BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP MEETING

7-8 March 2016

Europe Building, Amsterdam

Minutes

0. List of Participants

Delegation	Surname	First Name(s)
Albania	Pustina	Linda
Andorra	Martínez Ramírez	María del Mar
Armenia	Harutyunyan	Gayane
Austria	Bacher	Gottfried
Azerbaijan	Humbatov	Ilham
Belarus	Betenya	Elena
Belgium fr.	Monnoye	Benjamin
Belgium vl.	Vercruysse	Noël
BFUG Secretariat	Profit	Françoise
BFUG Secretariat	Steinmann	Marina
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Duric	Aida
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Maric	Petar
Council of Europe	Bergan	Sjur
Croatia	Maravic	Loredana
Cyprus	Martidou	Despina
Czech Republic	Trojanová	Lucie
Denmark	Johannesen	Jonas Husum
Denmark	Nielsen	Jette Birgitte Søgren
Education International	Vraa-Jensen	Jens Christian
ENQA	Kelo	Maria
ENQA	Walsh	Padraig
EQAR	Froment	Eric
EQAR	Tück	Colin

Estonia	Raudmäe	Kristi
ESU	Galan Palomares	Fernando
ESU	Meister	Lea Christina
ESU	Todorovski	Blazhe
ETUCE/EI	Roman	Agnes
EUA	Gaebel	Michael
EURASHE	Cloet	Johan
EURASHE	Lauwick	Stéphane
European Commission	Andersen	Mette Moerk
European Commission	van der Sanden	Karin
European Commission	Waters	Margaret
EUROSTUDENT	Hauschildt	Kristina
Eurydice	Crosier	David
Finland	Vuorinen	Anu Birgitta
France - Vice-chair	Pol	Patricia
France	Despréaux	Denis
France	Lagier	Hélène
Georgia	Kopaleishvili	Nino
Georgia	Rukhadze	Nino
Georgia	Sharvashidze	George
Germany	Petrikowski	Frank
Greece	Dionysopoulou	Panagiota
Greece	Skouras	Christos
Holy See	Kasperaviciute	Karolina
Holy See	Rosenbaum	Melanie
Hungary	Keszei	Ernő
Iceland	Strand Vidarsdottir	Una
Ireland	Cullinane	Timothy
Italy	Cinquepalmi	Federico
Kazakhstan	Chernykh	Yekaterina
Kazakhstan	Nurmagambetov	Amantay
Kazakhstan	Omirbayev	Serik
Latvia	Rauhvargers	Andrejs
Latvia	Upite	Linda
Liechtenstein	Miescher	Daniel

Lithuania	Armalyte	Elena
Luxembourg	Diederich	Léon
Luxembourg	Kox	Corinne
Malta	Sammut-Bonnici	Tanya
Malta	Sant	Stefan
Moldova - Co-chair	Velisco	Nadejda
Montenegro	Misovic	Biljana
Netherlands - Co-chair	Boselie-Abbenhuis	Floor
Netherlands	van der Vegt	Jolien
Norway	Johansson	Toril
Norway	Strøm	Tone Flood
Poland	Banaszak	Bartlomiej
Poland	Boltruszko	Maria
Romania	Haj	Mihai Cezar
Russian Federation	Kamynina	Nadezda
Russian Federation	Shvedova	Svetlana
Serbia	Babin	Mihajlo
Slovakia	Jurkovic	Jozef
Slovakia	Piovarci	Andrej
Slovenia	Rusda	Erika
Spain	Delgado Martínez	Luís
Sweden	Gaunt	Albin
Switzerland	Meister-Gampert	Muriel
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Aleksov	Borco
Turkey	Dogeroglu	Tuncay
Turkey	Mandal	Hasan
Ukraine	Rusnak	Olena
Ukraine	Smyrnov	Olexandr
UNESCO	Wells	Peter
United Kingdom	Crombie	Ian
United Kingdom	Robinson	Rebecca
United Kingdom	Wilkinson	Pamela

Apologies: Bulgary, Portugal, BusinessEurope.

1. Official opening and welcoming remarks

In her welcome address the Dutch minister of Education, Culture and Science, Mrs. Jet Bussemaker, refers to the ministerial conference in Yerevan. As all countries are facing at least some difficulties in reaching the goals of the EHEA, we should strengthen co-operation and working should focus on implementation and definition of new goals. She reports that the Netherlands agreed on three priorities (skills, prevent radicalisation, migration).

The delegates are welcomed by the co-chairs from the Netherlands and Moldova. The co-chair from Moldova, Nadeja Velisco, expresses her gratitude to the Dutch co-Chair Floor Boselie-Abbenhuis for organising the event and to the vice-chair and the Secretariat for its preparation. The co-chairs and the vice-chair, Patricia Pol, thank the former co-chairs (Liechtenstein and Luxembourg), and the co-chair from Moldova for hosting the board in January.

2. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_2a [Draft agenda] + BFUG_NL_MD_50_2b [Draft annotated agenda]*

The agenda is adopted.

The European Commission refers to a consultation paper "A New Skills Agenda for Europe" which is distributed by the Secretariat with a deadline on 23 March.

3. Minutes of the last meetings

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_3a [BFUG Luxembourg draft minutes]*
[BFUG Luxembourg draft minutes with documents]

Education International refers to point 3 of the document and proposes that the sentence about the evaluation of the Yerevan conference should include that "[…] the number of students and teachers attending the conference shall also be mentioned […]".

With this change, the document is adopted by the delegates.

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_3b [BFUG board Vaduz minutes]*
BFUG_NL_MD_50_3c [BFUG board Chisinau draft minutes]
[BFUG board Chisinau draft minutes with documents]

Hungary asks to correct a typing error (agenda point 8.1) "exists" instead of "exits" and the Council of Europe reminds that the Chisinau minutes are still circulating amongst the board members.

The delegates take note of both documents.

4. Update of the 2015-2018 work plan

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_4a [AG1_work_progress]*
BFUG_NL_MD_50_4b [AG2_work_progress]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_4c [AG3_work_progress]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_4d [AG4_work_progress]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_4e [WG1_work_progress]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_4f [WG2_work_progress]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_4g [WG3_work_progress]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_4h [meeting schedule]

The chairs of all groups highlight key issues of their written progress reports.

- AG1 proposes to rethink the Bologna Policy Forum in order to integrate it better within the Ministerial Conference. The international co-operation policy will focus on regions engaged in the development of regional higher education areas. The group will work on a matrix of topics and regions to identify fields of co-operation of mutual interest. The forum might come up with a common declaration for action, a statement of internationalisation of Higher Education and could address global challenges as well.

- AG2 follows its clear mandate to support the Belarus roadmap. If the topics are relevant or of interest, other AGs should invite Belarus colleagues to participate. Belarus has been asked to fill out the old questionnaire of the 2015 Implementation Report to get basic information comparable to those of the other countries and will send a timetable to the AG, including information on the Ministry's involvement in implementation of the roadmap. A timeline shall be prepared by the Secretariat.

- The work plan of AG3 will be discussed with agenda point 8.

- AG4 refers to the main conclusions listed in the document. The question on whether and how AG4 consider doctorates has been briefly discussed. Besides the fact that this is not the first priority, there is no identified need for inclusion or general agreement in the AG and in the BFUG (and in general, amongst countries), on the potential need to "ensure coherence between a review of the Diploma Supplement and the possible development of a "Doctoral Supplement" within the European Research Area" (ToR ofAG4).

  The AG should prepare information on the enhancement of the DS template for discussion during the next BFUG meeting. If decisions will be taken, the same document should be approved for both European qualification frameworks (Europass and Lisbon Recognition Convention).

- WG1 started its work with an evaluation of the 2015 report. As a consequence, the advice on the overall structure is to foresee no basic changes but modifications. A separate chapter on "teaching and learning" would be useful and the chapter on Quality Assurance should integrate Recognition. Information collected by other organisations e.g. ESU's "Bologna with Student Eyes" or EUA's "Trends" might be included. The annex shall provide national sheets. In September, the WG will finalise its proposal for the next report. It would also seek to include the autonomy of institutions, academic freedom and other basic values. Given the high importance of these issues, it has been agreed that a thematic discussion on fundamental values – in particular academic freedom and institutional autonomy – will be prepared for the BFUG meeting in December 2016. This could be done with support of the working group with potential contributions from the Magna Charta Observatory, Human Rights Watch and Scholars at Risk

- WG2 is preparing proposals of topics and countries for peer-learning activities. It tries to cluster countries with difficulties of implementation (which will be discussed together with the working papers of AG3 / agenda point 8).
  The Vice-chair welcomed the agenda of events and the importance to involve stakeholders. It is stated that topics of the previous WG on structural reforms (e.g. QF) or staff and teacher mobility need to be followed somewhere. A simple template for reporting on events has still to be developed by the Secretariat. All WG need close co-operation in order to neither forget nor duplicate things.

- WG3 acts as a think tank to the BFUG and might submit policy recommendations for discussion. The working method is similar to that of WG2 but peer learning does not play the same role as for WG2. WG3 follows a learning outcome approach in order to identify possible new challenges. Even if digitalisation did come up in the Yerevan communiqué, the WG has to prioritise topics and its ToR determine the main goals. The co-chair of WG3 explained that issues like migration and inclusion (and access as well) have been discussed but based on the priorities two main topics will be defined.

The BFUG co-chairs thank the groups and its co-chairs for their work and the information provided.

