

## 5<sup>th</sup> Bologna Coordination Implementation Group meeting (BICG)

Online, 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2026

Hosted by the  
EHEA Secretariat

Minutes of the  
meeting

### List of participants

Country	Name	Last Name
Armenia (TPG C on QA Co-Chair)	Varduhi	Gyulazyan
Bulgaria (BICG Co-chair)	Ivana	Radonova
EUA (BICG Co-chair)	Maria	Kelo
European Commission	Yann-Maël	Bideau
Finland (BICG Co-chair)	Maija	Innola
Georgia (TPG A on QF Co-chair)	Khatia	Tsiramua
Italy	Vera	Lucke
Malta (TPG D on SD Co-Chair)	Jana	Kazarjan,
Ukraine (TPG B on LRC)	Maryna	Mruga
EHEA Secretariat	Alexandrina	Druta
EHEA Secretariat (Head)	Horia	Onita

Albania, Azerbaijan, ESU, Kazakhstan did not attend the meeting.

The meeting started at 14:05 CEST.

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

The meeting was opened by the Finnish BICG Co-Chair, who welcomed participants to the 5th meeting of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group. She recalled that the current work cycle was approaching its final stage and that increasing attention would therefore need to be devoted to the consolidation of results, the preparation of the final BICG report, and the development of proposals for consideration in the context of the 2027 Ministerial Conference in Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

The co-chairs underlined that the meeting provided an opportunity for an exchange of views on the key messages emerging from the work of the Thematic Peer Groups, as well as on possible approaches for enhancing the visibility, dissemination and uptake of the outputs produced during the current work period.

An overview of the BFUG meeting held on 9–10 March 2026 was subsequently provided by the Finnish BICG Co-Chair. She reported that the Guidelines for the QF-EHEA Self-certification had been endorsed by the BFUG. It was further noted that TPG A had been mandated to serve as a platform for the presentation of self-certification reports during the current work period following the revision of the BICG Terms of Reference.

The Finnish BICG Co-chair recalled that differing views had been expressed within the BFUG regarding a possible recommendation for the periodic review of self-certification reports. It was indicated that further reflection on this matter would be required during the preparation of the final BICG report.

The Finnish BICG Co-chair further reported that support had been expressed within the BFUG for flexible learning pathways to be considered as a transversal topic across the work of the BICG and the TPGs. On the National Action Plans, the BFUG widely regarded them as useful instruments for supporting implementation and broad support for their continuation had been expressed. At the same time, possible improvements related to timing, coordination and stakeholder involvement were identified for future consideration.

Reference was also made to additional proposals raised during the BFUG discussions, including possible future work related to cross-border quality assurance and the Qualifications Framework of the EHEA. It was concluded that the feedback and decisions received from the BFUG would provide an important framework for the continuation of the BICG's work and for the discussions foreseen under the subsequent agenda items.

## 2. Approval of the agenda

Documents: [BICG 5 CY NO 1 Agenda 21.05.2026](#)

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

## 3. Approval of the 4th BICG meeting minutes

Documents: [BICG 4 CY NO 1 Minutes 17.02.2026](#)

The Finnish BICG Co-Chair invited participants to provide comments on the minutes of the fourth BICG meeting, which had taken place in November. As no corrections or amendments were proposed, the minutes were approved as circulated.

## 4. Updates from the EHEA Secretariat

Documents: [BICG 5 CY NO 4 EHEA Secretariat Presentation](#)

Updates from the EHEA Secretariat were presented by the Head of Secretariat. The EHEA Secretariat informed about the upcoming BFUG meetings and the preparatory work for the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum. He noted that a call for side events to be organised back-to-back with the Ministerial Conference would remain open until September 2026. The EHEA Secretariat informed that the implementation of the BFUG Work Programme progressed smoothly and presented the main ongoing activities of each BFUG working structure. He noted existing work by the EHEA Secretariat on ensuring terminological consistency across Bologna Process instruments and that a live document would be maintained by the Secretariat.

