BFUG MEETING · NOVEMBER 2026

Updates from the Working Group on Fundamental Values

Part I – *Monitoring the fundamental values of higher education in the EHEA: the monitoring process and the main results*

Part II – *Other activities promoting the fundamental values*

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Why ministers asked for monitoring

2018 **Paris**

Ministers identified the fundamental values as the “backbone” of the EHEA.

2020 **Rome**

A common definition of academic freedom adopted; BFUG asked to develop a framework for enhancing the values, including their monitoring.

2024 **Tirana**

Statements adopted on the remaining five values; commitment to protect them through legislation and promote them through various means; **BFUG asked to monitor implementation and report to the 2027 Ministerial Conference.**

The six values

- Academic freedom
- Institutional autonomy
- Participation of students and staff in governance
- Academic integrity
- Public responsibility for higher education
- Public responsibility of higher education

The reasoning: the values “cannot be automatically assumed”; **the conditions ensuring their exercise must be constructed, regularly assessed, protected and promoted.** Monitoring is how the EHEA sees whether that is happening.

What this exercise is, and what it is not

1 First full cycle

Protection, promotion, outlook and practice of all six values in 49 systems, with one instrument, one reference date and one set of coding rules. **The result is a baseline the next cycle can measure movement against.**

2 It monitors commitments, not the values as such

Gaps are discrepancies between EHEA members' joint commitments and what is reflected in the validated record.

3 It is not a ranking

Scorecards are not weighted or aggregated across values, and no composite score is c alculated. **The purpose is self-reflection, dialogue and peer learning.**

4 Every answer is source-backed

Disagreements between respondents are recorded. **Self-reported information is tested against independent evidence.**

5 It complements the BPIR

BPIR questions were mapped to 20 questions of the FV instrument, **so avoiding duplication and reducing the burden on ministries.**

49 systems

in 47 EHEA members, one reference date: 30 June 2026

The monitoring process in 16 steps

1. Monitoring framework & methodology agreed
2. National operators selected
3. National operators trained
4. Instruments developed (LimeSurvey and Excel)
5. Pre-filling by the national operators
6. Data validation of the pre-filling
7. Pre-filled files sent to public authorities and stakeholder organizations
8. Validation by authorities and stakeholders; operators flag contradictions
9. Public consultation of academic community on the open platform
10. Comparative view: all respondents and BPIR FV sections
11. Triangulation with external evidence
12. Data validation and normalisation
13. Draft 0
14. Consultation with the FV WG
15. Revalidation against final BPIR data
16. Draft 1 sent to the BFUG

Building the evidence, step by step

1 **National operators selected**

44 systems

24 proposed by public authorities, 20 identified by the project team; recruitment ran from September 2025 to March 2026

2 **Operators trained**

Multiple cohorts

Online training: policy context, role, monitoring tool, timeline and data platform

3 **One questionnaire**

147 questions

split into four monitoring instruments to limit respondent fatigue

4 **Responses**

47 + 98

47 public authorities validated the questionnaire; 98 stakeholder responses from 40 systems; BPIR 2027 answers for all 49 HE systems

5 **Scale of the consultation**

5,174 response attempts

Open platform for the academic community, de facto indicators only; 1,563 completed, 3,611 incomplete

6 **Sources checked**

≈17,000 sources

Legislation, policy documents, case law, monitoring reports and press, used to verify every answer

Checking the evidence, closing the record

7 **Public consultation responses from open platform**

1,563 responses

On 38 systems; 37% academic staff, 31% students; 59% of responses from Ukraine
Separate chapter on public consultation

8 **Data points**

10,123 points

Closed answers compared across respondents, system by system; more than 10,000 responses coded

9 **Cross-check with BPIR 2027**

13 BPIR questions mapped to 20 monitoring questions; suggestions sent on the BPIR draft data

10 **Eurydice and Monitoring WG**

Coordination

Working procedures agreed in March–April 2026; BPIR and monitoring figures reconciled in October 2026

11 **Consultation with the FV WG**

Every stage

Operator selection and each implementation step discussed; Draft 1 to the WG on 2 October, discussed on 14 October

12 **Cut-off dates**

30 June 2026

Reference date for protection and promotion; responses counted until 31 July 2026; practice recorded since 2020

Two types of monitoring, one colour code

De jure: scorecards

Protection · Promotion · Outlook

Each system is placed in a colour band by counting the scorecard dimensions covered in legislation (protection) or supported by policy (promotion), and by its documented plans (outlook). Bands are not weighted and not added up across values: no composite score, no ranking.

