

4th Bologna Coordination Implementation Group (BICG) meeting

Online, 16th of February 2026

Hosted by the
EHEA Secretariat
Minutes of the
meeting

List of participants

Country	Name	Last Name
Albania	Armela	Maxhelaku
Bulgaria (BICG Co-chair)	Ivana	Radonova
EUA (BICG Co-chair)	Maria	Kelo
European Commission	Yann-Maël	Bideau
Finland (BICG Co-chair)	Maija	Innola
France (TPG B on LRC Co-Chair)	Jingchao	Shi
France (TPG C on QA Co-chair)	Sophie	Guillet
Georgia (TPG A on QF Co-chair)	Khatia	Tsiramua
Italy	Vera	Lucke
Malta (TPG D on SD Co-Chair)	Jana	Kazarjan,
EHEA Secretariat	Alexandrina	Druta
EHEA Secretariat (Head)	Horia	Onita

Azerbaijan, ESU and Kazakhstan did not attend the meeting.

The meeting started at 10:02 CEST.

1. Opening of the Meeting – Welcome by the BICG Co-Chairs

The meeting was opened by the EUA BICG Co-Chair who welcomed all participants on behalf of the BICG Co-Chairs.

2. Approval of the agenda

Documents: [BICG 4 CY NO 2 Draft agenda 13.02.2026](#)

The EUA BICG Co-Chair introduced the draft agenda and invited comments or proposals for amendments. As no requests for modifications or additional items were raised by participants, the agenda was adopted without changes.

3. Approval of the 3rd BICG meeting minutes

Documents: [BICG 3 DK LI 2 Minutes 26.11.2025](#)

The EUA BICG Co-Chair invited participants to provide comments on the minutes of the third BICG meeting, which had taken place in November. As no further corrections or amendments

were proposed, in addition to the ones sent beforehand via e-mail and already incorporated, the minutes were approved as circulated. The Co-Chair expressed appreciation to the EHEA Secretariat member for the preparation of the minutes, noting their clarity and accuracy in reflecting the discussions held.

4. Updates from the EHEA Secretariat

Documents:

[BICG 4 CY NO 4 EHEA Secretariat updates presentation 23.02.2026](#)

The Head of the EHEA Secretariat (HoS) provided a detailed overview of developments within the EHEA since the previous BICG meeting. He presented the agenda items for the upcoming BFUG meeting in Cyprus and the ongoing work for each BFUG working structure. He also introduced the new EHEA website, currently available in a beta version, which will be formally launched at the BFUG meeting in Nicosia. TPG Co-Chairs will be invited to review and update policy-related content to ensure alignment with recent developments.

Among the pending issues, the HoS referred to the expectation that the BFUG agrees to mandating TPG A for conducting the QF-EHEA self-certification process. He also noted that few countries had not submitted their National Action Plans (NAP), while several had updated them in the last two months. The EHEA Secretariat also mentioned the pending issue of the monitoring of NAPs, as well as the revision of TPG Action Plans with a view to ensuring that final versions are published on the EHEA website.

Following the presentation, the EUA BICG Co-Chair thanked HoS for the comprehensive and detailed overview and acknowledged the substantial workload undertaken by the Secretariat, including the development of the new website.

The European Commission raised questions concerning the publication of future events on the new website and the intended follow-up to National Action Plans. The EHEA Secretariat clarified that the publication of events depended on their scheduling by the working structures, whereas the National Action Plans had been primarily conceived as a transparency and peer-learning tool. While the EHEA Secretariat can collect data on implementation submitted by BFUG members and provide analytical follow-up, they are not intended to constitute a formal monitoring mechanism.

The Finnish BICG Co-Chair highlighted the value of the EHEA Newsletter as a platform for increasing the visibility of TPG's work and emphasised the importance of further reflection within the BFUG on the future role and added value of National Action Plans. Additional clarification was also provided regarding the indicative planning of BFUG meetings in 2027.

5. Updates and feedback from the BFUG meeting (14 – 15 December) and from the BFUG Board meeting (6 February 2026)

The Bulgarian BICG Co-Chair introduced the agenda item and invited the EUA BICG Co-Chair to report on developments at the BFUG meeting held in December. The EUA Co-chair gave updates and noted that with regard to the self-certification process no formal decision had been taken during the December BFUG meeting. The proposal to integrate the review of self-certification reports within the BICG Terms of Reference, under the responsibility of TPG A on Qualifications Frameworks, had been presented as a practical and proportionate solution. While

the approach was generally welcomed, a formal decision is expected at the forthcoming BFUG meeting in Cyprus. It was further acknowledged that, in the longer term, the establishment of a more formalised basis for this function could be considered.