Furthermore, the EHEA Secretariat informed that the co-chairs of the BFUG working structures were invited to contribute with brief bullet points for the first in-person meeting of the 2027 Iași-Chișinău Communiqué Drafting Committee. Updates were also provided on the revised

EHEA website, which had recently been launched in updated form. BICG members were invited to provide feedback, particularly regarding additional materials or references that could be included, and to contribute to the upcoming June 2026 newsletter.

The Secretariat further reported that 42 national action plans had been compiled and published on the website, with an overview mapping national action plans to the Bologna Process Implementation Report completed and published on the website following BFUG's feedback. The BICG Co-Chairs welcomed the Secretariat's comprehensive overview and support and highlighted the importance of further strengthening the visibility of ongoing work.

Clarifications were requested by the Finnish BICG Co-Chair regarding the expected timeline for the Bologna Process Implementation Report, particularly the availability of the first draft for the BFUG meeting in Dublin, as well as regarding the scope and organisation of side events linked to the Ministerial Conference. In response, the HoS indicated that the timeline for the BPIR remained on track, with a first draft expected for the Dublin BFUG meeting. He further clarified that side events were still in a planning phase, with a deadline for initial submissions for September 2026 and several thematic proposals under consideration, including those related to QA, fundamental values, and internationalisation and mobility. Furthermore, the EHEA Secretariat invited BICG members to the Conference "The Future of Higher Education: Sharing knowledge and supporting implementation for a stronger Bologna Process", taking place between 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September 2026 in Bucharest.

## 5. TPG updates and reporting

The Bulgarian BICG Co-Chair welcomed the TPG Co-Chairs and expressed appreciation for their continued work, including the opportunity to meet several of them in person in Ruse, Bulgaria, recently. She highlighted that continued exchange within this format remained important for identifying developments, challenges, and solutions emerging from TPG activities.

### 5.1 TPG A on QF

Documents: [BICG\\_5\\_CY\\_NO\\_5\\_TPG\\_A\\_on\\_QF\\_o6.o8.2026](#)

The update from the Georgian TPG A on QF Co-Chair covered the implementation of activities under the QUATRA TPG A<sub>2</sub> project. She reported that work had been carried out in line with the agreed Action plan, including TPG meetings, peer learning activities, and PLA-type discussions on selected thematic priorities. The TPG A Co-chair recalled the activity of the two working groups, focusing on automatic recognition and flexible learning pathways. The automatic recognition group had developed a draft concept note and was working towards recommendations to be finalised by September 2026. The flexible learning pathways group had also advanced through a combination of online and in-person meetings and was likewise expected to deliver recommendations by September 2026.

It was noted that a PLA and self-certification-related activity had taken place in April in Latvia, where discussions had focused on transparency aspects of self-certification processes. Following this activity, a concept note had been developed summarising key elements, particularly regarding stakeholder engagement, relevance for the labour market and student perspectives. The TPG A Co-chair indicated that this concept note would be published on the EHEA website under the relevant TPG section. It was further reported that the TPG meeting had included a presentation by Moldova on its self-certification report.

The next PLA was announced to take place in Malta in October 2026, focusing on transparency within qualifications frameworks.

## 5.2 TPG B on LRC

Documents: [BICG 5 CY NO 5 TPG B on LRC o8.06.2026](#)

The update from the Ukrainian TPG B on LRC Co-Chair indicated that implementation remained aligned with the approved action plan, with steady progress across meetings, webinars, and peer learning activities. One TPG meeting had been held since the previous BICG meeting, as well as an online meeting focused on the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in the context of international mobility, and a meeting addressing automatic recognition.

The Ukrainian TPG B Co-chair reported that a mid-term monitoring survey had been launched and completed, with results under analysis. It was further noted that a forthcoming physical meeting would take place in France in June, focusing on flexible learning pathways as a cross-cutting topic requiring joint engagement with other TPGs. Preparatory work was also ongoing on a paper addressing transnational education from a recognition perspective.

## 5.3 TPG C on QA

Documents: [BICG 5 CY NO 5 TPG C on QA o8.06.2026](#)

The update from the Armenian TPG C on QA Co-Chair covered discussions held during the TPG C meeting in April and subsequent activities focused on quality assurance developments. It was reported that key topics included the revision of the ESG, the ECTS Users' Guide, staff mobility activities, cross-border quality assurance, and engagement with the EQAR knowledge base as a comparative information source for QA systems and external review outcomes.

