Implementing the Bologna Key Commitments through Peer Support

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) and the three Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs)

Contents

1   Executive Summary

The **Peer Support Approach** has proved to be a successful instrument for sharing experiences - both good practice and challenges – and in stimulating and guiding the implementation of the **three Key Commitments** for EHEA countries: a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA having its first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS, compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and utilization of the Diploma Supplement, and quality assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

Countries showed particular appreciation for the coordinated efforts of the three Thematic Peer Groups and the Bologna Implementation and Coordination Group, involving different stakeholders and experts.

The primary objective was to facilitate countries in supporting each other to fully implement the three Key Commitments. Almost all EHEA countries participated in at least one of the groups, with **many countries participating in two or all three groups**. The overall response to the initiative exceeded expectations, as Ministers had made the commitment in the Paris Communiqué for each country to participate in at least one group.

In this phase, national participation has mostly comprised **ministry representatives, agencies and experts,** while stakeholder participation has been drawn largely from European level organisations. This has **worked well**, and the formal nature of participation in the Thematic Peer Groups has enabled participants to be involved in the activities and discussions on a regular basis. However, there is a strong feeling that **greater involvement of higher education institutions, staff and students, as well as experts and practitioners would bring additional benefits** to the activities of the Thematic Peer Groups.

The Bologna Implementation and Coordination Group **survey results show a largely positive response to the work**. This includes responses both from countries advanced in the implementation of the Key Commitments ("dark-green countries") and those that still have work to do. Very few respondents questioned the usefulness of the activities, including for those already 'green'.

There is **strong evidence of tangible progress at national level** for each of the Key Commitments. Despite the short time since the establishment of the Peer Support structure, **new legislation inspired by peer support activities has been proposed or adopted in at least twelve countries**. In addition, other countries reported that the work

has given a positive boost to implementation of the Key Commitments and that **national discussions and action have taken significant steps forward**.

Sharing experience with others that have already undertaken similar reforms is seen as a particularly valuable way of avoiding mistakes and improving processes. An example of a highly appreciated initiative that derived from the work in the Thematic Peer Groups is staff mobility. Staff mobilities were introduced in two of the groups (B and C), and were particularly lauded for the opportunities they offer participants to share knowledge and expertise on sub-themes, specific topics and implementation practices. However, it is crucial that the findings of study visits be disseminated back home. Some objectives can still be reached since some of the mobilities have been postponed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 and will be carried out at a later stage.

The work of the groups has focused on the implementation of the Key Commitments, but it has also addressed other, specific issues in the respective policy areas. For example, the activities of the Thematic Peer Groups contributed to increasing the common understanding of certain concepts such as 'automatic recognition'.

The work of the Thematic Peer Groups has been supported by a special strand of **ERASMUS+ projects** co-funded by the European Commission. The two rounds of project calls provided an excellent balance between focusing on the implementation of the Key Commitments and exploring further developments of related policy areas. This was achieved by **linking the work of the Thematic Peer Groups with a broader community**, gathering a large number of diverse participant profiles. Although the ERASMUS+ projects provide the basis for the peer support activities, countries are also expected to ensure national co-funding for them.

In terms of organisation, all Thematic Peer Groups used a combination of **Thematic Peer Group meetings with public seminars.** This solution worked well and has been positively assessed. In the future it is felt particularly important to keep a mix of larger panel meetings to facilitate a broad discussion, and smaller group activities having a thematic focus (for example, staff exchange or workshops). This combination has proved to be very effective in facilitating the sharing of good practices. Moreover, Thematic Peer Group activities should continue to be grouped under the umbrella projects to ensure consistent organisation and communication.

The **Bologna Implementation and Coordination Group's role,** in coordinating the work and **promoting synergies** between the groups, has also been considered useful and necessary. Systematic and continuous cooperation and networking between the Thematic Peer Group members has been important to raise awareness about shortcomings in implementation, as well as the need for better communication and exchange of views among those responsible for implementation. In particular, the **countries' contributions to Thematic Peer Groups' Action Plans**, which countries

were asked to propose and keep updated for each Key Commitment, have helped to improve the coordination of relevant national stakeholders. This way of working also encouraged self-reflection on their own practices. Continuation of countries' participation in the Thematic Peer Groups would make it possible for them to reflect further on their contributions to the Thematic Peer Groups' Action Plans and revise and update them in the next period.

While there has been a very positive assessment of this first phase of work, the survey respondents propose a number of **recommendations for the future**. In particular:

- the methodology could be further developed in order to enable more intensive work in smaller groups;
- more digital meetings could be held to facilitate and broaden participation;
- more practical sessions could be offered with examples brought by each participant;
- improved synergy within and between countries could be brought about by more efficient national coordination. Public authorities should cooperate systematically with stakeholders in discussing and introducing necessary changes in legislation and regulations.

The Bologna Implementation and Coordination Group could also take a more pro-active role in ensuring coordination and exchange of information on different **transversal topics** relevant for all three Thematic Peer Groups - such as, for example, the further development of micro-credentials. Equally, **cooperation between the three Thematic Peer Groups themselves could be strengthened**, while maintaining clear thematic borders between the Thematic Peer Groups.

While the Bologna Implementation and Coordination Group may develop in this way, it is important to limit its role to coordination. Some respondents pointed to the risk of potential overlapping with some existing structures such as with ENIC/NARIC network or the QF-EHEA National Correspondents. Strong interaction and cooperation with these existing structures and networks is therefore essential.

In planning further developments of the Peer Support Approach through Thematic Peer Groups coordinated by the Bologna Implementation and Coordination Group, it should be acknowledged that the **co-chairs of all groups** in this structure have borne a **very significant workload**.

In conclusion, although the working period for the Thematic Peer Groups and the Bologna Implementation and Coordination Group itself has been very short, our observations of the interactions in the groups and the participants' reflections allow us to conclude that the **Peer Support Approach stimulates and facilitates positive developments**. This work has shown the potential of the peer support methodology for advancing both

supportive action towards other countries as well as for **stimulating national self-reflection and concrete action**.

2 Activities and structures of the BICG and the TPGs

2.1 Introduction

At the Ministerial Conference held in Paris in 2018, the ministers of higher education of the EHEA agreed that full implementation of **three Key Commitments** is crucial for the success of the Bologna Process. The three Key Commitments identified are a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA having its first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS, compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and utilization of the Diploma Supplement, and quality assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area[1].

