

**MEETING OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
Rome, 18 September 2014 - 19 September 2014
Draft Outcome of Proceedings**

Participant list

Country / Organisation	Name
Albania	<i>Absent</i>
Andorra	Maria del Mar Martinez Ramirez
Andorra	Meritxell Gallo Yanes
Armenia	Armen Ashotyan
Armenia	Robert Sukiasyan
Austria	Gottfried Bacher
Azerbaijan	Azad Akhundov
Belgium/Flemish Community	Noël Vercruysse
Belgium/French Community	Kevin Guillaume
BFUG Secretariat	Gayane Harutyunyan
BFUG Secretariat	Ani Hovhannisyan
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Aida Durić
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Petar Marić
Bulgaria	Ivana Radonova
BUSINESSEUROPE	<i>Apologies</i>
Council of Europe	Sjur Bergan
Croatia	Ana Tecilazić Goršić
Croatia	Ivana Krznar
Cyprus	Despina Martidou-Forcier
Czech Republic	Tereza Kobelkova
Denmark	Jette Søgren Nielsen
Denmark	Jonas Husum Johannesen
EC	Adam Tyson
EC	Frank Petrikowski
EI	Jens Vraa-Jensen
EI	Guntars Catlaks
ENQA	Maria Kelo
EQAR	Colin Tück
EQAR	Eric Froment

Estonia	Janne Pukk
ESU	Elizabeth Gehrke
ESU	Fernando Miguel Galán Palomares
EURASHE	Andreas Orphanides
EURASHE	Stefan Delplace
EUROSTAT	<i>Absent</i>
EUROSTUDENT	<i>Absent</i>
Eurydice	David Crosier
EUA	Michael Gaebel
EUA	Lesley Wilson
Finland	Maja Innola
France	Patricia Pol
France	Hélène Lagier
Georgia	Elene Jibladze
Germany	Peter Greisler
Germany	Katrin Fohmann
Germany	Peter Hassenbach
Greece	Christos Skouras
Holy See	Angelo Vincenzo Zani
Holy See	Friedrich Bechina
Holy See	Julia Maria Gonzales Ferreras
Holy See	Karolina Kasperaviciute
Holy See	Giovanni Patriarca
Holy See	Melanie Rosenbaum
Hungary	Ernö Keszei
Iceland	Una Vidarsdottir
Ireland	Christy Mannion
Italy	Stefania Giannini
Italy	Barbara Ciarlo
Italy	Daniele Livon
Italy	Maria Sticchi Damiani
Italy	Marzia Foroni
Kazakhstan	<i>Absent</i>
Latvia	Andrejs Rauhvargers
Latvia	Daiga Ivsina
Latvia	Jolanta Silka
Liechtenstein	Helmut Konrad
Lithuania	<i>Absent</i>
Luxembourg	Claude Schaber
Malta	<i>Apologies</i>

Moldova	<i>Absent</i>
Montenegro	<i>Absent</i>
Netherlands	Jolien van der Vegt
Norway	Tone Flood Strøm
Norway	Toril Johansson
Poland	Maria Boltruszko
Poland	Bartłomiej Banaszak
Portugal	Ana Mateus
Portugal	Ines Vasques
Romania	Cristina-Daniela Ghitulica
Romania	Radu-Mircea Damian
Romania	Adrian Curaj
Russian Federation	Alexander Sobolev
Russian Federation	Alexey Kuznetsov
Russian Federation	Nadezhda Kamynina
Russian Federation	Svetlana Shvedova
Serbia	<i>Absent</i>
Slovak Republic	Jozef Jurkovic
Slovenia	Mišela Mavrič
Spain	Luis Delgado
Sweden	Sara Bringle
Switzerland	François Grandjean
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	<i>Absent</i>
Turkey	Şaban Halis Çalış
Ukraine	<i>Absent</i>
UNESCO	<i>Absent</i>
United Kingdom	Pamela Wilkinson
United Kingdom/Scotland	Rebecca Robinson

1. Welcome and Introduction to the BFUG Meeting by the Chairs

Welcome by Italy

Mr. Daniele Livon, Director General for Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research of Italy, welcomed the participants and stressed the importance of the presence of three Ministers at the meeting, namely the Italian Minister of Education, Universities and Research, Ms. Stefania Giannini, the Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Archbishop Angelo Vincenzo Zani as well as the Armenian Minister of Education and Science, Mr. Armen Ashotyan as a strong indicator of the significant role of the Bologna Process.

