

**Minutes of the 3rd Working Group on Fundamental Values meeting  
Hybrid, Bucharest (Romania)  
20th-21st of November 2025**

**List of participants**

Nr.	Name	Country / Organisation
1	Lukas Dorfegger	Austria
2	Josipa Dragičević	Croatia
3	Karin Åmossa	EI/ETUCE
4	Daciana Pop	ESU
5	Camille Odent	European Commission (online)
6	Sara Thornton	France (online)
7	David Akrami Flores	Germany
8	Tilman Dörr	Germany
9	Sharon McGreevy	Ireland
10	Andris Teikmanis	Latvia
11	Rose Anne Cuschieri	Malta
12	James Perry Maia	Malta (Co-chair)
13	Borčo Aleksov	North Macedonia
14	Anne Kari Johansen	Norway
15	Maria Carla Proença	Portugal (online)
16	Tatiana Pasa	Republic of Moldova (online)
17	Cezar Hâj	Romania (Co-chair)
18	Liviu Matei	United Kingdom
19	David Crosier	WG on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process (Eurydice Co-chair, online)
20	Horia-Șerban Onița	EHEA Secretariat (HoS)
21	Oana Alexandra Țințar	EHEA Secretariat
22	Sjur Bergan	NewFAV2 project (guest)

23	Giulia D'Aquila	NewFAV2 project (online, guest)
24	Cristina Fiț	NewFAV2 project (guest)
25	Elizaveta Potapova	NewFAV2 project (online, guest)

Kazakhstan, Montenegro and Türkiye were absent.

EUA, Council of Europe, Hungary, Poland and San Marino sent their apologies.

## Day 1

### 1. Welcome and introduction from the WG Co-chairs

#### 1.1. Adoption of the agenda

#### 1.2. Acknowledgement of the 2nd WG on FV meeting minutes

#### 1.3. Tour de table

##### Documents:

- [WG FV 3 DK LI 1 Draft Agenda 18.11.2025](#)

The Co-chairs opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and introducing themselves. As no issues were raised, the agenda was adopted as proposed by the Co-chairs.

The Romanian Co-chair invited participants to take note of the minutes of the 2nd WG on FV meeting, which had been circulated to members in their final form and uploaded on the EHEA website. Furthermore, he invited the participants to introduce themselves.

### 2. Updates from the EHEA Secretariat regarding the activity of the other WS and feedback from the 2nd meeting of the WG on Fundamental Values

##### Documents:

- [WG FV 3 DK LI 2 1 Updates EHEA Secretariat](#)
- [WG FV 3 DK LI 2 2 Feedback Report 2nd WG FV meeting](#)

The Head of the EHEA Secretariat delivered an update on developments within the BFUG working structures, with particular reference to the upcoming BFUG meeting scheduled to take place in Copenhagen in December. On the work of the Coordination Group on the Global Policy Dialogue, he recalled that one of the CG GPD's four areas of action concerns the right to education and fundamental values, and informed participants that the group would organise a global peer-learning activity on the right to education, to be hosted by UNESCO in Paris in December 2026. He also referred to a debate to be organised during the upcoming BFUG meeting by the Task Force on the Future of the Bologna Process on the interconnectedness between the European Higher Education Area, the European Education Area and the European Research Area.

He observed that participation in the WG on FV currently stood at 68%, which, while slightly below the average, still represented an improvement compared to the previous working period. He reported that 39 EHEA members had submitted their National Action Plans. Although countries had not been requested to include actions related to fundamental values in their National Action Plans, the HoS noted that several members had nevertheless done so. He provided examples, including Austria, Germany, Moldova, Norway, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia, referring to actions related to scientific integrity, academic ethics, legislative alignment and the promotion of fundamental values at national level.

The EHEA Secretariat member briefly presented the feedback report for the 2nd WG FV meeting, noting the positive feedback received and thanking Malta for hosting the meeting.

### **3. Updates from the WG on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process and discussion on the BPIR 2027 Fundamental Values chapter**

#### **Documents:**

- [WG FV 3 DK LI 3 Updates WG on Monitoring BPIR 2027 FV chapter](#)

The Eurydice Co-chair of the Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process provided an update on the preparation of the BPIR 2027, with a particular focus on the chapter on fundamental values. He emphasised the close cooperation between the WG on Monitoring and the WG on FV, aimed at ensuring an aligned and coherent approach within the BFUG. He recalled that the structure of the BPIR 2027 had been presented to and endorsed by the BFUG at its meeting in Warsaw and explained that the report would follow a streamlined model, with a reduced number of indicators complemented by narrative sections in each thematic chapter, describing progress achieved through the work of the relevant working groups and projects. With regard to the fundamental values chapter, he stressed the need to respect the monitoring framework and indicators developed under the NewFAV2 project. He confirmed that the de jure indicators addressed to public authorities would be collected through the BPIR questionnaire and subsequently shared with the WG on FV and NewFAV2 project team in order to avoid duplication, while the WG on Monitoring would not modify the questions developed by the WG on FV. The Eurydice Co-chair outlined possible approaches to the content of the FV chapter in the BPIR 2027. He noted that no decision had been taken at that stage and that further discussion would be required ahead of the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen.

Sjur Bergan emphasised the importance of ensuring that information on the implementation of the fundamental values is given strong visibility and status within the EHEA. He expressed the view that, wherever possible, such information should be included in the BPIR, given its established role,

and that any elements not reflected therein should be covered through the FV monitoring report prepared within the NewFAV2 project. Supported by Germany and ETUCE, he cautioned against a situation in which the monitoring of fundamental values would be perceived within the BFUG as merely a project output of the NewFAV2 project, noting the risk that this could undermine the authority and uptake of the results in future cycles. Furthermore, Germany highlighted the importance of ensuring continuity and ownership of the work beyond the project framework.