Moreover, the ministers adopted a structured **Peer Support Approach** based on solidarity, cooperation, and mutual learning to promote the implementation of the three Key Commitments. Consequently, the **Bologna Implementation and Coordination Group (BICG)** was established with the objective of assisting the BFUG in implementing, coordinating and monitoring the peer support approach. The Peer Support Approach was to be facilitated by the establishment of three **Thematic Peer Groups** (TPGs), each dealing with one of the three Key Commitments.

In preparation for the 2020 Rome Ministerial Conference and the Communiqué the BICG herewith analyses the first round of peer support in order to report, through the BFUG, to the ministers and suggest the direction that the Peer Support Approach should take in the future.

This *Final Report on Implementing the Bologna Key Commitments through Peer Support* provides information on the activities implemented and the first outcomes of the Peer Support Approach with the objective of informing the discussion of the BFUG on continuation of the peer support after the Rome Ministerial Conference. In addition to that, this Report brings an assessment of what worked well and what could be improved in the future made by the BICG on the basis of a feedback of the TPG members captured from the meetings, TPG questionnaires and the BICG Survey.

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[1] See ANNEX I Paris Communiqué, passage on Peer Support

2.2 BICG activities

In the course of summer 2018 the BICG was established and before the BFUG meeting in September 2018 in Vienna three Thematic Peer Groups, one for each of the three key commitments, were set up in order to stimulate the new peer support approach. At the meeting in Vienna, the three co-chairs per Thematic Peer Group were identified and the BICG was expanded by one co-chair per Thematic Peer Group.

Guidelines for the work in the Thematic Peer Groups were agreed with the three co-chairs of each group and by the end of 2018/in the beginning of 2019 **Action Plans** had been drafted and all the Thematic Peer Groups held their first meetings.

The work of the Thematic Peer Groups has been supported by a special strand of **ERASMUS+ KA3-projects,** co-funded by the European Commission. The two rounds of this Erasmus+ action supported the three Thematic Peer Groups and provided co-funding for about 26 projects focussing on commitments made in the Paris Communiqué, ranging from qualifications frameworks, academic recognition, quality assurance to social dimension or learning and teaching.

The BICG has held twelve meetings (six of them online) from 2018 to 2020[2]. The first three meetings focused on kick-starting the work in the TPGs, and helping to set them up. This task was accomplished by using a survey conducted among the BFUG members followed by matchmaking activities aimed at bringing together countries and stakeholder organisations willing to engage in the various aspects of implementing the three key commitments.

The method chosen was to ask countries to express their willingness to cooperate in order to help each other to fully implement the three key commitments.

The third meeting was held jointly with all the Thematic Peer Groups' Co-chairs in order to allow a good exchange of ideas and working methods. After that, each TPG nominated one of their co-chairs to represent their group in the BICG meetings.

The BICG established an overall thematic framework for the work of the TPGs at the beginning of the process, but entrusted the groups themselves with deciding on further activities and their focus. A standard Action Plan template for all the TPGs was developed to assure a standard approach to the methodology of work of the TPGs.

The work of the groups has mainly focused on the overarching implementation of the key commitments, but it has also addressed specific issues and went into greater detail in the respective policy areas. Nonetheless, the implementation of the overall commitments has remained at the centre of the work.

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[2] 5 June 2018, Brussels, 30 August 2018, Brussels, 26 September 2018, Vienna, 22 October 2018, Brussels, 26 February 2019, Vienna, 16 September 2019, Brussels, 8 April 2020 (online), 13 May 2020 (online), 12 June 2020 (online), 09 July (online), 27 August (online), 18 September (online).

2.3   Action Plans of the TPGs

Collecting the ideas and proposals by the TPGs' members in order to develop the TPGs' Action Plans was key in focusing the work and valuable for ensuring progress.

The Action Plans contain the following information:

- Introduction and background information: the context for setting up the TPG, the scope, aims and objectives of its work;

- Thematic orientations: sub-themes that the TPG should cover in the frame of the Action Plan and the basis for such a thematic design (e.g. BICG survey results, networking sessions, discussions of the TPG at its first meeting, etc.);

- General information on the TPG: co-chairs, participating countries and institutions, umbrella project, other supporting projects;

- TPG activities and outcomes: e.g. surveys, self-assessment, peer assessment, analysis, workshops, conferences, list of participating countries and institutions, explanation of the contribution of the activity to the implementation of the key commitment in one or several countries, the projects supporting the activity and the time frame envisaged for the implementation of the activity;

- Specific country inputs: concrete actions to be undertaken in order to achieve the set engagements (e.g. surveys, self-assessment, peer assessment, analysis, workshops, conference), partners from the TPG, partners from the own country, outcomes, contribution of the activity to the implementation of the key commitments, timeline, supporting projects.

The Action Plans have been updated on a rolling basis and published on the EHEA website[3]. Countries have been matched up to create sub-groups to work on the specific themes where they can benefit from each other. It has been important to ensure that, even when a peer support group focuses on quite specific themes, the importance of implementing the overall commitments is not forgotten. Action Plans in all the TPGs were an important prerequisite for the work within the groups, but certainly also stimulated self-reflections on participants' state of play toward implementation of the respective key commitment.

A survey was sent out to all members of the Thematic Peer Groups at the beginning of February 2020 and the deadline for feedback was set in mid-April, in order to receive

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[3] The TPG Action Plans are available on the EHEA website:
TPG A on QF: http://ehea.info/page-peer-group-A-QF
TPG B on LRC: http://ehea.info/page-peer-group-B-LRC
TPG C on QA: http://ehea.info/page-peer-group-C-QA

input on how the approach is seen by the participants. Results of the BICG Survey are included in this Report, and were presented at the Split BFUG meeting in June 2020 in view of the Ministerial Conference, now postponed until 19-20 November 2020.

2.4   Composition of the BICG and the TPGs

COMPOSITION OF THE BICG

Co-chairs: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia

Members: Vice-chair (Italy), Co-chairs of TPG A on QF (Czech Republic, Finland, Kazakhstan), Co-chairs of TPG B on LRC (Albania, France, Italy), Co-chairs of TPG C on QA (Belgium-Flemish Community, Georgia, Cyprus), Co-chairs of WG1 (Eurydice, Norway), EUA/EURASHE, European Commission

COMPOSITION OF THE TPG A ON QF

Co-chairs: Czech Republic, Finland, Kazakhstan

Members: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium Flemish Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Council of Europe, EI-IE, Estonia, ESU, EURASHE, European Commission, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Malta, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Turkey.