The Armenian TPG C Co-chair reported that a working group on cross-border quality assurance had been established under ENQA's coordination, focusing on updating the 'Key Considerations for CBQA' document and developing a code of conduct, alongside additional peer learning activities and ongoing meetings. She also highlighted that TPG C had contributed to discussions on flexible learning pathways from a quality assurance perspective, and that a policy brief was under development, including recommendations for QA agencies and public authorities. It was noted that while regulatory frameworks exist in many countries, quality assurance arrangements for flexible learning pathways remain underdeveloped in several contexts.

The Armenian TPG C Co-chair further reported that cooperation with other TPGs was being strengthened, including a planned joint meeting in June to align work on flexible learning pathways and related cross-cutting themes.

## 5.4 TPG D on SD

Documents: [BICG 5 CY NO 5 TPG D on SD o8.06.2026](#)

The update from the Maltese TPG D on SD Co-Chair covered the outcomes of the TPG meeting in Salzburg and subsequent activities. She reported that the TPG action plan had been finalised,

and that follow-up mechanisms after PLAs had been further strengthened, with emphasis on feedback loops and stakeholder engagement.

The recent PLAs of TPG D had addressed inclusive institutional cultures, community engagement, counselling and guidance, and broader institutional transformation in higher education. The BICG was informed that additional activities were planned including a TPG D meeting in Malta in October 2026 and an online session focusing on funding for social dimension in June 2026.

Finally, the TPG D Co-chair pointed out that a country review on social dimension under the INSPIRE project had been completed in Austria, with reporting outputs still in preparation.

Following all TPG updates, the Bulgarian BICG Co-Chair emphasised that strong convergence had emerged across groups on key cross-cutting themes, including automatic recognition, flexible learning pathways, and transnational education, which were expected to further inform joint work and future reporting.

## 6. Key messages and input for the BICG report

The discussion on key messages and input for the BICG report was opened by the EUA BICG Co-Chair, who indicated that the preparation of the final report required technical and substantial input, including potential contributions to the ministerial communiqué. She proposed that input be collected through a roundtable involving both TPG representatives and other BICG members, focusing on methodological aspects of the implementation framework and on future thematic priorities. In this sense, methodological input was expected to refer to the overall implementation architecture of the TPG system, including the functioning of the coordination structure, participation modalities, effectiveness of activities, and links with supporting projects. It was further indicated that thematic input was expected to identify future priorities for each TPG area, with reference being made to flexible learning as an emerging cross-cutting theme requiring further development.

The European Commission considered that the existence of the BICG was useful and that an overview of TPG activities was appreciated. However, he also observed that a weak link had been perceived between national action plans and TPG activities. He suggested that stronger alignment between national priorities and TPG planning could increase engagement at national level and further observed that BICG discussions would benefit from more focused preparation, including the circulation in advance of structured questions from TPGs requiring the BICG's consultation. The EUA BICG Co-Chair acknowledged that the linkage between national action plans and TPG planning was essential. She indicated that timing challenges had affected the current cycle, but that improved alignment mechanisms would be in place for the next cycle.

The Georgian TPG A on QA Co-chair identified peer learning activities as a central methodological feature of the TPG system. In this sense, she considered that peer learning formats, including "critical friend" approaches, were effective due to their capacity to reflect diverse national contexts. She further pointed out that the coordination of transversal topics across TPGs required strengthening and that a more active coordinating role could be provided by the BICG. The development of structured recommendations within TPGs was also highlighted by the Georgian TPG A on QF Co-Chair as an important methodological output, as it allowed translation of discussions into concrete policy guidance.

The Armenian TPG C on QA Co-Chair observed that many countries were currently engaged in legislative reform processes and that assessing the impact of implementation-focused activities would therefore require time. She further stated that staff mobility and peer learning activities were supporting the implementation of national action plans.

The Ukrainian TPG B Co-chair described the TPG system as an effective instrument for outreach and knowledge exchange. However, she also observed that structural constraints limited the translation of identified needs into policy change, including financial constraints affecting participation.

