BFUG Meeting LXXX

11-12 April 2022
Hosted by France
Venue: Council of Europe, Strasbourg

<u>Minutes</u>

List of Participants

Delegation/Working structure	First Name	Last Name
Albania (Vice-Chair)	Linda	Pustina
Albania	Anila	Paparisto
Andorra	Jordi	Llombart
Andorra	Maria del Mar	Martínez
Armenia (Outgoing Co-Chair)	Tatevik	Gharibyan
Austria/BICG Co-Chair	Helga	Posset
Azerbaijan (BFUG Co-Chair)	Nijat	Mammadli
Azerbaijan	Vusala	Gurbanova
Belgium Flemish Community/ CG on GPD Co-Chair	Magalie	Soenen
Belgium French Community	Caroline	Hollela
Croatia	Dijana	Mandić
Croatia	Marina	Brečić
Council of Europe	Sjur	Bergan
Council of Europe	Villano	Qiriazi
Cyprus	Kyriacos	Charalambous
Czech Republic	Michal	Karpíšek
Czech Republic	Tomas	Kust
Czech Republic	Zuzana	Polakova
Denmark	Anders	Mihle
EI/ETUCE	Andreas	Keller
ENQA	Douglas	Blackstock
ENQA	Goran	Dakovic
ESU	Martina	Darmanin
ESU	Jakub	Grodecki
EUA	Michael	Gaebel
EUA	Maria	Kelo
EURASHE	Armando	Pires
EURASHE	John	Edwards
EURASHE	Ana	Tecilazić
EQAR	Colin	Tück
EQAR	Karl	Dittrich
Estonia	Janne	Pukk
European Commission	Vanessa	Debiais-Sainton

European Commission	Kinga	Szuly
European Commission/Eurydice	David	Crosier
Finland/WG on San Marino Roadmap Co-Chair	Maija	Innola
France (BFUG Co-Chair)	Patrick	Nédellec
France	Siegfried	Martin-Diaz
France	Mathieu	Musquin
France	Leopold	Dubreuil
Georgia	Kakha	Khandolishvili
Germany/WG on Fundamental Values Co-Chair	Marit	Metternich
Greece	Alexandra	Karvouni
Greece	Ioannis	Katsanevakis
Holy See	Melanie	Rosenbaum
Hungary	Laura	Sinóros-Szabó
Iceland	Una Strand	Viðarsdóttir
Ireland	Tanya	Kenny
Ireland	Joseph	Gleeson
Ireland	Padraig	Hennigan
Italy/ TF on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing Co-Chair	Luca	Lantero
Kazakhstan	Banu	Narbekova
Kazakhstan	Saltanat	Sadybekova
Kazakhstan	Kuanysh	Yergaliyev
Latvia	Daiga	Ivsina
Liechtenstein	Daniel	Miescher
Lithuania	Andrius	Zalitis
Lithuania	Paulius	Vaitiekus
Luxembourg	Isabelle	Reinhardt
Malta	Rose Anne	Cuschieri
Moldova	Nadejda	Velişco
The Netherlands	Sophie	Duijser
Norway/WG on Monitoring	Tone Flood	Strøm
Romania	Mihai Cezar	Hâj
San Marino	Remo	Massari
Slovak Republic	Peter	Ondreicka
Slovenia (Outgoing Co-Chair)	Mateja	Robič
Sweden	Robin	Moberg
Switzerland	Aurélia	Robert-Tissot
Ukraine	Kateryna	Suprun
UNESCO	Peter	Wells
United Kingdom	Pamela	Wilkinson
WG on Social Dimension (Co-Chair)	Ninoslav Scukanec	Schmidt
WG on Learning and Teaching (Co-Chair)	Philippe	Lalle
BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Oltion	Rrumbullaku
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari
BFUG Secretariat	Jora	Vaso
BFUG Secretariat	Aida	Myrto
BFUG Secretariat	Patrik	Bardhi

Welcome addresses

Opening remarks by Villano Qiriazi, Head of the Education Department, Council of Europe

Villano Qiriazi welcomed all BFUG members and consultative members, and thanked the BFUG Chairs for wishing to organize this meeting at Council of Europe headquarters. He continued by emphasizing that the Council of Europe (CoE) is a value-based organization that protects and promotes three core values: human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. As such, the work of the EHEA in promoting institutional autonomy and academic freedom is of particular importance to the Council of Europe. The inclusion of the definition of academic freedom in the Rome Communique was particularly valued, as was the development of a framework for the enhancement of fundamental values of higher education, democracy and the rule of law by the BFUG. It was announced that, on the same day, the 25th anniversary of the Lisbon Recognition Convention was to be celebrated. This convention, crucial to the facilitation of student and staff mobility, mutual understanding in Europe and reaching the objective of the EHEA, represents a noteworthy success story of collaboration between the CoE and UNESCO. The current crisis of democracy in Europe was addressed and the Council of Europe's condemnation of the attack of the Russian Federation on Ukraine was emphasized. To this end, the Council of Europe helped develop and was one of the first signatories of the statement calling for support for higher education in Ukraine and asking the BFUG to suspend the rights of participation of the Russian Federation in the BFUG. Mr. Qiriazi concluded with the reiteration that education is not only about structural developments, but also about values. The Council of Europe has indicated that the fundamental right to education remains a priority.