COMPOSITION OF THE TPG B ON LRC

Co-chairs: Albania, France, Italy

Members: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Council of Europe, Denmark, EI-IE, EQAR, Estonia, EURASHE, ESU, EUA, European Commission, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, UNESCO.

COMPOSITION OF THE TPG C ON QA

Co-chairs: Belgium-Flemish Community, Georgia, Cyprus

Members: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, EI-IE, ENQA, EQAR, EURASHE, ESU, EUA, European Commission, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia,

Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, UNESCO, United Kingdom (Scotland).

A record of attendance at all the meetings is provided in Annex III.

2.5 Thematic orientations and intended outcomes of the TPGs

	Thematic Peer Group A (QFs)	Thematic Peer Group B (LRC)	Thematic Peer Group C (QA)
Thematic orientations:	- Self-certification of the national qualifications frameworks to the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA; - Complete implementation of the ECTS Users' Guide; - Short cycle higher education; - Multiple purposes and use of the qualifications frameworks by the stakeholders; - Study programmes outside 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; - 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; - External quality assurance; - The role and engagement of stakeholders in QA; - Cross-border QA; - European Approach to accreditation of joint programmes.

	Thematic Peer Group A (QFs)	Thematic Peer Group B (LRC)	Thematic Peer Group C (QA)
Intended outcomes:	• Organise peer learning activities and seminars on the thematic orientations to discuss different approaches and share experience; • Special support will be given to countries working on the self-certification of their NQFs to the QF-EHEA; • Give an opportunity to peer review the draft or final self-certification reports; • Improve the implementation of ECTS.	• Peer support to share ideas in order to establish common standards to implement recognition practices operating in respect of the LRC and of national legislation within the EHEA; • Support implementation of the Action Plans at national level; • Organise 3 public seminars on (1) fraudulent qualifications and digitalisation, (2) substantial differences, (3) information provision.	• Peer to peer support and cooperation on the different thematic orientations in order to better fulfil the key commitment on QA; • Organise thematic sessions with the members of the TPG on the thematic orientations to exchange ideas and good practices; • Up to date Action Plan for each country participating in the TPG, with concrete activities within the TPG or the own country.

3   Implementation of the Key Commitments

3.1   The Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Frameworks

The Thematic Peer Group A focuses on the Key Commitment 1: a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching frameworks of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS.

3.1.1   Meetings and activities

Meetings: 15 January 2019, Helsinki

3 June 2019, Prague

18 February 2020, Prague

Events: Workshop on self-certification of NQF, Prague, 3 May 2019

Conference on the Implementation of the ECTS Users' Guide, Prague, 4 June 2019

Self-certification Workshop, Strasbourg, 6 September 2019

PLA on NQFs, Berlin, 21 – 22 October 2019

PLA on Multiple Purposes and Qualifications Frameworks by stakeholders, Brussels, 18 – 19 November 2019

Seminar on Current and Future Trends – Linking Qualifications Frameworks and Quality Assurance, Prague, 17 February 2020

The first meeting of the TPG took place in Helsinki on 15 January 2019. TPG members met here for the first time and discussed the thematic indications and their interests in them based on the first draft of their contributions to the TPG Action Plan. In their contributions to the TPG Action Plan, countries indicated their need for support and offered their support. It became clear at the meeting in Helsinki that the Thematic Peer Group would not be able to benefit from specific projects funded through Erasmus+, due to lack of projects in this area. Nevertheless, the Thematic Peer Group's general activities could be supported by the same call. The related project included plans and co-funding proposals for the Thematic Peer Group meetings, wider conferences and different peer learning activities.

The Action Plan was finalized, and showed that several countries had a strong interest in working on their self-certification reports. Since the PLA focusing on self-certification was planned only for October 2019, the co-chairs decided to organize an additional **workshop on self-certification of national qualification frameworks** for interested countries, on 3 May 2019 in Prague. Representatives of eight countries participated in the workshop; of these three countries (Finland, Germany and Croatia) had already self-certified their frameworks and shared their experience with the others. Criteria and procedures for self-certification were discussed in detail and countries got practical advice on how to approach the preparation of the report.

The second meeting of the TPG took place in Prague on 3 June 2019. Representatives of 18 countries and other stakeholders participated: in total 30 participants. Members discussed new developments in their countries and plans for new projects. Kazakhstan presented the current state of development of their national qualifications framework (NQF) and preparation of their self-certification report and received feedback from the participants.

The meeting was followed by a **conference on ECTS** and the implementation of national credit systems for higher education in line with the commitments of the EHEA. The meeting started with an overview of the foundations of ECTS, its development, and the current situation. Two examples of national credit systems were presented by Estonia and Azerbaijan and the parallel sessions focused on developing course catalogues and credit recognition procedures, producing grade distribution tables for grade conversion and ECTS from the perspective of QA.

On 6 September 2019, members of the Thematic Peer Group who are also the national correspondents for NQF in the network of the Council of Europe met in Strasbourg for the second **self-certification workshop**. This time, Albania and Georgia presented the current state of their national qualifications frameworks and the preparation of their self-certification reports and participants provided feedback and gave recommendations.

Two PLAs prepared by the German Rectors' Conference and the European Students' Union followed in October and November.

The **German PLA** took place on 21–22 October in Berlin and presented the German case with a focus on higher education qualifications frameworks, the process of self-certification, the question of promoting the QF among higher education institutions, academics and employers, and subject-specific QFs. There was also detailed discussion on the criteria and procedures for self-certification.

ESU organized its **PLA** on 18–19 November 2019 in Brussels. During the PLA, the multiple purposes and uses of qualifications frameworks by stakeholders were explored. A report with recommendations for national governments was prepared

based on presentations of different stakeholders and discussions among PLA participants.

Two final Thematic Peer Group events took place in Prague on 17–18 February 2020. A **seminar on linking qualifications frameworks with quality assurance** brought together more than 50 representatives of different countries and stakeholder organizations. Six countries from different EHEA regions introduced their approach to linking qualifications frameworks and quality assurance and the representatives of different stakeholders (higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies, and students) provided their views on what works well and what needs to be improved.

