

Bologna Implementation Coordination GROUP (BICG)

DRAFT FINAL REPORT (Version 1, 9 October 2026)

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1. Activities of the BICG and the TPGs

1.1. Mandate and composition of BICG and TPGs

Structured peer-based support for the implementation of the Bologna key commitments was introduced in the Paris Communiqué in 2018. Since then, the BFUG has worked to improve the full and effective implementation of key commitments through the work in the Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs). The work of the TPGs is supported by the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG).

The level of implementation of the key commitments is surveyed based on data submitted during the BFUG's regular monitoring procedures, using the scoreboard indicators in the Bologna Process Implementation Report. All EHEA countries are asked to self-identify their needs and expertise to commit to the mode through which they can contribute to the improved implementation of key commitments of the Bologna Process in the EHEA as a whole. Countries that self-identify as having successfully implemented a key commitment are invited to suggest ways in which they are willing to support countries having difficulties with implementation of that key commitment and share their examples of successful implementation and aid others in achieving the same. Countries that self-identify as not or insufficiently having implemented a key commitment are invited to indicate what peer support would be beneficial to aid implementation and how it aims to use that support. Each country is expected to join at least one of the peer groups.¹

Over the years the work in the TPGs has been active and productive, focusing on key commitments but also dealt with several connected and emerging themes. The work of the TPGs has been supported by Erasmus+ funded projects.

The 2024-2027 working period

The Tirana Communiqué acknowledges the important contribution of the TPGs in improving the incomplete and uneven implementation of the key commitments and recognises that more work is needed to improve the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education. The Communiqué also introduces a commitment to have and publish national action plans to address remaining implementation gaps.

"The 2024 Bologna Process Implementation Report confirms and illustrates the still incomplete and uneven implementation of these key commitments, but also the important contribution of the Thematic Peer Groups under the guidance of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group in improving the situation. Therefore, we commit to ensuring that we have, or will devise, and will publish appropriate action plans to address any remaining implementation gaps, and to promoting knowledge-sharing activities related to the EHEA."

¹ Paris Communiqué Appendix 1 Appendix I: Structured peer-based support for the implementation of the Bologna key commitments
https://old.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2018_Paris/77/3/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixI_952773.pdf

As the Bologna Process tools have developed throughout the last decade, we mandate the BFUG to work on their future-proof development, dissemination and possible expansion.

The adoption of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA in the 2020 Rome Communique was an important step in this direction, but more is needed to ensure their implementation by 2030. We commit to measuring progress in their implementation and ask the BFUG to report back on this in 2027.”

The work of the BICG and TPGs builds upon the work and achievements, outcomes and recommendations of the previous working periods. The Terms of Reference for the BICG² states that the BICG is responsible for coordinating the work of the Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs). The purpose of the BICG is to facilitate a coordinated implementation of the four identified topics: the three key commitments as well as the social dimension of higher education.

The specific tasks of the BICG defined in the Terms of Reference are:

- Coordinate the work of the TPGs;
- Follow-up on the peer support activities by keeping an overview of the composition and activities of the different groups;
- Seek to improve the Peer Support approach for the implementation of the Key Commitments and of the social dimension, including possible adjustments;
- Identify synergies in the work of the Thematic Peer Groups and ensure consistency and coherence of outcomes;
- Give the BFUG regular updates and an overview on the progress and effectiveness of the Peer Support Approach, based on the activities of the TPGs;
- Prepare recommendations for further actions to improve the implementation of the topics of the TPGs for consideration by the BFUG;
- Prepare a template, for approval by the BFUG, for the national action plans regarding implementation of the Tirana commitments, with focus on the four TPG topics;
- Ensure synergies between the national plans and the activities of the TPGs and their working plans.

The objective of the TPGs is to provide a forum to support countries in working together to implement the Key Commitments and reforms related to the social dimension of higher education. The TPGs should continue using the Peer Support Approach. In addition, TPG A on Qualifications Framework acts as a platform for presenting self-certification reports and provides expertise and feedback about self-certification reports to the members and to the BFUG. Each TPG should follow up and update its overall Action Plan to reflect countries' progress and developments.

² [BFUG 99 CY NO 8.6 BICG 2 Adopted ToRs 10.03.2025.pdf](#)

Composition of the BICG

Co-chairs: Bulgaria, EUA, Finland

Members: Albania, Azerbaijan, European Commission, ESU, France, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Malta and TPG co-chairs (with usually only one cochair of each TPG attending the meeting of the BICG).

