Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

Fourth Meeting, Hosted by Austria, Online*
Tuesday, 29 March 2022
10:00-13:00 (Brussels time)

Minutes

List of Participants

Country	Name	Last Name
Austria (Co-Chair)	Helga	Posset
Bulgaria (Co-Chair)	Ivana	Radonova
EUA	Maria	Kelo
EURASHE	John	Edwards
EURASHE	Marta	Rodrigues
European Commission	Lucie	Trojanova
European Commission/Eurydice	David	Crosier
Georgia	Ketevan	Panchulidze
Italy (Co-Chair)	Ann Katherine	Isaacs
Romania	Madalina	Matei
Co-Chair of TPG A	Khatia	Tsiramua
Co-Chair of TPG B	Chiara	Finocchietti
Co-Chair of TPG C	Magalie	Soenen
BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Oltion	Rrumbullaku
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari
BFUG Secretariat	Jora	Vaso

Albania sent regards.

Welcome by Co-Chairs and BFUG Secretariat

The Co-Chairs welcomed everybody to the fourth meeting of the 2021-2024 work period. Ivana Radonova (Co-Chair) expressed the desire to meet in person in 2022 and provided a brief overview of the group's tasks and activities. Due to the first participation of the new members of the group there was a tour de table and all the participants introduced themselves and informed the group on their respective roles within the institutions they represented.

1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.

For more detailed information, please see *BICG_FR_AZ_4_Draft Agenda*

2. Update from the BFUG Secretariat

Oltion Rrumbullaku (BFUG Secretariat, Head) gave an overview of the activities that have resumed after the BFUG Board meeting 79, held on February 9, 2022. 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. Due to the present situation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, an Extraordinary BFUG Board meeting was organized on 18 March 2022. Following this meeting, a revised version of the "EHEA Statement by members and consultative members of the BFUG on consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine" was distributed to the BFUG members and consultative members. An update on the upcoming BFUG meeting LXXX, to be held in-presence, in Strasbourg on 11-12 April 2022 was provided, with additional information to be found on the EHEA website.

For more information, please see: *Extraordinary BFUG Board Meeting LXXIX/I*

3. Umbrella Projects, EC support Update

Lucie Trojanova (European Commission) provided an update on the EHEA call, informing that the results of the call have been shared and the contract finalization procedure has begun, allowing the BFUG working structures to begin their projects. Ms. Trojanova also stated that a list of approved projects will be made available on the Commission's website.

As many projects are interconnected and cover themes in a complimentary manner, it was suggested that the European Commission organize meetings to coordinate the work done so far in the different projects to avoid work duplication. In this context, it was stressed that the European Commission strived to approve diverse topics and distribute the tasks and projects among different colleagues who are responsible for the respective topics. It was also suggested that the project coordinators and key partners be linked so that comparable work can be coordinated. Finally, the publication of a Eurydice report "Towards equity and inclusion in higher education in Europe" was announced, with focus on the topic of equity and inclusion in higher education in Europe, and the ten Principles & Guidelines agreed by all EHEA countries as a blueprint to take forward the commitment of improving the social dimension.

4. Update from the Co-chairs of TPGs

4.1. Update from Co-Chair of TPG A

Khatia Tsiramua (TPG A, Co-Chair) provided an update on the Country Work Plans, with 18 replies received by the country members thus far. The thematic priorities were listed, with micro-credentials, self-certification and ECTS User's Guide as the most preferred priorities. Ms. Tsiramua further highlighted that three working groups have been formed to focus on the implementation of Key Commitment 1[1] through specific topics. An outline of the Erasmus+ Programme Project "Qualifications Frameworks for trust, transparency and diversity" (QUATRA) was presented, with the aim of providing country members with opportunities for a peer-to-peer support in order to ensure the fulfilment of the key commitments that are essential for the functioning of the EHEA. A list of the project partners, as well as the main activities of the QUATRA project were also provided. Four peer-learning activities (PLAs) were mentioned to be arranged:

1. Micro-credentials and use of QF by stakeholders – Autumn 2022 (Riga, Latvia)
2. Implementation of Qualification Frameworks and ECTS – Spring 2023 (Vienna, Austria)
3. Self-certification – Autumn 2023 (Tbilisi, Georgia)
4. Assessment of Learning Outcomes on program level - Spring 2024 (Tallinn, Estonia)

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[1] Key Commitment 1: A three-cycle system compatible with the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS).

Further information on the TPG A working groups2 was provided, including the composition of each working group and the main topics for discussion and outcomes. The activity of the working groups was outlined for this working period, with 3 online meetings and one in-person meeting to be organized. The agenda for the first meeting consisted of setting up the work plan and agreeing on the chairs of each working group. Finally, it was underlined that the fourth meeting of TPG A on QF will be organized in Latvia (autumn 2022), with the exact date to be determined at a later stage.

Ms. Tsiramua highlighted the challenge of obtaining all country action plans, and requested advice on how to encourage countries to respond more actively. Recommendations included countries to be contacted individually, and one-on-one dialogues be held, particularly during physical meetings. Another issue that was stressed included finding a balance to support future-oriented policy developments and innovative topics, whilst ensuring that the Key Commitments are implemented.

