



WG ON MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

First Meeting, Hosted by Norway, Online*

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

10.00-13.00 (Brussels Time)

Minutes

List of Participants

Country	First Name	Last Name
Albania	Linda	Pustina
Austria	Helga	Posset
Cyprus	Yiannis	Kasoulides
EI - ETUCE	Andreas	Keller
EQAR	Melinda	Szabo
ESU - European Students' Union	Ronja	Hesse
European University Association	Henriette	Stoeber
Eurydice (Co-Chair)	David	Crosier
EUROSTUDENT	Kristina	Hauschildt
France	Hélène	Lagier
Germany	Frank	Petrikowski
Italy	Vincenzo	Zara
Malta	Viktoria	Maltseva
Moldova	Nadejda	Velisco
The Netherlands	Robert	Wagenaar
Norway (Co-Chair)	Tone Flood	Strøm
Romania	Camelia	Mircea-Sturza
Russian Federation	Aliya	Myrsalieva
BFUG Secretariat, Head	Enida	Bezhani
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari
BFUG Secretariat	Patrik	Bardhi

Czech Republic, Belarus and United Kingdom did not attend the meeting.

***Note:** Due to the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held online.



Welcome and introduction to the meeting by the Co-chairs

Tone Flood Strøm (Co-chair) opened the meeting by introducing the Co-chairs of the WG on Monitoring and welcoming everybody to the first meeting of the 2021-2024 work period. As a Co-chair of the WG on Fundamental Values as well, she emphasized that it is vital to enhance the cooperation and collaboration among these working groups to foster self-reflection, constructive dialogue and further progress in improving structured and standardized monitoring of the EHEA.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without any changes.

For more detailed information, please see [WG Monitoring PT AD 1 Draft Agenda](#).

2. Tour de Table

All members of the WG on Monitoring introduced themselves and informed on the positions they held within the institutions/organizations they represented.

3. Reminder of Terms of Reference

Tone Flood Strøm (Co-chair) provided an overview of the ToRs of the WG, emphasizing that the document was approved in the BFUG meeting, hosted by Portugal on April 15-16, 2021.

It was highlighted that most of the tasks to be covered by the WG revolved around the development of suitable data collection material from all the Bologna countries. Coordination of all technical aspects of the data collection will be carried out by Eurydice. This should ensure coherence both at a policy level and technical level. Moreover, a link will also be established between this WG and the WG on Fundamental Values (FV), as one of this WG's tasks is to work on the development of indicators to measure progress for the 2024 BPIR report, in line with the work of the FV group.

For more detailed information, please see [WG MIBP PT AD TORs](#).

4. Planning the 2024 BPIR¹ Report / Feedback on the 2020 BPIR report

David Crosier opened the discussion in order to get feedback from the WG on the 2020 BPIR report, recalling that it comprised of a different report structure from the previous years, focusing on the combination of three key areas: historical narrative, statistical trends and current (at the time) key information. Thus, in line with the Paris mandate from the 2018 Paris Communiqué², the aim of the 2020 BPIR report was to determine the main 'waves' of progress and combine this information with different statistical data, rather than update all indicators also considering, under this update dimension, the short time between Paris and Rome, meaning one-year focus only for implementation and therefore fewer changes at HE system level in this timeframe.

Feedback on the 2020 report was highly positive due to its relevant narrative overview of the last two decades. Moreover, the combination of the three key areas (historical narrative, statistical trends and current key information) was said to be very insightful, well-structured and reader-friendly.

¹ BPIR: EN acronym for 'Bologna Process Implementation Report'

² Quote from Paris Communiqué: 'For our 2020 conference, we mandate the BFUG to develop a Bologna Process Implementation Report assessing the main developments in the EHEA since the Bologna Process began, including to what extent we have fulfilled the mobility target agreed in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009.'



With this background in mind, several aspects of the planning of the 2024 BPIR report were discussed:

- The report should be written in a consistent and cohesive style.
- It should not include raw data, but rather portray the findings in a contextualized and elaborated way, to provide an overview of the current situation. It was mentioned that the 2024 BPIR report should include different sources of data from various organizations (i.e., EUROSTAT as the main statistical source for quantitative data, but also additional relevant data for the BPIR 2024 from Eurostudent and potentially information from EQAR, ESU, EUA and other stakeholders as well).
- Concerning the content of the report on how to identify the topics (or chapters), the group will decide which topics to cover by focusing on the structural commitments. For specific areas like fundamental values, the WG on FV will provide assistance so that the end results are more efficacious.
- It was also noted that the historical background has been well-documented in the previous working periods, especially in the last report based on the Paris mandate (as recalled in footnote 2). Thus, and considering the Rome Communiqué, it was underlined that there is no need to cover the historical aspect again in the 2024 BPIR report.
- It was decided that the focus of the BPIR 2024 report should be on the implementation of the Bologna Process and the representation of all key Bologna-related areas to be addressed. However, it was emphasized that finding and measuring indicators can prove challenging. For this reason, it was advised to focus on the statements from the Rome Communiqué, when formulating the Work Plan.
- The comprehensive style of the 2020 BPIR report should be reflected in the 2024 BPIR report as well, however, as this working period is longer there will be a need to present more data. Nonetheless, the report should have a clear statistical analysis. It was advised to use context setting and embed the data in that context. The 2020 BPIR report had a high number of downloads, and it was noted that a large number of these downloads linked to specific parts of the report (i.e., Social Dimension, Quality Assurance etc.). Hence, when writing and structuring the report, it was suggested to think of the different audiences that the report will serve/cater to - which topics to include and how to structure them.

In summary the 2020 BPIR report was a special, standalone edition with some specific areas to be excluded for the upcoming report (i.e., historical background). As per the 2024 BPIR report, the information ought to be contextualized, easily readable and understandable. The main challenge of this report would be the 'danger' of trying to cover too much information. Therefore, the WG needs to indicate and prioritize what to include in the 2024 BPIR report.

5. Imagining the 2024 BPIR Report

5.1. Key components of the 2024 BPIR report

It was decided that based on this meeting's discussions, the Co-chairs would gather input from the members to outline a structure for the next report. It was emphasized that this was not a decision-making process, but rather a *brainstorming process* to identify interesting suggestions and ideas. Moreover, it was decided to hold another WG meeting before the BFUG meeting (in December 2021) to decide on a proposal for the structure of the final 2024 BPIR report.

The discussion then continued on whether it was preferred to produce one comprehensive BPIR report containing various chapters or have several self-contained reports organized thematically. It was mentioned that comprehensive reports are typically getting longer with each working period,



as key commitments keep being added. Furthermore, it was stated that the impact of the BPIR report and the target audience should be taken into account.

In conclusion, it was decided that one comprehensive BPIR 2024 report would be the preferred option, and several suggestions were made to this end:

- A comprehensive report includes individual chapters, with the possibility to correlate chapter to correlate the chapters with one another. As for some audiences (i.e., students) separate reports can have clearer and easier to find information, the option to download specific chapters will still be available. In order to have a comprehensive report, all constituent themes (chapters) such as SD, L&T, FV etc. should be interlinked or connected to one-another. Therefore, taking a holistic approach would be effective so that the report is put together in a way that looks at how all the themes are interlinked, rather than treating them as separate chapters with no correlation to each other.
- It is helpful for policy-makers and statistical analysts to have one comprehensive report. However, one main challenge linked to data collection was observed. While for countries part of the European Statistical System, quantitative data has typically been collected by Eurostat, for the other EHEA countries, mainly in the eastern regions, data have been gathered specifically for the BPIR reports. The Co-chairs stated that this has not proven problematic in the past, though.
- The comprehensive report has proven very successful in providing an overview of the implementation of the Bologna Process. If separate reports were to be produced, there would be a lack of consistency and an incoherent style of writing due to the involvement of separate authors. And, as previously stated, consistency was deemed crucial in the writing of this report.
- It was suggested that, since this working period is longer and more data will have to be reported, in the interest of being brief, not all data ought to be featured in the report, but rather stored in a dedicated space, with a link inserted in the report to direct readers to this storing space that is easily accessible.

It is crucial to have a look at the structuring of the main commitments and principles in the Rome Communiqué, as a reference point for the structure of the 2024 BPIR report.

The link between the BICG and the WG on Monitoring was also discussed. The work of BICG should be reflected in the BPIR report as well, to show how the implementation process is carried out across the Bologna Process. The BICG uses the BPIR report data as a projection of the state of play in the implementation of the KCs³, and develops its own activities within the TPGs accordingly. While the work of these two structures is strongly linked, key areas need to be distinguished as to which working structure collects which data. Additionally, focus should be placed on the three pillars or 3 "key commitments" of implementation, but also on emergent issues such as lifelong learning, digitalization, digital strategies, etc.

In conclusion, the 2024 BPIR report ought to be comprehensive and modular, with essential chapters that ought to be interlinked. The writing style of the report ought to be cohesive and consistent.