The **third and final TPG meeting** followed the seminar. The Co-chairs wrapped up the group's work and Kazakhstan presented their NQF and self-certification report for peer review. The second half of the meeting was devoted to discussions on how the countries had progressed in implementing the key commitment on qualifications frameworks and how the Thematic Peer Group supported them in improving implementation. Many countries reported progress, although challenges remain. Participants agreed on the usefulness of the Thematic Peer Group meetings and other support and expressed a need to continue the Thematic Peer Group work.

3.1.2   Main outcomes, conclusions and recommendations

Generally, awareness of the importance of qualifications frameworks and their implementation has increased. Countries have been able to compare their situation, achievements and challenges with other countries. Co-operation with the EQF has been sought throughout the work. With regard to self-certification, the lack of a peer review procedure and of opportunities to present and discuss the self-certification report have been noted.

Kazakhstan prepared their self-certification report and presented it in February 2020. It was generally received very well with some proposals for adding information and improving clarity. Albania and Georgia presented their situation and ideas for their reports and they both received feedback from the peer support group. Based on feedback received as well as observations of the co-chairs, it is important for those countries which have not yet done so to prepare their self-certification reports.

It has also been noted that it is especially important to have up-to-date information concerning self-certification available on the EHEA website. If a country would like to proceed to self-certification – or update its report – the information concerning criteria and procedures is difficult to find. Discussions with both the Council of Europe and the European Commission concerning information on self-certification/referencing as well

as having those reports easily available have been initiated. In the next BFUG work period TPG A should strengthen its efforts to achieve this goal.

When it comes to the implementation of the ECTS User's Guide, in many countries further work needs to be done. Many aspects of the Guide are overlooked and the Guide should be used more effectively as guidance on programme design, better recognition of learning outcomes, credits and qualifications; learning, teaching and assessment; instruments for planning and carrying out mobility activities; recognition of prior learning and experience and quality assurance of ECTS implementation.

As far as the overall working method of the Thematic Peer Group is concerned, following **conclusions and recommendations** were made based on the feedback from participants at the Thematic Peer Group meetings and from the survey organized by the BICG:

- Many countries joined the Thematic Peer Group with an interest in one specific subtheme – mostly qualifications frameworks, ECTS or short-cycle qualifications. However, due to the fact that only the umbrella project supported the work of the TPG and the time period was relatively short, some of these topics were not discussed in detail. That was for example the case of short-cycle qualifications. In case of ECTS, there was a conference but no smaller events which could have had an even stronger peer support aspect. As a result, some countries participated in the big group meetings but there were less examples of smaller scale peer support activities for sharing good practice. This might explain why the Thematic Peer Group may have been less helpful for certain countries to achieve tangible results.

- The Thematic Peer Group seemed to work very well for the countries with an interest in developing or updating their qualifications frameworks. These countries participated in most of the smaller activities (workshops and PLAs) and found them useful and encouraging. These participants reported that they appreciated having a chance to share what they were working on, what challenges they were facing, and that they could get feedback from colleagues – both from the more experienced ones and from those dealing currently with the same issues. Participants also appreciated the bigger events (the ECTS conference, the seminar on linking qualifications frameworks and quality assurance) because they provided important perspectives on how the topics are related and what can be done to make them work better together. Participants also mentioned that the Thematic Peer Group helped them to establish contacts with colleagues from other countries and organizations and it is now much easier to reach them for direct consultations.

- To make the group work in a truly peer supported way, it would be helpful to have more countries that are advanced in implementation participate and be active in sharing good practice and providing support to others, just like those that have been involved during this period.

- The peer support spirit could also be reinforced if more countries take an active role in planning and organizing the Thematic Peer Group work. During this period, most of the work was done by co-chairs and the umbrella project partners (HRK and ESU).

- There was good participation in the TPG events even when countries had to cover a part of their costs. That was the case at the beginning before the funding from the umbrella project was available. TPG members had to cover their costs related to the first meeting in Helsinki and partly to the first self-certification workshop in Prague. Both meetings had good participation.

Most participants agreed that the TPG work should be continued. The topics and thematic indications should be well defined and the working method should reflect them. Small events with opportunities to share good practice and discuss current challenges would be especially helpful. These could be organised by countries in a pro-active way.

Further information, agenda, reports and presentations of the events can be found at http://ehea.info/page-peer-group-A-QF.

3.2   The Thematic Peer Group B on Recognition

The Thematic Peer Group B focuses on the Key Commitment 2: national legislation and procedures compliant with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Diploma Supplement.

3.2.1   Meetings and activities

Meetings: 31 January 2019, Tirana

24 June 2019, Bologna

17 June 2020, online (postponed from 10 March, Sèvres)

Events: Seminar on document fraud and digitalization (with EQAR) - 1 February 2019, Tirana

Seminar on substantial difference (with ESU) - 26 June 2019, Bologna

Seminar on information provision (with EUA) - 18 June 2020, online (postponed from 11 March, Sèvres)

The composition of the TPG, with a mixture of representatives of the Ministries and ENIC-NARIC centres (37 countries and 8 stakeholder organisations) proved to provide a good balance of policy makers and professionals involved in recognition that facilitated discussion and exchange of practices.

The first meeting, which was held on 31 January 2019 in Tirana, was attended by 28 members (23 countries and 5 stakeholder organisations). During the first meeting the starting point was the Bologna Process Implementation Report and its indicators for recognition, in order to set the scene and support countries in focusing on concrete indicators of implementation of the LRC at national level. The work plan of each country and the overall work plan of the group were analysed, matching needs and offers in the field of peer support on recognition issues. Furthermore, four subthemes were discussed: the legal framework to allow implementation of the LRC; achieving automatic recognition; qualifications held by refugees; digitalisation. The first meeting was followed by a Public Seminar on Document Fraud and Digitalization (around 150 participants, organised with EQAR).

The second meeting, on 24 June 2019 in Bologna, attended by 35 members (30 countries and 5 stakeholder organisations), focused on sharing the developments regarding the countries' contributions to the Action Plan, with a focus also on the Erasmus+ call and on a matchmaking activity as a support to the countries' activities. The need for tools and instruments to support portability of recognition decisions was discussed too. The meeting was followed by a Public Seminar on Substantial Difference on 26 June 2019 (around 120 participants, organized with ESU).