De facto: narratives

Positive developments · Threats · Infringements or fulfilment of obligations

Practice since 2020 is described in words, with the most representative sourced cases. It is not scored or counted, because these questions were optional for public authorities and reporting was uneven.

What the colours mean

	Protection	Promotion	Outlook
	All four dimensions	All dimensions	Plans to strengthen both
	Three	All but one	Plans to strengthen either
	Two	Fewer	No documented plans
	One	None	Plans to weaken either
	None	Measures restricting the value*	Plans to weaken both
			Plans in both directions

*Protection counts dimensions covered in legislation; promotion counts dimensions supported by policy (non-legal) instruments. *No system is in the red promotion band. Grey would mean no data; no system is grey on any value.*

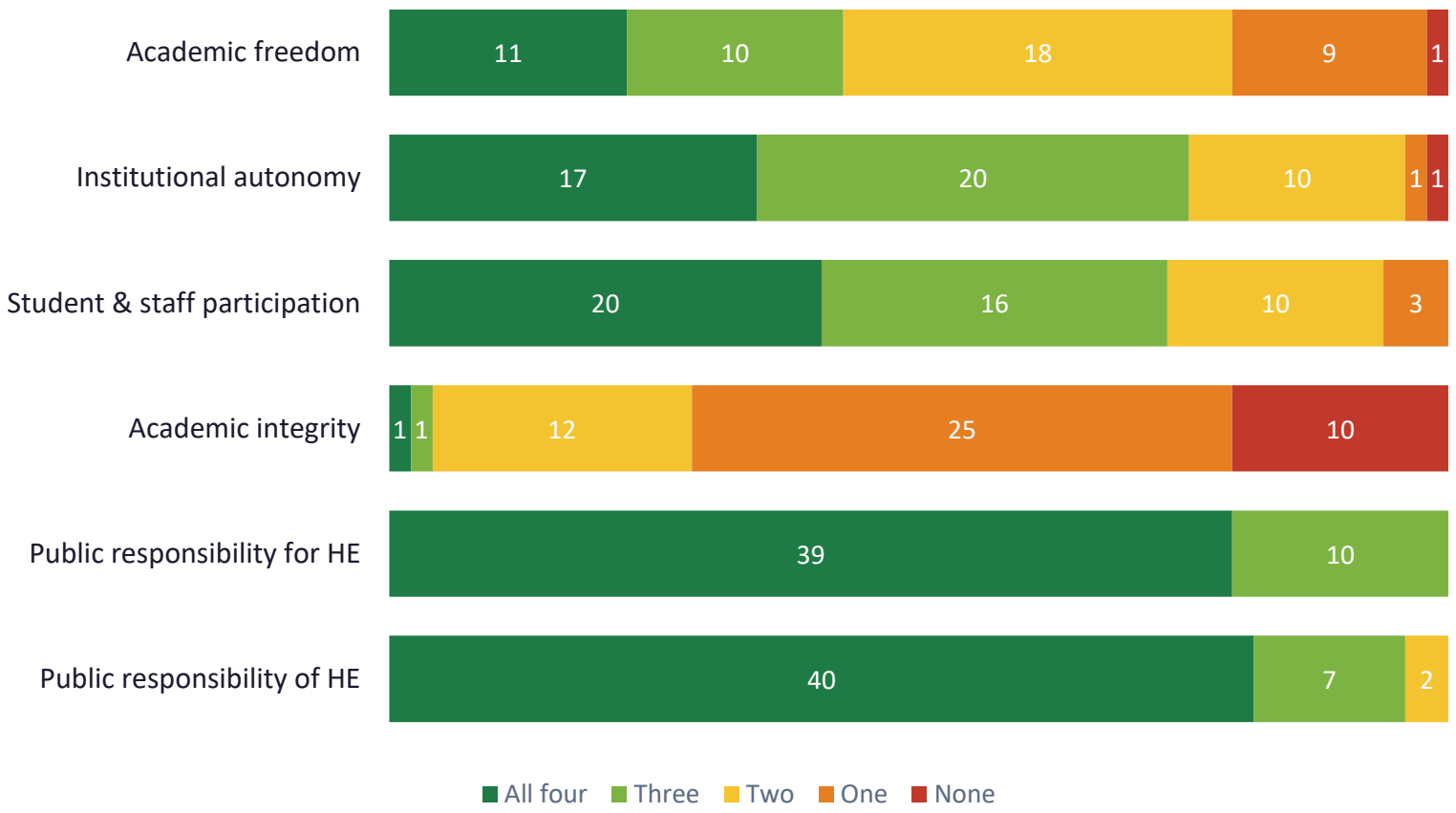
What each de jure indicator counts

Value	Protection: dimensions covered in legislation	Promotion: dimensions supported by policy
Academic freedom	Legal recognition · legal definition · scope of protection (research, teaching, learning, dissemination within the academic community and towards society) · coverage of beneficiaries (staff and students)	Strategic guidance · implementation mechanisms · external evaluation requirements
Institutional autonomy	Legal recognition · legal definition · scope of protection (academic, organisational, staffing, financial) · coverage of beneficiaries (public and private institutions)	Strategic guidance · implementation mechanisms · external evaluation requirements
