



MINISTRY
of Science and Higher Education
Republic of Poland



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
Yerevan, 7 September 2011, 10:00 – 17:00**

Draft minutes

BFUG Board List of participants

Country/institution/association	First name	Last name
Andorra	<i>Apologies</i>	
Armenia	Armen	Ashotyan (Minister)
Armenia	Karine	Harutyunyan (Vice Minister)
Armenia	Gayane	Harutyunyan
Armenia	Mher	Melik-Bakhshyan
Azerbaijan	<i>Apologies</i>	
BFUG Secretariat	Ligia	Deca
BFUG Secretariat	Viorel	Proteasa
Council of Europe	Sjur	Bergan
Denmark	Helle	Damgaard Nielsen
Denmark	Jacob	Fuchs
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)	Stefan	Delplace
European Commission (EC)	Adam	Tyson
European Commission (EC)	Margaret	Waters
European Students' Union (ESU)	Magnus	Malnes
European University Association (EUA)	<i>Apologies</i>	
Hungary	Ernő	Keszei
Poland	Zbigniew	Marciniak
Poland	Bartłomiej	Banaszak
Poland	Maria	Bołtruszko
Romania	<i>Apologies</i>	

1. Welcome and introduction to the meeting

The Armenian Chair welcomed the participants. Mrs. Karine Harutyunyan, Deputy Minister for Higher Education introduced the Armenian higher education system. Mr. Armen Ashotyan, Minister of Education and Science, Republic of Armenia underlined the importance of the meeting and introduced the themes of several other events organised under the Armenian Chairship of the Bologna Process, including the International Conference "Funding of Higher Education", held on 8-9 September 2011, back to back with the BFUG Board meeting. He also insisted on the commitment of Armenia to the

Bologna Process and on keeping higher education policy and the Bologna Process outside of political disputes.

More information about the issues put forward can be found in the PowerPoint presentation below:



BFUG Board
meeting_AM.ppt

The Polish Chair, Minister Zbigniew Marciniak, presented the updates with regard to the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. He raised the issue of new generation of EU mobility programmes and their openness to the non-EU countries (with an emphasis on expanding Erasmus to the Eastern Partnership countries), as well as informed about the Ministerial Debate on widening participation of the Eastern Partnership countries in those programmes which is going to take place on 28 September in Białystok/Poland. The Polish Chair also focused on the priority of modernization of higher education, namely publication of the Commission Communication on the modernization of higher education being planned for 20 September and the conference on the subject (Sopot/Poland, 24-25 October).

2. Next BFUG Board meeting, Copenhagen, 30 November 2011

The upcoming Danish Chair presented the timeline of the Bologna Process events to be organised in Denmark in the first semester of 2012, as well as the priorities of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

3. Point of information related to the priorities of the EU Danish Presidency and planning of the BFUG activities in the first semester of 2012, under the Danish and Azeri Chairmanship

The Danish Chair introduced their priorities and the main events on education within the future Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The details of the presentation are available in the PowerPoint document below:



BFUG Board
meeting_DK.ppt

4. Adoption of minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Andorra la Vella, 11 February 2011 and taking note of the outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Gödöllő, 17-18 March 2011.

The minutes of the BFUG Board meeting in Andorra la Vella, 11 February 2011 were adopted, with the request to introduce the apologies in the participants list and to correct the small typos.

The outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting from Gödöllő, 17-18 March 2011 was endorsed by the BFUG Board participants. The BFUG Board was satisfied with the overall format of the minutes, which was considered fit for purpose.

5. General conditions for usage of the BP and EHEA logos

The Chair introduced the document. The following suggestions were received:

- To refer to all the institutions of the European Union, instead of only to the European Commission, when talking about the organisations which are entitled to use the logos freely;
- Not to make any reference to the number of EHEA members, as it could be subject to change;
- To make explicit that the EHEA does not recognise qualifications, institutions or study programmes, hence the logos cannot be used to claim EHEA recognition. A banner on the EHEA website should be added in this respect;
- A paragraph on what are the general conditions for usage apart from EHEA membership should be added. It was suggested to refer to the events that support the consolidation of the EHEA and the objectives of the Bologna Process within this paragraph.

6. BFUG thematic sessions

It was agreed that the session prepared by the E4 group on quality assurance would start at 9:00 a.m. on the second day of the Cracow BFUG meeting (14 September 2011) and would last for two and a half hours, followed by a coffee break and the continuation of the BFUG meeting. The E4 would send out a new agenda proposal to fit this timeframe.