The Finnish BICG Co-Chair then provided an update from the BFUG Board meeting held in Oslo in early February. The discussion at the Board focused primarily on the self-certification process and the preparation of the implementation debate foreseen for the BFUG meeting in Cyprus.

Regarding self-certification, the Board discussed concrete proposals to be submitted to the BFUG in Cyprus. These included the proposal to adjust the BICG Terms of Reference in order to formally anchor the review function within TPG A on Qualifications Frameworks, the endorsement of the previously prepared guidance document on the preparation of self-certification reports, and the recommendation that countries revisit their existing self-certification reports to assess whether updates are necessary. It was suggested that an indicative timeframe for such updates could also be proposed. Concerning the implementation debate in Cyprus, the Board expressed strong support for holding a focused and timely discussion. It was recommended that the number of guiding questions be limited to one to three in order to allow for a meaningful and in-depth plenary exchange.

During the discussion, the Italian BICG member asked for clarification regarding the format of the implementation debate, recalling that earlier discussions had included the possibility of organising breakout sessions. The Finnish BICG Co-Chair clarified that, due to time constraints and the number of items on the upcoming BFUG agenda, the discussion is currently foreseen to take place in plenary rather than in smaller groups. It was further indicated that the matter would be revisited under a subsequent agenda item of the present meeting.

6. Update from each TPG

6.1 TPG A on QF

Documents: [BICG_4_CY_NO_6_1_TPG_A_on_QF_presentation_11.02.2026](#)

The Georgian TPG A on QF Co-Chair presented the update on behalf of the group. The TPG A Co-Chair explained that the main focus of the group remains the QUATRA 2 project, which builds upon the results and experiences of the previous QUATRA initiative. A significant component of the group's current work concerns the self-certification process. Appreciation was expressed to the BICG Co-Chairs for having raised the matter at BFUG level and for the constructive progress achieved so far.

It was reported that two thematic working groups have been established within TPG A on QF. The first addresses support for automatic recognition of higher education qualifications in the context of qualifications frameworks, while the second focuses on qualifications frameworks for flexible learning pathways. The TPG A Co-Chair further informed participants about preparations for a Peer Learning Activity on self-certification and the third TPG A on QF meeting, both to be held in Riga in April. The TPG A Co-Chair highlighted flexible learning pathways as a theme with clear cross-cutting relevance and expressed readiness to cooperate closely with other TPGs on this topic.

In the discussion, the French TPG C on QA Co-Chair welcomed the openness to cross-TPG collaboration, particularly in relation to flexible learning pathways, and emphasised the

importance of ensuring coherence between work strands. The Finnish BICG Co-Chair supported the idea of including cross-TPG cooperation as a dedicated topic at a future BICG meeting and raised the question of so-called “re-self-certification”, noting that several countries have substantially revised their national qualifications frameworks since their original self-certification reports.

In response, the Georgian TPG A on QF Co-Chair recalled that recommendations previously adopted within TPG A suggest that countries revisit their self-certification reports every six to seven years, particularly where substantial changes have occurred. The importance of peer feedback and structured exchange was emphasised, while also acknowledging that further procedural clarification would need to be discussed within BICG and BFUG structures.

6.2 TPG B on LRC

Documents: [BICG_4_CY_NO_6_1_TPG_B_on_LRC_presentation_12.02.2026](#)

The French TPG B on LRC Co-Chair presented the updates on behalf of the group. It was reported that the third online meeting of TPG B on LRC, held in January, focused primarily on automatic recognition. The meeting included a presentation of evidence emerging from the most recent monitoring exercise, followed by an exchange of good practices among participating countries. The agenda also addressed the use of artificial intelligence in recognition processes. During breakout discussions, participants examined both the risks and the opportunities associated with AI. It was acknowledged that AI holds considerable potential for improving efficiency, streamlining procedures and enhancing data management in recognition processes. At the same time, concerns were raised regarding data integrity, ethical considerations and the level of institutional readiness required for responsible implementation.

The TPG B Co-Chair further informed participants that a mid-term monitoring survey has been launched within the group. The survey seeks feedback on expectations regarding TPG B on LRC activities, the extent to which the group’s work supports national-level implementation, and suggestions for improving future activities.

The next in-person TPG B meeting is scheduled to take place in June in Sèvres, France, and is expected to focus thematically on flexible learning pathways. In addition, the TPG LRC+ project, which is planned to run over three years, will support a range of peer-learning activities, staff mobility initiatives, online seminars and publications. The project includes four thematic working groups addressing automatic recognition, transnational cooperation, alternative pathways including micro-credentials, and digital transition.

