

Minutes of the 4th Working Group on Fundamental Values meeting Hybrid (Bucharest, Romania), 25th of February 2026

List of participants

Nr.	Name	Country / Organisation
1	Lukas Dorfegger	Austria (online)
2	Ulrike Najar	Austria (online)
3	Monika Steinel	EUA
4	Jelena Drca	Council of Europe (online)
5	Josipa Dragičević	Croatia
6	Karin Åmossa	Education International - ETUCE
7	Camille Odent	European Commission
8	Bálint Koós	ESU
9	Tim Maschuw	Germany (online)
10	Flora Megyeri	Hungary
11	Sharon McGreevy	Ireland
12	Andris Teikmanis	Latvia
13	Christiane Beck	Malta (Co-chair)
14	Maria Bołtruszko	Poland (online)
15	Tomasz Pietrzykowski	Poland (online)
16	Maria Carla Proença	Portugal (online)
17	Cezar Hâj	Romania (Co-chair)
18	Monica Cavalli	San Marino
19	Esther Esteban	Spain
20	Liviu Matei	United Kingdom (online)
21	Horia-Șerban Onița	EHEA Secretariat (HoS)
22	Oana Alexandra Țînțar	EHEA Secretariat
23	David Crosier	Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process (guest, online)

Nr.	Name	Country / Organisation
24	Cristina Fiț	NewFAV2 project (guest)
25	Daniela Crăciun	NewFAV2 project (guest)
26	Elizaveta Potapova	NewFAV2 project (guest)
27	Giulia D'Aquila	NewFAV2 project (guest, online)

Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and North Macedonia were absent. Norway and Türkiye sent their apologies.

1. Welcome and introduction from the WG Co-chairs

1.1. Adoption of the agenda

1.2. Acknowledgement of the 3rd WG on FV meeting minutes

1.3. Tour de table

Documents: [WG FV 4 CY NO 1 Draft Agenda 03.02.2026](#)

The Romanian Co-chair opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and presenting the draft agenda. As the participants did not raise any issues, the agenda was adopted as proposed. The Romanian Co-chair invited participants to take note of the minutes of the 3rd WG on Fundamental Values meeting, which had been circulated to members in their final form and uploaded on the EHEA website.

The new Maltese Co-chair introduced herself and welcomed the participants.

2. Updates from the EHEA Secretariat regarding the activity of the other BFUG WS and feedback from the 3rd meeting of the WG on Fundamental Values

Documents:

- [WG FV 4 CY NO 2 1 Updates EHEA Secretariat](#)
- [WG FV 4 CY NO 2 2 Feedback 3rd WG meeting](#)

The Head of the EHEA Secretariat provided an update on recent developments within the BFUG working structures and on the implementation of the BFUG Work Programme. He informed participants that since the previous meeting of the Working Group on Fundamental Values, the BFUG had held a meeting in Copenhagen and a BFUG Board meeting in Oslo. The next BFUG meeting, organised by Cyprus, was scheduled to take place in the coming weeks, followed by a BFUG meeting planned for November in Ireland.

The HoS briefly presented the ongoing work of the different BFUG working structures. He noted that the Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process had finalised the list of indicators and the survey for the data collection process for the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2027. The pre-filled questionnaires had started to be circulated to countries, and the first draft of the report was expected to be presented at the BFUG meeting in Ireland. He also referred to the work of the Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility, which was currently preparing a document on common terminology related to internationalisation and mobility as part of a broader Action Plan. In this context, discussions were also ongoing regarding mobility targets, the definition of mobility and the development of internationalisation strategies within the EHEA and beyond.

In addition, he informed participants that several key Bologna Process policy documents were currently under revision. These included the ECTS Users' Guide and the revised Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG), and the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. Furthermore, he noted that the Drafting Committee responsible for preparing the next Ministerial Communiqué had started its work in January, with the first draft expected to be available in autumn.

Finally, the HoS encouraged participants to follow developments related to the Bologna Process through the EHEA newsletter and invited members to contribute with examples of national or institutional initiatives supporting the implementation of the Bologna commitments. He also presented the new EHEA website, which was expected to be launched shortly, noting that it would include updated information on Bologna Process policies, working structures and resources, including a dedicated section on fundamental values.