Opening remarks by Anne-Sophie Barthez, Director General for Higher Education and Professional Integration, Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation of France

Anne-Sophie Barthez welcomed everyone and expressed gratitude to the Council of Europe for hosting the BFUG meeting. Dr. Barthez affirmed the inevitable changes of the agenda as a result of the current situation in Ukraine, emphasizing the need of academic community support and the ideals on which the EHEA is based, which cannot be compromised. The BFUG meeting was a good occasion to present EHEA's progress in a unique environment as a result of a new strategy for higher education institutions. The new approach encourages higher education institutions to collaborate across borders and to maintain synergies between the European Research Area (ERA), European Education Area (EEA) and the EHEA. The new strategy has four main objectives: consolidation of EEA and ERA, promotion of Europe's role and global leadership, consolidation of Europe's recovery and response to digital challenges, and deepening of the sense of belonging to Europe. Dr. Barthez underlined that these four goals can be shared by all Bologna partners and will strengthen the Bologna Process. Anne-Sophie Barthez emphasized the significance of the 25th anniversary of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, whose framework should continue to serve students. Dr. Barthez stressed the importance of vital themes to be discussed, such as mobility, and wished for a successful continuation of the meeting.

Opening remarks by Mukhtar Mammadov, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Mukhtar Mammadov welcomed everyone to the 80th BFUG meeting, taking this opportunity to request that Azerbaijan, as an active member of the BFUG since 2005, join additional BFUG working groups, including the Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process, the Working Group on Learning and Teaching and the EHEA Network of QF National Correspondents, adding that the BFUG's support on this matter would be greatly appreciated. With the BFUG's assistance, Azerbaijan has achieved the implementation of the European system in accordance with the ECTS system and ESG guidelines, the establishment of the NQF in accordance with the European QF and other significant developments in the Azerbaijani higher education system. With great focus on learners, through the renewal of study programs, mobility and joint degree programs, key changes have been made to the learning and teaching approach on a national level, resulting in new structures that have had a positive effect on QA and recognition matters. The country's commitment was reaffirmed to being a valuable member of the BFUG and to continuing to establish a set of principles that

will assist in the EHEA. Mukhtar Mammadov expressed his gratitude to the BFUG Chairs and the BFUG Secretariat for all of their support and guidance throughout this period and in the preparation of this meeting.

1. Welcome and introduction to the meeting

1.1. Welcome by the BFUG Co-chairs (France, Azerbaijan)

Patrick Nédellec (Co-Chair, France) welcomed everyone and thanked the Chairs and the BFUG Secretariat for their contribution and support. Dr. Nédellec emphasized the significance of addressing the challenging situation following the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine. He also stressed the necessity of reflection in preparation for the forthcoming Ministerial Conference, as well as key EHEA priority areas such as mobility and international interactions. Dr. Nédellec concluded by mentioning the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) and wished for a successful meeting.

Nijat Mammadli (Co-Chair, Azerbaijan) welcomed all participants to the 80th BFUG meeting and expressed gratitude to the Chairs and Secretariat for their assistance and cooperation. Mr. Mammadli acknowledged the difficult situation with the Russian Federation, noting that this issue has had a big impact on higher education, and praised the BFUG for taking the required steps to address it. Mr. Mammadli stressed the necessity of legitimacy while making a decision on this issue, saying that the BFUG should act in cases where students' access to higher education in any EHEA state is hindered. Mr. Mammadli concluded by wishing for a successful meeting.

1.2. Welcome by the BFUG Vice-chair (Albania)

Linda Pustina (Vice-Chair) welcomed everyone to the first BFUG meeting of the year and congratulated the Co-Chairs for organizing an in-person meeting after a lengthy period of online sessions due to Covid-19. She expressed gratitude to the BFUG Co-Chairs for their efforts in managing the challenging circumstances, as well as the Council of Europe for hosting the meeting. Ms. Pustina acknowledged the difficult situation in Ukraine and urged all members to lend their support to the country. She emphasized that, despite the challenging situation, the work of the BFUG working structures has continued intensively. The Vice-Chair praised the great collaboration with the Co-Chairs and the continuous support to all the working structures by the Secretariat.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.

For more information, please see: *BFUG_FR_AZ_80_Draft Agenda*
For more information, please see: *BFUG_FR_AZ_80_Draft Annotated Agenda*

3. Information by the outgoing BFUG Co-Chairs

3.1. BFUG Board Meeting hosted by Armenia, online, 21 October 2021

Tatevik Gharibyan (Outgoing Co-Chair, Armenia) provided a summary of the BFUG Board meeting 77, highlighting the change in the wording of EQAR's representation in the Rules of Procedure, the designation of a BFUG representative[1] to the Eurostudent steering board, and the request by ESU to include the possible modification of the Co-Chairmanship in the BFUG meeting 78 agenda, as key outcomes. Ms. Gharibyan thanked the outgoing Co-Chair and BFUG Chairs for their support during the Board meeting and for the opportunity to contribute to the strengthening of the EHEA, and concluded by wishing a successful meeting continuation.

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[1] EUROSTUDENT requested the BFUG Board to designate one BFUG representative to the EUROSTUDENT steering board, followed up via an Expression of Interest Call. With one application received from Mr. Yiannis Katsanevakis, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Greece, the EUROSTUDENT representative from the BFUG was approved.

3.2. BFUG Meeting hosted by Slovenia, online, 1-2 December 2021

Mateja Robič thanked the outgoing Armenian Co-Chair and BFUG Secretariat for the support and successful handover activities, and sent regards on behalf of Ms. Duša Marjetič (Outgoing Co-Chair, Slovenia) who was unable to attend. Ms. Robič commended the Republic of Kazakhstan for their readiness to take over the co-chairmanship for the June 2022 – December 2022 period, as well as the BFUG Chairs for addressing the proposals on the Rules of Procedure document. Ms. Robič reported on the progress of the proposal on synergies of the Ad-hoc Task Force[2] to Increase Synergies between the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), European Education Area (EEA) and European Research Area (ERA), that was adopted at the 78th BFUG meeting. Together with the European Commission, the proposal was taken forward to respective entities of ERA and EEA during an informal ERA workshop[3], as well at the first meeting of the Working Group on Higher Education[4]. Furthermore, the proposal was presented in an EUA activity, on 27 January 2022. Ms. Robič thanked the French presidency for keeping the topic of increasing synergies between the EHEA-ERA-EEA as a priority in higher education, and concluded by wishing a good continuation of the meeting.