The Chair of the Qualifications Frameworks Working Group (QF WG) presented the context of the QF discussions in the BFUG. He mentioned that the thrust of the thematic session organised in connection with the January BFUG meeting in Copenhagen would be defined by the comments to be received on the QF WG report in Cracow. The envisaged timeframe should be between two and three hours. A small paragraph would be prepared for the information of the BFUG. Four possible topics were identified:

- 1) If countries have problems meeting the deadline for self certification, how does the Bologna Process help this endeavour?
- 2) How to follow the implementation of NQFs once they are adopted?
- 3) The follow-up for the 2012-2020 horizon at European, national and institutional level;
- 4) The link between QF EHEA and the EQF.

For the BFUG thematic session to take place in March 2012 in connection to the Copenhagen BFUG meeting it was agreed that the thematic focus would be the future development of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, subsequent to the publication by the Commission of the EIT's Strategic Innovation Agenda at the end of November 2011. The BFUG would be informed of this topic and more details about the

thematic session would be provided by the Denmark and the European Commission in the January 2012 BFUG meeting.

The transparency tools mini-seminar will be organised in Cracow, on 12 October 2011, between 15:00 and 18:30, lunch being offered before, at 14:00. The main themes are:

- The transparency function of the Bologna tools;
- Higher education institutions' perspective on rankings as presented in the EUA study;
- New approaches in rankings' discourse, building especially on the „U-multirank“ feasibility project findings;
- Practical aspects of diversity policies.

7. EHEA possible additional working methods

It was agreed that the information on countries' preferences in terms of additional working methods would be published on the EHEA website and would be subject to updates, if countries send new information.

Following the e-mail received from UK/Scotland on the procedures of the BFUG, it was agreed to box together the agenda points that are for immediate adoption. Procedural points of agenda or other points of agenda that have been intensively discussed beforehand are rendered appropriate for boxing. The boxed agenda points would be subject to concluding without discussion. In practice, when the BFUG meeting agenda is adopted, the Chairs propose the points of agenda to be boxed. A delegation can suggest discussing one of the points proposed for boxing, while bringing forward the reason for reopening the discussion. The BFUG would be informed on this solution for making the BFUG meetings more effective.

It was agreed to include this issue on the agenda of the BFUG meeting just for information purposes.

With regard to the other proposals put forward by UK/Scotland, they would be taken into consideration on a case by case basis. The particular recommendation to attempt to limit the BFUG meeting schedule to one day, supplemented by a half a day thematic session was considered as desirable, when the BFUG meeting agenda points do not impose a different setting.

8. EHEA wide higher education programmes database

The Hungarian representative introduced the background document linked to this agenda point. He also offered the Hungarian programmers involvement, if necessary, in the implementation phase of the project.

The proposal was welcomed and the following suggestions were received:

- Coordination with the Mobility and Transparency Tools WG is crucial;

- The proposal would be much more powerful if EUA and EURASHE supported or seconded it;
- A number of countries are not comfortable with the proposal. It should be framed as a transparency tool complementing the other ones, not as the single database to be used for admission in HE;
- A pilot with a limited, yet representative number of HEIs, should precede the full implementation of the database;
- The financial sustainability of the database has to be outlined in order to render the proposal acceptable both for the BFUG and for European Commission funding;
- The proposal should build on other similar initiatives such as Qrossroads¹ and PLOTEUS²;
- The proposal should outline the minimum information necessary to make the database useful for prospective students;
- Institutional autonomy may be used by HEIs to refuse providing their data for collection. The inclusion in the database should therefore be voluntary, hoping for a snowball effect;
- The document should point to the specific benefits as a consequence of implementing the database;
- The operational part should be described in a non-technical language;
- The feasibility part should be also outlined: what is the spread necessary in order to make the database meaningful?

It was agreed that the paper needed redrafting before being submitted to the BFUG. The deadline would be 23 September 2011. The list of concerns would help in drafting a new version of the proposal and further discussions should be held at the next BFUG meetings.

A conclusion of the BFUG could be that the principle of the initiative is endorsed and that the Mobility WG could investigate it further and clear the pending questions. The Transparency Tools WG has a mandate that restricts the WG members to monitoring current transparency tools and that does not allow the focus on developing new ones.

9. Procedure for the election of the 2015 Ministerial Conference host

It was agreed to submit the paper to the BFUG, with the following remarks:

- A possible language regime change would impact on the costs of hosting the conference. A paragraph on this would be included in the letter for the ministers. Applicants would be invited to mention how many languages they can provide for.
- Kazakhstan would be included in the BFUG chairing rotation according to the alphabetical order.

Other minor corrections were proposed and the BFUG Secretariat would include them in the final draft of the document to be circulated to the BFUG members.