5.2. The role of indicators and cooperation with other WGs

a. The role of indicators

It was discussed whether "key" indicators should be included in the report to capture progress in implementing the agreed Bologna key commitments and have a broader range of indicators stored outside the body of the BPIR 2024 report, but which remain accessible in some storing space, or rather produce a broad range of indicators on each topic.

³ KCs: this is referring to the notion of «Key commitments» as enhanced by the 2018 Paris Communiqué and underpinning the peer-review approach and works carried out by the Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) set up after Paris and currently going on for the 2021-2024 period until Tirana 2024.



It was decided to prioritize the indicators, as some of the current indicators need revising or might no longer be applicable. For instance, the indicator on the "European approach"⁴ would need revising/upgrading. It was also noted that not too many indicators should be included.

In terms of developing new indicators for the social dimension, it was decided to focus on the principles and guidelines and develop the indicators accordingly. However, it was mentioned that it will prove challenging to exclude or remove indicators. Furthermore, in order to prioritize some of the indicators, some topics/areas may not be included or covered extensively in the report, which can prove tricky.

It was agreed to revise the indicators, assess the need for new indicators and prioritize them. On the other hand, the members recommended the gathering of information from other WGs on the indicators' development process (i.e., WG on SD, L&T).

b. The role of other WGs and cooperation with them

From the start, it was emphasized that there is a willingness from the WGs to be involved to some degree in some parts of the BPIR 2024 report. It was mentioned that the WG on Monitoring should make it clear what to expect from the other WGs and how can their work be linked to this WG. Indicators from the WGs on L&T and SD will be included in the BPIR 2024 report, therefore it is expected that the respective WGs will provide feedback on this matter.

A comment was made on the "Bologna in Students' Eyes" project, stating that the project will continue and it aims to be extended through the involvement of more stakeholders. A proposal was made to also include information from what may be called an additional perspective on 'Bologna in Teachers' Eyes' in the upcoming BPIR 2024 report.

c. The expected time investment from providers of information

As the 2021-2024 is a longer work period, more time investment will be required by all. Therefore, countries are expected to contribute by submitting evidence-based information, as part of their commitment in this WG and in the Bologna Process in general. It was advised that countries collect information from organizations and hand over the findings to the Monitoring group. In addition, outreach toward the universities and stakeholders (ESU, EQAR, Eurostat, EUA) should be carried out to obtain updates on their current data collection, in order to integrate it in the BPIR 2024 report. A proposal was made to look for other relevant data sources so that some pressure can be removed from countries when it comes to data collection.

The EQAR representative noted that the EQAR website exhibits updated data and information for the group to make use of. This could be a means to simplify the work of the country members, especially when an indicator has been previously used. In these instances, the countries should only indicate if anything has changed rather than provide all elements of indicators from scratch.

d. Drafting the report

The range of materials that will need to be covered for this working period will be broader and a larger amount of data will need to be collected. However, it was observed that the available human resources within the Eurydice unit are limited. This creates challenges in the planning and execution of the Work Plan as the expectations for this WG have increased, but the available human resources have declined.

Nonetheless, it was suggested that other WGs can contribute along with other relevant organizations/stakeholders (ESU, EQAR, EUA, Eurostat, Eurostudent), to compensate for fewer human resources in the Eurydice unit. The involvement of several authors can be valuable and beneficial. However, it was underlined that harmonization may be tricky if there are too many

⁴ "European approach": this notion is referring to the 'European approach for quality assurance of joint programmes' as an appendix to the 2015 Yerevan Communiqué



authors. In addition, involving authors from other WGs might create problems given the roles of the other working groups to be forward looking only, as opposed to the work of this Monitoring group to assess and review progress as its main task, while also pointing at emerging trends and issues in HE across the EHEA. Thus, it is crucial to consider the implications of different options quite thoroughly and focus on achieving a coherent writing style.

6. Wrap up and conclusions

It was concluded to consult with and get input from the different WGs for the upcoming BPIR report. Nonetheless, the philosophy of the BPIR 2024 report should be formulated and decided upon by the WG on Monitoring, as the preparation of this report is part of this WG's tasks, but also so that the style and content of the report are in line with the Monitoring group guidelines.

7. Planning of next meeting

It was observed that a proposal on the report ought to be delivered during the BFUG meeting in December 2021. Therefore, the next WG meeting will be scheduled for October/November in order to plan the proposal. A doodle will be sent out by the BFUG Secretariat with proposed dates.

8. A.O.B

No other business was raised and the first meeting of the WG on Monitoring was concluded with thanks to the Co-Chairs and the BFUG Secretariat for the well-organized meeting.