4. Information on the BFUG Board Meetings

4.1. BFUG Board Meeting, hosted by Azerbaijan, online, Baku, 9 February 2022

Nijat Mammadli (Co-Chair, Azerbaijan) gave a summary of the key takeaways from the BFUG Board Meeting LXXIX, highlighting that the main focus was the discussion on possible amendments to the Rules of Procedure 2021-2024. A revised version of the Rules of Procedure 2021-2024 was distributed to the BFUG, with the incorporation of comments on specific aspects involving the representation of delegations in the BFUG meetings, the voting procedure and approval of electronic decisions. Moreover, the meeting consisted of an update on the progress of the BFUG working structures.

For more information, *please see: BFUG_Board_FR_AZ_79_Minutes of Meeting*

4.2. BFUG Extraordinary Board Meeting, hosted by France, online, Paris, 18 March 2022

Patrick Nédellec (Co-Chair, France) provided an overview of the discussions at the Extraordinary BFUG Board Meeting LXXIX/I, with focus on the statement on consequences of the Russian Federation invasion of Ukraine developed by a group of BFUG members and consultative members. The statement outlines the importance of EHEA members and consultative members to assist higher education in Ukraine, as well as Ukrainian and international students and staff who have been forced to flee the country. The statement also urges the BFUG to suspend the Russian Federation's rights of representation in the BFUG, as well as any country assisting the Russian Federation in its invasion of Ukraine. While there was broad support for the statement, a slightly revised version was proposed to be distributed to the BFUG, including a more explicit reference with regards to the need for countries to support Ukrainian higher education in accordance with their national legislation and policies. In conclusion, it was agreed to submit a proposal to the BFUG to suspend the rights of representation of the Russian Federation and any other EHEA country that supports Russia, and that this motion would be discussed at point 6[5] of this agenda.

For more information, please see*: BFUG_Board_FR_AZ_79-1_Minutes of Meeting*

5. Update from the BFUG Secretariat

Oltion Rrumbullaku (Head of BFUG Secretariat) welcomed everyone and thanked the Chairs for their continuous contribution and support, and for organizing this meeting in-presence. Mr. Rrumbullaku delivered an overview of the key processes and activities undertaken by the BFUG Secretariat since the last BFUG meeting. Main

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[2] Ad Hoc Task Force's mandate ended in December 2021.

[3] "How to empower higher education institutions to develop, in line with the ERA and in synergy with the EHEA" workshop (14/12/2021).

[4] A new Working Group on Higher Education within the EEA.

[5] Status of Suspension of the Rights of Participation of the Russian Federation and Belarus in the EHEA.

activities included the revision of the Rules of Procedure 2021-2024, up-to-date correspondence with BFUG working structures, organization of the Extraordinary Board meeting LXXIX/I, as well as distribution of the "EHEA Statement by members and consultative members of the BFUG", published and updated accordingly in the EHEA website. A summary of all the meetings organized was provided including statistical information on each BFUG working structure, the status of meetings organized, involvement in additional related events/activities of various WGs, as well as membership and attendance rates respectively. Mr. Rrumbullaku thanked the BFUG Chairs for their great cooperation and support to the Secretariat during their tenure and wished for a successful meeting.

For more information, please see: *BFUG Secretariat Update*

6. Status of Suspension of the Rights of Representation of Russia and Belarus in the EHEA

Patrick Nédellec (Co-Chair, France) introduced this session by recalling that the declaration under discussion was developed in response to a letter from the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, underlining the importance for all EHEA members to support higher education in Ukraine, its displaced students and staff, and all members of the academic community in the Russian Federation who have publicly opposed the invasion. The resulting declaration asked the BFUG to suspend rights of representation of the Russian Federation and all countries (Belarus) who intend to support it in this invasion of Ukraine.

As of the first day of the BFUG Meeting LXXX (April 11th, 2022), the statement to suspend the representation rights of the Russian Federation and Belarus had been signed by 37[6] member countries, and in addition by 6 consultative members and EQAR, all of whom were thanked for the near consensus on this exceptional situation. The aim was to reach a final decision before the end of the session.

Subsequently, all concerns among the members regarding the declaration were addressed. Austria and the Belgium Flemish Community clarified support for the statement, with request of several amendments to the terminology of the declaration[7] which would enable full support of it. Moldova and San Marino informed they had also signed the statement. Italy, having signed the statement and maintaining its opposition to the invasion of Ukraine, reiterated the fact that any document treating such a delicate and far-reaching topic in the EHEA, would benefit from a democratic and inclusive discussion and decision-making process among BFUG members. The CoE reiterated the unprecedented nature of the events and the need to react quickly to lay the ground for a decision at this BFUG meeting, which was the first to be held after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The CoE, along with several members and institutions, helped initiate the statement in order to appeal to the BFUG as soon as possible to take action in accordance to the Bologna Process. The Holy See delegation confirmed its policy of neutrality, stating that it would therefore not participate in the decision process. No other delegation indicated it would abstain or vote against the decision.

The BFUG therefore decided to suspend the rights of participation of the Russian Federation and Belarus, based on a near-unanimous agreement on this exceptional situation.

Following the adoption of the decision, Ms. Kateryna Suprun (Ukraine) addressed the current violations of human rights and lives, and listed the specific hardships[8] students are undergoing at this moment in Ukraine as a result of the invasion. The Ukrainian representative thanked the BFUG for its reaction and support and read the final full list of countries[9] in support of the statement. Ms. Suprun concluded the session by thanking

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[6] 39 country members, inclusive of Belgium and the United Kingdom, two countries with federal systems.

[7] Amendments included: The name Russia should be edited to the Russian Federation; the phrase "countries that may assist Russia" was considered unclear phrasing and it should be changed to "Belarus"; the phrase "right of representation" refers to statutory rights and, as BFUG is not an international statutory body, it has no position to address this issue and should change it to "right of participation."