The EHEA Secretariat member briefly presented the feedback report from the 3rd WG on Fundamental Values meeting, noting the positive feedback received.

3. Updates from the XCVII BFUG meeting in Copenhagen and the XCVIII BFUG Board meeting in Oslo - Romanian Co-chair of the WG on FV

Documents: [WG FV 4 CY NO 3 Updates BFUG Board meeting](#)

The Romanian Co-chair provided an update on the discussions held at the XCVII BFUG meeting in Copenhagen and the XCVIII BFUG Board meeting in Oslo.

Regarding the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen, he informed participants that he had presented the current status of the work carried out within the WG on FV, shortly after the previous WG meeting. He noted that the overall approach had been clarified during the discussions, including the role of national operators in the monitoring process. In particular, he explained that national operators would be responsible for pre-filling the questionnaires, while BFUG members would retain the possibility to review and amend the responses. During the discussions, it was also emphasised the need to establish a clear pathway for the future monitoring of fundamental values, which informed the inclusion of a dedicated discussion on this topic in the current meeting.

With regard to the BFUG Board meeting in Oslo, the Romanian Co-chair presented updates on the progress of the monitoring process, including the selection of national operators and the launch of their training sessions. He also outlined the planned timeline for the monitoring activities and provided information on communication and promotion efforts related to the project, including the development of the fundamentalvalues.info website. He informed participants that a public consultation would be organised through the project website, and that efforts would be made to ensure its visibility, including through the EHEA website and through promotion at national level by BFUG members.

During the discussions at the BFUG Board meeting, clarifications were also provided regarding the outputs of the monitoring process. In particular, he noted that the exercise would result in a report similar in format to the BPIR, rather than individual national reports. He further clarified that, as the monitoring exercise is supported through a project, a report would be produced as part of the project deliverables, independently of any subsequent formal endorsement by the BFUG.

Finally, the Romanian Co-chair referred to recent exchanges with the WG on Monitoring, noting that the questions related to fundamental values to be included in the BPIR 2027 had been reviewed and agreed. He also recalled that the WG on FV would contribute to the drafting of the corresponding narrative section of the report.

4. Updates from the WG on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process regarding the data collection process for the BPIR 2027

Documents: [WG FV 4 CY NO 4 Updates WG Monitoring](#)

The Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process provided an update on the data collection process for the BPIR 2027.

He recalled that the structure of the BPIR had been agreed at the BFUG meeting in Warsaw, with the report comprising two main components: indicators reflecting policy developments aligned with the priorities of the Tirana Communiqué, and narrative texts prepared by the BFUG working structures, presenting ongoing work supporting implementation across thematic areas. He noted that this approach was also intended to better reflect European-level efforts and to address the need to streamline the number of indicators, thereby improving the overall quality and manageability of data collection.

He further explained that each working structure would nominate an author responsible for drafting the narrative text for its respective chapter, with drafting expected to take place over the summer of 2026. An editor would ensure coherence in terms of style and structure across chapters, while responsibility for content would remain with the working structures.

With regard to fundamental values, he informed participants that the questionnaire includes a set of questions covering de jure aspects, aligned with the methodology of the NewFAV2 project. He noted that, where possible, pre-filled answers from the previous data collection round had

been included to facilitate completion, while acknowledging that this was not feasible for questions that had been substantially reformulated.

He also clarified that the questionnaires had been made available to national operators involved in the NewFAV₂ project and that the data collected would be shared with the project once the responses had been verified and cleaned. The data validation phase is expected to take place between May and July 2026.

Finally, the Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring presented the timeline for the data collection and reporting process. The questionnaire was launched at the end of February 2026, with a deadline for completion set for 4 May. This will be followed by a data checking and cleaning phase (May-July), after which drafting of the report will intensify, including the preparation of narrative texts over the summer and the development of a first draft of the BPIR ahead of the BFUG meeting in Ireland in autumn 2026.