Mr. Massimo Egidi, the Rector of the LUISS University, highlighted that in the last decade the Bologna Process has created important conditions to value the culture of evaluation and quality within university systems reducing the gap among countries and encouraging academic mobility. At the same time this policy may create many barriers. Moreover, by establishing common

rules, the European higher education (HE) system might risk to lose competitiveness in the framework of the global competition especially in respect to emerging countries. Finally, it was noted that the low mobility of teaching staff is one of the major issues hindering Europe's competitiveness while nowadays the global cooperation is of great importance.

Ms. Stefania Giannini, Minister of Education, Universities and Research of Italy, noted that the Anniversary of the Bologna Declaration was celebrated on 19 June 2014 and the European political vision behind the Bologna reforms is still valid and relevant. It was stressed that HE has a multiplicity of purposes, including societal, economic and cultural development. However, the priorities are to support for "creative, innovative, critically thinking and responsible graduates" to graduate on time and to realise their full potential in the labour market. This is a core issue for the Italian Presidency of the European Council, and recommendations on "entrepreneurship education" will be proposed.

At the national level, Italy supports cooperation between Universities and the labour market to promote job placements for as many students as possible. Improving the quality of Doctoral programmes is the third important theme for the Italian Presidency.

As a conclusion the Minister highlighted that for the future a different approach to monitoring implementation is desirable, which should be enriched by information collected bottom-up from institutions, for the continuation in the share of good practices, for the systematic involvement of academic experts and for a wider diversification of outcomes of the BFUG work.

Welcome by Holy See

Archbishop Angelo Vincenzo Zani, the Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, noted that it is a pleasure for the Holy See to Co-Chair the BFUG together with Italy and to discuss, in particular, the future of the Bologna Process and the EHEA. The Holy See-based on its age-old tradition and its international presence representing the Catholic Church throughout the world-is convinced, more than ever, that education, and in particular HE, can and must contribute more effectively to finding answers to questions that the society faces in these days, as well as preparing people who can put these answers into practice.

Finally it was noted that Bologna Process is still an important instrument and since Rome is an inspiring place for many people, Archbishop Angelo Vincenzo Zani wished the participants courageous and fruitful discussion while searching together for the right path for HE policy.

Welcome by Armenia

Mr. Armen Ashotyan, the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia, noted that criticism on the Bologna Process (BP) should not put at risk the Process itself and the different speeds of the implementation of the BP in the EHEA countries should not be frightening as it is quite natural. Moreover, the Process is very often being criticised because of the miscommunication with the society. Thus, the BP should not be too much paper-based but have the political attractiveness as well as the ambition and spirit.

It is important to underline that the BP as well as the creation of the EHEA is not just an educational dimension for cooperation but a pan-European project that unites such countries that would hardly cooperate. Armenia is honoured to host the Ministerial Conference and this is really significant for the country.

Another point singled out by the Minister was the content of education since the education reforms in the countries become too much market-oriented. As a result the role of education as a unique tool to transfer values as well as bring up generations that are really united, is being underestimated.

It was also stressed that looking at the map of the EHEA there are still unrecognised territories where people are not exercising the advantages of the European education. This is an important issue since education should be without discrimination. Thus, it was suggested to create a body within the BFUG for dealing with the educational issues of such kind.

As for the Fourth Bologna Policy forum Mr. Ashotyan highlighted that organisationally it will be easier for Armenia to host small number of countries but having in mind that more ambition should be put in the BP, it is proposed to enlarge the list of the participants of the Forum by combining the Mediterranean region with the global approach.

Last but not least it was noted that the best conditions should be ensured for all the participants.

The BFUG was informed that there were 86 participants present at the meeting and the apologies were received from BUSINESSEUROPE and Malta. The following countries/organisations were not present at the meeting Albania, EUROSTAT, EUROSTUDENT, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Ukraine and UNESCO.

2. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: BFUG_IT_VA_41_2a [Draft agenda]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_2b [Draft annotated agenda]

The agenda was adopted with the inclusion of four items in "AOB":

3. Internal seminar on the "Future of the Bologna Process"

Documents: BFUG_IT_VA_41_3a [Bologna Process Revisited_Future of the EHEA]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_3b [BFUG internal seminar]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_3c [EHEA members responses on national priorities]

The Chair, Ms. Maria Sticchi Damiani (Italy) presented the programme of the internal seminar as well as the three documents under this agenda point, namely:

1. The paper "Bologna Process Revisited: Future of the EHEA", which was based on the previous documents developed on the future of the EHEA by the BFUG members and by the Secretariat¹ and was intended to structure the discussion of the internal seminar.
2. The document "BFUG internal seminar" introducing the aim, structure and organisation of the internal seminar.
3. The survey on the EHEA members' responses on national priorities based on which the Co-Chairs together with the Secretariat prepared an introductory note with a list of

¹ "Bologna Process revisited" (BFUG_GR_KZ_39_5a), "Spanish non paper on the Bologna process revisited" (BFUG_GR_KZ_39_5a.1), "Bologna Process Revisited" (BFUGBoard_IT_VA_40_5a_Version1)

responses of the EHEA members. At the time of presentation 43 BFUG members and consultative members had responded to the survey.

Thus, the BFUG members were informed that the internal seminar was structured in plenary and group sessions. The three themes, namely "Looking back: 15 years of convergence", "The overall EHEA vision for the present and the future" and "Looking ahead: how to implement the EHEA vision" were discussed at the group sessions, for which the BFUG members were divided into 4 groups facilitated by the pre-defined delegates. Moreover, during the plenary sessions, the facilitators together with the group coordinators reported on the main points raised by the participants during the group discussions.

While wrapping up the internal seminar, the Chair highlighted that all the participants agreed that the internal seminar was very fruitful and was marked with intense discussion of the main themes as well as the related questions. As a result lots of valuable ideas were expressed.

First of all, it was generally agreed that the EHEA had come to a turning point where a new vision was needed in order to move ahead, face the new challenges to HE and develop new goals and strategies. A reflection on the lessons learned in the past years was also deemed necessary: on the whole, the original vision of the EHEA, as well as the common framework and tools developed in the first 15 years, were still considered valid, although it was clear that the vision had not been well communicated to all players in HE and that the framework and tools had not been fully implemented by all countries. Second, it was agreed that a thorough implementation of the Bologna process would also require the full involvement of academic communities at the institutional level and could only take place through cultural change.

The discussions on the new challenges to be faced by the EHEA opened up a number of possibilities and showed that present challenges like the public role of HE, technological developments, demographic changes, the current economic crisis, the rise of new conflicts, have a clear European dimension and, therefore, can be best tackled at the European level by defining common goals and strategies. The various suggestions made, both in the working groups and in the plenary meetings, were well received by the participants.

Organisational issues were also discussed in the working groups and it was generally agreed that some changes might be needed in the BP governance and working procedures. Several suggestions were made concerning the Ministerial meetings, the roles and interactions of the different BP structures, the stocktaking activities and the support measures for countries with implementation problems.

Finally, it was agreed that the follow up work should continue to be as inclusive as possible, and it was suggested that the Co-Chairs should collect written reports from the facilitators of the groups and any additional contributions from the participants (see also point 4) for the revision of the background document.

4. Presentation of the main conclusions of the internal seminar

The Holy See Co-Chair, Mr. Friedrich Bechina, informed the BFUG that based on the outcomes of the internal seminar, the paper "Bologna Process Revisited: Future of the EHEA" would be revised. Moreover, for all the delegations wishing to contribute to the revised version of the paper, the Secretariat will circulate the electronic version of the note sheets used for the group sessions. The comments and suggestions were requested to be sent to the Secretariat by 5 October 2014.

5. Draft minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Vatican City, 9 July 2014 and draft outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Athens, 9-10 April 2014

Documents: BFUG_IT_VA_41_5a [BFUG Board Vatican draft minutes]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_5b [BFUG Athens draft outcome of proceedings]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_5b_Annex1 [Thematic session on Financing of HE]

The draft outcome of proceedings of the Athens BFUG meeting was approved with the inclusion of some minor rephrasing. The BFUG also took note of the Vatican BFUG Board meeting draft minutes.

▪ Reports from the Chairs of the working groups

6a. WG Reporting on the Bologna Process Implementation

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_6a [Report of the Reporting on the Implementation Of the Bologna Process WG]

Mr. Andrejs Rauhvargers (Latvia), the Co-Chair of the **Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process WG**, informed the BFUG that since the last meeting of the WG held on 2 July 2014 in Riga, the data collection has been closed. Moreover, all the countries, except one, have submitted the questionnaire.