6.3 TPG C on QA

Documents: [BICG_4_CY_NO_6_1_TPG_C_on_QA_presentation_16.02.2026](#)
[Policy Brief on the external quality assurance of flexible learning pathways](#)
[Thematic analysis on stakeholder involvement in quality assurance](#)

The French TPG C on QA Co-Chair gave updates on behalf of the group. She noted that the TPG C had committed to organising six peer-support meetings, producing three thematic analyses, and holding a final conference in 2027 dedicated to the ESG and the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. To date, three peer-support meetings had been carried out, and a fourth meeting is scheduled to take place online on 17 April. In addition, one thematic

analysis had already been completed. This deliverable, coordinated by ENQA, focused on stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, and further details were subsequently provided during the presentation.

The group further launched in late 2025 a first call for applications for staff mobility. The selected visits are expected to take place between April and July 2026. In relation to international external quality assurance activities, EQAR developed and launched a survey addressed to quality assurance agencies and ministries in order to gather feedback for upgrading the EQAR knowledge base. A few weeks prior to the meeting, ENQA also organised the kick-off meeting of the working group on cross-border quality assurance, which is tasked with updating the Key Considerations on CBQA and develop a Code of Conduct for QA agencies.

In the fourth strand, focusing on innovation in quality assurance and higher education, the French TPG C Co-chair informed about the publication of a policy brief on the QA of flexible learning pathways. In this regard, the French TPG C on QA Co-Chair raised the possibility of developing a transversal deliverable on flexible learning pathways in cooperation with other TPGs. However, she wondered whether such an initiative would be feasible before the upcoming Ministerial Conference.

She also noted that country action plans demonstrate progress in implementation, albeit at a slow pace, due to the cultural and legislative changes required to align national systems with Bologna tools and commitments. While participation rates in TPG C activities were high and feedback surveys positive, the direct impact of peer-learning activities on policy implementation remained difficult to measure. She suggested that the next Bologna Process Implementation Report might offer an opportunity to better assess progress by comparing indicators over time.

Regarding the planned work on the quality assurance of European Universities alliances in autumn 2026, the European Commission informed the group that they would also undertake substantial work on this topic in 2026, including consultations with alliances to assess their needs and experiences with evaluations. He suggested that strong synergies be developed in this direction. Secondly, the Commission considered that the definition used for the flexible learning pathways was too broad and thus the concept appeared difficult to grasp and its implementation monitored. The Commission further noted that the Communiqué mentioned specific examples that could serve as a starting point for narrowing the focus of the topic.

In response, the French TPG C on QA Co-Chair indicated that the activities related to the QA of Alliances would likely take place in October or November 2026 in Yerevan, back-to-back with the TPG C meeting. Concerning the flexible learning pathways, she acknowledged the conceptual breadth and the challenges posed by the wording of the Tirana Communiqué. While discussions within the EHEA have often centred on micro-credentials, TPG C had deliberately adopted a broader definition. She agreed that this constitutes a limitation and that, in the absence of more specific ministerial guidance, it remains challenging to move beyond general considerations.

Italy referred to the survey results indicating that some countries, including Italy, had reported having no national regulations or guidelines for flexible learning pathways, despite the existence of micro-credentials in Italy. The French TPG C on QA Co-Chair clarified that the survey had been distributed through TPG C representatives, with a request that they consult national stakeholders before responding.

6.4 TPG D on SD

The TPG D on SD Co-Chair from Malta informed that the updates covered developments since October 2025. She reported that the third TPG D meeting had taken place in Oxford, accompanied by a Peer Learning Activity organised under the Inspire project, which supports the work of TPG D. The Peer Learning Activity in Oxford addressed inclusive national strategies and included presentations on inclusive learning pathways, recognition of prior learning, student support measures and cross-sectoral cooperation. The PLA report had been finalised as part of the Inspire project deliverables and uploaded on the EHEA website.

The next TPG D meeting is scheduled to take place on 18 February 2026 in Salzburg and will be followed by a Peer Learning Activity focusing on inclusive institutional cultures and guidance and counselling. Another TPG D meeting and subsequent PLA are planned for October 2026 in Malta, with a focus on Principle 4 concerning monitoring and data collection. In addition, three countries have been selected for country reviews under the Inspire project, as announced at the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen in December.

The EUA BICG Co-Chair asked whether the group had encountered challenges in defining its scope and working methods or whether the process had been proceeding smoothly. In response, the TPG D on SD Co-Chair from Malta acknowledged that, while the work was progressing well, certain challenges remained. She noted in particular that National Action Plans have proven to be a challenging aspect.