The HoS stated that TPGs functioned in practice both as implementation and policy development spaces, which should require clarification. He further pointed out that the governance structure contained ambiguities regarding the level of openness of the BICG. The creation of temporary cross-cutting working groups at the beginning of cycles was also proposed as a possible option for addressing transversal themes.

The Finnish BICG Co-Chair concluded that a growing consensus was emerging regarding the importance of national action plans and their potential to improve coordination and impact. She also emphasised that participation constraints required careful balancing in order to avoid overburdening the system.

A concern regarding the coherence between TPG-level and national-level positions was raised by the EUA BICG Co-Chair, who observed that in some cases misalignment had been noted between positions expressed by the same country in TPGs and in BFUG. She suggested that improved coordination mechanisms and dual-level participation should be constantly recalled. In this sense, the Armenian TPG C on QA Co-Chair reminded that involvement of ministries was essential for ensuring policy relevance and implementation capacity, while the Ukrainian TPG B on LRC Co-chair emphasised the importance of maintaining balance between policy-level and practitioner-level perspectives.

## 6. Consolidation and dissemination of TPG outputs

The discussion on the consolidation and dissemination of TPG outputs was introduced by the EUA BICG Co-Chair, who stated that a large volume of outputs was being produced by TPGs and their supporting projects, but that structured dissemination and visibility needed to be strengthened.

The European Commission proposed that TPG outputs should be linked more systematically to national action plans, allowing access to outputs based on thematic priorities rather than institutional structures. In this sense, they suggested that tagging systems could be introduced to improve searchability. This proposal was supported by the Ukrainian TPG B on LRC Co-chair, who stated that the use of keywords and tagging would improve accessibility of outputs beyond the Bologna working structures.

A question regarding communication platforms was raised by the TPG D on SD Co-Chair from Malta, who asked whether sufficient use was being made of social media platforms such as LinkedIn. She suggested that visibility could be improved through more structured outreach. The EUA BICG Co-Chair replied that dissemination required engagement through both institutional and national networks in order to ensure amplification of activities and outputs.

The Finnish BICG Co-Chair considered that greater clarity was required regarding the status of outputs, as it was not always clear whether documents constituted formal Bologna Process outputs or project-level deliverables. Supported by the EUA Co-chair, she suggested that categorisation should be improved in this regard. A three-tier classification system was proposed by the HoS under which outputs would be categorized as formal documents adopted by ministers, BFUG-endorsed guidance documents, and project outputs compiled in a compendium of good practice. The EHEA Secretariat also proposed that active dissemination by participants should be strengthened.

Supported by the Finnish BICG Co-chair, the Ukrainian TPG B on LRC Co-chair pointed out that dissemination should focus not only on visibility but also on usability of outputs, with emphasis on practical application and formal endorsement. The EUA BICG Co-Chair concluded that improved categorisation and strengthened dissemination mechanisms were required to ensure effective use of TPG outputs.

## 7. Next steps and Any other business (AOB)

The EUA BICG Co-Chair stated that the next key milestone would be the BICG meeting in Sofia, where draft outputs would be further developed and transversal issues discussed in a workshop format. The Bulgarian BICG Co-Chair invited BICG members to the in-person BICG meeting taking place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October in Sofia, with arrival expected on 15 October. For the in-person BICG meeting all TPG co-chairs would be invited to attend.

In the context of the reviewed ECTS User's Guide requiring ESG-compliance for the issuance of ECTS, the European Commission inquired regarding a question raised from the United Kingdom. As the UK did not currently follow the ESG, they asked about the ESG revision process and the compatibility between risk-based approaches and ESG peer review requirements in the revised ESG draft. The EUA BICG Co-Chair provided a clarification stating that the ESG revision maintained peer review as a core principle. She explained that the UK's concerns had been discussed in the ESG steering group and that flexible implementation approaches, including extended review cycles, could be accommodated while ensuring ESG compatibility.

The meeting was closed by the EUA BICG Co-Chair, who thanked all participants for their contributions and confirmed that further information regarding the meeting in Sofia would be circulated in due course.

The meeting ended at 16:25 CEST.