

## Minutes of the 1st Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue meeting

30th of January 2025, 10 - 12 CET

Nr.	Country/Organisation	Name
1.	Italy (Co-chair)	Elisa Petrucci
2.	Moldova (Co-chair)	Nina Putuntean
3.	UNESCO (Co-chair)	Borhene Chakroun
4.	UNESCO	Leila Loupis
5.	EURASHE	Ana Duplava
6.	Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
7.	European Commission	Bianca Busuioc
8.	North Macedonia	Borco Aleksov
9.	EUA	Elizabeth Colucci
10.	Austria	Katalin Szondy
11.	Austria	Michael Roither
12.	Romania	Madalina Matei
13.	Germany	Nils Tensi
14.	France	Mathieu Musquin
15.	Kazakhstan	Rauza Mendaliyeva
16.	Head of the EHEA Secretariat	Horia Onita
17.	Italy (IN-GLOBAL staff)	Marianna Tardioli

Norway and ENQA sent their apologies. Albania, Azerbaijan, Education International - ETUCE, ESU, Montenegro, Slovakia were absent.

Meeting started at 10:02 CET

### 1. Welcome remarks and introduction to the meeting

*Documents:* [CG GPD PL AL 1 1 Draft agenda](#)

The Co-chairs started the meeting by welcoming the participants and outlining the importance and remit of the group. They thanked the EHEA Secretariat for the support in organising the meeting and the participants for joining the CG on GPD. The Italian Co-chair described the structure of the meeting, including a first part on information sharing regarding the state of play of the CG GPD, global initiatives and interlinkages between BFUG working structures, and a second part dedicated to discussing the work plan of the group in terms of topics to address, as well as an initial discussion on identifying international stakeholders with whom CG GPD should prioritise cooperation.

The welcome remarks were followed by a tour de table of the CG GPD members.

2. **From Tirana to Iași-Chișinău: state of the art and future perspectives**
3. **Objectives and outcomes for the CG on GPD. Presentation of the Terms of Reference**

*Presentation:* [CG GPD PL AL 1 2 ToRs context](#)

The Italian Co-chair gave the presentation of the state of the art in relation to the CG GPD starting from the Tirana Communique and the Tirana Global Policy Forum Statement, where ministers asked to keep enhancing dialogue and cooperation with macro-regions, highlighting the importance of identifying relevant interlocutors. The Communique specifically puts in the remit of the CG GPD the focus on supporting the implementation of the UNESCO Global Recognition Convention and the second-generation regional recognition convention, as well as the alignment and understanding of quality assurance principles. The GPF Statement further identifies topic of common interest, particularly flexible learning pathways and lifelong learning, including microcredentials and recognition of non-formal learning, access to higher education, including for migrants and refugees, comparability of learning credits, trusted sharing of data, joint approaches to technological development, including Artificial intelligence, and ethical principles and value of international academic cooperation.

The Italian Co-chair further presented the discussion during the XCII BFUG meeting in Budapest, which emphasised the relevance of finding suitable interlocutors and synergies with other BFUG working structures, as well as reflecting and acting upon the way the work of the CG GPD supports mobility. She continued with updating the members on the composition of the CG GPD, the ToRs, the synergies between the key topics tackled by the CG GPD, as well as the principle outlined in the ToRs of a rotating system for CG GPD meetings: two meetings per year with one dedicated to CG GPD members and the second focusing on policy discussions with external partners, leading to topic specific recommendations. The Italian Co-chair finalised her intervention with an invitation to the IN-GLOBAL project final conference, to be held in February 2025 in Rome, which would include future-oriented discussions about the global cooperation of EHEA.

The Moldovan Co-chair continued by presenting the key features of the new project submitted for the Erasmus+ call to support the work of the CG GPD during the 2024-2027 work period. The project, pending selection, would include three work packages related to the work of the CG GPD: supporting CG GPD meetings, supporting the organisation of the GPF in Iași-Chișinău, and enhancing global dialogue with other macro-regions, including drafting a roadmap for post-2030 cooperation.

The EHEA Head of Secretariat (HoS) presented the draft Schedule of topics for BFUG meetings, adding that the Romanian-Moldovan hosts for the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum aim to send the invitation to the delegates by the BFUG meeting in Cyprus in spring 2026, which would require that the CG GPD would already have drawn up the proposals for external partners to be invited by that point. He further presented a graph with the interlinkages between working structures, showing that CG GPD is well connected within the Work Programme, with input to CG GPD expected from the WG on Internationalisation and Mobility and the WG on Fundamental Values.

The Holy See expressed dissatisfaction that the ToRs were not previously discussed in the group, pointing out that the main contributions of the Holy See were not reflected in the ToRs sent to the BFUG for adoption and suggesting that the ToRs are rediscussed during the meeting to avoid breaking the silent adoption procedure in the BFUG. The Italian Co-chair reminded participants that the ToRs had been submitted to the group for consultation via email and that the co-chairs had done their best to integrate all comments while finding a compromise between different requests. The HoS suggested that, if all parties agree to the amendments, the input of Holy See

is reflected in the meeting minutes and thus avoiding revising the ToRs, which would imply a new procedure through the BFUG.