The United Kingdom representative underlined the need to distinguish clearly between the technical nature of the monitoring exercise and the political dimension of the Bologna Process. He stressed that the NewFAV2 project constitutes a technical monitoring exercise conducted within its mandate, while political decisions, assessments and recommendations, including those reflected in the Ministerial Communiqué, fall within the remit of the BFUG. He cautioned against treating the monitoring report as equivalent to, or a substitute for, political documents, emphasising the importance of maintaining clarity regarding the different roles and purposes of the various outputs.

The Romanian Co-chair indicated that the set of indicators discussed with the WG on Monitoring should form the basis for data collection for the BPIR, while noting that the authors of the report would ultimately decide how the data and any narrative contributions from the WG on Fundamental Values would be reflected. He further explained that the monitoring exercise carried out under the NewFAV2 project would adopt a more comprehensive approach, including de facto data and stakeholder perspectives. Nevertheless, he underlined the importance of maintaining a fundamental values section in the BPIR for reasons of consistency with previous and future implementation reports.

The Norwegian representative expressed agreement with the previous interventions and supported the inclusion of a section on fundamental values in the BPIR, while also underlining the usefulness of a more comprehensive standalone FV monitoring report to support follow-up and evaluation.

The United Kingdom representative further pointed out that the BPIR should not rely solely on numerical indicators or visual comparisons, but should allow sufficient flexibility in how findings are reflected, including through narrative explanations of progress and compliance.

Sjur Bergan expressed a preference for embedding the assessment of fundamental values as firmly as possible within the BPIR, while stressing that having a limited reflection would be preferable to having none. He underlined the importance of ensuring that the assessment of fundamental values becomes a permanent feature of the Bologna Process, whether through the BPIR, a dedicated report, or Ministerial Communiqués. He further cautioned against any approach that could undermine the commitments agreed in the Tirana Communiqué, particularly the mandate given to the BFUG to further develop indicators for assessing the state of fundamental values.

The Romanian Co-chair recalled that the BPIR 2024 had already included a section on fundamental values and noted that several of the currently proposed indicators are similar to those used in the previous cycle. He stated that, in his view, there was no justification for excluding these indicators from the BPIR 2027 and indicated that he would propose to the BFUG the use of the agreed indicators as the basis for data collection and their reflection in the report. He concluded by reiterating that this approach would complement, rather than replace, the more comprehensive monitoring of fundamental values carried out under the NewFAV2 project.

The Eurydice Co-chair of the Working Group on Monitoring clarified that previous BPIR had not applied colour-coded or evaluative approaches to indicators on fundamental values. He explained that the key question concerned whether the BPIR should continue to reflect a limited set of de jure indicators collected from public authorities, as in previous cycles, or whether the focus should shift towards explaining the development of a more comprehensive monitoring framework that incorporates multiple perspectives beyond governments. He cautioned that presenting a fundamental values monitoring report alongside the BPIR, based on a different and more experimental methodological approach developed under the NewFAV2 project, could risk creating methodological inconsistencies. In particular, he noted the potential difficulty of presenting two distinct approaches to monitoring fundamental values to the Ministerial Conference. He stressed that it would be premature to integrate the full project-based methodology and indicators into the BPIR.

The Romanian Co-chair noted that the BPIR should continue to reflect de jure indicators consistent with previous reporting cycles, while the fundamental values report would provide a more comprehensive perspective, including additional data sources and a traffic-light approach. He underlined that this would create synergies rather than inconsistencies between the two outputs.

The HoS referred to the precedent set in the BPIR 2024, where stakeholder contributions from ESU and EUA were reflected alongside the main report through narrative explanations and selected data visualisations. He suggested that a similar approach could be considered for fundamental values, whereby the BPIR would include de jure indicators complemented by a limited narrative drawing on relevant de facto elements from the project, while the fundamental values monitoring report would provide a more comprehensive analysis, including additional indicators and methodological tools. He noted that such an approach could allow for coherence between the two outputs, while acknowledging that questions regarding authorship and ownership within the BPIR would require further consideration.

The Eurydice Co-chair of the Working Group on Monitoring expressed agreement with the approach outlined by the HoS. He confirmed that the WG on FV would have the opportunity to

contribute a narrative text to the BPIR, explaining the development of a more comprehensive monitoring approach under the project. He noted that, based on the discussion, there appeared to be a preference to maintain a limited set of de jure indicators alongside such a narrative section and stated that this approach would be proposed to the BFUG, which he considered likely to be acceptable. He concluded by underlining that the longer-term question of how the project-based monitoring could be mainstreamed into regular Bologna Process monitoring remained open and would require further reflection. The Romanian Co-chair expressed agreement with the proposed approach and noted that there was consensus at this point on the way forward.

#### **4. Discussion on the final proposal of indicators for the FV chapter of the BPIR 2027**

##### **4.1. Discussion on the connection between the BPIR 2027 data collection and the NewFAV2 project data collection**

###### **Documents:**

- [WG FV 3 DK LI 4 1 Indicators for Monitoring FV](#)
- [WG FV 3 DK LI 4 2 FV Monitoring Flow](#)

The Romanian Co-chair introduced the proposed set of indicators for the Fundamental Values chapter of the BPIR 2027. He explained that the indicators had been developed through several iterations following discussions with the WG on Monitoring. He noted that the revised set of indicators had been shared with the group and had also been presented to the BFUG Board.

The Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring noted that the document reflected the questionnaire format used to derive the indicators and suggested that, for the purpose of BFUG discussion, it might be preferable to present only the titles of the indicators rather than the full set of questions. The Romanian Co-chair confirmed that the indicators would be presented at the level of their titles, noting that BFUG members would retain access to the full documentation should they wish to consult the underlying questions and response options.

The Latvian representative expressed appreciation for the inclusion of provisions related to academic integrity in the context of digital technologies. Supported by various members of the group, he suggested that further clarification could be provided by explicitly referring to the use of artificial intelligence, in order to avoid ambiguity for institutions and public authorities.