The Third meeting and **the Seminar on information provision,** which should have taken place on 10 and 11 March 2020 in Sèvres, had to be cancelled due to the outbreak of Covid-19, and they were postponed to 17-18 June 2020, well before the Ministerial conference, now planned for November. The third TPG on 17 June 2020 was attended by 35 members (30 countries and five stakeholders organisations). Contents and length were reshuffled to better fit the online modality, and to take into account the impact of the current crisis on higher education and recognition. In line with the mandate of the Thematic Peer Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the goal of this online meeting was to analyze the impact of the outbreak of COVID-19 on the Action Plan and implementation of LRC at the national level. The meeting helped to outline what threats and challenges are currently being posed for the implementation of LRC in the EHEA countries and to share possible responses

and good practices. Results of the discussions in the working groups fed into the section below about outcomes and recommendations from TPG B. This last TPG meeting was followed by an online Seminar focused on the role of HEIs for information provision and recognition in times of Covid-19 (around 350 participants, both from the EHEA and other interested countries from outside the EHEA).

Staff mobility activity

In the framework of the project *Thematic Peer Group on the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in EHEA countries - TPG-LRC* a staff mobility activity was organized. The main aim of the activity was to provide the TPG B on LRC members with the opportunity to offer or receive peer support on the topic of recognition and implementation of the LRC.

The call for applications was launched in October 2019 and a total of fifteen requests were submitted. Eight institutions from seven countries applied to send mobile staff members to deepen specific topics related to the LRC implementation, while six institutions applied to host colleagues and provide them with peer counselling.

Considering that the project foresees a maximum of 20 participants, it was initially planned to discuss the staff mobility during the Third TPGB meeting in Sèvres and to launch a second call for applications in March 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the second call for applications had to be suspended and the closing date for mobilities was postponed to 31 October 2020. To avoid an excessive slowing down, the staff mobility activity has been partially redesigned to take place online, at least for the contents that can be covered remotely (at the moment, five applicant countries are organising online sessions).

The online peer support is arranged to serve as a propaedeutic activity for the realization of the staff mobilities in presence, when the circumstances will make this possible. In this light, a six-months-extension of the TPG-LRC project has been requested to the European Commission.

3.2.2   Main outcomes, conclusions and recommendations

The **peer support activity** is very effective in supporting exchange of practices, and for finding ways to address common challenges, with a concrete approach based on results. In particular, the different backgrounds of the TPG B members (mainly Ministries and ENIC-NARIC centres) facilitated the exchange of expertise and the analysis of the topics related to implementation of the LRC from different perspectives.

Putting together Ministries and ENIC-NARIC representatives also helped deepen the cooperation between the ENIC-NARIC networks and Ministries.

One relevant element is the **synergies with EU funded projects** in the field of recognition, especially in the framework of the Erasmus+ call for the implementation of reforms in the European Higher Education Area. In all three TPG meetings a focus has been kept on projects relevant for the group, presenting the main activities, outcomes and tools, and supporting the matchmaking in order to present project proposals on topics of common interest/need. This synergy represents an added value for the work of the entire group and could be strengthened in the future if the activity of the TPGs continues.

Cooperation among the 3 TPGs is relevant. In each of the meetings a slot was allocated for input and feedback from the other two TPGs, and the co-chairs of the other TPGs were invited to share insights from the work of their Groups relevant also for recognition. An example was the topic of short cycle qualifications that was discussed thanks to the input of TPG A in the TPG B meeting in Tirana. Another topic is the recognition of micro-credentials, included in the themes of the online TPG B meeting in June. A third transversal topic is automatic recognition, which has been a recurrent topic in the group. Qualifications framework, recognition and quality assurance concur in fostering mobility of individuals. The TPG B included in its agenda the subject of the recognition of short cycles that was discussed in the TPG A.

Cooperation with stakeholders and stakeholders' organisations can play a strong role in the implementation of the LRC. First of all, students, student unions and associations can play a crucial role in building awareness for the recognition process, the related "rights and duties", the concept of substantial difference, and in multiplying information. The seminar on substantial difference, coordinated with ESU, has been an occasion also to present the section of "Bologna with Student Eyes" report dedicated to recognition, and to discuss the indicators and the main findings with Ministries, Higher Education Institutions, and ENIC-NARIC representatives.

Higher Education Institutions are the frontline of information provision on recognition, as in the majority of EHEA member countries they are the competent authorities for carrying out recognition procedures and taking recognition decisions. One of the topics of the TPG is fostering higher education institutions' role in the implementation of the LRC in relation to information provision on recognition (giving clear and transparent information on the process, the right to appeal, etc.). This was in particular one of the topics of the seminar that was to be held in March 2020 in Sèvres co-organized with the EUA and was discussed during the online seminar that was held in June 2020.

Quality is another key word in the TPG discussions, on the one hand in relation to enhancing the quality of the recognition process (quality is understood in this TPG context to mean recognition that is fully compliant with the principles of the LRC), and the role of quality assurance agencies to support ethics, integrity and transparency in education, and on the other hand to fight corruption, including lack of academic integrity, diploma mills, and education fraud in higher education. This has been one of the topics discussed at the seminar in Tirana organised together with EQAR. In particular, the DEQAR database has been presented as a concrete tool to support the recognition of qualifications, giving quick access to reliable information on accreditation and status of HEIs.

Digitalisation supports mobility and employability both of students and professionals. It supports the automatic recognition of qualifications and makes it easier to share academic qualifications in a secure way. These key aspects have all been examined. Further aspects of digitalisation have also been discussed, from the use of digital credentials to the digitalisation of the recognition process, and the application of new technologies in recognition, such as block-chain technology. Digitalisation is a key aspect of linking recognition and quality assurance, with perspectives of simplifying the verification of accreditation of an institution or a study programme opened by the integration of the DEQAR database in the recognition process. However, digitalisation and the use of digital student data remain a challenge across the TPG countries, where the level of digitalisation of workflow in the recognition field, the use and acceptance of digital credentials is very different across countries. A number of countries already have consistent tools in place for the exchange of student data, whereas in other countries only paper documents, such as parchment signed by the university rector, have legal value.

Also discussed was the need for tools and instruments to support portability and transparency of recognition decisions and to improve mobility, such as the **European Assessment Report**. This would be a reference document on key information that should be reported in a recognition statement. Also in this field there is still room for further improvement, with recognition decisions taken at national level and with few common standards and/or consensus on what these common standards should be. The publication [Portability of recognition statements in the EHEA – Nuffic](#) could provide the basis for further discussion and was included in the preparatory note for the online TPG B meeting.

Implementation of **article VII of the LRC**, "Recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation", has been analysed, sharing good practices at national and international level. Implementation of this article remains, however, challenging in a number of countries.