Mr. David Crosier (Eurydice) noted that the 2015 Implementation Report will be more comprehensive than the 2012 one. So, there are more data to analyse and this brings to the challenge of checking the feasibility of these data. It was also highlighted that after the evaluation of the 2012 Report, it was clear that the scorecard indicators tend to reflect the priorities from a few years back. Thus, there was a need to develop new scorecard indicators that should focus on the current and future challenges. Therefore, the WG has prepared a proposal for the BFUG with the new scorecard indicators. However, the BFUG was asked not to make a final decision on them yet and postpone it after the first draft of the report was discussed in the WG's next meeting on 5-6 November 2014 in Brussels.

Mr. Andrejs Rauhvargers (Latvia) stressed that during the WG's next meeting the maps for the new scorecard indicators will also be available, however the latter ones will be made in neutral colours for the WG's discussion and agreement. Afterwards, the WG will present to the BFUG at the November meeting whether these indicators can be used as scorecard indicators.

Finally, it was noted that the last meeting of the WG will be on 13 January 2015 in Riga and during the BFUG meeting on 26-27 January 2015 the second draft of the report will be presented to the BFUG. As for the final approval of the 2015 Implementation Report, it is expected in March during the BFUG meeting in Riga.

For more details as well as the timetable of the WG, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



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The BFUG highlighted that the developments of the 2015 Implementation Report are very encouraging. Moreover, the flexible approach to the discussion of the scorecard indicators is

greatly appreciated since the scorecard indicators are not only reporting tool but they also show how the commitments of the Ministers were interpreted.

As for the proposed new indicators, the BFUG stressed that a clear decision should be reached whether the proposed indicators should be in colour or not. Also, there is a need to be clear in terms of level and performance of the proposed indicators. Furthermore, it was noted that the proposed indicators need to be fine-tuned.

In particular, the BFUG made the following comments:

- Indicator Proposal 1: Level of national openness to cross border QA activity of EQAR registered agencies - it seems not to tell what it is supposed to, especially in "yellow" category, thus the formulations should be reviewed. It was also stressed that formulations used in the proposal does not correspond to the one of the Bucharest Communiqué, especially in the part "to fulfil the official requirements for external QA, and the outcome of the review is fully recognized".
- Indicator Proposal 2: Portability of public grants and publicly subsidised loans - its categorisation should be thought carefully and be more descriptive, also by looking at the formulation of the Ministerial Communiqué, where the distinction between credit and degree portability is less emphasized.
- Indicator proposal 6: System-Level recognition of three cycle degrees - it is good to have this indicator; however, the formulations should be reviewed reflecting the discussions of the pathfinder group and reflecting the fact that there is an uneven implementation of qualifications framework and of the quality assurance system within the EHEA.
- Indicator proposal 7: Internationalisation and Mobility - this is also recommended to be amended, by taking into account credit mobility levels as well.

Thus, Mr. Andrejs Rauhvargers stressed that all the comments made by the BFUG are very valuable and they will be taken into consideration during the WG's next meeting in November.

6b. Structural Reforms WG report including the updates from Ad-Hoc WG on the Third Cycle, Ad-Hoc WG on the Revision of the ECTS Users' Guide, RPL Network, and NQF

Document: Oral Update

Mr. Sjur Bergan (CoE), the Coordinator of the Co-Chairs of the **Structural Reforms WG**, noted that the WG had not sent a written report since the last meeting of the WG was on 16-17 September 2014 in Vatican City. The BFUG was informed that the final report of the WG would be presented to the BFUG during its November meeting, while highlighting that the report is quite substantial with an executive summary and a number of recommendations. It was highlighted that the revised version of the final report will be circulated to the WG members for their agreement and then to the BFUG members before the November BFUG meeting. Therefore, it was highly recommended that the BFUG members contacted their representatives in the Structural Reforms WG and kept communication ensuring that the BFUG members and their country representatives in WG are on the same line concerning the final report of the WG.

As for the substructures of the WG, it was noted that the revised draft of the ECTS Users' Guide had been discussed in the Structural Reforms WG and as a result the WG made some final comments. Therefore, the revised version of the document together with the recommendation of the Structural Reforms WG will be presented for adoption at the November BFUG meeting. In any

case, the SRWG agreed with the Co-Chairs proposal to have a first presentation of the Guide at the BFUG meeting of September to stimulate reflections also from the side of the BFUG (point 12 of the agenda). The final report of the ad-hoc group on Third Cycle Qualifications, which is a quite considerable piece of work, may also be presented to the attention of the BFUG during the November meeting. As for the RPL Network, the BFUG was informed that the group had provided no input for the final report of the WG despite the repeated requests. Therefore, the corresponding chapter and recommendations have been developed without the input from the Network. Furthermore, the issue of the RPL Network being an appropriate instrument for furthering the recognition of prior learning within the EHEA would be signalled in the final report of the WG.