Elizaveta Potapova, NewFAV₂ project expert, raised a question regarding the two-way use of data, noting that while the NewFAV₂ project would benefit from BPIR data, it was unclear to what extent data collected through the project would inform the BPIR. In response, the Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring clarified that the BPIR would rely on its own data collection to inform the indicators included in the report. He underlined that the BPIR would focus on a limited set of de jure indicators, aiming to present a concise state of play, and would not go into the same level of depth as the NewFAV₂ project. However, any inconsistencies or issues identified through the project could be used to further verify and improve the accuracy of the data collected for the BPIR.

The Romanian Co-chair further noted that, beyond indicators, the work of the WG on FV would also feed into the BPIR through the narrative text. In this context, he raised a question regarding the timeline for the first draft of the BPIR. The Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring confirmed that the intention is to present a first draft of the report at the BFUG meeting in autumn 2026, in order to support the preparation of the next Ministerial Communiqué. In light of the timeline for submitting narrative texts, the Romanian Co-chair highlighted that the WG on FV would need to rely on a written consultation procedure to agree on the draft narrative text, as the next WG meeting would take place after the submission deadline. He also enquired whether further revisions would be possible after the initial submission, with the Eurydice Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring confirming this approach.

5. Updates from the NewFAV₂ project

5.1. Contracting of the National Operators

5.2. Training of the National Operators

5.3. Data collection process

Documents: [WG_FV_4_CY_NO_5_Updates_NewFAV₂](#)

Elizaveta Potapova, NewFAV₂ project expert, provided an update on the implementation of the project, with a particular focus on the current stage of the data collection process supporting the monitoring of fundamental values. She noted that significant progress had been made in the recruitment of national operators. At the time of the meeting, 40 national operators had

confirmed their participation, with the remaining cases still under coordination with BFUG representatives. The selection process was carried out in close consultation with BFUG members, ensuring both the expertise of selected candidates and their acceptance at national level. The process remained ongoing, with continuous follow-up to ensure full country coverage.

The training of national operators had largely been completed. A combination of asynchronous pre-recorded training materials and online Q&A sessions was used to ensure a common understanding of the monitoring framework, including the definitions and scope of fundamental values, the structure of the questionnaires, and the use of the LimeSurvey platform. Particular attention was given to the interpretation of more complex questions and to ensuring consistency in responses. A mock pre-filling exercise was also conducted, allowing national operators to familiarise themselves with the process and receive feedback.

Regarding the timeline, national operators are expected to complete the pre-filling of questionnaires in early March, followed by a validation phase by public authorities by the end of the month. In parallel, consultations with stakeholders and the academic community will take place during March and April. The consolidation and triangulation of data will continue into April and May, followed by data cleaning and analysis in the second half of 2026. The drafting of the monitoring report is expected to take place towards the end of 2026, with subsequent consultation and validation within the BFUG.

During the discussion, the European Commission representative raised questions regarding the remaining countries without confirmed national operators and offered support where needed. In response, the project team and the Romanian Co-chair clarified that, for four countries, candidates had already been identified and were being contacted, while for the remaining cases input from BFUG members was still awaited. An overview of the pending cases was provided, indicating a range of situations, including lack of responses from proposed experts, ongoing contact attempts, or the need for additional nominations. The Romanian Co-chair emphasised that, while the objective remains to appoint national operators in all countries, fallback options had been considered to ensure full coverage. These include requesting public authorities or stakeholders to complete the questionnaires directly in the absence of a national operator, or, as a last resort, involving external experts. He underlined that the process will ensure that data is collected for all countries.

WG members also discussed the involvement of national stakeholders, in particular in contexts where formal representative organisations may be absent or not affiliated to European umbrella organisations. The ESU representative offered support in identifying relevant student stakeholders in such cases, while similar approaches were acknowledged for other stakeholder groups. The WG welcomed the possibility of preparing a standard communication template to facilitate outreach at national level.

Further clarifications were provided regarding the handling of countries with decentralised higher education systems. It was noted that, in line with the BPIR approach, the reporting will aim to reflect system-level realities, while avoiding excessive fragmentation. The final approach would be adapted during implementation, based on input from national operators and in coordination with existing BPIR practices. In this context, the German representative informed the group that a coordinated national response would be provided for Germany.