Composition of the TPG A on the Qualifications Framework

Co-chairs: France, Georgia, Latvia

Members: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium Flemish Community, Bulgaria, Council of Europe, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, EURASHE, Estonia, ESU, European Commission, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malta, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Sweden, United Kingdom, United Kingdom (Scotland).

Composition of the TPG B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Co-Chairs: Italy, France, Ukraine

Members: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, EUA, Council of Europe, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, EQAR, EURASHE, ESU, European Commission, Georgia, Germany, Greece, The Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, UNESCO, United Kingdom – Scotland.

Composition of the TPG C on Quality Assurance

Co-Chairs: Armenia, France, Romania

Members: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium – Flemish Community, Belgium-French Community, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Business Europe, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Education International – ETUCE, ENQA, EQAR, EUA, EURASHE, European Commission, ESU, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (Scotland).

Composition of the TPG D on Social Dimension

Co-chairs: ESU, Latvia, Malta

Members: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium – Flemish Community, EUA, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Education International - ETUCE, Estonia, EURASHE, European Commission, Eurostudent, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

1.2. Specific themes of the TPGs

Thematic Peer Group A	Thematic Peer Group B	Thematic Peer Group C	Thematic Peer Group D
- Self-certification of the national qualification frameworks within the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA - Complete implementation of the ECTS User's Guide - Short cycle higher education - Multiple purposes and use of the qualifications frameworks by the stakeholders; - Study programmes outside of the Bologna three-cycle structure; - Relationship between the qualifications frameworks and quality assurance.	- Establishing the legal framework to allow the implementation of the LRC - Establishing the distribution of work and responsibilities among the competent institutions that have the right knowledge and capacity to carry out recognition procedures, - Achieving automatic recognition - Recognition of alternative pathways, - Qualifications held by refugees, - Optimising the potential of digital technology for the recognition agenda and the Diploma Supplement.	- Legislative framework in line with the ESG (introducing changes) - Ensuring effectiveness of internal quality assurance arrangements, including the use of QA results in the decision-making process and quality culture as well as links to learning and teaching, - The role and engagement of stakeholders in internal and external QA (students, teachers, employers), - Cross-border QA - European Approach to the QA of joint programmes.	supporting the effective implementation and monitoring of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen Social Dimension of Higher education in EHEA.

1.3. National Action Plans

In the Tirana Communiqué Ministers committed to devising and publishing national action plans for the implementation of the key commitments and sharing knowledge about the Bologna Process.

The BICG drafted a template for the NAPs and it was approved by the BFUG in connection with terms of reference of the group. Countries were asked to prepare a national action plan for the implementation of the Bologna Process commitments in the current working period 2024-2027. Instructions were given in the template that NAPs must address the implementation of the key commitments and enhancement knowledge sharing activities, and additionally should consider other Bologna commitments, as agreed to within Ministerial Communiqués, which need to be further implemented by the member state concerned (social dimension, fundamental values, learning and teaching including student-centred learning, internationalisation and mobility, digitalisation etc). In particular, countries were encouraged to include topics that have been identified as not entirely implemented in the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2024. Furthermore, it was emphasised

that NAPs should be prepared involving relevant stakeholders, bodies, and institutions in the national context, such as QA agencies, ENIC-NARIC offices, internationalisation and mobility offices, national students' union(s), national rectors' conferences, and the like, as appropriate and relevant for each topic. Furthermore, it was highlighted in the template that each country should create a structured mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the national action plan, according to their national context. The mechanism should engage the stakeholders consulted for the creation of the national action plan.

The BFUG set a deadline of 5 June 2025 for submitting the national action plans. The Secretariat has published all national action plans on the EHEA website. So far x National Action Plans have been submitted. The national action plans include both areas where implementation is lagging and areas where EHEA members want to improve the implementation even when commitments had already been met.

The Secretariat prepared an overview table analyzing the match between the actions in the NAPs and outcomes of the 2024 edition of the Bologna Process Implementation Report. The analysis took an inclusive and descriptive approach, reflecting all reported actions without assessing their coverage or level of detail in relation to a commitment. Furthermore, the Secretariat supported the thematic peer groups by producing separate tables of national commitments for each TPG. All these documents are available on the EHEA website.

TPGs have integrated NAPs in their work plans as they concern key commitments and social dimension. The completion of NAP only after the TPG work was already underway was not ideal for the work. In addition, NAPs also address other commitments such as internationalisation and mobility, fundamental values, learning and teaching and artificial intelligence that are not covered by any BFUG working structure.

1.4. BICG meetings and main activities

The coordination group met x times, mostly online. One meeting was held in Sofia in hybrid format which enabled the group to discuss more in-depth discussion about the key recommendations.