[8] Consequences include the displacement of students, their impossibility to continue studies abroad, the use of schools as shelters for the more than 7 million internally displaced people and the risk to their lives, among others.

[9] Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French Community, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, the European Commission, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, UK/Scotland, the Council of Europe, Education International, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, European Students Union, European University Association, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education.

all members once more for passing the decision on the day of the BFUG meeting.

For more information, please see: *BFUG_FR_AZ_80_statement by members and consultative members*
For more information, please see*: BFUG_FR_AZ_80_letter to be distributed to the BFUG*

7. Update from the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

Helga Posset (Co-Chair, BICG) provided an update of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group, focusing on the Thematic Peer Groups and their state-of-play. Ms. Posset highlighted the aim of the BICG to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the three key commitments of the EHEA, through close collaboration with the TPGs. Four online meetings have been organized thus far, with the next meeting scheduled for October 2022. Furthermore, an overview of the work of the three TPGs including the membership of each peer group, specific thematic indications, organization of meetings, as well as submission of umbrella projects, Work Plans and Country Plans for each individual TPG was provided.

Ms. Posset also brought up several points for discussion and reflection related to the TPGs' success, with particular focus on increasing country member involvement in the TPGs' activities, in order to have a successful peer support approach. Furthermore, despite the natural inclination to focus on innovative themes, it was underlined that the TPGs' emphasis should be focused on ensuring that the basis of the Key Commitments remain at the at the center of the TPGs' attention. Hence, a balance between innovative themes and the Key Commitments must be achieved. Ms. Posset concluded by sending regards from the other BICG Co-Chairs and wished for a successful meeting.

For more information, please see: *BICG Update Presentation*

8. Updates from the BFUG Working Structures

8.1. Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

David Crosier and Tone Flood Strøm (Co-Chairs, WG on Monitoring) gave an update on the WG, stating that three meetings have been organized thus far. The first meeting focused on the review of the Terms of Reference and objectives for the 2024 report, while the second focused on developing a proposal for the structure of the 2024 BPIR, followed by the third meeting on the discussion on indicator development. Ms. Strøm added that the WG members' input on the 2020 report was highly positive, and that productive talks about the framework and indicators for the next report had taken place. In contrast to the 2020 edition, which was more of a stand-alone edition, the 2024 report would focus on analyzing progress in the agreed commitments. The report's size would have to be carefully managed, with a combination of existing and new indicators in the works, as well as a balance of backward and forward-looking orientation. Mr. Crosier explained the components of the proposed structure for the 2024 BPIR and how coordination with other WGs will be accomplished. He stressed that the report will include information from the consultative members and will focus more on recent statistical data. The indicators will be finalized by the next BFUG meeting[10], followed by a draft questionnaire by the end of the year, data collection by March 2023, and finally a draft report by the end of the following year.

Several comments were made on the timeframe for the following steps, the significance of key commitments and mobility, and whether further indicators from other working structures are required. Furthermore, the upcoming LRC's monitoring report (November 2022) was identified as essential material for the WG on Monitoring's work. The BFUG Board will also need to adopt a position on the missing data in the Russian Federation and Belarus reports as a result of their suspension, with EQAR confirming that information on these countries is no longer available on their website. Finally, it was decided to continue the discussion about the data collection on the Russian Federation and Belarus in the next BFUG Board Meeting[11].

For more information, please see: *WG on Monitoring progress report*

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[10] Eighty-second Bologna Follow-Up Group meeting, hosted by Czech Republic (Brno), 7-8 November 2022.

[11] Eighty-first Bologna Follow-Up Group Board meeting, hosted by Kazakhstan (Nur-Sultan), 5 October 2022.

8.2. Working Group on Fundamental Values

Marit Metternich (Co-Chair, WG on FV) gave an overview of the WG's key objectives and meetings organized thus far, with the latter meeting serving as an expert hearing with academic researchers and related organizations. Based on the input from the hearing, draft definitions would be created and reviewed within the WG. Ms. Metternich presented the expert panel and highlighted the different factors to consider for each of the values, as well as the relation between them. The project "New building blocks of the Bologna Process: fundamental values", an ERASMUS+ project to support the work of the WG, was approved by the Commission, which will begin in July 2022 and feature some of the experts named. Next steps for the WG included drafting definitions for each of the developed values with the support of experts, to begin work on establishing indicators through the Erasmus+ project, and to organize a third meeting in 11-12 July 2022, in Malta to discuss the draft conceptual framework.

A remark was made that despite being categorized as four fundamental values, the WG ought to consider them as six separate values due to the distinct issues they pose, and explore these differences. The values to be considered as distinct included academic freedom and integrity, as well as public responsibility for and of higher education. It was also suggested that data sources for the indicators other than governmental ones be included.

For more information, please see: *WG on Fundamental Values Update*

8.3. Working Group on Social Dimension

Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt (Co-Chair, WG on SD) gave an overview of the WG on SD's progress to date, emphasizing the importance of the updated definition of SD, the Principles and Guidelines (PAGs), and the need to build a framework for the PAGs' implementation. The Work Plan 2021-2024 was presented in January 2022, containing the objectives, methods of work together with the timeline, resources and communication channels. The next meeting was announced to be conducted in-presence on April 26, 2022, in Malta.

To develop indicators for the SD principles, three subgroups were formed within the WG, and their aims and work procedures were outlined. Mr. Schmidt added that four meetings have been organized, with a huge turnout and active participation from members. Collaboration with other BFUG WGs has also been established, including the WG on Monitoring and, more recently, the WG on Learning and Teaching. The Erasmus+ project[12] was approved on March 2022 and a summary of the peer-learning activities (PLAs) that had been completed thus far was provided. Finally, Mr. Schmidt expressed gratitude to Malta for hosting the forthcoming meeting in-presence, as well as the UK and the Netherlands for their willingness to host consecutive meetings in-presence in 2022.