The Portuguese representative raised a question regarding the interaction between public authorities and national operators, inquiring whether it would be necessary to facilitate a dedicated consultation meeting between the two, given the lack of prior collaboration in some cases. In response, the Romanian Co-chair clarified that the connection between national operators and public authorities would be ensured through the process itself. He explained that, once the pre-filled questionnaires are sent to public authorities, national operators would be included in copy, enabling direct communication between the parties where needed. This approach is intended to facilitate coordination without requiring additional formal meetings.

6. Presentation of the Limesurvey questionnaires used in the data collection process for the FV monitoring report

The Romanian Co-chair briefly presented examples of questions from the Limesurvey platform used for the data collection process. He noted that the questionnaires can also be exported in Excel format and that pre-filled Excel files will be shared with BFUG members alongside the individual survey links when requesting validation.

Elizaveta Potapova added that the platform includes user-friendly functionalities, such as the possibility to save responses and continue completing the questionnaire at a later stage. She clarified that responses remain accessible through the same individual link, allowing users to resume from their last saved input.

7. Website prepared within the NewFAV₂ project - status and discussions

The Romanian Co-chair presented the fundamentalvalues.info website developed within the NewFAV₂ project, outlining its objectives, structure and current state of development. He explained that the website aims to provide a centralised and accessible platform for promoting a common understanding of fundamental values, in line with the mandate of the WG. It presents the six fundamental values, each with dedicated pages including explanations, references to official definitions and additional resources.

He further highlighted several key functionalities of the website. These include a dedicated section on monitoring, presenting existing tools and initiatives beyond the NewFAV₂ project, as well as a consultation section, which would host the link to the public survey supporting the *de facto* data collection. A reporting section would also be used to publish both the fundamental values monitoring report and the FV chapter of the BPIR.

Particular emphasis was placed on the resources section, which provides access to a curated collection of policy documents, reports, research articles and open educational resources related to fundamental values. The platform allows filtering by value, type of resource, geographical scope and institutional source. It was noted that the website does not host the content itself but redirects users to original sources, ensuring respect for copyright and licensing conditions.

The website also includes additional features aimed at supporting dissemination and engagement, such as an events section to promote relevant activities, a contact and FAQ section, and interactive elements such as quizzes. The Romanian Co-chair also mentioned

potential future developments, including the integration of an AI-based tool to support users in navigating the content. He invited WG members to contribute additional resources for inclusion on the platform and noted that the website remains a work in progress, with ongoing improvements based on feedback received.

The European Commission representative welcomed the development of the website and suggested monitoring its uptake once launched, including data traffic. She also requested further clarification regarding the artificial intelligence tools used in developing the platform and its resources. The Romanian Co-chair explained that, at that stage, AI tools such as NotebookLM had been used primarily for generating certain open educational resources, while a more complex AI-based chatbot, currently under development, would rely on a combination of open-source models. He emphasised that the tool would include appropriate disclaimers and would be based strictly on validated content.

The Latvian representative raised two points. Firstly, he suggested that translating the website into national languages would enhance its accessibility and impact. The Romanian Co-chair acknowledged this and noted that different options could be explored, including automated translations followed by validation at national level, or the integration of manually validated multilingual content, particularly for static information.

Secondly, the Latvian representative raised a broader question regarding the potential future revision of the definitions of fundamental values, including the treatment of freedom of expression within academic freedom and the emerging impact of artificial intelligence. In response, the Romanian Co-chair noted that, while such updates may become necessary in the future, no revision of the definitions was envisaged for the upcoming Ministerial Conference, given their recent adoption and the complexity of reopening such discussions. However, he acknowledged the growing relevance of artificial intelligence and indicated that this topic is expected to be addressed in the next Ministerial Communiqué, including in relation to its implications for fundamental values. Daniela Crăciun, NewFAV₂ project expert, added that, within the monitoring framework, aspects related to freedom of expression are addressed indirectly through the concept of freedom of dissemination, reflecting its academic dimension.

Further discussions addressed the promotion of the website and related outputs. The Romanian Co-chair informed participants that the Secretariat would be involved in disseminating key updates, including the launch of the website. He encouraged WG members to actively contribute to its promotion at national level and within their respective organisations. He also mentioned the creation of additional communication channels, including a dedicated Facebook page for the project, intended to support ongoing dissemination efforts beyond the official EHEA channels.