Last but not least, the BFUG was informed that the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) Committee requested to comment on the questionnaire that was circulated to all the members of the LRC with a copy to ENIC-NARIC Networks. This is a major effort to verify the state of the implementation of the Convention in all the EHEA member countries that have ratified the Convention except one country.

6c. Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_6c [Report of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG]

Ms. Elisabeth Gehrke (ESU), the Co-Chair of the **Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG** (SD&LLL WG) updated the BFUG on the WG's recent activities. After the Athens BFUG meeting on 9-10 April 2014, the SD&LLL WG had a small internal meeting on 10 July 2014 in the Vatican City. The meeting was entirely devoted to the discussion of the WG's final outcomes to be presented to the BFUG in November.

During the meeting the following documents were presented and discussed:

- Third draft of the Strategy for the Development of the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning in the European Higher Education Area to 2020 with the working title of "Widening participation for equity and growth";
- Guidelines for National Access Plans;
- First draft of the final report.

Next meeting of the SD&LLL WG is on 23-24 September 2014 in Brussels. The meeting will follow the format of having a thematic session, focusing on student supports and services, in the beginning on the first day and internal work on the following day.

6d. Mobility and Internationalisation WG

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_6d [Report of the Mobility and Internationalisation WG]

The report of the **Mobility and Internationalisation WG** was presented by Mr. Gottfried Bacher (Austria), the Co-Chair of the WG, who noted that the last meeting of the WG was on 8-9 September 2014 in Vienna.

It was highlighted that during the last meeting the WG adopted the final texts of the report and agreed on its structure. It is planned to start with an executive summary, which should be less descriptive and will concentrate on the results of the work which started at the end of 2012. The executive summary will be followed by the recommendations for the Communiqué, then brief

accounts will be given on the development of the individual themes, again focussing on the results, and finally the full texts will be appended to the report.

At the meeting, the WG also undertook the preliminary ranking of the topics to be included in the final report, which is as follows:

- Staff mobility
- Mobility of teacher – training students
- Quality in mobility
- Description of study programmes
- Target on incoming mobility
- Guidelines on the Portability of financial student supports

It was stressed that as regards recommendations for overcoming underrepresentation in student credit mobility a common approach will be sought with the WG on Social Dimension.

As for the revision of the 2007 “The EHEA in a global setting”, it was noted that an overview of an up-to-date state of affairs has been drafted by the EUA, which will be finalised after a last round of feedback from the WG.

6e. Updates on the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition

Documents: BFUG_IT_VA_41_6e [Report of the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition]

Mr. Adam Tyson (EC) introduced the report of the **Pathfinder group on automatic recognition**. The BFUG was informed that the last meeting of the group was on 15 May 2014 in Brussels, and the focus was on the following points:

- Progress updates from Pathfinder group countries since the last meeting;
- Diploma Supplement;
- Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes.

As for the final report of the Group, it was stressed that it will include recommendations to review national, legislative procedures, to advise proper implementation of the Diploma Supplement, to implement appeal systems at institutional level, to support the role of quality assurance in recognition processes and to explore the potential for system-level automatic recognition on a regional and volunteer basis.

The last revision of the report is currently being undertaken for internal endorsement by the Group before being submitted to the BFUG in 2014 in time for the 2015 Ministerial Conference. The report will also be sent to the Structural Reforms WG for information.

As a conclusion, the Chair underlined the question of working methods being a very important one. Thus, this is something that the BFUG should also evaluate while providing feedback on the final outcomes of the WGs. Also, the working methods should also be presented from the experience of different WGs and the BFUG can take the advantage from this kind of experience while developing the new Work Programme for the upcoming 3 years.

6. Proposal for the Revised European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA

Documents: BFUG_IT_VA_41_7a [ESG Revision_feedback to BFUG]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_7a.1 [ESG Revision_changes_clean]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_7a.2 [ESG Revision_changes_tracked]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_7a.3 [BFUG_IT_VA_41_7a.3_Data BFUG survey]

Mr. Jens Vraa-Jensen (EI) briefed the BFUG on the revision process of the revised draft of the ESG for Quality Assurance in the EHEA after the Athens BFUG meeting, which was followed by a long discussion during which several countries expressed their agreement to the proposal while others, including the European Commission, proposed further changes.