The working group reported regularly on the progress of its work and on the main activities of the TPGs to the BFUG. During the March 2026 BFUG meeting the BICG organised a short discussion on the implementation of key commitments and social dimension. During this thematic discussion, BFUG exchanged views on experiences gained from national implementation plans and how they could be utilised better to improve the efficiency of implementation.

Time and place	Topics covered
1. 4 February 2025, online	- Tasks and roles of BICG and TPGs - BICG draft work plan - Discussion about the draft TPG action plans - Identification of first key common topics across groups
2. 5 June 2025, online	- Updates from the TPGs - Discussion about National action plans and their impact on the work of the TPGs - Follow-up on key common topics
3. 21 October 2025, online	- Updates from the TPGs

	- Follow up on key common topics
4. 16 February 2026, online	- Updates from the TPGs - Follow up on key common topics - Preparation of the BFUG thematic discussion on implementation
5. 8 June 2026, online	- Updates from the TPGs - Reflections on achievements, challenges and future priorities from the TPGs - Consolidation and dissemination of TPG outputs
6. 16 October 2026, Sofia	- Updates from the TPGs - Identification of recommendations for further actions
7. 19 January 2027, online	- Discussion the draft final report for the BFUG and recommendations for the BFUG
8. xxx, online	- Finalising the final report and recommendations

1.4. Tackling transversal topics and liaison with other working structures

2. Implementation of Key Commitments and Social dimension (TPG reports)

2.1. The Thematic Peer Group A on Qualification Frameworks

2.1.1. Summary of TPG A activities

2.1.2. Progress made in implementation

2.1.3. Conclusions and recommendations

2.2. The Thematic Peer Group B on Lisbon Recognition Convention

2.2.1 Summary of TPG B activities

2.2.2. Progress made in implementation

2.2.3. Conclusions and recommendations

2.3. The Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance

2.3.1 Summary of TPG C activities

2.3.2. Progress made in implementation

2.3.3. Conclusions and recommendations

2.4. The Thematic Peer Group D on Social Dimension

2.4.1 Summary of TPG D activities

2.4.2. Progress made in implementation

2.4.3. Conclusions and recommendations

3. Conclusion and recommendations

National Action Plans

- Positive experiences have been gained from the use of National Action Plans (NAPs) in addressing implementation gaps. NAPs enhance accountability and create peer pressure to advance implementation. They have also helped member states to prioritise their implementation efforts, strengthened cooperation with stakeholders, and promoted knowledge-sharing activities.
- There should be a renewed commitment from every EHEA member to develop a national action plan for the next working period to address implementation gaps as identified in the 2027 edition of the BPIR.
- There is a need to improve the link between NAPs and the TPG work (plans), especially with regard to timing. Possibility of setting an earlier deadline for the next round.
- The BFUG should be mandated to ensure that the next work programme is planned and structured in a way that integrates the implementation efforts of member states, as outlined in their NAPs, into all relevant working structures.

Work of BICG and TPGs and methodology

- Peer-based support for the implementation of the Bologna key commitments remains an essential tool for enhancing progress. There should be a clear commitment to continue this work:

- coordination structure;
 - participation modalities;
 - effectiveness of activities;
 - links with supporting projects.
- To strengthen the impact of peer support, the work of the BICG and TPGs should focus on promoting structural reforms in member states, based on the needs identified in the NAPs.
- Active participation from all countries is essential to ensure progress. The final report of the BICG from the previous working period concludes that the change in the implementation has been positive, but slow. To strengthen the implementation, the report notes that countries that have not fully implemented the key commitments are also not always active in the TPG's work. In some cases, active participation does not help, if countries are not committed to making changes. Good representation in TPGs with expertise in the field and good communication and collaboration with the BFUG members have been highlighted repeatedly over the years as good practice and should be taken as a recommendation and a requirement for the future.

Self-certification process of NQFs

- Efforts to increase clarity and transparency of National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) should continue. The BFUG should be mandated to establish a platform for presenting self-certification reports and exchanging good practices in the next work programme.
- All EHEA members should commit to reviewing and updating their self-certification reports whenever significant changes occur in their national qualification frameworks, and to submitting revised reports to the BFUG Secretariat.

Consolidation and communication of TPG/project outputs

- Need to improve dissemination and visibility
- Clarity regarding status of outputs (Bologna or project) -three-tier system 1) formal documents adopted by ministers, 2) BFUG-endorsed guidance documents, and 3) project outputs compiled in a compendium of good practice
- Dissemination of outputs by members of the groups, focusing on practical applicability and use

Transversal topics