8. Possible approaches to long-term monitoring of fundamental values in the EHEA

The Romanian Co-chair explained that the session would serve as an initial discussion to inform the development of a proposal to be further elaborated within the WG and presented to the BFUG. He outlined that the discussion would be structured around three guiding questions: who, what and how. In this context, participants were invited to reflect on who should be responsible for carrying out the long-term monitoring of fundamental values, what aspects should be monitored - considering the current comprehensive approach covering both de jure

and de facto dimensions - and how such monitoring should be implemented, including the possible mechanisms and structures involved.

The Romanian Co-chair emphasised that the objective of the session was not to reach conclusions, but rather to initiate a structured reflection that would contribute to the development of a more concrete proposal. Participants were then divided into two breakout groups to discuss in more detail.

The Head of the EHEA Secretariat reported on the discussions held within the first breakout group. As an initial reflection, the group emphasised that future approaches to monitoring would depend significantly on the outcomes and perceived usefulness of the current monitoring exercise. While there was general agreement that some form of continued monitoring of fundamental values would be necessary, its scope, format and required resources would need to be determined based on the results of the ongoing process. The group also raised the question of how “long-term” should be defined, distinguishing between a perspective spanning multiple Bologna cycles and a more extended timeframe, noting that early design choices would have implications for future developments.

In relation to the “*who*”, several possible institutional arrangements were discussed. These included integrating the monitoring within the Working Group on Monitoring, establishing a dedicated subgroup within it, continuing with a separate Working Group on Fundamental Values supported or not by a project, or exploring the role of a potential permanent EHEA Secretariat. The latter was seen as offering advantages in terms of continuity, legitimacy and institutional memory, while also raising issues regarding capacity and resource allocation. In addition, participants highlighted the potential role of national-level structures, such as quality assurance systems, national Bologna committees, ombudsperson offices or rectors’ councils, in contributing to the monitoring process.

Regarding the “*what*”, the group underlined the importance of maintaining both the relevance and independence of the monitoring exercise, particularly given the politically sensitive nature of fundamental values and the need to capture both de jure and de facto dimensions. It was noted that monitoring fundamental values differs from other Bologna commitments, requiring broader stakeholder involvement and careful consideration to avoid duplication with existing initiatives. Participants also reflected on the possibility of focusing on specific thematic areas in different cycles, as well as on whether certain aspects - such as de jure and de facto elements - could be addressed through different mechanisms or instruments.

With respect to the “*how*”, discussions covered both methodological and practical aspects. This included questions related to the continuation and sustainability of the tools and resources developed within the current framework, such as the website and community platforms, as well as the need to ensure ongoing engagement with the wider higher education community. The group also reflected that monitoring fundamental values would also depend on whether the Bologna Process Implementation Report maintains its current approach focused primarily on *de jure* information provided by countries, whether it could evolve to incorporate broader perspectives, or whether a prioritisation of topics would be considered in the future, depending on available capacity and strategic direction.

Overall, the discussion highlighted a range of possible approaches and underlined the need for further reflection on the balance between ambition, feasibility and sustainability in designing a long-term monitoring framework.

The Romanian Co-chair reported on the discussions held within the second group. As a starting point, participants discussed the meaning of “long-term”, highlighting the need to distinguish between short-term arrangements (e.g. for the next mandate) and longer-term perspectives extending beyond one or more Bologna cycles. It was suggested that any proposal to the BFUG could include both short-term and long-term options, recognising that more complex or structural solutions may require additional time to be developed and implemented.

A significant part of the discussion focused on the “who” dimension, particularly from a national perspective. Participants underlined the diversity of national contexts and governance structures, noting that responsibilities related to fundamental values may be distributed differently across countries, including across central, regional and institutional levels. In this context, it was emphasised that monitoring should not rely solely on public authorities, but should include a broad range of stakeholders, including higher education institutions, academic staff and students, in order to ensure a comprehensive and balanced perspective.

The importance of stakeholder involvement was consistently highlighted throughout the discussion, with participants stressing that the inclusion of student and staff perspectives is essential for capturing the *de facto* situation and for ensuring the credibility of the monitoring exercise. At the same time, the principle of independence emerged as a key requirement for any future monitoring mechanism, both at national and European level.