For more information, please see: *WG on Social Dimension Update*

8.4. Working Group on Learning & Teaching

Philippe Lalle (Co-Chair, WG on L&T) gave a summary of the three WG meetings, as well as elaborated on the formation of three subgroups, presenting detailed information on the mission and specific themes to be tackled. An example of the work of sub-group 2 (staff development) was provided, including how an indicator is created and which topics are considered. In addition, this WG convened meetings with the WG on Monitoring and Social Dimension to foster cooperation, and as a result tangible follow-up steps have been developed such as presenting indicators to the WG on Monitoring on the BPIR, as well as working with the WG on SD to define common indicators and embrace the topic of social dimension as a transversal issue. Following that, the Work Plan and its key activities were presented, including meetings of the WG and subgroups, as well as PLAs to share best practices, create capacity and consider European indicators. Sub-group meetings to be organized between May-August were presented as next steps, with the next WG meeting scheduled for September 2022.

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[12] "Peer Learning Activities and Resources to Underpin the Principles and Guidelines for Social Dimension".

It was advised that the WG prioritize the list of indicators and work with other BFUG working structures (TPGs) on overlapping topics, as well as focus on developing recommendations and/or policy improvements to enhance innovative learning and teaching, micro-credentials and other topics, to present preliminary concepts that could be useful in the Communiqué's preparation.

For more information, please see: *WG on Learning and Teaching Update*

8.5.   Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Magalie Soenen (Co-Chair, CG on GPD) provided an overview of the state-of-play of the CG on GPD, including the membership with a new delegation (Belgium French Community) recently joining the CG, as well as information on the meetings organized. Furthermore, due to the huge number of CG members and the necessity for flexible and frequent interaction to complete the CG tasks, subgroups were formed, with the option of adding new groups if necessary, during this working period. Ms. Soenen also discussed the subgroups' membership, focus and outcomes so far. It was stressed that the group is seeking for synergy between the CG and the IN-GLOBAL initiative. Next steps included liaising with the Secretariat on the restricted area, organization of the WG and subgroups' meetings and reporting of CG activities to the BFUG. The subgroup meetings will continue in April and May, with the third CG meeting to be held in June.

To promote the global dimension, it was suggested that the CG's tasks be prioritized. In this respect, one of the CG's tasks to organize regional events with various stakeholders was praised. Additional suggestions included making the Global Policy Forum (GPF) more effective and considering whether the current model of incorporating it into the Ministerial Conference is well suited to attract appropriate interest from other regions, as well as having the drafting groups for the GPF and the Communique work together to ensure that the statements are linked. Further, it was proposed by ESU to introduce the Global Student Forum to the CG Co-Chairs, as it is also one of the stakeholders in the mapping exercises and is rapidly expanding in membership.

For more information, please see: *CG on GPD Presentation*

8.6.   Working Group on San Marino Roadmap

Maija Innola (Co-Chair) underlined the purpose of the WG is to assist the San Marino authorities in the process of implementing the key principles at national level and informed that the WG has outlined a working plan that builds of the roadmap and on the implementation plans of Sammarinese authorities. The main developments were presented, including information from previous meetings such as the establishment of the WG work plan and the interaction with Sammarinese stakeholders to gain a detailed understanding of the HE system in San Marino. Ms. Innola acknowledged the great collaboration with the San Marino authorities and their progress in the process of implementing the key principles at national level. She further added that a peer support session in the field of quality assurance has been organized, and specific needs for San Marino have been identified accordingly. The need for more peer support sessions in areas such as governance, peer learning recognition and alternate pathways to higher education was identified. The fourth meeting is scheduled for September 2022 in San Marino, with the opportunity to participate in stakeholder consultations.

Remo Massari (San Marino) presented an overview of the implementation status of the roadmap, as well as a comprehensive review of all of its themes. First, an outline of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), including its present structure and timeframe was presented. The first draft of the NQF was created using the EQF and the QF-EHEA, with the goal of incorporating all levels of education in San Marino, as well as have a legitimate-based feature. Future steps include the involvement of foreign experts in accordance with the BFUG's recommendation. In addition, on 1 November 2021, an independent assessment body was established at the University of San Marino to provide guidelines and ensure ESG compliance in quality assurance (QA). Next steps include the drafting of a report based on the new guidelines, as well as the deployment of a QA evaluation system. In terms of qualification recognition, the current focus is on exploring alternative pathways while validating non-formal and informal qualifications and recognizing prior learning inside the NQF. Future steps

included organization of working sessions with partner universities to discuss and compare possible solutions for a more effective recognition process. In the area of higher education governance, development has been more rapid, with the new law being passed ahead of the timeframe.

The further development of qualification recognition, gathering of reliable data to increase access to higher education for all underrepresented groups and establishment of standards to provide a methodical approach to implementing social dimension policies were emphasized as key focus points. Remo Massari concluded by thanking the WG Co-Chairs and members for their continuous support and recommendations.

For more information, please see: *WG on San Marino Roadmap Report*

8.7.   Network of National Qualifications Frameworks Correspondents

Sjur Bergan (CoE) delivered an update on the EHEA Network of NQF Correspondents' and its thematic focus points, with emphasis on short cycle qualifications and micro-credentials, and how they connect to and can be incorporated in the NQF. Furthermore, the importance of a link between structures and purposes was emphasized, to ensure that structural reforms within the NQF encourage systems and institutions to consider all major purposes of higher education: preparation for the labor market, preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies, personal development and the development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base. These topics will be discussed at the next meeting of the Network in September 2022, to be held at the Council of Europe's premises. A final remark included an update that Ukraine will submit its self-certification report shortly. As this is not an requisite practice of the Bologna Process, it was proposed to look at ways for members states that are not part of the EQF Advisory board can present their self-certification reports.