Tools and actions for fostering **automatic recognition** have been analysed. Even if some progress has been made, especially in understanding the concept of automatic recognition and making links between relevant national players in a number of countries, this topic needs further attention in the upcoming period. Currently there are a few different models of automatic recognition in place in TPG countries, from legally binding bilateral and multilateral agreement to "de facto" automatic recognition. To foster implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and move towards automatic recognition, a remaining challenge is the full understanding of the difference between access (more at system level) and admission (more at HEIs level), that represents the key issue in removing obstacles to full implementation of automatic recognition.

The following **recommendations** were made based on the feedback from participants at the Thematic Peer Group meetings and from the survey organized by the BICG:

- Step up action to foster the implementation of the LRC to ensure fair recognition throughout the EHEA in close cooperation with the ENIC-NARIC centres and the LRC Committee Bureau.

- Further support full implementation of the LRC and work to enhance automatic recognition, providing training and peer support to ensure that higher education qualifications obtained in one EHEA country at a certain level are automatically recognised in the others for the purpose of further studies. To foster automatic recognition, further explore the concept and the tools that can help to remove obstacles and advance in the acceptance of automatic recognition.

- Further analyse the different interpretations of "substantial difference" (section IV, V and VI of the LRC) to further deepen the topic and define a core set of indicators of what should be considered "substantial difference", in cooperation with the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC and NARIC Networks.

- Ensure that fair recognition in accordance with the LRC becomes a reality also for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, in accordance with the Recommendation adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in November 2017 and by making good use of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees.

- Support the use of digitalisation, of contemporary technology (e.g. block-chain, etc.) and of digital student data, working to remove obstacles existing at national level, in order to promote automatic recognition and to support verification of the authenticity of credentials.

- Consider and discuss the need to further develop common tools, instruments and reports to support portability and transparency of recognition decisions.

- Ensure the commitment of the EHEA countries to fostering ethics, integrity and transparency in education, enhancing trust and confidence in the quality and reliability of qualifications.

- Take action to eradicate all forms of fraudulent practice, through promotion of integrity and ethical practices, encouraging the use of new technologies in a proper way to support anti-corruption, and developing strong network and peer support activities among countries.

- Support and strengthen synergies with EU funded projects relevant for the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and related to the European Higher Education Area.

- Strengthen cooperation at national level between the ENIC-NARIC centres and Higher Education Institutions, in view of the fact that in most EHEA countries higher education institutions are autonomous and responsible for implementing LRC compliant recognition procedures.

Further information can be found at http://ehea.info/page-peer-group-B-LRC.

3.3 The Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance

The Thematic Peer Group C focuses on the Key Commitment 3: quality assurance.

3.3.1 Meetings and activities

Meetings: 3-4 December 2018, Tbilisi

27-28 May 2019, Limassol

16-17 January 2020, Ghent

Events: PLA on the European Approach to the accreditation of joint programmes, Limassol, 29 May 2019

Thematic session on stakeholder engagement, Ghent, 17 January 2020

The group consists of 37 member countries and 8 stakeholder organisations. The representatives of the countries are a mixture of persons working in QA agencies and ministries.

The first meeting took place in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 3 – 4 December 2018 and was the kick-off of the Thematic Peer Group, with 17 countries and 6 organisations present. During this meeting the countries started to work on their countries' contribution to the TPG Action Plan and started to look for cooperation with other Thematic Peer Group members on the specific needs of their country. In February 2019 the Thematic Peer Group Action Plan, with input from all member countries, was sent to the BICG and published on the website.

During **the second meeting** in Cyprus on 27 – 28 May 2019, the countries elaborated on their contributions to the Action Plan and worked closely together on the 6 subtopics of the peer group. 54 persons from 26 countries and 7 organisations were present. On 29 May 2019 a Peer Learning Activity was organized on the topic 'European Approach to the QA of Joint Programmes'.

The third meeting was held in Ghent, Belgium, on 16 – 17 January 2020, with as its main focus sharing the outcomes so far of the work of the Thematic Peer Group. A separate thematic session on the involvement of stakeholders was part of the third meeting (51 participants of 26 countries, 7 international organizations and 2 external experts). The Thematic Peer Group also discussed the further needs for future cooperation using the peer support structure.

In all the TPG meetings the focus was primarily to have a lot of discussion and opportunities to exchange expertise among countries during the various sessions.

Staff mobility programme

The content discussed in the TPG is very broad and linked to the six main subtopics. To accommodate this wide range of specific needs for each country a staff mobility programme was set up. This ensures that countries at various levels of implementation find meaningful input for further development of their practices. The staff mobility project has indeed proven to be popular among member countries, but also organisations. A broad range of countries linked to all colours of implementation status on QA in the Bologna Process Implementation Report applied for funding through the staff mobility project

Following the first call for applications, 47 persons from 26 countries/organisations applied for a staff mobility to another ministry/QA agency. In a second call another 34 applications from 18 countries/organisations were received. In total 27 countries and 5 international organisations of the Thematic Peer Group took part in one or more staff mobilities.

The content of the staff mobilities is linked to the key commitments as such for certain countries, but for other countries it is more about enhancement with regard to specific issues. Staff mobilities were scheduled to take place between October 2019 and May 2020. In response to the travel restrictions introduced across the EHEA, the closing date for mobilities was postponed to November 2020 to allow as many members of group as possible the chance to participate. An extension of the staff mobility project to further extend the possible period for mobilities has been requested to the European Commission.

Each mobile peer will produce an observation report. Input from these reports will be shared with the Thematic Peer Group members for further dissemination of the lessons learned.

3.3.2　　Main outcomes, conclusions and recommendations

Participants agreed that the work of the Thematic Peer Group should be continued. The participation in the group accelerated the QA reforms in many countries, it led to self-reflection and increased cooperation and trust. It also allowed participants to expand their European QA network of ministries and agencies.

The postponement of the Ministerial Conference to November 2020 gave the Thematic Peer Group the opportunity to work for an extra six months. During this period, the overall Action Plan of the TPG has been analysed on the basis of updates provided

by each participating country, which was asked to evaluate its own goals and proposed actions by June 2020. This has given further insight in the concrete outcomes of the Thematic Peer Group's work.

Many countries reached their goals partly or completely. In several countries, actions are still in the implementation phase or new legislation is still under development.

Especially, several countries reported on their further steps towards the implementation of the European Approach for the QA of Joint Programmes. Also proposals to review legislation on cross-border QA are being set up.