Thus, by the decision of the BFUG made in Athens, the Steering Group was asked to make written proposals on how to integrate the proposed changes into the ESG and carry out a survey of the BFUG members to gain an understanding of the level of consensus on the proposed changes. As agreed by the BFUG, the purpose of this exercise was not to collect further comments or suggestions, but to identify areas of consensus for the suggestions made during the BFUG in Athens.

It was noted that the current proposal also demonstrates the important efforts of the Steering Group to integrate textual changes wherever possible and reasonable as well as reflecting the recommendations of the Board made at its meeting on 9 July 2014 In Vatican City.

The BFUG thanked the Steering Group for their work. Moreover, it was stressed that the changes made had moved the proposal in a right direction.

More specific proposals were also made, but suggesting parties made clear that they were not a condition for the adoption of the revised ESG:

- To include in the standard 1.3 assessment data system of the students demonstrating that learning outcomes have been achieved.
- The guidelines to the standard 1.8 should be supplemented with the information about the rights associated to qualification in particular in relation to regulated professions.

Finally it was proposed to add in the guidelines of the standard 2.4 that participation of international experts in peer panels is highly desirable to which the Steering Group gave its agreement.

The BFUG endorsed the proposal. Moreover, the BFUG agreed to publish the latest version after the meeting, with the indication that it is subject to approval by the Ministers. The revised ESG will not be used in the procedures before approval by the Ministers.

7. Revised version of the proposal for the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_8a [European Approach QA of Joint Programmes_Cover Letter]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_8a.1 [European Approach QA of Joint Programmes_v8_4]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_8a.2 [European Approach QA of Joint Programmes_Background Report]

This agenda point was presented by Mr. Colin Tück (EQAR), who underlined that the current proposal (ver.8.4) has been thoroughly discussed and consulted during the last meetings of

the Structural Reforms WG as well as the Mobility and Internationalisation WG. Moreover, the comments made by the BFUG at its Athens meeting as well as by the Board at its Vatican meeting are also reflected in the current proposal.

Thus, it was stressed that the political will to increase the number of joint programmes and joint degrees in the EHEA is evident through various Ministerial Communiqués. Therefore, the current proposal has been developed to ease external quality assurance of joint programmes. In particular, it will:

- dismantle an important obstacle to the development of joint programmes by setting standards for quality assurance of these programmes that are based on the agreed tools of the EHEA, without applying additional national criteria, and
- facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance of joint programmes that genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character.

The BFUG noted that revised version of the proposal for the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes is an important step forward and it gives more freedom for cooperation. Moreover, it will be beneficial to have one accreditation decision which will be accepted by all European countries that have programme level accreditation without applying additional criteria. At the same time it will save time, money and enhance transparency of accreditation while promoting European HE internationally and drawing the attention to the specific European Approach for QA, which have been established in the past few years.

Furthermore, it was stressed that the proposal is balanced and it will enable to dismantle many obstacles to joint programmes. However, still there are many obstacles created by national legislation. Thus, if the proposal makes sense and the legislation makes it difficult then maybe there is a need for the change in the legislation. So, the Ministers should commit to reviewing their national legislations in general so that the latter facilitate and do not hinder the implementation of the key goals of the Bologna Process. On the other hand, the Ministers, by adopting the proposals, would officially commit only to dismantle obstacles resulting from different arrangements concerning external quality assurance. In order to dismantle other obstacles created by national legislation, further work has to be done.

Moreover, it was stressed that the proposal concerns dismantling the obstacles created by different rules of external quality assurance and as such can be endorsed. The European approach is indeed an important step forward. However, its possible adoption will not mean that ministers commit to dismantle obstacles to joint programmes and joint degrees resulting from other aspects of national legislation. Therefore the problem of remaining obstacles to joint programmes should be further explored after the Ministerial conference.

The following comments were made by some BFUG members:

1. It was proposed to include in the recommendations the principle of the creation of the free zone in the proposal.
2. There is a need to clarify what the consequences of the negative decision are: immediate termination of the program provision or actually of the recruitment.

Concerning the first comment, Mr. Colin Tück clarified that the use of the word "free zone" may cause confusion at this stage and there is a need to be careful. As for the second comment, it was explained that there are different consequences of negative accreditation decisions in different countries.

With regard to the small amendment suggested by Finland on point 1.1 (Status), it was clarified that under the European Approach all degrees will remain national degrees (while a joint degree would be a degree of several countries at the same time), and therefore the Expert Group for drafting the proposal agreed to add a clarification to standard 1.1 as follows:

“The institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based”.