The Norwegian representative raised a question regarding the scope of the proposed indicators, noting that they did not cover the public responsibility for higher education. The Romanian Co-chair clarified that no fundamental value had been excluded from the monitoring framework. He explained that the indicator related to public responsibility for higher education had already been

covered by existing indicators in the BPIR. He noted that, in practice, most response options under this indicator could already be inferred from data collected elsewhere, while the remaining element, related to funding frameworks, lacked sufficient specificity and would likely yield uniform responses. Sjur Bergan suggested that, in the longer term, consideration could be given to examining the extent to which public authorities provide a framework that enables higher education institutions to fulfil their public responsibility, including in relation to their broader societal role.

The Romanian Co-chair presented the proposed monitoring flow for fundamental values, outlining the linkages between the BPIR 2027 data collection and the data collection foreseen under the NewFAV<sub>2</sub> project. The Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring explained that, should pre-filling by national operators not be feasible within the required timeframe, a contingency approach could be applied. In this case, responses could be pre-filled for public authorities using corresponding data collected in previous exercises, in order to facilitate validation by national authorities. The Romanian Co-chair expressed agreement with the proposed contingency approach for the BPIR data collection.

## **5. Updated Technical Implementation Methodology for the Monitoring Framework of Fundamental Values. Updated detailed timeline of the NewFAV<sub>2</sub> project**

### **Documents:**

- [WG FV 3 DK LI 5 1 FV Monitoring Tool](#)
- [WG FV 3 DK LI 5 2 Updated Timeline NewFAV<sub>2</sub> project](#)

The United Kingdom representative, speaking in his capacity as a member of the NewFAV<sub>2</sub> project team, gave a presentation on the tool. He recalled that, following extensive discussions within the Working Group, an additional indicator on outlook had been introduced. This indicator reflects the fact that several definitions of fundamental values, including those related to public responsibility for and of higher education, were adopted only recently in Tirana, and that immediate legislative change could not reasonably be expected. The outlook indicator therefore captures planned developments, indicating whether protection and promotion are expected to improve, remain unchanged or, potentially, deteriorate. He clarified that the monitoring framework is structured around three main dimensions: protection, promotion and outlook. In addition to the de jure component, the framework also includes a de facto dimension, which will be addressed through narrative analysis. This analysis will draw on existing national and international sources, including available reports and indices, without developing new measurement tools. He emphasised that the project does not intend to create new indices, such as an academic freedom index, but will instead rely on existing evidence where relevant.

He further underlined the importance of training national operators on the Monitoring Tool, to ensure a common understanding and consistent application of the methodology across countries.

The ETUCE representative raised a question regarding the approach of academic integrity within the monitoring framework, referring in particular to the role of structural drivers such as precarious employment conditions and pressure on academic staff. She asked for clarification as to whether such aspects are reflected in the framework. The United Kingdom representative, speaking also in his capacity as a member of the NewFAV<sub>2</sub> project team, clarified that the statements on fundamental values include a reference to the obligation of national authorities to ensure a good working environment for academic staff. He acknowledged that this aspect is not currently reflected in the de jure or promotion-related questions and suggested that it could potentially be addressed within the de facto component of the monitoring framework.

Upon a question from Germany asking how the participation of stakeholders in the de facto component would be ensured, the United Kingdom representative, speaking in his capacity as a member of the NewFAV<sub>2</sub> project team, explained that the dissemination of the de facto questionnaires would be the responsibility of the national operators. He clarified that national operators would promote and circulate the questions to representatives of relevant stakeholder groups, including national rectors' conferences, trade unions and student unions. He further noted that, in addition to targeted dissemination, an open platform would be made available to allow any interested individuals to contribute information. The Romanian Co-chair further explained that all available channels would be used to promote participation, including dissemination through BFUG members, project partners such as ESU and EUA, and their respective networks. He also noted that the EHEA Secretariat would be invited to support dissemination through the EHEA Newsletter and by making the information available on the EHEA website.

The European Commission representative emphasised the importance of effective dissemination, noting that this would have a direct impact on the quality of the data collected and, consequently, on the robustness of the resulting report. She expressed support for the approaches outlined and suggested that the timeline and circulation process for the questionnaire be clarified further.

The United Kingdom representative, speaking in his capacity as a member of the NewFAV<sub>2</sub> project team, briefly presented the updated timeline for the implementation of the project. He noted that, depending on coordination with the BFUG regarding the list of national operators, the training might be postponed to January 2026, while underlining that no data collection would take place without prior training. He explained that the main data collection phase is foreseen between January and mid-2026 and would rely on input from national operators, complemented by existing national and international sources in order to capture the de facto situation. He further referred to

the organisation of two peer-learning activities during this phase, including one linked to the WG on FV meeting and one additional standalone PLA. The United Kingdom representative noted that, following the completion of data collection, the second half of 2026 would focus on data cleaning, checking and validation, to be carried out in cooperation with national operators. He explained that data processing and the preparation of initial analytical outputs would follow, allowing for further peer-learning activities and internal testing of the results. He indicated that a first draft of the monitoring report would be prepared towards the end of 2026, in line with the BFUG calendar. The United Kingdom representative further informed participants that the project foresees the organisation of an international conference towards the end of the project, aimed at promoting fundamental values in higher education and disseminating the results of the monitoring exercise. He underlined the broader significance of the initiative in positioning the EHEA as a reference point for the protection and promotion of fundamental values.

The ETUCE representative asked how the background reports informing the de facto component of the monitoring framework would be identified and collected, and whether stakeholders could support this process in any way. The United Kingdom representative confirmed that stakeholders could support the identification of background reports for the de facto component and explained that the identification of relevant sources would require consultation between national operators and the project team.

Sjur Bergan raised a question regarding the articulation between the international conference and the next Ministerial Conference, in terms of timing, participation and location. He suggested that the conference could potentially contribute to the Ministerial Conference by raising the profile of fundamental values and supporting their inclusion on the political agenda, while noting that this would require further reflection. The Romanian Co-chair responded that the organisation, timing and format of the international conference would be discussed and agreed during the implementation of the project, with the aim of maximising its impact in promoting the results.

The Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring agreed that postponing the training of national operators to January 2026 would be advisable. He explained that, from the perspective of the BPIR, the questionnaire to public authorities and BFUG members was planned to be launched in mid-February 2026. He noted that, given the reduced number of indicators, the aim is to complete both data collection and data cleaning by the summer of 2026, acknowledging that this would involve iterative exchanges with countries to clarify and validate references, including on legislative provisions. He further explained that this timeline would allow narrative texts to be drafted over the summer of 2026, enabling the drafting of the BPIR to start as early as possible in the autumn of 2026, in line with preparations for the Ministerial Communiqué. He concluded that, overall, the timelines of the BPIR and the NewFAV2 project appeared to be well aligned, even if the BPIR data collection might start slightly earlier, with convergence expected as the processes progress. The

Eurydice Co-chair also highlighted the importance of maintaining direct communication with countries during the data cleaning phase and expressed appreciation for the support of the EHEA Secretariat in facilitating communication with BFUG members.

The European Commission representative welcomed the presentation and commended the robustness of the proposed planning. She emphasised the importance of maintaining February 2027 as the target date for the submission of the substantive content of the final report. She further expressed interest in the forthcoming discussions on the organisation of the international conference and invited early engagement on any logistical or strategic support that might be required. She underlined the importance of timely planning and reiterated the Commission's openness to provide assistance as needed.

The Romanian Co-chair recalled that the WG on Monitoring had invited each working structure to designate responsibility for drafting its respective narrative contribution. The WG agreed to mandate this task to the Co-chairs, with the draft text to be shared with the WG on FV for review prior to its submission to the WG on Monitoring.

## **6. Presentation and discussion: National Operators - selection and training process**

### **Documents:**

- [WG\\_FV\\_3\\_DK\\_LI\\_6\\_2\\_NO\\_selection\\_and\\_training\\_process](#)

The Romanian Co-chair introduced the agenda item by outlining the background and rationale for the selection of National Operators within the NewFAV2 project. He explained that the profile and responsibilities of National Operators, including their role in pre-filling the questionnaires and supporting data collection activities, had been presented to the BFUG as part of the monitoring framework. Following the approval of the project, the project team compiled an initial list of proposed National Operators, to be agreed with the BFUG in line with the discussions at the previous BFUG meeting. He explained that the list was first shared with the WG on FV, subsequently revised in light of feedback, and then submitted to the BFUG Board, in accordance with established procedures.

The Romanian Co-chair emphasised that BFUG members can propose alternative candidates and recalled that National Operators act as technical instruments for data collection, thus not expected to provide analytical or normative assessments. He underlined that consultation with BFUG members on the list of National Operators was intended precisely to safeguard the objectivity and credibility of the process. Turning to the current state of play, the Romanian Co-chair briefed participants on the status of the consultation, noting that, at the time of the meeting, 25 BFUG

members had not yet responded. He acknowledged that uneven response rates are a recurrent challenge within the BFUG and recalled similar difficulties experienced in previous monitoring exercises, including in the BPIR data collection process. In this context, he explained that the proactive approach of proposing an initial list of National Operators was intended to ensure continuity and progress of the project, as an open call would likely have resulted in a significantly lower response rate.

The Austrian representative asked how the proposed National Operators had been identified. He explained that the issue had been discussed extensively in their ministry and noted that, in their view, National Operators should ideally have a stronger legal background, given the nature of the monitoring exercise. The Romanian Co-chair responded that, when designing the role of National Operators, it had not been envisaged that they would necessarily have a legal background. He underlined that in-depth knowledge of the higher education system and its policies is equally important, noting that legal experts do not always have a comprehensive understanding of higher education governance, internationalisation or policy dynamics. He acknowledged that a combined legal and policy background could be beneficial, but stressed that such profiles are difficult to find in practice. For this reason, the agreed approach was to identify National Operators with strong knowledge of the higher education system, without expecting them to be experts in every fundamental value or policy area. With regard to the identification of candidates, he explained that the initial list was based on existing professional cooperation and experience from previous mapping and monitoring exercises.

The Austrian representative raised a follow-up question regarding the selection of National Operators, asking what would happen in cases where the proposed National Operators decline the role or indicate that they do not have sufficient time to undertake the tasks foreseen. In response, the Romanian Co-chair explained that the list of proposed National Operators had been conceived with flexibility in mind. He clarified that, for some countries, more than one candidate had been proposed where multiple suitable contacts were known, while in other cases only one candidate had been identified, reflecting the available knowledge at the time. He stressed that, ultimately, only one National Operator would be selected per country. He further explained that, in cases where a proposed National Operator declines the role or is unable to commit the necessary time, an alternative candidate would need to be identified.

The HoS underlined the need to clarify the situation regarding National Operators following the Working Group meeting and to communicate clearly with the BFUG thereafter. The Romanian Co-Chair explained that he had intentionally refrained from engaging further with the BFUG on this matter prior to the meeting, in order to allow the WG on FV to discuss the issue collectively. He also cautioned that postponing further clarification until a future BFUG discussion would likely result in additional delays to the overall timeline.

Answering a question from ESU, the Romanian Co-chair explained that the selection of student unions would follow the same approach applied to other stakeholder organisations. He clarified that, in the case of students, the questionnaire would be sent to national unions that are members of ESU. He further explained that national operators would be responsible for contacting the relevant stakeholder organisations at national level, including national student unions.

The European Commission representative underlined the importance of considering the implications of the confirmation process for the training of National Operators, noting that delays or staggered confirmations might require mitigation measures such as additional or recorded training sessions to ensure consistency and quality. The Romanian Co-chair confirmed that the project team had already begun internal discussions on the possibility of organising training in more than one wave or through alternative formats. He stressed that all efforts would be made to avoid unnecessary delays, given the tight overall timeline and the fixed deadline of February 2027 for the submission of the report content.

The United Kingdom representative, speaking in his capacity as an expert of the NewFAV2 project, presented the proposed approach for the training and engagement of National Operators and outlined their role in the data collection process. The training is designed to provide National Operators with a clear understanding of the policy and governance context of the Bologna Process and the monitoring exercise, their specific tasks and responsibilities, and the practical use of the monitoring tool and data collection platform. The programme would combine presentations with hands-on exercises, including a mock data collection assignment to be completed between sessions, followed by group discussions to identify challenges and lessons learned.