5. Discussion and adoption of the revised ToR of WGs and selected AGs

Documents: BFUG_NL_MD_50_5a [AG1_revised TOR]
                    BFUG_NL_MD_50_5b [AG4_revised_TOR]
                    BFUG_NL_MD_50_5c [WG1_revised_TOR]
                    BFUG_NL_MD_50_5d [WG2_revised_TOR]
                    BFUG_NL_MD_50_5e [WG3_revised_TOR]

AG1: Regarding the composition of the group, it has been agreed to mention UNESCO amongst the BFUG members, the others will be called "experts from European and international organisations such as

ACA, EAIE, IAU, OECD and regional associations of stakeholders". The ToR are adopted with these changes.

AG4: One paragraph moved to another place, the UK will join the group and Mihai Cezar Haj (Romania) will be co-chair instead of Daniela Burghila (Romania). The ToR are adopted with these changes.

The delegates approve Daniel Miescher as co-chair of AG3.

The ToR of WG1 and 2 are adopted as presented. The ToR of WG3 are adopted with Greece being added to the list of participating countries and with one more reference to the Yerevan Communiqué.

The delegates agree that there is no need for a sub-group on professional recognition.

6. Parallel sessions

The members are invited to join a thematic group for discussion (cf. item 11.).

7. Discussion and adoption of the BFUG proceedings 2015-2018

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_7a [Draft_proceedings] + [Annexes_proceedings]*

The Secretariat presents the draft BFUG proceedings and its annexes which outline the structure of the BFUG and the way of operating in the 2015-2018 period. The historical information has been moved to the annexes and – except annex 8 – annexes are not new. The co-chair and the vice-chair explain that due to the actual period of the Bologna Process (2010-2020) there is no mandate for action after 2020 for the BFUG and that the 3-3-2-cycle of the conferences has been fixed in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve. A proposal regarding a future cycle should be discussed prior to the 2018 conference and included in the draft communiqué for Paris. Furthermore, a decision about a permanent Secretariat has not yet been taken. The BFUG has to discuss the topic again and it must be clear whether a decision is made by the ministers or by the BFUG.

In response to the demand of integrating more practitioners into the process which has been postulated in the Yerevan Communiqué, it is declared that they are included in the AGs and WGs.

It is stressed once again, that the timely delivery of documents is a necessity. Any person or institution wishing to contribute to a meeting should provide their papers 15 working days ahead of a event.

Minutes generally should be adopted by e-mail after the meeting and not during the following meeting. Only if there should be too many diverging comments, the adoption will be postponed until the meeting.

To engage practitioners, e.g. students, generally all documents will be published before the meetings. The co-chairs of the BFUG and its groups decide if a document which is on the agenda should be excluded from ex-ante publication. Once the discussion has ended, all documents will be published in the approved version. In principle documents will be available within 15 days after the meeting. This implies that different versions may be public, so these have to be clearly labelled ("draft"/"adopted"). It shall be monitored if the decision for transparency will cause confusion.

The drafting group for preparing the next communiqué will be kept small (outgoing + present co-chairs + vice-chair but no additional members) and be supported by the Secretariat. The discussion for the 2020 conference will start in spring 2017.

The delegates agree to include these changes in the proceedings and to update Annex 8 accordingly. With these changes the proceedings are adopted.

The Secretariat is asked to prepare a document outlining different future Secretariat options for the board in October 2016, in order to have a discussion on a possible permanent Secretariat.

The co-chair thanks the Secretariat for providing the proceedings.

8. Discussion and adoption of key EHEA commitments and procedure set-up by AG3

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_8a [AG3_working paper 1] +*
              BFUG_NL_MD_50_8b [AG3_working paper 2]

The co-chair of AG3 explained that the key commitments (a three-cycle system (compatible with the QF-EHEA and scaled by ECTS); compliance with the LRC; QA that conforms to ESG) have been defined by

looking at the Yerevan Communiqué. Uneven implementation of structural reforms, incorrect use of tools etc. affect also the core values of the EHEA. Many of them are hard to measure, nevertheless they represent necessary prerequisites for proper implementation and have to be monitored. To focus their work, three key commitments have been chosen. The implications of concentrating on three commitments have been discussed and the report should underline that this focus does by no means imply to abolish the other commitments. The different levels of implementation are already shown in the 2015 Implementation report and AG3 will not cover everything which can be done in WG2. All countries will be looked at equally, as all are facing challenges.

The co-chair of AG3 made clear that the three cycles include the short cycle. The AG will be dealing with both unwillingness and inability of implementation. Within the proposed text it is possible to mention the Diploma Supplement and prior learning as well. The documents will be read again to make sure that other commitments are hinted at, and the purpose of the work will become visible. The wording of Working Paper 1 will be changed slightly where necessary. With this perspective, document 8a was approved by the delegates.

