

# WG on Fundamental Values in Education

BFUG Meeting  
9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

- ▶ The WG on Fundamental Values was established to develop a comprehensive framework to further the monitoring and implementation of the fundamental values of the EHEA in Higher Education systems.

- ▶ The aim is for the system to foster:
  - ▶ Self-reflection
  - ▶ Constructive dialogue
  - ▶ Peer learning.....

while making it possible to assess the degree to which these fundamental values are honoured and implemented.

This is a continuation of the commitment to promote and protect these values as outlined in the Rome Communiqué (2020) which put particular emphasis on the protection of “fundamental values of Higher Education and democracy and the rule of law”.

- ▶ This brought a commitment to uphold:
  - ▶ Institutional autonomy
  - ▶ Academic freedom and integrity
  - ▶ Participation of students and staff in Higher Education governance
  - ▶ Public responsibility for and of higher education

# Work Plan of the WG for 2021 - 2024

- ▶ 1. Develop indicators on the *de jure* and *de facto* implementation of academic freedom and integrity, based on the definition of academic freedom adopted by Ministers in the Rome Communiqué’.
- ▶ 2. Set a consultation process with academic experts and relevant stakeholder organisations to establish how the additional fundamental values defined in the Paris and Rome communiqués can be
  - ▶ Defined
  - ▶ Understood
  - ▶ Implemented in the EHEA

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3. Continue to develop a comprehensive, effective and evidence-based monitoring framework for future reporting on the implementation of these fundamental values in the EHEA through the Bologna Process Implementation Report, a system which takes into account both the *de jure* and the *de facto* aspects.

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4. Liaise with the WG on Monitoring to make sure that the collection of data related to *de jure* monitoring of the fundamental values takes place, and that this data is reported in time for the 2024 Bologna Process Implementation Report

- ▶ 5. Develop options for the *de facto* monitoring of fundamental values, including different ways for types of data to be explored, together with methods for collecting, combining and analysing data.
- ▶ 6. Recommend indicators of fundamental values, as well as the evidence required to elicit such indicators.
- ▶ 7. Together with BFUG, initiate a policy dialogue and peer learning activities in the respective areas, with all relevant HE policy makers, institutions and stakeholders.

# Three Main Areas to be Developed

- ▶ A. Agree on how these values are defined, making sure that some already-existing definitions are formally agreed upon. It is to be borne in mind that the definition of *Academic Freedom* has already been agreed upon in the Rome Communique'. However, the notion of *Academic Integrity* still needs to be developed. This is envisaged to happen at a later stage by the WG
- ▶ B. Develop clear indicators that can distinguish the level of implementation
- ▶ C. Identify and agree upon reliable and objective evidence to feed the indicators.



# Future Monitoring Framework

- ▶ The WG recognizes that the future monitoring framework would need to happen at two levels:
  - ▶ 1. the nature of the legal protection given to these values
  - ▶ 2. the level of respect for values as experienced in practice.

Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to identify both existing mechanisms which monitor the respect and implementation of these values, that need to be strengthened; and the possibility to develop a new monitoring system in this regard.

# Consult on Conceptual Framework

- ▶ As its first task, the WG agreed to establish the definition or conceptual frameworks for the three remaining fundamental values.
- ▶ For this reason, we felt the need to consult with academic researchers and organisations, with relevant professional expertise, on the conceptual frameworks or definitions.
- ▶ This was done during the last two days when experts were invited for the WG meeting. The idea was to have experts for all three values and to subdivide them according to these values. However, inevitably, most experts were able to contribute to practically all areas.
- ▶ These “hearings” were great opportunities to outline substantive arguments to support particular proposals and ideas, and thus support the work of the WG.
- ▶ In the process, more questions were raised which make us realise that this is certainly a huge job which we need to undertake.

- ▶ Based on these experts' input, draft definitions will be prepared and discussed within the WG and at a later stage with BFUG. We are hoping that this will be helped by an Erasmus+ project which, once confirmed, would pave the way to start work on the indicators.

# Further questions.....

How can an evidence-based assessment be carried out?

How can indicators which provide a reliable and objective assessment of where countries stand in this regard, be developed?

Which aspects within an overarching concept need to be assessed?

How can these values be promoted and protected?

What are the possible sources of evidence and what methods can be adopted?