The UK representative supported the suggestion to organise the training for National Operators in two waves, noting that this would accommodate availability constraints. He expressed reservations about relying on recorded training sessions, arguing that this would undermine both the interactive nature and the overall value of the training, as well as the effectiveness of the practical assignments.

The Norwegian representative enquired whether additional mechanisms were envisaged to ensure ongoing dialogue between National Operators, public authorities and other relevant stakeholders, including through peer-learning activities or other forms of structured engagement. In response, the UK representative explained that follow-up with National Operators would be ensured through two main mechanisms. He noted that National Operators would be involved in one or two peer-learning activities, while clarifying that these activities are not intended solely for their capacity-building but also serve broader dissemination and exchange purposes. In addition, he explained that the project team would have a direct coordination and supervisory role, acting as a support structure for National Operators and maintaining regular contact to address challenges

encountered in interactions with public authorities or stakeholders and to monitor progress. The Romanian Co-chair further explained that a dedicated content team within the project would maintain regular contact with National Operators, supported by the project coordination team. He further noted that additional support could be sought, where necessary, from Eurydice and the EHEA Secretariat, including for facilitating communication with public authorities.

The German representative suggested considering a more condensed and flexible approach, such as organising two half-day sessions spread over different weeks, with time in between for completing the practical assignment. He noted that, in some cases, National Operators may be senior staff members, for whom a full two-day commitment could be challenging.

The Romanian Co-chair indicated that, in his exchanges within the BFUG, he would underline that the approach presented had been discussed and agreed within the WG on FV, in line with established Bologna Process working methods. He voiced cautious optimism that, once it is clearly understood that BFUG members retain the decisive role in the nomination of National Operators and in the validation of the questionnaires, concerns would be alleviated.

## 7. Presentation of the communication strategy

### Documents:

- [WG\\_FV\\_3\\_DK\\_LI\\_7\\_FV\\_Communication\\_strategy](#)

The Romanian Co-chair presented the draft communication strategy and outlined its strategic objectives: (i) raising awareness among EHEA stakeholders; (ii) promoting good practices in the implementation of fundamental values; (iii) disseminating existing evidence, results and resources on fundamental values, including relevant monitoring tools and reports developed beyond the Bologna Process; and (iv) encouraging collaboration and engagement through activities and events that support a shared understanding and peer learning. With regard to target audiences, he proposed a primary focus on academic communities - students, staff, researchers and higher education professionals - using accessible and interactive formats. He added that outreach should also extend to institutions and practitioners, as well as to the broader public, recognising the wider societal relevance of fundamental values.

He outlined a range of communication instruments, including blog posts, visualisations and interactive quizzes, short explanatory videos on the six fundamental values, and curated dissemination of relevant resources and monitoring tools, such as existing reports on academic freedom or institutional autonomy and previous BPIR outputs. He emphasised the importance of

providing a “one-stop” reference point where stakeholders can easily access structured information and further reading.

A central element of the strategy is the development of a dedicated online platform to host and structure these resources. The Romanian Co-chair proposed that this platform be developed as a subdomain of the EHEA website, in order to ensure visibility and institutional legitimacy. He explained that this proposal had already been raised within the BFUG Board and would be brought to the BFUG for formal endorsement, particularly as the platform would also host the public consultation component of the monitoring process (open platform for de facto inputs). He further highlighted the intention to use existing EHEA communication channels in a proportionate manner, including the EHEA website, LinkedIn and other social media, as well as the EHEA Newsletter, by regularly contributing content on fundamental values without overburdening the Secretariat’s communication capacity.

The Romanian Co-chair also presented a proof of concept for using AI-supported tools to make content on fundamental values more accessible, stressing that all such content would be subject to human review for accuracy. Finally, he linked the communication strategy to the broader project and Working Group activity plan, including peer-learning activities and workshops, and underlined the intention to design future events in ways that increase accessibility and participation, notably through stronger online formats and wider promotion via EHEA channels.

The United Kingdom representative welcomed the inclusion of strategic partnerships in the communication strategy and suggested expanding this dimension. He observed that a range of organisations and initiatives already promote EHEA fundamental values through conferences, seminars and capacity-building activities, both within and beyond the EHEA. He proposed that the WG on FV and the NewFAV2 project could systematically track and, where appropriate, promote such initiatives, as well as explore informal cooperation with organisations beyond the formal project partners, without necessarily establishing formal partnerships. The Romanian Co-chair welcomed the suggestion, noting that broader cooperation had been envisaged. He underlined, however, the need for caution in formally designating partner organisations, given potential concerns within the BFUG. As an alternative, he suggested focusing on the development of open-access resources on fundamental values (such as presentation materials or explanatory content) that could be freely used by interested organisations and practitioners, thereby supporting wider dissemination while avoiding procedural or political complications.

Sjur Bergan cautioned against formal labels or certification of partner organisations, while supporting broader and informal promotion of fundamental values. He noted growing interest from countries beyond the EHEA and suggested informal engagement with relevant programmes and organisations without implying official endorsement. He also pointed out the limited visibility of

fundamental values on the current EHEA website and suggested considering interim solutions. Finally, he stressed that any simplified explanatory materials should be carefully balanced to avoid loss of nuance.

The German representative welcomed the communication strategy and expressed DAAD's willingness to support dissemination efforts. He suggested leveraging Erasmus+ structures, including National Agencies and Erasmus offices in partner countries (NEOs), as potential channels to inform higher education institutions about the project. He noted that the European Commission could play a facilitating role in encouraging such outreach.

The Latvian representative welcomed the use of AI-assisted tools and recommended clearly labelling any AI-generated content, both for transparency and as a good practice example for students in relation to academic integrity. The ETUCE representative suggested exploring the development of a dedicated chatbot on fundamental values or academic integrity, as an interactive learning tool drawing on the project's knowledge base.