The Holy See replied by suggesting instead that the CG GPD agrees on a revised ToRs to be resubmitted to the BFUG. She further explained the main issues of the Holy See concerning the ToRs: i) non-correspondence with the Tirana Communique through not referencing the section on SDGs from the Communique, which focuses on supporting HEIs to advance SDGs, while including SDGs in the main goals and transversal issues tackled by CG GPD on behalf of ministries; ii) prioritising in the formulation the cooperation with other countries instead of macro-regions; iii) supporting the implementation of recognition conventions in a too narrow sense, without considering other instruments, texts and networks adjacent or subsidiary to the recognition conventions iv) stating the contribution to the UNESCO World HE Roadmap as a goal, while EHEA as such is not expected to contribute to the roadmap and the Holy See is not a member of UNESCO. Instead, the Holy See suggested that CG GPD contributes to international for a fostering quality education for all, such as UNESCO World HE Roadmap, to support the achievement of SDGs. Finally, she pointed out that Council of Europe initiatives were not mentioned in the section pertaining to synergies with initiatives outside of EHEA, despite the proposal raised during the coordination meeting between the co-chairs.

Germany added that they also had some minor comments and, supported by the UNESCO co-chair, suggested sending contributions in writing after the meeting to ensure that all agenda points during the meeting would be covered.

The HoS added that while the template ToRs only referenced the Tirana Communique, in the case of the CG GPD the mandate could also stem from the GPF Statement, which gives broader elements to rely to when drawing up the ToRs. On procedure, the HoS suggested that the CG GPD discusses during the meeting the red lines of members and agrees on the ToRs, to be consequently sent to the BFUG for a revised procedure. In this regard, the HoS, supported by the Italian Co-chair, mentioned that ToRs could be considered a living document, and non-major comments could be left for the minutes.

The UNESCO Co-chair suggested discussing the ToRs in the plenary of the CG GPD meeting, ensuring a participatory approach from all group members, and scheduling a new CG GPD meeting for agenda items which would not be covered during the meeting.

Germany presented their three comments on the ToRs: i) including Kazakhstan in the list of members; ii) correcting a typo in relation to the year of the 2027 GPF statement; iii) including the task of identifying the partners for the Iași-Chișinău GPF. The Italian Co-chair confirmed that Kazakhstan was included in the latest version of the ToRs. The HoS proposed that the third point is formulated as 'identifies and proposes partners', in order to remain in line with the EHEA Rules of Procedure, which state that the final decision rests with the BFUG and the host authorities. The inputs of Holy See (sent in writing to the Secretariat) and of Germany (sent through the Zoom chat, as amended) were integrated and the members agreed not to recirculate the document for comments, thus considering the revised ToRs adopted by the group.

The HoS stated that the ToRs would be sent to the BFUG Co-chairs to relaunch the silence online adoption procedure with the BFUG.

#### 4. Key initiatives at the global level and their relevance for the work of the CG on GPD

Presentation: [CG GPD PL AL 1 4 UNESCO Higher Ed conventions](#)

The UNESCO Co-chair gave the presentation. He outlined the growth in the enrolment of students across all macro-regions, with approximately 256 million students currently enrolled in HE, whereas only some regions seemed to be heading towards a plateau. He remarked that the growth pattern was also associated with student mobility, with 6.4 mobile students, triple from 2000. However, the UNESCO Co-chair emphasised that this mobility was imbalanced towards the Global North, suggesting that the CG GPD could also discuss what tools can remedy this situation.

He continued with presenting the situation of ratifying the recognition conventions, with around 100 countries having ratified at least one convention. He noted strong impetus for the Global Recognition Convention, considering that 36 countries had ratified the convention and around 10-20 other countries are in the process of ratification. He showed that the ratifying countries presented a diverse range in terms of income level and size of HE systems. As further steps, he informed the CG GPD members that the GRC Bureau had been working on the second interim work programme, to be agreed at the next Intergovernmental Conference in June 2025, as well as on operational guidelines, as well as further subsidiary texts on the quality assurance of transnational education, qualifications of refugees and displaced persons and the relationship between the GRC and the regional recognition conventions.

#### 5. **BFUG working structures: overview and synergies with the CG on GPD**

*Presentation: [CG GPD PL AL 1 5 BFUG working structures](#)*

The Moldovan Co-chair gave the presentation. She outlined the role of the BFUG, the BFUG Board and the EHEA Secretariat. She further presented the current Work Programme, including the working structures for the 2024-2027 working period, their co-chairs, as well as synergies with other working structures, particularly the WG on Internationalisation and Mobility, the Thematic Peer Groups on Qualifications Frameworks, Recognition and Quality Assurance, as well as the Task Force on the Future of Bologna.

#### 6. **Working group on the CG on GPD work plan and identification of the first list of stakeholders to involve**

#### 7. **Reporting from the working groups**

The Italian Co-chair suggested a new meeting for the next steps of identifying stakeholders and relevant topics. The Holy See asked whether the Secretariat and the Co-chairs received the list of contacts from the last cycle and suggested keeping them updated during the entire cycle.

The Italian Co-chair replied that overall mappings of HE stakeholders had already been carried out, with the focus resting on identifying stakeholders that would be engaged by the CG GPD. The HoS informed that they received the list of stakeholders invited for the GPF in Tirana and their contacts, adding that the Secretariat would share it with the group ahead of the next meeting and proposing that the list serves as a starting point which could then be regularly updated by the group.

EUA highlighted the importance of showing coherence to external partners when communicating on behalf of the group. She suggested that after a list of stakeholders is agreed, a letter is sent about the group, the state of the art, the new goals, difference from other policy areas, added value and means of engagement. She also stressed the importance of synergies with other projects, informing that EUA and OBREAL are expected to organise an exchange with the



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BFUG or its working structures within the SPHERE project, with a potential event in Romania in autumn, in the context of which a CG GPD meeting could also be organised.

## 8. Wrap up and conclusions

There was no AOB. The Co-chairs thanked the participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

The meeting finished at 11:58 CET.

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