¹ <http://www.grossroads.eu/home>

² <http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/home.jsp?language=en>

10. Language regime for Ministerial Conferences

Specific proposals of addition and redrafting were received. It was agreed that the BFUG Secretariat would adjust the document and also include a deadline for receiving the position of the ministers. The ministers' positions should be communicated to the BFUG Secretariat until the end of the year, allowing for a discussion on the matter in the January BFUG meeting. The Communiqué would reflect the predominant opinion expressed by the ministers.

11. Roadmap for drafting the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué

The following suggestions were discussed and agreed after the presentation of the proposal for a roadmap to draft the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué:

- All versions of the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué would be kept for further consultation, if the Bologna Process members wished to do so;
- National BFUGs and national stakeholders should be involved as early as possible. Hence, the first draft of the Communiqué should be sent to the BFUG one week before the initial proposal for a deadline included in the roadmap;
- The Danish and Azeri Chairs should be involved as early as possible. Hence, they would also receive the Communiqué drafts from the period of the Polish and Armenian chairing;
- A drafting committee of countries would not be feasible due to the tight delivery deadlines. Therefore, it was considered by the BFUG Board members that the responsibility for the Bucharest Communiqué drafting should fall on the Bologna Process Chairs assisted by the Secretariat;
- The Secretariat would ask the WGs/ networks' Chairs for written proposals of paragraphs linked to the specific conclusions of the WGs/ networks;
- The final version of the roadmap to be presented in the Cracow BFUG meeting would also include the deadline for reactions.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would take on board all the above suggestions. For the Cracow BFUG meeting a bullet point outline of possible thematic issues to be included in the Ministerial Communiqué would be prepared.

12. BFUG Working Groups and Networks Reports in light with the adopted BFUG workplan

The BFUG Board members expressed their concern regarding the delay of the Report on the Bologna Process implementation, since it does impact on other WGs/ networks reports.

The QF WG report would be presented in Cracow, but the Executive Summary and final conclusions would only be ready after the delivery of the Report on the Bologna Process implementation.

It was agreed that all WGs/networks can have 30 minutes for both presentation and discussions, unless they have a solid argument to ask for a time extension.

13. Agenda of the BFUG meeting, Cracow, 13-14 October 2011

A proposal of an agenda for the Cracow BFUG meeting (13-14 October 2011) was introduced by the BFUG Secretariat. Two additional proposals for new agenda points were received by the Secretariat: Germany's proposal to add two agenda points on the EHEA mobility strategy and on Eurostudent and EI's proposal to have a discussion on supporting working conditions for academic staff.

It was agreed that the EHEA Mobility Strategy and Eurostudent will be distinctive points of agenda. EI's proposal was also welcomed and would be inserted as a separate agenda point. Furthermore, the Board decided to group together agenda points that are suggested by members and that are not included in the BFUG Plan of Work.

It was acknowledged that due to the numerous agenda points, the BFUG meeting would exceed the one and a half day limit proposed by UK/Scotland.

It was agreed that the discussion on the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué should precede the discussion on the roadmap for its drafting.

The Board requested that the BFUG document 'Information on the preparations of the 2012 EHEA Bucharest Ministerial Conference and Third Bologna Policy Forum' should include, as an annex, a timeline for the drafting of the Third Bologna Policy Forum Statement.

14. Any other business

The BFUG Secretariat presented the "Future of Higher Education – Bologna Process Researchers' Conference (FOHE-BPRC)" taking place in Bucharest on 17-19 October 2011 that would feature four thematic sessions on the Bologna Process and four thematic sessions on the national developments which support the implementation of the Bologna Process. More information on the papers and authors would be sent to the BFUG Board members and is available at: <http://fohe-bprc.forhe.ro>.

The Board also discussed the eventuality of receiving EHEA membership applications within the deadline publicly available on the EHEA website. The Board members agreed that it would be best to start the BFUG discussion of applications in the January BFUG meeting, should they be submitted. Thus, the assessment report has to be prepared beforehand. The Board agreed that the best solution would be if the BFUG mandates the BFUG Board to select the experts that would assess the membership applications during its November meeting in Copenhagen. With this early decision, the experts would have enough time to analyse the potential membership applications and report back to the BFUG for the January 2012 BFUG meeting. The selection of the experts would be based

on the following criteria which were outlined in the BFUG document BFUG (HU/AD)_24_6a, endorsed at the BFUG meeting in Gödöllő, 17-18 March 2011:

'...the group suggests that no member of a given expert team should have a vested interest in the application to be assessed and should be sufficiently removed from it to be able to assess it objectively. As a practical measure, it is suggested that no member of the expert team come from a country neighbouring the applicant country in question. The composition of the small expert team should be balanced and members should have experience of the BFUG.'

The background paper for the Bologna Policy Forum was also discussed. It was agreed that E4 would finalise the first full draft of the QA chapter and then the BFUG Secretariat could include further feedback received by BFUG/ IO WG members.