The United Kingdom representative highlighted the potential impact of small but targeted initiatives, drawing on examples such as awards, training programmes and courses that have successfully raised awareness of fundamental values. He encouraged the Working Group to pay attention not only to dissemination, but also to teaching and training activities already taking place across Europe, and to consider how these could be supported or connected. Sjur Bergan added that several organisations, including Eurodoc, have already organised courses and webinars on fundamental values, and suggested identifying suitable platforms (e.g. webinars, podcasts, conferences) to reach diverse audiences, while being mindful of capacity constraints.

The Romanian Co-chair presented a proof-of-concept video on academic freedom, generated with the support of artificial intelligence, as an example of how AI-assisted tools could be used to communicate fundamental values in a more accessible format. The WG members welcomed the video, while suggesting to consider shorter video formats, careful use of AI-generated content and a clearer link between the societal benefits of academic research and the erosion of academic freedom.

The Romanian Co-chair clarified that the video had been produced rapidly as a proof of concept and should not be assessed in terms of creativity or final quality. He reiterated that any future use would involve substantial refinement and expert review.

The Latvian representative welcomed the initiative and suggested that future iterations could more explicitly address freedom of communication for academics, including the right to express critical views both within and beyond higher education institutions, as an essential dimension of academic freedom. The Maltese representative considered the video effective as a visual communication tool

and underlined the importance of clarifying the intended target audience, noting that different levels of detail may be required for different audiences. ESU representative observed that the format closely resembles educational video content commonly used by students, such as online crash courses, and considered it well aligned with students' learning habits and expectations.

The Romanian Co-chair concluded by thanking participants for their feedback. He noted that future videos could be further edited, contextualised and adapted, including through clearer source attribution and audience-specific adjustments, and that the discussion would be continued the following day.

## **8. Wrap-up of the day and practical info for Day 2**

The Romanian Co-chair thanked participants for the constructive discussions held during the day. He noted that the Working Group had reached a shared understanding on the key issues related to the monitoring of fundamental values and expressed confidence that a similarly clear direction would be achieved by the end of the second day with regard to communication and promotional activities. He then provided practical information regarding Day 2 of the meeting, noting that the agenda would start with a presentation of the LimeSurvey questionnaire and the dedicated website, followed by parallel discussion sessions on concrete communication instruments and promotional activities.

### **End of Day 1**

### **Start of Day 2**

## **9. Presentation of the draft data collection platform for the monitoring of FV**

The Romanian Co-chair presented the draft website developed within the NewFAV2 project, stressing that it was showcased strictly as a proof of concept focused on possible instruments rather than on finalised content. He underlined that the platform should be understood as an exploratory exercise, intended to support discussion within the Working Group on whether such a tool is needed and, if so, which components would be most useful. Furthermore, he explained that the website was conceived as a central access point for information related to fundamental values in the EHEA, bringing together explanatory content, resources, communication materials and monitoring-related information in a structured and accessible format. From the homepage, users can navigate to dedicated pages for each of the six fundamental values, based on the agreed statements. These pages include simplified explanations aimed at a wider audience, alongside

references to key documents and external resources, such as ministerial communiqués, statements and existing monitoring tools.

The Romanian Co-chair further outlined a central resources section, designed as a searchable and tag-based database aggregating materials related to fundamental values. These include policy documents, research outputs, learning materials, promotional content and AI-supported tools. Resources could be accessed either through individual fundamental value pages or directly through the database, allowing flexible navigation. He also presented an events section, envisaged as a space to list relevant past and future initiatives related to fundamental values, such as conferences, peer-learning activities, workshops and webinars, with the aim of promoting visibility and engagement. In addition, the platform includes a video section, where short explanatory videos on fundamental values could be hosted, as well as interactive elements such as quizzes, designed as engagement and awareness-raising tools rather than assessment instruments.

The Maltese representative welcomed the initiative and described the proposed website and related instruments as valuable and commendable. At the same time, she stressed the importance of sustainability, underlining that such tools should not risk becoming outdated or abandoned over time. In response, the Romanian Co-chair explained that, during the lifetime of the NewFAV2 project, responsibility for updating and maintaining the website would rest with the project team, with input from the Working Group. He recalled that the question of what happens after the end of the project had already been discussed and clarified that, in his view, the materials developed could later be handed over to the EHEA Secretariat, depending on decisions taken by the BFUG regarding future working structures.

Sjur Bergan observed that it had long been a paradox that, while a Working Group on Fundamental Values exists, the topic itself is not clearly visible as a thematic area on the current EHEA website. In this context, he considered the proposed platform a very positive development. He agreed with the concern regarding sustainability and expressed the hope that maintaining such content could become part of the remit of future EHEA Secretariats. He highlighted the particular importance of the resources section and suggested that a reasonable ambition would be for the platform to become the main reference point for information on the fundamental values of higher education within the EHEA. At the same time, he noted that it might be useful to distinguish clearly between events and resources originating from the Bologna Process and those produced by external organisations. The Romanian Co-chair agreed on the need to clearly distinguish between Bologna-related resources and external initiatives. He explained that this concern was one of the reasons why the website had initially been conceived as a project website rather than an official EHEA platform. He outlined alternative options, including the possibility of later transferring essential resources to the EHEA website if the BFUG considered the current approach excessive, while using the project website as a way to gather and structure information during the project's lifetime.

The ETUCE representative asked whether the website would be accessible to Working Group members while still under construction, noting that it would be useful to explore it in more detail. She also asked whether the AI-generated videos could be accessed online. The Romanian Co-chair confirmed that access could be extended to the Working Group through shared files that allow offline exploration.

The European Commission representative welcomed the work and described the platform as professional and well structured. She expressed interest in accessing the HTML version and asked about the contact section of the website. The Romanian Co-chair confirmed that the platform includes a general contact form linked to the project and added that a frequently asked questions section was also foreseen, although it had not yet been reviewed in detail.

The European Commission representative further commented on logistical aspects, particularly continuity after the project ends. She asked for the EHEA Secretariat's perspective.