Participation of students and staff	Legal recognition · scope of protection (six rights, from self-organisation to co-decision and consultation) · coverage of beneficiaries (institution types, governance levels) · stable learning and working conditions	Guidance or mechanisms for participation · guidance or mechanisms for stable conditions · external evaluation requirements
Academic integrity	Legal recognition · legal definition · scope of obligation (all areas of the mission) · regulatory framework (digital technologies, international cooperation, codes of ethics)	Strategic guidance · implementation mechanisms · external evaluation requirements
Public responsibility for higher education	Major purposes · structural frameworks · enabling frameworks · stakeholder consultation	Major purposes · higher education frameworks · stakeholder consultation
Public responsibility of higher education	Academic mission · education and student success · societal contribution · public engagement	Academic mission · education and student success · societal contribution · public engagement

Outlook, for every value: documented plans to change protection and documented plans to change promotion. All dimensions come from the EHEA statements (Rome 2020, Tirana 2024); the value sub-dimensions are the elements each statement names.

Protection: recognised widely, complete in few systems

Systems by number of protection dimensions covered in legislation (of 49)



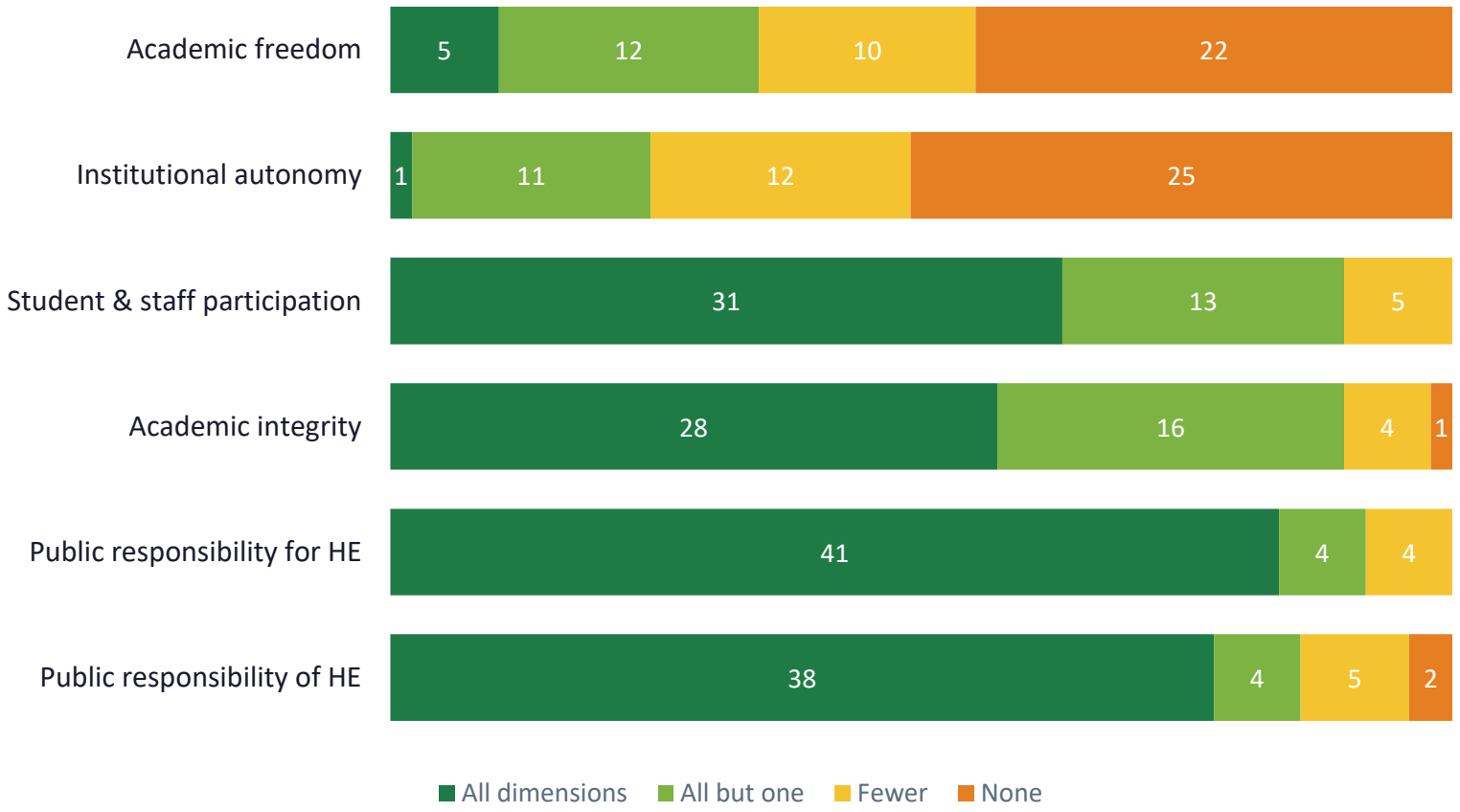
48 · 48 · 49
systems recognise academic freedom, institutional autonomy and student participation in law