Participants also explored various possible institutional arrangements for carrying out the monitoring at EHEA level. These included continuing the current project-based approach, establishing a dedicated working group or subgroup within the BFUG structure, integrating the task within existing structures such as the Working Group on Monitoring or Eurydice, or exploring alternative models such as consortia, external contractors or even the creation of a European-level observatory. However, no clear preference or consensus emerged regarding a specific model.

In addition, participants discussed whether the monitoring should focus primarily on outcomes, based on agreed indicators, rather than on the specific institutional responsibilities within each country, given the significant diversity of national systems. The need to maintain both *de jure* and *de facto* perspectives was reaffirmed, alongside the recognition that the current monitoring framework may need to be further refined based on the results of the ongoing exercise.

Despite the breadth of ideas discussed, the group did not reach a concrete conclusion regarding the most appropriate approach for long-term monitoring. It was acknowledged that, at present, no fully satisfactory and permanent solution exists within the current institutional framework, and that the existing project-based model, while not ideal, may represent a pragmatic interim solution.

Finally, the discussion underlined the importance of developing a clear vision and direction for the continuation of monitoring beyond the current mandate. Participants emphasised that, in the absence of a defined approach, there is a risk that monitoring would be reduced to the *de*

jure elements included in the BPIR, without capturing the broader and more complex reality of fundamental values.

9. Next steps - timeline and objectives

The Romanian Co-chair presented the next steps and timeline related both to the monitoring process of fundamental values and to the other activities planned within the NewFAV2 project.

Regarding the monitoring process, he informed that a first wave of approximately 30 national operators had already been trained and engaged in the pre-filling of questionnaires. It was noted that by mid March the first set of pre-filled questionnaires would be shared with public authorities and national stakeholders for validation. The second wave, covering the remaining higher education systems, would follow once the selection of national operators is finalised, with a slight delay compared to the first wave but following the same methodology.

In terms of timeline, it was indicated that a preliminary draft of the report would be available by the end of spring, serving as the basis for the narrative text to be submitted for inclusion in the BPIR. This draft would be further developed and refined over the following months. An update, including the draft narrative text and a preliminary version of the report, is expected to be presented at the BFUG Board meeting at the end of September. A more advanced draft report would then be submitted to the BFUG for feedback at its meeting in November, with the final version to be prepared for early 2027.

The Romanian Co-chair also outlined the upcoming activities within the NewFAV2 project. He noted that WG members would be informed once the fundamentalvalues.info website is ready for wider dissemination. A series of PLAs and related events are planned throughout the year, including a PLA in summer, a workshop in late summer or early autumn to discuss preliminary results of the data collection, and 2 PLAs in autumn, including one in Malta in October in conjunction with the 5th WG on FV meeting and another one in Brussels organised by ESU and focusing on student and staff participation in higher education governance.

Looking ahead, he indicated that further events would be organised in the following year, including additional PLAs and workshops. He also mentioned plans to organise a conference aimed at promoting the results of the project, potentially as a side event to the upcoming Ministerial Conference in Iași-Chișinău.

The EUA representative asked for clarification regarding the target audience of the planned workshops. In response, the Romanian Co-chair explained that all events organised within the NewFAV2 project are open to the members of the Working Group by default, while also including additional participants, such as national operators or other relevant stakeholders, depending on the objectives of each event.

The European Commission representative raised a question regarding the organisation of side events in the context of the upcoming Ministerial Conference, noting the potential overlap with similar initiatives from other BFUG working structures. In response, the HoS informed that several other initiatives are currently considering organising side events. He noted that overall coordination and coherence would be ensured by the hosts.

The Romanian Co-chair added that the project team would develop a proposal for organising its contribution to the Ministerial Conference in coordination with the WG. He also highlighted that the presence of international participants attending the Global Policy Forum could represent an opportunity to increase the visibility and impact of these activities.

The Co-chairs concluded the meeting by thanking the participants for their active engagement and contributions, as well as the EHEA Secretariat for its support in facilitating the work of the WG.

There was no other business. The meeting ended at 14:26 EET.