The UK representative raised a clarifying question regarding ownership of the website. He asked whether it should be understood as a project website, a Working Group website or part of the EHEA Secretariat's infrastructure, noting that this distinction has implications for independence, governance and the use of separate communication channels. The Romanian Co-chair clarified that the website should be understood as a project website developed with European Commission funding to support the work of the Working Group. He explained that, while the project has a degree of operational independence, its purpose is to serve the Working Group's mandate, and that the website could be discontinued if the Working Group did not consider it useful.

The German representative welcomed the effort and stressed the importance of sustainability, recommending that the focus should be placed on the resources section and on ensuring that content remains accessible and up to date after the end of the project. He suggested that dynamic elements such as events could be prioritised during the project lifetime, while longer-term integration into existing channels, such as established YouTube accounts, could support sustainability.

The HoS informed participants that work was already underway on a new EHEA website, which would include a dedicated section on fundamental values linked to statements, definitions and Working Group outputs. He explained that a clear choice would need to be made regarding the status of the proposed website: either as a project website, in which case the Secretariat would not be responsible for its maintenance, or as an integrated part of the EHEA website, which would imply institutional BFUG ownership and sustainability. He cautioned against ambiguous solutions and argued that, from a sustainability perspective, integration within the EHEA website would be

preferable. He also explained existing procedures for posting external events on the EHEA website and suggested that similar principles could apply to fundamental values resources, including clear labelling of content not formally endorsed by the BFUG.

The European Commission representative welcomed these clarifications and reiterated that, during the lifetime of the project, it would be acceptable for the website to exist as a project tool linked to the EHEA website. However, she cautioned against the risk of creating a “ghost” project website once the project ends and expressed the view that, if the work is not continued, resources should be transferred to the EHEA website and the project website closed. She emphasised that final decisions could be taken once the quality and usefulness of the content were clearer.

In response, the Romanian Co-chair summarised the discussion and proposed a way forward: the website would be clearly positioned as a project website for the duration of the NewFAV2 project, with a defined handover process at the end of the project, whereby relevant resources would be transferred to the EHEA website. He suggested that the project website could then redirect users to the official EHEA fundamental values section. He asked participants whether this approach seemed reasonable, and noted general agreement.

The Austrian representative asked when the website was expected to go online. The Romanian Co-chair replied that the launch was foreseen for January or February of the following year, depending on the time needed to review content. He explained that the platform could be launched progressively, with some sections activated later, and noted that the timing could align with the launch of the questionnaire. Sjur Bergan suggested that, if the website would be launched around that time, it might be possible to present it as a concrete achievement of the Working Group at the upcoming Ministerial Conference, in order to raise the visibility of fundamental values.

The United Kingdom representative returned to the question of function, stressing the importance of clearly defining the purpose of the website. He argued that clarity on whether the platform is primarily a dissemination tool, a peer-learning instrument or something more would help avoid confusion and allow for meaningful evaluation of its success. In response, the Romanian Co-chair clarified that the website should be seen as a central tool for fulfilling the Working Group’s mandate to promote a common understanding of fundamental values across the EHEA. He explained that, beyond dissemination, the platform could support peer learning and provide open educational resources for academic communities, including teachers addressing issues such as academic integrity.

The Romanian Co-chair presented an example of the questionnaire to be used for the collection of data from public authorities within the Fundamental Values monitoring exercise, as implemented on the LimeSurvey platform. He explained that public authorities would receive a personalised,

country-specific LimeSurvey link that would already be pre-filled with the information collected by the National Operators. Upon accessing the link, the public authority would see that the relevant respondent category (public authority) is already selected and that proposed answers and references are pre-entered. Their role would be to review, validate, amend or supplement this information as necessary. In addition to the online questionnaire, the Romanian Co-chair explained that public authorities may also receive an Excel version of the questionnaire, containing all questions and the pre-filled responses. He added that the same approach would apply, as appropriate, to national stakeholders.

The European Commission representative underlined the importance of clearly explaining the pre-filling process in order to avoid confusion for respondents. The Romanian Co-chair agreed and confirmed that this would be explicitly addressed both in the introductory email and in the introductory text of the survey itself.

## 10. Discussion on the promotional activities and materials

Participants were divided into two parallel discussion groups to further reflect on possible promotional activities and materials. The discussions were structured around three guiding questions:

- How could we better promote the common understanding of FV by the academic communities? How can we better engage stakeholders?
- How could we use the upcoming PLAs towards promoting FV?
- How could we incentivize stakeholders to improve the de facto outlook at national level?

The Romanian Co-chair reported that the discussions in the first group focused on the uneven level of awareness and understanding of the six fundamental values within academic communities. Participants noted that, in practice, some fundamental values are far better known and recognised than others. Academic freedom, institutional autonomy and academic integrity were identified as relatively well understood, while student and staff participation, as well as public responsibility for and of higher education, were seen as significantly less visible and less clearly understood by the wider academic community and public authorities. Against this background, the group emphasised the need for targeted communication approaches that prioritise those fundamental values which are currently less known. Participants stressed the importance of adapting messages to different target groups, including students, academic staff, institutional leaders, public authorities and policy support staff, recognising that awareness, interests and entry points differ significantly across these audiences.

The Romanian Co-chair further reported that participants discussed concrete instruments to support promotion and awareness-raising. One such proposal was the development of reusable presentation materials, such as a slide deck on fundamental values, which could be used by members of the Working Group and BFUG representatives to present and explain fundamental values within their ministries, institutions or academic communities. In addition, the group highlighted the potential role of the Working Group as a resource pool for external events, both by encouraging members to represent and present fundamental values at relevant conferences and by proactively connecting organisers of events with suitable speakers from within the Working Group.

With regard to peer-learning activities, the group discussed how upcoming PLAs could be more strategically used to promote fundamental values. Participants underlined the value of focusing future PLAs on less visible fundamental values. It was suggested that future PLAs should aim for wider accessibility, including through online participation. The distinction between peer-learning activities and webinars was discussed, with the understanding that, for the purposes of outreach and awareness-raising, a more open and webinar-like format could be acceptable, provided that some level of interaction is preserved where possible.