11 · 17 · 20
have every protection dimension covered for the three freedoms

39 · 40
do so for public responsibility for and of higher education

Promotion: strongest where structures already existed

Systems by number of promotion dimensions supported by policy (of 49)



22 · 25

systems have no promotion measure for academic freedom and for institutional autonomy

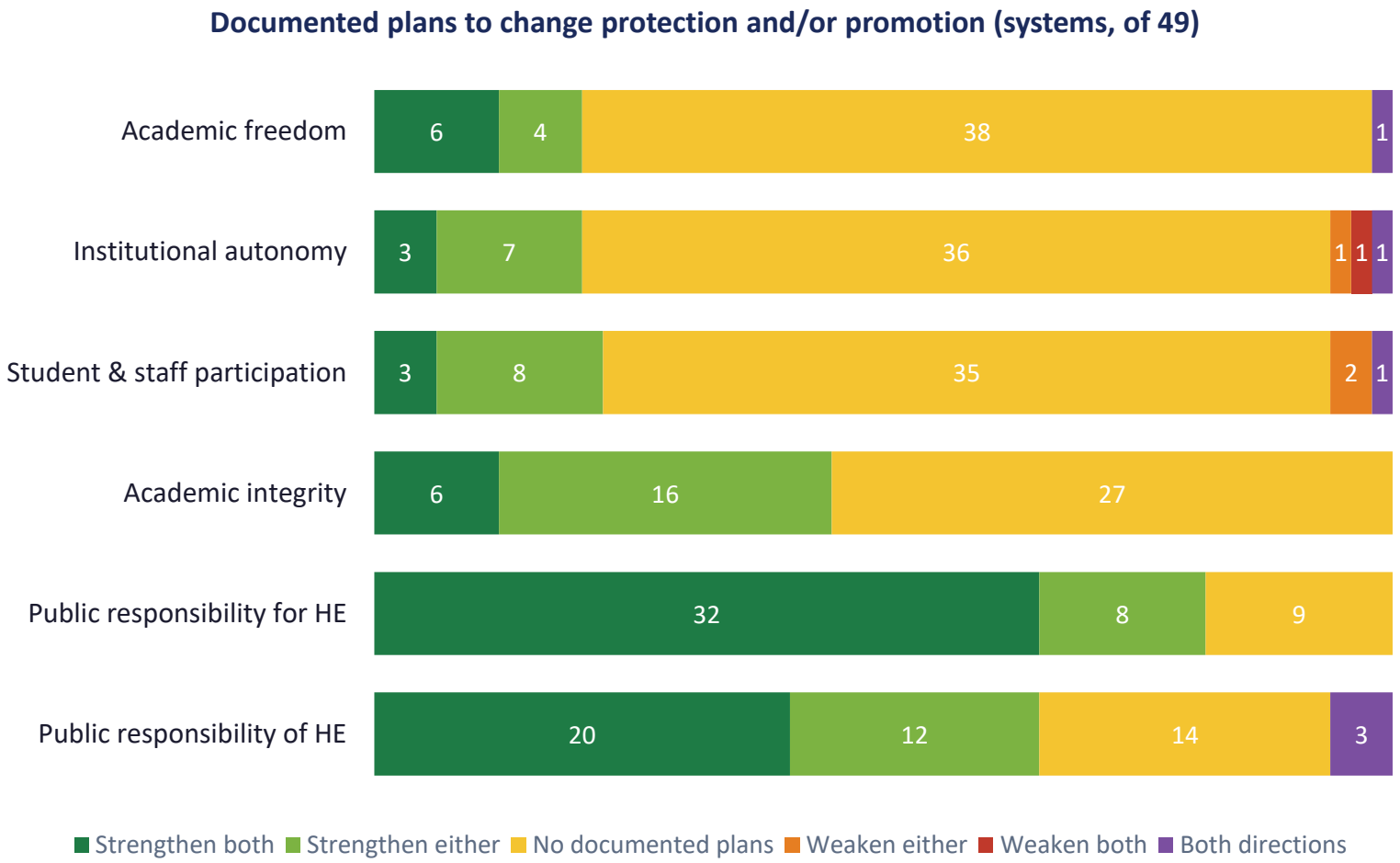
10 · 10

require external evaluation of these two values, always through quality assurance