For more information, please see: *TPG A on QF Presentation*

4.2.   Update from Co-Chair of TPG B

Chiara Finocchietti (TPG B, Co-Chair) provided a summary of the Work Plan 2021-2024, focusing on general information and country profiles. The thematic priorities were listed and an outline of the working methodology and monitoring of the outcomes was presented. The addition of the Slovak Republic in the TPG B composition was also highlighted. An overview of the TPG B on LRC activities and a list of the completed country profiles was provided, with a total of 38 countries delivering this information. Furthermore, an overview of the first meeting was provided in which survey results and presentations were delivered, followed by the second meeting which focused on exchanging experiences on digital technology and diploma supplement for the recognition agenda.

Next steps included the organization of the third TPG B meeting, planned to be held in-presence[3] in France on 8-9-10 June 2022, with main focus on the topic of alternative pathways as one of the priorities identified in the survey, as well as organization of PLAs to provide best practices and peer support among countries. It was highlighted that, as in the last working period, a list of relevant projects for recognition should be presented to give country members further insight into this priority. Furthermore, due to the interconnectedness of their work, communication with the Co-Chairs of the other TPGs, particularly on issues like the work plan and key priorities, was recognized as highly beneficial for TPG B's work. Finally, Ms. Finocchietti gave an overview of the Umbrella Project, including a list of the project Work Packages (WP) and a brief description of each WP, concluding collaboration with HEIs and stakeholders as a transversal priority.

A discussion was held on the organization of hybrid or in-person meetings for this time period. It was suggested that holding a hybrid meeting would have a substantial impact on the meeting's organizational, financial and technical components. Furthermore, the hybrid approach was discouraged because it could limit networking opportunities.

For the forthcoming TPG B meeting, a contribution from the BICG Co-Chairs was sought, with the BICG Co-Chairs agreeing to discuss who might attend and inform the TPG B Co-Chairs accordingly. TPG A and TPG C Co-Chairs were also asked for their input, and it was decided that the TPG B Co-Chairs would inform them on what information they require.

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[2] Working groups on: 1. micro-credentials; 2. self-certification; 3. short cycle higher education.

[3] The third meeting of the TPG B on LRC will include a public seminar to be held on 10 June 2022, to be organized on a hybrid format.

The issue of recognition of refugee qualifications was highlighted as a topic of discussion in the upcoming TPG B meeting, particularly in view of the current situation in Ukraine. This topic will be discussed in working groups, and depending on demand, it may also be included in the plenary session. It was suggested that countries with previous experience in high refugee influxes look at how the issue of refugee qualification recognition was addressed. Germany, Sweden and Austria were identified as countries that can provide best practice examples in this area; thus, it would be advantageous to prioritize their experiences.

For more information, please see: *TPG B on LRC Presentation*

4.3.   Update from Co-Chair of TPG C

Magalie Soenen (TPG C, Co-Chair) presented the state-of-play of TPG C and the activities completed thus far. Ms. Soenen highlighted that 26 out of 43 countries have provided their country work plans, thus a content review was postponed until further country work plans are received. A list of the TPG C thematic orientations was provided, followed by an outline of the Umbrella project. The focus of the project was on the implementation of the KC 3[4], as well as on some innovative topics. The 7 WPs were highlighted, with 6 WPs concentrated on the content component of the TPG C, and 1 WP focusing on the management aspect. The WP "Staff mobility program," aimed to address individual country needs, was further elaborated and explained how it would be adjusted from the recommendations received from the previous working period, in various aspects (i.e., call for proposals). The Staff Mobility Program's upcoming activities included a matchmaking committee meeting in September 2022, with mobilities taking place from November 2022 to February 2024, assuming the project's start date is May 2022. Moreover, the WP 3 included three PLAs to be held in-presence with EQAR in the lead:

- PLA 1: Aligning the legal framework with the ESG – Belgium, September 2022;
- PLA 2: Cross-border QA (CBQA) & QA of TNE – Romania, March 2023;
- PLA 3: European Approach to the QA of Joint Programmes – Belgium, September 2023

A preparatory analysis of the topic will be performed prior to each PLA, followed by a cross cutting analysis and report to be submitted at the Ministerial Conference in 2024.

The thematic WPs focused on the innovative topics of the project were listed: 1. QA of Micro-credentials; 2. QA of European Universities; and 3. Digitalization of QA processes.

There is an ongoing dynamic at a political level concerning the legal statute of European Universities. However, when we speak in the context of the TPG on European Universities, we focus only on the QA dimension on the European Universities, not on other legal challenges.

For more information, please see: *TPG C on QA Presentation*

5. Next meeting / further meeting schedule

Coordination among representatives in a country's TPGs, particularly about their work in the country work plans, was a recurring challenge mentioned throughout the meeting. It was advised that these representatives should establish ways to coordinate, communicate and share information. In addition, methods for motivating countries to submit work plans were reviewed. Furthermore, it was stressed that EHEA is founded on the Key Commitments, that the BICG's remit is to ensure their complete, correct and compatible implementation. Thus the countries participating in the TPGs should be reminded that the implementation of the Key

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[4] Key Commitment 3 (Quality Assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area).

Commitments themselves is their first task, and that their focus should not lie primarily on innovative subjects.

The date of the next BICG meeting was decided among the members as 25 October 2022, to be organized in an online format. A schedule of the next meeting will be provided at a later stage.

The TPGs presentations will be delivered to the BICG Co-Chairs so that they can present an update during the upcoming BFUG meeting LXXX.

No other business was brought forward, therefore, the fourth meeting of the BICG was concluded.