As for the specific comment of Austria, i.e. to add in the second bullet point on the first page of the proposal (ver.8.4.) “while complying or considering national requirements”, it was noted that there is already a clear statement on the second page of the proposal (ver.8.4.) stating that “Dependent on the national legal framework, the external quality assurance decision should come into force or be recognised in all countries where the programme is offered, as agreed in the Bucharest Communiqués”. Thus, it will not be in line with the proposal to add another line with the national requirements since it will be misunderstood as adding additional criteria.

After the deliberations, the Chair concluded that the proposal can be considered endorsed with the addition in the notes that the last approval from Austria is still pending and this can be sent by e-mail.

8. Countries and organisations to be invited to the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum and update on the preparation of the Yerevan Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum in Yerevan 2015

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_9 [List of countries and organisations to be invited to the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum]

Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan (BFUG Secretariat) briefly introduced the issue under this point of agenda, underlining that the list of the countries is based on the list of the Third Policy Forum. Moreover, if the BFUG agrees with the proposed list, the invitations will be sent to the participants as soon as possible taking into consideration the little time left for the event.

As for the Ministerial Conference, it was stressed that the website is already ready and the draft agenda of the event will be presented for discussion during the November BFUG meeting.

Ms. Marzia Foroni, the Italian Co-Chair, noted that while preparing the agenda of the Ministerial Conference it is important to ensure enough time for the Ministers to really discuss the challenges as well as present their vision on HE.

Further deliberations were features by different views of the BFUG on the proposal of the invitees to the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum. In particular, the following concerns were stressed:

- The rationale that the host country decides who to invite to the Bologna Policy Forum is comprehensible; nevertheless the discussion of the focus and approach of the event during two BFUG meetings is unclear if that discussion should not be taken into consideration. With the proposed approach, a fruitful and positive discussion on a

particular theme cannot be ensured and that is why a different approach focusing on one region was suggested.

- It is indicated in the agenda point that the list is composed of countries and organisations; however there are no organisations in the list.

Meanwhile, the following comments were expressed for the support of the proposal:

- The dynamics of the global policy forum should not be broken and the focus should not be narrowed to one region. Therefore, it is good to enlarge the list of the participants.
- There is a clear indication that regions outside the EHEA are interested in the Bologna Process, thus the approach used at the previous Policy Forums should be continued.

Moreover, the ESU offered help for contacting student organisations of the proposed countries and the EI expressed willingness to provide contacts since the latter one has member organisations in almost all the countries proposed in the list.

Finally it was noted that since there is little time left for the Policy Forum, the discussion should be focused not on the list of the participants but on the format and theme of the upcoming forum. It was also noted that the cause of such frustration is that the issue was not discussed earlier and more thoroughly. Furthermore, there was no clear responsibility who was in charge for the development of the programme for such an important international event. Thus, maybe for the future there is a need to establish an ad-hoc committee for dealing with this kind of issues.

Thus, the Chair concluded that the Co-chairs together with Armenia and the Secretariat will come up with the proposal in time for the November BFUG meeting. The proposal should take into account a request to have a wider perspective for global approach as well as present how the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum can be made politically relevant and attractive. Moreover, while developing the topics for the event there is a need to consider the fact that there are other global events on HE during 2015 in order to avoid overlaps.

9. Preparation of the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum Statement

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_10 [Roadmap for drafting the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué]

Ms. Marzia Foroni (Italy) briefed the BFUG on the recommendation of the Board made at its meeting on 9 July 2014 in Vatican City to prepare a roadmap for drafting the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué. Moreover, for the drafting of the Communiqué the Board recommended establishing a drafting group composing of the representatives from Italy and Holy See as present Co-Chairs as well as Latvia and Iceland as the upcoming Co-Chairs and Armenia as a Vice Chair and the Secretariat.

Thus, according to the roadmap, draft 0 of the Yerevan Communiqué should be presented at the Riga BFUG meeting on 26-27 January 2015, for the preparation of which the drafting group should take into consideration the outcomes of the internal seminar on the future of the Bologna Process and in particular the suggestions of the BFUG concerning the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué.

The BFUG supported the suggested approach and endorsed the roadmap for drafting the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué.

11. Procedure for the selection of the 2018 Ministerial Conference host

Documents: BFUG_IT_VA_41_11 [Proposal for the selection procedure of the 2018 Ministerial Conference host]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_11_Annex1
BFUG_IT_VA_41_11_Annex2

While presenting this agenda point, Ms. Marzia Foroni (Italy) noted that since the issue of the Bologna Secretariat is still under discussion, in the call for the selection of the 2018 Ministerial Conference (MC) host, it should be clarified that the issue of the Secretariat might be further discussed in November and the BFUG might come up with additional proposals to the conference host.

Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan (Bologna Secretariat) underlined that the current proposal is an update of the *BFUG_PL_AM_26_10a* document which was endorsed by the BFUG during its meeting on 13-14 October 2011 in Cracow. The revision mainly concerns the new deadline for the submission of the proposal by 1 November 2014 as well as the composition of the chairing arrangements that follow up to the Ministerial meeting in 2018. Finally, it was highlighted that the Secretariat had not received a proposal to host the 2018 MC from any EHEA member country so far.

The BFUG noted that there may be a need for some flexibility with regard to the deadline, since if the approach to the Secretariat is changed in November additional proposals from the EHEA countries might be received. At the same time the EHEA countries are welcome to submit informally any alternative/possible models for the Secretariat.

Last but not least it was noted that it should be clarified in the call that the application should be received by the Secretariat by the proposed deadline of 1 November 2014. Moreover, the applicants are invited to mention in their application which languages they can provide for the simultaneous interpretation during the 2018 MC.

12. Presentation of the revised ECTS Users' Guide

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_12a.1 [ECTS Users' Guide_clean]
BFUG_IT_VA_41_12a.2 [ECTS Users' Guide_track changes]

Mr. Frank Petrikowski (EC) informed the BFUG that the revised ECTS Users' Guide has been revised by the ad-hoc WG of experts, who have started the revision of the Guide since January 2013. The Guide is based on a broad agreement of the experts as well as the stakeholders, who underlined the practicability of the Guide.

The latest version of the draft has been discussed during the Structural Reforms WG's last meeting on 16-17 September 2014 in Vatican City, and all the comments made by the Structural Reforms WG will be taken up by the ad-hoc WG. Moreover, it was noted that if the BFUG members have any comments or suggestions for the current revised Guide they are welcome to send them to the ad-hoc WG by mid-October.

Last but not least, it was stressed that the final version of the Guide will be presented to the BFUG in November for the endorsement.

13. Presentation of the draft agenda of the BFUG meeting in Rome (27-28 November 2014)

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_13 [November Rome BFUG meeting draft agenda]

The BFUG took note of the draft agenda of the November Rome BFUG meeting.

14. Information on the priorities of the Latvian EU Presidency and planning of the BFUG activities in the first semester of 2015 (Latvian and Icelandic Chairmanship)

Document: BFUG_IT_VA_41_14 [Latvian Presidency Presentation]

Ms. Daiga Ivsina (Latvia) presented the overall priorities and main events to be organised in Latvia during its EU Presidency and the BFUG Co-Chairmanship. For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



BFUG_IT_VA_41_14
_Latvian Presidency F

15. Any Other Business

On behalf of EUROSTUDENT, Ms. Marzia Foroni (Italy) reminded the BFUG that the mandate of Věra Šťastná as the Czech representative in the BFUG had come to an end on 30 June 2014, so as her mandate to represent the BFUG in the EUROSTUDENT V Steering Board. Thus, the candidacy of Ms. Marzia Foroni (Italy) as the representative of the BFUG in the EUROSTUDENT V Steering Board was unanimously endorsed.

Mr. Adrian Curaj (Romania) presented to the BFUG the key information including the main aims and themes of the Future of Higher Education-Bologna Process Researchers' Conference (FOHE-BPRC), second edition, which is planned on 24-26 November 2014 in Bucharest. For more details, see the PowerPoint presentation below:



FOHE BPRC 2 -
presentation for the I

Mr. Fernando Miguel Galán Polomares (ESU) recalled the recommendation of the Board concerning the transparency of information made its meeting on 17 September 2013, i.e. after the endorsement of the minutes/draft outcome of proceedings of the meetings, documents which were also endorsed at meetings of the BFUG/Board as well as the structures of the 2012-2015 Work Plan, should be made freely accessible in the Archive except for the documents containing information on the application of the countries for the EHEA membership and draft version of the Communiqués. Thus, it was requested to follow the Board's recommendation.

Finally, Mr. Colin Tück (EQAR) noted that the agencies will be admitted to the Register based on the current ESG until the new revised proposal is finally adopted by the Ministers in spring 2015. Those, agencies that have already been reviewed should take into consideration that the

renewal is approaching. Moreover, all the agencies are expected to be reviewed by the new revised ESG by 2020.

The Chair thanked the BFUG members for their fruitful discussions and contributions.