The role, expectations and cooperation between ministries and agencies in developing QA practices and legislation have become clearer, due to best practice examples of peers.

Many countries have finalised membership of ENQA and/or EQAR, showing improved compliance of the national procedure with ESG.

In 2020 six new European Projects on the topic of quality assurance have been set up through the Erasmus+ programme (KA3). Almost all EHEA countries are hereby involved and will be cooperating between different EHEA countries and organisations in one or more of the projects.

Topics discussed within the TPG were very broad and needs were very specific per country. In the many working sessions during the Thematic Peer Group meetings the following **challenges** and **ideas/proposals** for future work were raised to be tackled in the next working period:

- Legal frameworks: creation of good cooperation (dialogue and relationship) between governments and QA agencies; independence of QA agencies and internal QA mechanisms of agencies; proposals for future projects on QA for PhD programs.

- European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programs: legal changes and addressing the procedural and concrete aspects that currently hinder progress in the implementation of the European Approach, such as various timelines for accreditation periods in countries and different approaches for quality assurance developed at national level. The Thematic Peer Group could offer a space for exchange of good practice on the European Approach.

- Stakeholders' engagement: The TPG members identified the involvement of students and employers in the QA process as particularly challenging. This could be addressed by structural engagement and capacity building of experts,

students and employers. Exploring stakeholders' engagement in cross-border evaluations would be particularly important.

- Internal QA: Developing quality culture within higher education institutions.

- External QA: Further to internal QA, some countries have in place a combination of the programme and/or institutional approach, which, if not coordinated in an appropriate way, may risk overly bureaucratic procedures and overburdening the higher education institutions. Strategies of finding a good balance between accountability and minimising bureaucracy could be developed in the group; dealing with new study programmes and flexible pathways (relevance, labour market needs, etc.); design and publication of external QA reports.

- Cross-border QA: Despite the commitment already made in 2012, some countries are still reluctant to allow their HEIs to be externally evaluated by a suitable foreign quality assurance agency registered in EQAR; higher education systems in the EHEA still differ from each other to a great extent, even though the transparency tools have already contributed to more comparability. This leads to a lower level of trust in other HE systems, for example in the way that they ensure accreditation of HEIs in their territory. The Thematic Peer Group could be helpful in collecting data on legal challenges in regard to incoming cross-border QA, which could help to discuss and elaborate possible solutions for these concerns and support the acceptance of external evaluations by foreign, EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies. At the same time, the TPG could also collect positive examples which demonstrate the usefulness of cross-border QA.

Numerous participants expressed the need also to work on related emerging themes, such as QA for micro-credentials, QA within digital learning environments, distance learning metrics, assessments and higher education governance. How quality assurance addresses the social dimension was also mentioned as an area of interest.

Challenges on a global scale require to be prepared for smart and intelligent specializations and future jobs, innovative learning and teaching, and reduction of bureaucracy while still maintaining high quality. The student population is becoming more and more diverse, so innovative ways of teaching and learning could offer flexible solutions to underrepresented groups to support their participation in higher education, but also to adult learners to upskill or reskill. On the other side of the spectrum the world of work is also changing and the labour market requires people who can easily adapt and up- and reskill throughout their career. The higher education

sector has to meet these needs and adapt its offer through e-learning, MOOC's, interdisciplinary programmes, short courses, etc. All these forms of learning and teaching should of course have guaranteed quality standards and be recognized appropriately throughout the European Higher Education Area.

The Thematic Peer Group should explore whether the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) are ready to be used for these new kinds of learning and teaching and strive to have all agencies EQAR-registered. The Thematic Peer Group should also investigate the need to find a way to address and discuss QA provision by non-traditional providers. This is a point where synergies should be sought with the other two Thematic Peer Group.

Further information can be found at http://ehea.info/page-peer-group-C-QA

ANNEX I Paris Communiqué

The Paris Communiqué states:

"We acknowledge that the reforms driven by the Bologna Process require both successful implementation and full ownership of all of our agreed goals and commitments throughout the EHEA. Fulfilling our commitments depends on the concerted efforts of national policy-makers, public authorities, institutions, staff, students and other stakeholders as well as coordination at EHEA level.

"In order to unlock the full potential of the EHEA and ensure the implementation of Bologna key commitments, we are adopting a structured peer support approach based on solidarity, cooperation and mutual learning. In 2018-2020, Thematic Peer Group will focus on three key commitments crucial to reinforcing and supporting quality and cooperation inside the EHEA:

- a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS

- compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention,

- and quality assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area."

"We mandate the BFUG to implement, coordinate and monitor the adopted peer support approach, and to do so with the aid of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group established to that end."

"We encourage the use of the Erasmus+ programme for increasing cooperation, beyond mobility, and achieving progress on the key commitments."

ANNEX II Terms of reference for the BICG 2018 to 2020

Terms of Reference for the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group

Name of the Working Group
Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)
Contact persons
Members should be nominated before and confirmed by the BFUG immediately following the Ministerial Conference. Therefore, an invitation for countries/organisations to volunteer for membership has to be launched in time for the Ministerial Conference, and nominations discussed no later than during the last BFUG meeting prior to the Ministerial Conference.
Composition
The group will include representatives nominated by both full and consultative members of the BFUG. Countries and organisations are requested to signal which (one or several) of the thematic peer groups they may wish to coordinate. The group should initially (i.e. prior to the first meeting of the peer groups in the first round of the support procedure) be composed of ca. 5 members, who will be joined by those chairs who are not already part of the BICG once the peer groups are operational. To aid impartiality, independence and transparency the BICG chair will not be a chair of a peer group.
The choice of countries/organisations will aim to represent the geographical diversity of the EHEA and ensure a balance of expertise across all key commitments. To ensure continuity, members should commit themselves for more than one work-period. Ideally there should be a maximum overturn of 2/3 of its members between work-periods. It is up to the BFUG to decide how this group could fit in the governance of the EHEA after 2020.
Purpose and/or outcome
The purpose of the BICG is to facilitate the coordination and reporting of the peer groups that support the implementation of key Bologna commitments (see associated document on Support for implementation of key Bologna commitments), and act as a venue for exchange of experiences and best practice between co-chairs of those peer groups. It facilitates the support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments through ensuring that countries that are facing challenges in meeting the key commitments are fully supported in taking positive action to improve the situation.