28

systems support all three promotion dimensions for academic integrity

Outlook: static freedoms, expanding responsibilities

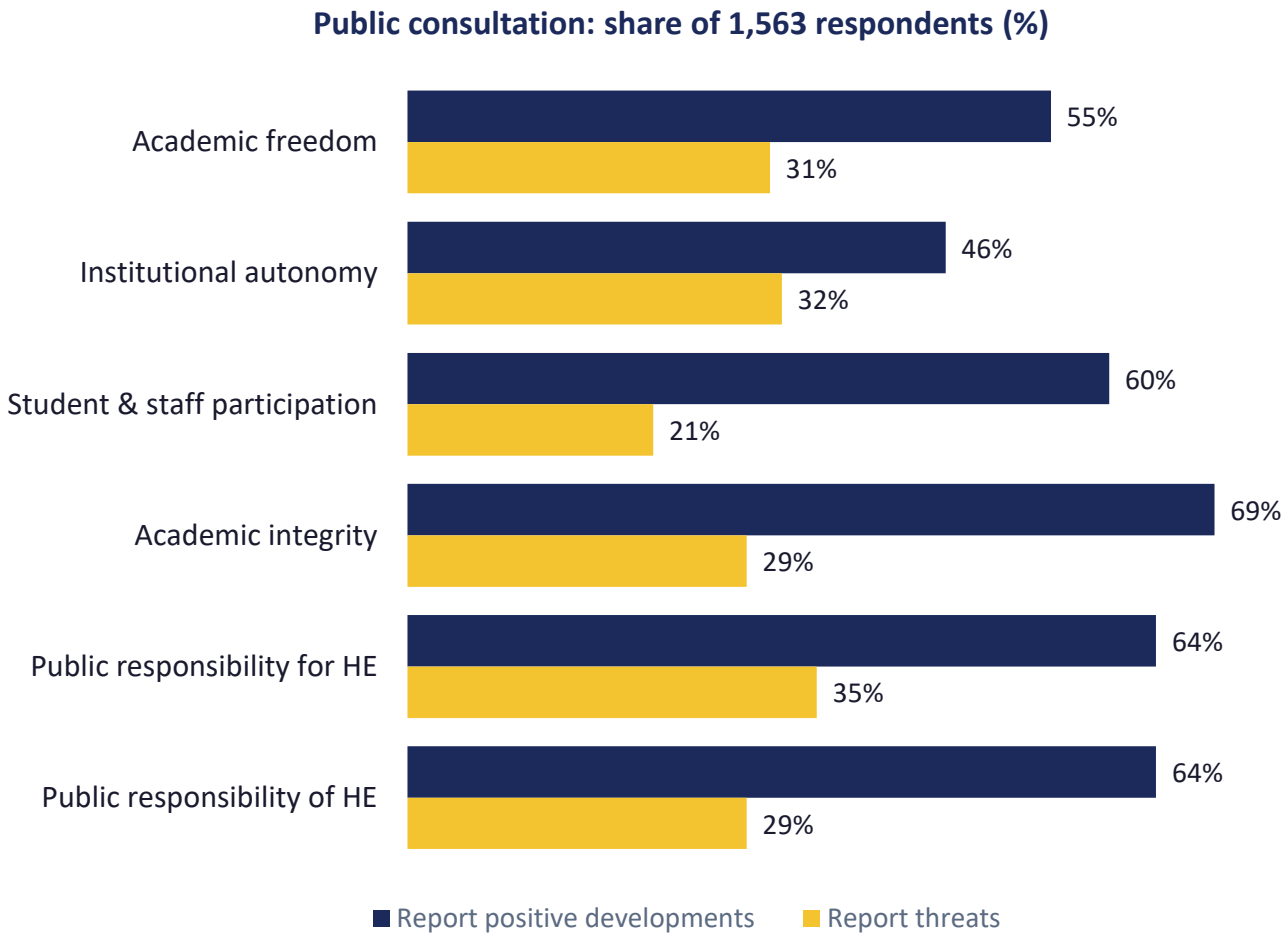


38 · 36 · 35
systems document no plans for academic freedom, autonomy and participation

32
plan to strengthen both protection and promotion of public responsibility for HE

6 · 3
systems with plans that would weaken the freedoms, or public responsibility of HE

In practice: The issue is not whether to legislate, but how



Pressures recorded across the values

- **€** — **Funding:** most frequent threat; other pressures have funding as a prerequisite
- **G** — **Governance:** centralisation and political interference
- **P** — **Precarity:** insecure careers weaken participation and free expression
- **S** — **Self-censorship:** mostly an academic freedom concern
- **AI** — **Generative AI:** the main challenge for academic integrity
- **D** — **Demographic decline:** felt in the two public responsibility values

What the first monitoring cycle shows

1

A shared baseline

The EHEA now has common definitions, clear commitments and a validated, sourced record for 49 systems.

2

Beyond formal recognition

Systems differ less in whether a value is legally recognized than in how it is defined, the scope of its application, and who it co vers.

3

Implementation is the challenge

The gap between commitments and practice is substantial, and it sits inside systems that legislate.

4

Promotion lags for the freedoms

Academic freedom and institutional autonomy are rarely promoted directly; quality assurance carries most of it.

5

Threats are connected

Funding, governance and employment conditions act on several values at once; positive developments coexist.

6

Uneven coverage

Students, internal constituencies, society and private providers are the least consistently covered.

Recommendations built on commitments already made

To public authorities

1. Complete the legal protection of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and participation
2. Set an enabling legal framework for academic integrity, including digital technologies
3. Promote the freedoms through measures aimed at the values themselves
4. Address the conditions: funding, careers, appointment rules, protection from reprisal
5. Consult staff, students and their organisations in their own right