8.8.   Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community

Luca Lantero (Co-Chair, TF on Knowledge-Sharing) gave an overview of the organization of the TF, including the scope of work and the group composition. Mr. Lantero provided insight on the topics and activities discussed in the three meetings, and informed of the approval of the IN-GLOBAL project to support the activities of the TF and its respective Work Packages.

The Action Plan was introduced, including the tasks, as well as respective actions and methodologies aimed at spreading information and creating dialogue about the Bologna Process. Some of these activities included the activation of Bologna expert networks, organization of award events, the development of a new section on the website aimed at providing specific information to students/teachers/researchers, introduction of a newsletter and the building of Bologna hubs at a local level. Further, Mr. Lantero reported on the completion of one of the actions, on the review of the material resulting from the BFUG 2019 consultation on "The Future of the EHEA".

It was emphasized that there may be too many actions to be followed up by the TF considering the remaining time of this working period. Furthermore, a remark was made on Task 3[13] of the Action Plan, as the key task of this TF, to be reformulated as "developing a policy of making the Bologna Process and its reforms better understood and accepted by the academic community and stakeholders". Moreover, because the priority of the Bologna Process is policy development, the TF should concentrate on developing recommendations and suggestions for ministers in order to improve the understanding of the Bologna Process through its reforms among the academic community, stakeholders, as well as the broader community. The further involvement of stakeholders was also emphasised as key in the work of this TF. Taking into account the suggestions regarding the extensive list of tasks and activities to be completed, it was proposed to revise the Action Plan with the aim of prioritizing most significant tasks in terms of knowledge sharing.

For more information, please see: *TF on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA Community Update*
For more information, please see: *TF Action Plan*

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[13] Propose to the BFUG ways to make the Bologna Process and its reform goals better understood and more transparent at national, institutional and individual level; as well as innovative ways of knowledge sharing, attractive and accessible for all, encouraging the sector to contribute proactively to the process.

The European Commission (EC) announced that 16 projects were funded through the EHEA call in support of the BFUG working structures, in line with the Rome Communiqué's priorities, covering a wide range of topics such as quality assurance, social inclusion, recognition, academic freedom, micro-credentials, etc. A significant number of resources have been dedicated to this EHEA call, with 91 organizations involved for a three-year duration, as it is the case for most projects' deadline.

9. Thematic discussion on mobility: keynote speeches

Patrick Nédellec (Co-Chair) introduced the session by reaffirming the ongoing priority of having at least 20% of graduates in the EHEA each year include an educational experience abroad, followed by the introduction of the two presenters, Piet Van Hove (EAIE) and David Crosier (Eurydice).

Piet Van Hove's presentation, entitled "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly", offered an overview of the positive and negative aspects of mobility. The advantage of mobility is that it results in transferable and collaborative learning skills for students and benefits the larger community. It was emphasized that the most profound effects come from areas outside of formal learning, in the informal interactions among students. It was also noted that the 20% objective has not been reached, as well the other 80% (students who are unwilling to study abroad) should be a group of interest. As a result, it was recommended that mobility be made more inclusive. To this end, internalization at home and of the curriculum can be helpful. An internationalization of all strategy was recommended, making mobility more purposeful and impactful, ensuring that the competences developed through mobility are well-documented and explicitly defined so that students become aware of advantages related to mobility. Mobility should only be one valuable tool among many in a larger internationalization strategy. This strategy should create incentives that guarantee the inclusion of all students and effectively utilize advantages and new developments of online learning. A problem with terminology was cited, concerning the term *virtual mobility*. It was noted that while online learning and collaboration is effective, it does not offer the same competencies as physical mobility. So as to avoid any potential confounding, it was recommended that the term *virtual mobility* not be used.

David Crosier's presentation offered clarifications on the data on mobility throughout the years. He explained that the original target on mobility, set in 2009, stipulates that at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have study or training abroad by 2020. However, it was explained that the figure was set without basis on any prior data, as there were no statistics on the reality of mobility of on mobile students, especially outside of the EHEA or Erasmus zones. Since 2011, more specific data has become available. The Bologna Process Implementation Report 2020 states that only 9.6% of graduates had a mobility experience for 2016-2017. It was clarified that when this percentage is divided into cycles, the higher the study cycle[14], the closer the approach to the 20% target is.

Other issues that were difficult to assess but important to research further were barriers to staff mobility, quality of online learning, and the social dimension aspect of mobility. The presentation concluded with questions on which policy action could help stimulate students who are hesitant to participate in mobility, which specific fields of study are worth particular attention, and whether mobility should be encouraged earlier than the standard norm, which is at the Master's and PhD levels.

The discussion following the two presentations included inquires on the current lack of studies on the factors or potential barriers affecting students who are not interested in mobility. It was suggested that to tackle this issue, aiming for the inclusion of 100% of the students and adding items of internationalization in all curricula can prove beneficial. On the other hand, lack of data on staff mobility was cited as problematic in that it does not accurately reflect the real level of international engagement and mobility among staff. Concerns on the transferability of community engagement and other skills in online programs were also discussed. It was determined that funding should be targeted toward increasing the quality of physical mobility and toward promoting mobility as early as the Bachelor years of study. A balance of strategies that consider brain gain

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[14] 17.3% PhD, 16.1% Master, 9.6% Bachelor.

and brain drain among countries was also recommended. In conclusion, increased mobility and the facilitation of international contact among people was cited as an effective policy in the fight against current isolating nationalist tendencies.