7. Upcoming BFUG meeting in Cyprus (9-10 March)

The Finnish BICG Co-Chair explained that the BICG would present the usual updates on progress within the TPGs, together with the proposed actions concerning the self-certification process, which had been discussed earlier in the meeting. She outlined the proposals to be submitted to the BFUG for endorsement, including the endorsement of the guidelines for self-certification reports and processes, the adjustment of the BICG Terms of Reference to mandate TPG A on Qualifications Frameworks to act as a platform for presenting self-certification reports and providing peer feedback, and the recommendation that BFUG members consider revisiting their self-certification reports to determine whether updates are necessary.

She further explained that the BICG Co-chairs would facilitate a discussion on the implementation and the key commitments. She noted that the time allocation foreseen for the BICG at the BFUG meeting was limited. Given these constraints, a focused discussion paper with a limited number of guiding questions would be required.

Two possible thematic strands had been presented at the Board meeting. The first concerned the peer learning methodology and its effectiveness in enhancing implementation, including the role of National Action Plans and their connection to the work of the TPGs. Questions proposed under this theme addressed whether the current methodology remained fit for purpose, how National Action Plans could better address implementation gaps, and how the work of TPGs could more effectively feed into BFUG-level policy discussions. The second possible theme concerned the future-proof development of Bologna tools, in line with the Tirana Communiqué's mandate to examine their future relevance, including considerations related to digitalisation.

The European Commission requested clarification regarding the reference to digital interoperability of Bologna tools, asking whether this concerned digital interoperability of educational data more broadly or specifically the digital dimension of Bologna tools such as the ESG and the European Approach. The Finnish BICG Co-Chair clarified that the initial reference concerned Bologna tools in particular but acknowledged that the broader impact of digitalisation had also been discussed and could be formulated more precisely. The European Commission emphasised that digital description and exchange of qualifications is likely to become increasingly important and cautioned that, in the absence of coordinated action within the EHEA, the private sector might shape standards and monetise exchanges. He considered the issue to be strategically significant for the future of the EHEA.

In view of the tight timeline for submitting materials to the BFUG, it was agreed that BICG members would provide any written comments or suggestions for the drafting of the BFUG discussion paper by 18 February, allowing sufficient time for the document to be consolidated.

8. Next steps: Revisiting the BICG work plan

The EUA BICG Co-Chair introduced the agenda item, noting that preparation of the BICG final report would need to commence earlier than anticipated. The report is expected to be presented to the BFUG in November, and it will need to include not only an overview of progress but also an analysis of the peer support methodology and recommendations for the next working period.

She observed that the current meeting schedule might not provide sufficient time for in-depth preparation and proposed adding an additional working meeting before autumn, potentially in June, focused specifically on brainstorming key messages for the final report and discussing cross-cutting topics such as flexible learning pathways.

The Finnish BICG Co-Chair supported this proposal and noted that flexible learning pathways had emerged repeatedly as a cross-TPG theme. It was agreed in principle that an additional online meeting could be organised in June to focus on substantive preparation of the final report.

Italy asked for clarification regarding the format of the meeting planned for October, noting that the work plan indicated the possibility of either an online or in-person meeting. The EUA BICG Co-Chair explained that the intention had been to hold at least one in-person meeting during the working period, ideally towards the later stages to consolidate joint messages for the final report. It was clarified that only one of the autumn or winter meetings would be held in person, not both.

The French TPG C on QA Co-Chair requested clarification as to whether more than one Co-Chair per TPG could attend an in-person meeting. The EUA BICG Co-Chair responded that participation could be broadened for an in-person meeting, as it might facilitate side discussions and working sessions among Co-Chairs.

Participants expressed general support for the added value of in-person meetings. It was agreed that an email consultation would be circulated to explore preferences for dates in late September or early October, as well as January, and to determine whether the meeting would be held online or in person based on responses. It was confirmed that the June meeting would

be held online and would focus on brainstorming for the final report and flexible learning pathways.

9. Any other business (AOB)

The TPG D on SD Co-Chair from Malta raised a procedural question regarding the possible inclusion of an additional participant from IDE, involved in the Inspire project, as a member of TPG D. She indicated some uncertainty as to whether formal approval by the BFUG would be required. The EUA BICG Co-Chair clarified that TPGs are free to invite experts to participate in meetings without formal approval, and such invitations can be extended on a recurring basis. However, formal membership in a TPG is granted to countries, which nominate their representatives. There is no provision for individual institutional membership independent of a country nomination. Therefore, if the individual were to be formally listed as a member, this would require a nomination from the respective country and subsequent approval through the established BFUG procedure, typically by written consultation.

The meeting ended at 12:08 CET.