The supplementary report to the Bologna Process Implementation Report, addressing the level of implementation of agreed key commitments, will be used to determine priority issues for the BFUG.

The group's work will be guided by the adopted procedure for support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments. It will:

• prepare invitations to join the peer groups, to be sent out by the BFUG Co-chairs;

• facilitate the grouping of countries offering or seeking support to peer groups;

• follow-up peer support activities by keeping an overview of the composition and activities of the different groups;

• give the BFUG regular updates and an overview on the progress and effectiveness of the support for the implementation of the key Bologna commitments, based on the activities of the thematic peer groups.

The group may also make recommendations:

• to improve the support for the implementation of key Bologna commitments, including possible adjustment needed to the process between work periods;

• to improve the support offered to a specific country.

If a country shows no or insufficient progress after one round of peer support activities, the group highlights that in its report, and may advice the BFUG how to provide more specific support to address the issue.

If there is no progress after a further round the BICG prepares a specific report to the BFUG, providing information that can form the basis for a decision on any further steps to be taken by the Ministerial Conference.

Reference to the Yerevan Communiqué

- "… implementation of the structural reforms is uneven and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic and superficial ways."
- "Through policy dialogue and exchange of good practice, we will provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals and enable those who wish to go further to do so."
- "By 2020 we are determined to achieve an EHEA where our common goals are implemented in all member countries to ensure trust in each other's higher education systems;"
- "Implementing agreed structural reforms is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the EHEA and, in the long run, for its success. A common

degree structure and credit system, common quality assurance standards and guidelines, cooperation for mobility and joint programmes and degrees are the foundations of the EHEA."

- "Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA. We need more precise measurement of performance as a basis for reporting from member countries."
- "Full and coherent implementation of agreed reforms at the national level requires shared ownership and commitment by policy makers and academic communities and stronger involvement of stakeholders."

Specific tasks

- Prepare letters for BFUG Co-chairs;
- Facilitate the grouping of countries that offer support in implementation of key commitments with those who could benefit from such support and maintain an overview of the composition and activities of the different peer groups;
- To coordinate the work of the different peer groups;
- Inform and advise the BFUG on implementation of key Bologna commitments;
- Prepare analytical reports to the BFUG on the activities of the different peer groups and the support for the implementation of key commitments as a whole, including operation (what works, what doesn't work), impact and usefulness;
- Prepare recommendations for further action to improve implementation for consideration by the BFUG.

Reporting

Minimum of one yearly report to the BFUG.

Minutes of BICG meetings will be made available by the Bologna Secretariat in addition to the full reports of the individual peer groups.

Meeting schedule:

To be decided

Liaison with other WGs' and/or advisory groups' activities

- WG 1 on "Monitoring" and any other relevant BFUG structures

Additional remarks

Country / organisation	BICG												TPG A on QF			TPG B on LRC			TPG C on QA		
	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	4th meeting	5th meeting	6th meeting	7th meeting	8th meeting	9th meeting	10th meeting	11th meeting	12th meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting
Albania			1	1										1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Andorra																					
Armenia														1	1		1	1		1	1
Austria	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	1		1	1
Azerbaijan														1	1		1				
Belarus													1	1	1	1	1	1			1
Belgium Flemish Community			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Belgium French Community																	1	1			
Bosnia and Herzegovina																1	1	1			
Bulgaria	1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1	1
Council of Europe															1						
Croatia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1
Cyprus			1	1															1	1	1
Czech Republic			1	1	1	1				1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Denmark																1	1	1			1

Country / organisation	BICG												TPG A on QF			TPG B on LRC			TPG C on QA		
	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	4th meeting	5th meeting	6th meeting	7th meeting	8th meeting	9th meeting	10th meeting	11th meeting	12th meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting
EI / ETUCE													1	1		1	1		1		
ENQA																			1	1	1
EQAR																1	1	1	1	1	1
Estonia													1	1	1	1	1	1			
ESU													1	1		1		1	1	1	1
EUA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1	1	1
EURASHE	1	1	1			1		1	1	1			1	1	1		1			1	1
European Commission	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eurydice	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1				1					
Finland			1	1		1	1	1			1		1	1	1						
France			1	1		1										1	1	1	1	1	1
Georgia			1	1										1	1		1	1	1	1	1
Germany													1	1	1			1	1	1	1
Greece													1	1		1	1	1			
Holy See																1	1	1			
Hungary														1	1				1	1	1
Iceland																					1
Ireland																1	1	1			
Italy	1	1	2	1	2		1	2	2	2	2	2				1	1	1		1	1

Country / organisation	BICG												TPG A on QF			TPG B on LRC			TPG C on QA		
	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	4th meeting	5th meeting	6th meeting	7th meeting	8th meeting	9th meeting	10th meeting	11th meeting	12th meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting
Kazakhstan			1				1		1			1	1	1	1	1	1			1	
Latvia																		1	1		
Liechtenstein																				1	
Lithuania																	1	1	1		
Luxembourg																1	1	1			
Malta														1	1	1	1	1			1
Moldova																				1	1
Montenegro																			1	1	1
Netherlands																1	1	1	1	1	1
North Macedonia																	1			1	1
Norway															1	1	1	1			
Poland													1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Portugal																				1	1
Romania													1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1
Russian Federation																	1	1			
Serbia														1						1	1
Slovak Republic																			1	1	1
Slovenia																1		1			

Country / organisation	BICG												TPG A on QF			TPG B on LRC			TPG C on QA		
	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	4th meeting	5th meeting	6th meeting	7th meeting	8th meeting	9th meeting	10th meeting	11th meeting	12th meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting	1st meeting	2nd meeting	3rd meeting
Spain														1							
Sweden																			1	1	
Switzerland																	1	1			
Turkey																					1
Ukraine																1	1	1			
UNESCO																					
United Kingdom – EWNI																					
United Kingdom (Scotland)																					
AEC (observer)															1						1
Total number of members participating	8	8	16*	14*	9	9	11	9	11	10	11	9	15	22	20	29	35	36	23	32	34
Total number of members	**10****												**29**			**46**			**45**		

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* In the 3rd and 4th BICG meeting all the TPG Co-chairs were invited, whereas in the following meetings one Co-chair per TPG was representing the others.

** The BICG members are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, EUA and EURASHE who divide one place, the European Commission, one Co-chair of WG1 on Monitoring, one Co-chair of Peer Group A on QF, one Co-chair of Peer Group B on LRC, one Co-chair of Peer Group C on QA.