6. Follow through on announced plans and document change in both directions

To institutions and stakeholder organisations

7. Turn the right to participate into practice, for staff as well as students
8. Build a culture of integrity, not only misconduct detection
9. Safeguard public engagement and the conditions that make it possible
10. Take part in the monitoring and make the EHEA statements known

Each recommendation points to an element of the EHEA statements that the record shows to be unevenly implemented. How it is carried out is for each system to decide.

What we ask of the BFUG

Now

Draft 1 presented

Report, summary for public authorities and annexes shared with the BFUG

By 14 December 2026

Your feedback

Tracked changes and comments directly in the main report file

By the next BFUG meeting

Feedback applied

Revised report consolidated and brought back to the BFUG

How to send feedback: annotate the main report file (tracked changes for edits, comments for questions) and return it to oana.tintar@ehea.info. Comments on the summary are most useful on its structure and coverage.
Contact: fundamentalvalues.info · newfav@uefiscdi.ro

Events organised in this cycle

Held

6 December 2024

First meeting of the WG on Fundamental Values (online)

16–17 June 2025

Second meeting of the WG, Malta

19–21 November 2025

Third meeting of the WG and PLA on **academic integrity and academic freedom**, Romania

24–25 February 2026

Fourth meeting of the WG and PLA on **public responsibility of higher education**, Romania

18 September 2026

PLA on **fundamental values monitoring**, Romania

13–14 October 2026

Fifth meeting of the WG and PLA on **institutional autonomy**, Malta

Coming up

10 November 2026

PLA on **student and staff participation in higher education governance** (Brussels, organised by ESU - online)

26–27 January 2027

Sixth meeting of the WG (tbc) and PLA on **public responsibility for higher education** (Brussels, organised by ESU)

15–16 March 2027

Seventh meeting of the WG and workshop on the final monitoring results (Norway)

25 May 2027

Side event on fundamental values at the Ministerial Conference, Iași, Romania

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Thank you

Questions and discussion

fundamentalvalues.info · newfav@uefiscdi.ro