For more information, please see*: BFUG_FR_AZ_80_background_document_on_mobility*
For more information, please see*: BFUG_GR_AZ_80_Mobility_and_data_in_the_EHEA*

10. Thematic discussion on mobility: plenary

The participants were divided into three breakout sessions to facilitate discussions in smaller groups, starting with a round table discussion followed by exchanges between participants. Following these sessions, a plenary was held to report on the group discussions as follows:

Group 1: Building on the various forms of mobility to enable student to benefit from an international experience

Oltion Rrumbullaku presented the key session outcomes that focused on the topic of implementation of internationalization at home. The term COIL[15] was mentioned, aimed at developing intercultural competencies and skills in graduates. It was highlighted as a task that students develop collaboratively, rather than an actual subject of the curricula. It was noted that the target group includes resistant students that are not generally interested to pursue such task. One of the disadvantages is that there's no formal recognition on this activity as assessing intercultural skills is complex, as well as its effect on the students and whether they attain these global competences as well. It was proposed that a good framework on assessment and recognition of COIL-like activities would be beneficial. COIL was referred to as a tangible and practical tool that develops a more comprehensive internationalization of the curriculum strategy. However, reducing internationalization of the curriculum to COIL, or to another single tool could prove risky, as it cannot be incorporated to all courses.

The project "Inclusive Comprehensive Internationalization", was highlighted with the aim to internationalize universities and for students to have a consideration of the global impact in their disciplines, virtual exchange possibilities, as the accumulation of these experiences progressively allows students to profile themselves. Recommendations to help students included flexible modular curricula and sustainable development of curricula. The cultural work that needs to be done once students conclude their mobility and return to their home countries was one topic that was brought up. This mobility, as well as the information and skills they acquired, must be recognized by their home country and HEIs. This also applies to staff mobility, as their expertise and experience should be shared and used to improve their country's higher education system. Buddy programs were suggested in these cases as helpful to building the bridge between internationalisation and society, and with prospective students to increase awareness about these mobility opportunities.

Assessment of skills, especially intercultural skills and language competences, was also discussed in the context of being valued or evaluated for any type of collaboration. Other areas to improve included university alliances to reach 50% mobility, identifying mobility in the current hybrid world, training stakeholders (academics, professional staff) in internationalization, identifying internationalization of the curriculum, as well as clarifying between mobility and internationalization.

Group 2: Supporting inclusive mobility to remove barriers for disadvantaged groups

Helga Posset reported on the mobility session, highlighting the presentation of the project "Peer Learning Activities and Resources for Social Inclusion in Mobility Programmes" (PLAR-4_SIMP: Peer Learning Activities and Resources for Social Inclusion in Mobility Programs) as key focus of the discussion. The recently completed two-year project focused on social inclusion in mobility programs in order to improve mutual learning and deepen the exchange of practices between EHEA countries in different implementation stages. Through the use of surveys, PLAs, an e-learning package and a self-reflection tool, the project built on the principles and guidelines of social dimension, the definition of disadvantaged pupils, and presented recommendations and

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[15] Collaborative, Online, International, Learning.

best practices. Following the discussion, members agreed that mobility requires collaboration from all actors, both nationally and internationally, as well as within institutions.

The importance to explore available data on various aspects of mobility (i.e., staff mobility, incoming mobility, unbalanced mobility in different fields of study) and address challenges that they may impose, was stressed. Only if all parties contribute to the Inclusivemobility.eu webtool, it will deliver the added value needed for cooperation and mobility for all.

Group 3: Brain circulation, brain mobility or brain drain: ensuring balanced mobility

The discussion focused on three key areas: definition, strategies, and policies/instruments. For the first area, certain concepts were elaborated. For *brain waste*, it was suggested that reintegration of students when they return is key in order to make the most of the knowledge they acquire during their mobility. Involuntary mobility was also discussed, together with graduate mobility as being more problematic in terms of brain drain. Following this, an example by Albania was provided related to the development of a Brain Circulation Platform in the context of preparing the Smart Specialization Strategy, noting that the country has made human capital an important part of its overall development strategy. It was stressed that mobility should be focused on a country's strength and linked to the country's specialization priorities. For the policies/instruments area, several country examples were provided with Greece, Azerbaijan and Lithuania implementing a conditionality of mobility by giving scholarship to go abroad with the condition to return to the home country for a few years. However, it was recognized that there is a lack of evaluation of how beneficial these initiatives are, thus this was suggested as an issue to investigate further. The European Universities Initiative, as well as the EUROGRADUATE program for following graduates and seeing their development, provide mobility support at the EU level. Regardless, it was determined that this problem is inextricably linked to other policy areas, particularly research and the economy and for mobility to improve, it must be linked to economic plans.

Following the group reports, a two-fold approach was suggested, with the first step to increase the target by more than 20%. Second, the internationalization agenda should be broadened, and the notion of internationalization should be expanded, by including virtual learning experiences, foreign exchanges, blended learning mobility programs and other initiatives. Nonetheless, the latter technique was emphasized as being more effective in improving mobility within the Bologna Process. The emphasis should be placed on enhancing mobility in Bachelor's degrees, as this is the experience that the majority of students have had. Furthermore, it was advised that if mobility could not be evaluated for the BPIR 2024, it would be included in future monitoring reports.

11. Discussion of Possible Amendments to the Rules of Procedure for 2022-2024

Vusala Gurbanova (Azerbaijan) presented a revised version of the Rules of Procedure 2021-2024 (RoP).

With regards to the proposed change "While the BFUG seeks to reach decisions by consensus, when this proves impossible, in exceptional circumstances, the BFUG chairs may decide to take a decision through vote", it was initially questioned whether the term *exceptional circumstances* should be expanded or further specified. In terms of voting procedures, the required number of delegations to go to voting was discussed. Moreover, it was agreed that if no consensus could be reached, the BFUG Co-Chairs would agree to vote on all issues without categorizing between political and technical matters. It was suggested that the text clearly indicates that all BFUG country members will be counted as voting members, regardless if they will participate in the meeting or not.

It was also underlined that the RoP are not designed to be amended in order to address each specific case, but to offer a structure of decision-making that also relies on the trust of collaboration among members and consultative members. With the revised document presented at the meeting, the members emphasized that there was insufficient time to adequately consider the amendments. The Chairs agreed to prepare and circulate a revised version of the RoP to the BFUG for comments on only the proposed parts that have already been

discussed, in order to prepare, finalize, and approve a final text via an electronic procedure, and present it at the next BFUG meeting for formal approval.