The Romanian Co-chair concluded by noting that the group broadly agreed on the importance of planning future PLAs strategically, both in terms of thematic focus and target audiences, and of using them as key instruments for promoting a common understanding of fundamental values across the EHEA. Based on the discussions, he proposed that the second PLA focus on public responsibility of higher education, the third on student and staff participation, and the fourth on public responsibility for higher education.

The Maltese Co-chair reported that the discussions in the second group focused primarily on the notion of a common understanding of fundamental values and questioned the extent to which such an understanding currently exists across the EHEA. Participants observed that fundamental values are not necessarily interpreted or understood in the same way across countries, institutions or stakeholder groups. This highlighted the need to start from a more basic level of awareness-raising, ensuring that fundamental values are recognised as shared commitments rather than abstract or assumed principles.

From a promotional perspective, the group discussed the importance of engaging a wide range of organisations and stakeholders in order to improve understanding and ownership of fundamental values. This included outreach to academic communities, students and representative bodies, as well as cooperation with other organisations. Participants emphasised the value of mutual visibility, both by inviting such organisations to participate in EHEA-related activities and by seeking opportunities to present and promote fundamental values within external events and networks.

The Maltese Co-chair further reported that the group explored more innovative promotional ideas. Among these was the concept of developing a digital application that could present how fundamental values are understood or implemented across different countries, allowing users to explore national perspectives in an accessible way. Another idea discussed was the creation of “fundamental values ambassadors”, namely individuals in academic or leadership positions who would actively promote and embody EHEA fundamental values within their institutions and professional communities, thereby contributing to increased awareness and cultural change.

With regard to peer-learning activities, participants also noted that PLAs do not necessarily need to rely solely on presentations, but could include discussions, papers or other interactive formats aimed at deepening understanding and stimulating debate.

Finally, the Maltese Co-chair reported that the group discussed possible ways of incentivising improvements in the de facto implementation of fundamental values at national level. Rather than formal enforcement mechanisms, the emphasis was placed on encouragement and peer influence, for example by engaging national rectors’ conferences, student unions and other representative bodies to promote awareness and foster commitment within their constituencies.

## **11. Next steps - timeline and objectives**

## **12. Any other business and closing remarks**

The Romanian Co-chair introduced the discussion on next steps, timelines and objectives by thanking the EHEA Secretariat for its support in the organisation of both the Peer Learning Activity and the Working Group meeting. He then outlined the key decisions and forthcoming milestones.

With regard to the next meeting, it was proposed to organise the next meeting over two consecutive weekdays, on 24–25 February, with 24 February dedicated to a full-day PLA and 25 February to a full-day meeting of the WG on Fundamental Values.

The Romanian Co-chair confirmed that the meeting would be organised in person. As no members had expressed interest in hosting the event, it was agreed that Romania would host it again in Bucharest. He explained that, while the Working Group meeting would be fully face-to-face, the PLA would be organised in a hybrid format, allowing online participation. However, he cautioned that interaction for online participants would necessarily be limited if participation numbers were high, particularly during plenary PLA sessions.

Furthermore, the Romanian Co-chair proposed that the second PLA focus on public responsibility of higher education, subject to further consultation with EUA and EURASHE, which were not

present at the meeting. He underlined the importance of involving these organisations, both for content and for outreach. In response to a suggestion from the United Kingdom representative, he agreed that co-organisation with EUA and EURASHE, as well as the involvement of high-profile speakers, could significantly increase visibility and participation, and committed to pursuing this approach.

He then outlined the broader PLA calendar foreseen for the rest of the project. In addition to the February PLA and Working Group meeting, a standalone PLA on student and staff participation would be organised by ESU in Brussels, with the date to be agreed following a consultation, noting the accessibility of Brussels for participants. A further PLA in autumn would focus on the initial results of the monitoring exercise, while another PLA, organised in conjunction with a Working Group meeting, would most likely take place in Malta, on the public responsibility for higher education.

The Romanian Co-chair further addressed next procedural steps related to monitoring. He indicated that the Secretariat would be asked to send an email to the BFUG with updated statistics on the confirmation of National Operators, requesting clarification from remaining members by the end of the month. He explained that, at the upcoming BFUG meeting in December, he would present the state of play regarding the monitoring of fundamental values, clearly distinguishing between the BPIR data collection and the NewFAV<sub>2</sub> project. He outlined that the agreed de jure indicators would be collected through the BPIR mechanism, while additional indicators from the broader monitoring framework would be collected through the project. He stressed that National Operators would be contracted within the project and that the resulting monitoring report would be submitted first to the Working Group and subsequently to the BFUG for comment. He underlined that, while the BFUG would retain full autonomy regarding endorsement and reference in the Ministerial Communiqué, the project nevertheless has a responsibility to deliver a monitoring report as agreed.

With regard to the project website, the Romanian Co-chair recalled the earlier discussion and noted that, for the purpose of the public consultation of academic communities, the project website would remain separate, while being promoted through the EHEA website, for example via a banner or direct link. He expressed the request that the Secretariat would support dissemination of the consultation through EHEA channels at the relevant stage. The United Kingdom representative supported this approach, suggesting a separate project website permanently linked from the EHEA fundamental values pages in order to maximise visibility without implying institutional hosting.

In his concluding remarks on next steps, the Romanian Co-chair encouraged members of the Working Group to actively engage with their national BFUG representatives in order to support forthcoming discussions on fundamental values within the BFUG meeting.

Under Any Other Business, the ESU representative drew attention to serious concerns regarding the situation in Serbia, highlighting alleged breaches of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and student participation, including reports of police intervention in universities and harassment of students. She urged EHEA members to take note of the situation and consider accountability mechanisms.

The Maltese Co-chair thanked participants for the constructive discussions, expressing appreciation for the work undertaken within the Working Group.

In closing, the Romanian Co-chair thanked all participants for their engagement, both online and in person. He expressed particular gratitude to the EHEA Secretariat and colleagues who had supported the organisation of the meeting. He concluded by thanking all participants for their commitment and formally closed the meeting.

The meeting ended at 12:48 RO time.