Because of the considerable number of suggestions discussed at the meeting, including the historic part of the RoPs, it was suggested that the entire RoP and Annexes be thoroughly revised and updated, which may best be done by an ad hoc group.

For more information, please see: *Proposed Draft of Rules of Procedure 2021-2024*

12. Discussion on Support to Higher Education in Ukraine

Kateryna Suprun (Ukraine) addressed current key challenges to higher education in Ukraine following the Russian Federation aggression in the country. In addition to higher education, the presentation centered on digital elements or solutions and other levels of education that need support.

One of the main current problems identified is that education institutions are no longer able to conduct full-time studies. Ensuring high-quality distance learning solutions and deploying e-services, such as electronic admissions and electronic exams, was noted as crucial in order to compensate for an increasing learning gap. Developing the institutional capacity of Ukrainian schools and adopting comprehensive approaches that go beyond higher education were two of the priorities mentioned. In terms of higher education specifically, it was clarified that Ukraine reacted swiftly to the situation by establishing partnerships with top non-formal online learning providers[16] who have agreed to provide content and support, free of charge, to all institutions. The importance of this was underlined as a by-law was recently passed in recognition of non-formal and informal learning[17].

The support and safeguarding of individual mobility and research possibilities among staff and students was emphasized. There have been numerous recent initiatives among EHEA countries to support individual mobility, with the ERASMUS+ special support mechanism being especially timely. However, additional potential methods of support by EHEA countries were listed, like the creation of joint or double degree programs wherein Ukrainian students may be given credit for courses completed in Ukraine. International qualified staff who can physically or virtually contribute their knowledge was also welcomed.

The Ukrainian Global University system was introduced, which seeks common ground and possibilities for cooperation. Its usual format of cooperation is through bilateral agreements with individual institutions, with Stanford, Yale, and Harvard universities already on board. The collaboration of EHEA countries was encouraged and related information on how they can join will be distributed.

Another issue of key importance regarded the psychological wellbeing of Ukrainian students at this time. All expertise related to trauma-informed learning and supportive inclusive education centers was welcomed. It was also heavily emphasized that the most fundamental necessity right now is technology equipment provision, such as laptops and all online-learning related gadgets, as well as administration of e-admissions and e-exams. For computer-based testing, the support of hosting countries would be needed in order to make their spaces, such as embassies or consulates, available as provisional testing centers.

The last item of the presentation focused on swift data collection and analysis methods and related digital solutions in crisis situations. The need to make evidence-based decisions was cited as necessary and only data that can capture rapid changes on the movement of students and staff may help in building models of response for current and future crisis situations.

For more information, please see: *Support to Higher Education in Ukraine*

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[16] Free access to Coursera, edX, Udemy platforms and e-tools from Zoom, Google for Edu, Microsoft.

[17] Up to 25%, and higher for the IT sector, of informal education study programs can be recognized and validated by HEIs in Ukraine.

13. Information by the incoming Co-Chairs

13.1. BFUG Board Meeting in Kazakhstan

Kuanysh A. Yergaliyev, Vice Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, announced that Kazakhstan planned to host the next BFUG Board meeting in-presence on 5 October 2022. Mr. Yergaliyev also provided information on the adoption of the Turkestan Declaration establishing the Central Asian Higher Education Area[18], as well as an overview of the implementation of the Bologna Process principles, including the establishment of joint, double degree and lifelong learning programs. He further stated that the country's experience can be utilized to communicate the EHEA's fundamental values and best practices with countries outside of Europe. As a result, two initiatives were proposed: to open a BFUG style office in Kazakhstan, and second to organize an international conference prior to the BFUG Board meeting, inviting neighboring countries, as well as experts/speakers from the EHEA. Mr. Yergaliyev appealed for EHEA's support in these initiatives and concluded by thanking the BFUG Chairs for organizing the meeting.

For more information, please see: *BFUG Board Meeting LXXXI*

13.2. BFUG Meeting in Czech Republic (7-8 November 2022)

Zuzana Polakova, representing the Czech Republic's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, delivered an update on the conference's objectives, venue and related events for the BFUG meeting LXXXII, which will be held in Brno, on 7-8 November 2022. Ms. Polakova identified potential goals for their impending co-chairmanship, including support for Ukraine, enhanced mobility, quality assurance, micro-credentials, etc. Ms. Polakova expressed gratitude to the BFUG members for their contribution to the meeting.

For more information, please see: *BFUG Meeting LXXXII*

14. AOB

Luca Lantero (TF on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing, Co-Chair) informed that a prioritized action plan of the Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA Community will be disseminated, with special focus on tasks 3 and 4, upon consultation with the other TF Co-Chairs and members. The action plan will be sent to the BFUG via email after its revision, to be approved through online consultation.

A remark was made by the EI/ETUCE representative to include an update session from consultative members into the agenda of future BFUG meetings. The co-chairs agreed to give consideration to this request.

Patrick Nedellec (Co-Chair) delivered a summary of the meeting discussions and outcomes, and concluded the meeting by thanking the BFUG Chairs, BFUG Secretariat and the members for their contribution and support to the first in-presence BFUG meeting for the 2021-2024 working period.

This meeting represented Mr. Sjur Bergan's last in his capacity as CoE representative, due to his retirement. As such, the BFUG Co-Chairs, Vice Chair, BFUG members and consultative members thanked him for his significant contribution and ongoing assistance to the BFUG over the years, and wished for his continued commitment and expertise. Mr. Villano Qiriazi was welcomed as the new CoE representative in the BFUG by the Chairs, BFUG members and consultative members.

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[18] Turkestan Declaration establishing the Central Asian Higher Education Area.