The vice-chair referred to the summary of commitments done by AG3 and the two proposed types of measures: immediate and long-term response. According to the key commitments and the indicators existing in the Implementation Report, it has to be decided which level of implementation ("full"/"substantial"/"partial") will be referred to in establishing a table or list of countries.

The co-chair of AG3 states that the 2015 implementation report already includes measurement and that the levels of implementation for the 2018 report have to be developed together with WG1. The respective performance of each member country on the implementation of the three key commitments will be documented in a table. Based on this table and the peer learning activities proposed by WG2, AG3 will establish a list of countries which might be invited to participate in suitable peer learning events. This list should be looked at by the chairs of the BFUG who should have a mandate to send letters to individual countries. To be more transparent, the table in which the performance of all member countries on the implementation of the three key commitments is presented, will be provided to all delegates for the next BFUG meeting in December and delegates will decide how AG3/the chairs/the BFUG will proceed after that meeting. In 2018, the response to peer learning will be evaluated and a comparison between the performance in 2015 and in 2018 will help to develop following activities. With these remarks, document 8b is approved by the delegates.

9. Information by the BFUG Secretariat

Document: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_9 [Restructuring_EHEA_Website]*

In addition to four French civil servants (one policy officer, one webmaster/community manager, one assistant and the head), the Secretariat is supported by a German policy officer, a colleague from Armenia who will be in charge of WG1, and a Bulgarian colleague who will take part in some events when necessary. Romania hosts the website and helps with some other IT issues as well. The Secretariat expresses its thanks to both former German colleagues and sent best wishes to Nina-Scholle-Pollmann.

The ToR for the Secretariat include the review and regular update of the website. The feedback from BFUG members on the current website criticised it as being outdated, wanted it to meet the needs of different user groups, as well as documents to be readily available and linked to key meetings. The Secretariat shows a simulation of the new website with the two logos and use of their colours (two blues and yellow). Mobile compliance and the use for social media is tested. Malta offers to provide links for search engine optimisation.

10. Parallel sessions

The members are invited to join a thematic group for discussion (cf. item 11.).

11. Plenary discussion on results of parallel sessions from day 1 & 2 (item 6./10.)

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_6a_parallel_session_governance*
               BFUG_NL_MD_50_6b_parallel_session_SCL
               BFUG_NL_MD_50_10a_parallel_session_Int_cooperation
               BFUG_NL_MD_50_10b_parallel_session_New_goals

The co-chair thanks all speakers, moderators and rapporteurs of the parallel sessions. The main results of the parallel sessions are presented:

Governance:
Before governance is looked at, strategies and decisions on what to achieve have to be found. As the Bologna Process is a voluntary process, the vision has to remain / become successful. The system works but imposing regulations would destroy it. Tangible goals (e.g. ECTS) seem to work better than intangible goals (e.g. values).

To communicate the goals, the website is crucial for information and promotion. The engagement of politicians and individuals at ministerial and university level should be increased. There is a need for focusing on ex-ante governance, tangible tools and for communicating the goals throughout all member states.

Student Centred Learning (SCL):
The presentation referred to the new Standards and Guidelines. Student centred learning is linked to learning outcomes and quality assurance. A strong engagement of both teachers and students is needed for implementation. The educational culture of member countries supports SCL to varying degrees. The responsibility lies mainly with institutions and academics and less with higher education policy.

International Co-operation:
The concept of internationalisation is promoted by the Bologna Process. The Bologna Process offers fair and reliable conditions for co-operation. In addition to benefits for students, institutions and countries, it also creates a global benefit. National stimuli might further enhance internationalisation.
The Bologna Policy Forum should be rethought and combined with interregional dialogue(s) before the Ministerial Conference and not be regarded as an isolated event.

New goals:
The sessions concentrated on on-line education (in general and on European level). Quality standards and tools for recognition could be defined for the field of digital learning. Existing tools have to be used and to be made fit for this purpose instead of developing some new tools.
There are different groups of on-line learners which might need different offers. European added value of on-line education and migration might be discussed within a session on migration in one of the next BFUG meetings. Another potential topic would be the connection between EHEA and ERA (maybe via the PhD topic).

The innovation of having these sessions on the agenda of a BFUG meeting is welcomed by the delegates. With the minutes the Secretariat will provide slides of the presentations. The ideas from the parallel sessions will be taken into the AGs/WGs.

12. Q&A on written contributions received from EHEA associate members and partners

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_12a [update_Council of Europe]*
BFUG_NL_MD_50_12b [update_EURASHE]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_12c [update_EUROSTUDENT]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_12d [update_ENQA]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_12e [update ESU]
BFUG_NL_MD_50_12f [update EQAR]

The associate members and partners highlight some aspects of their written information:

COE encourages ministers to attend the Standing Conference session in April and announces that it will send information about the LRC state of implementation after adoption.

EURASHE announces the Equip conference in April and a workshop on access and inclusion of refugees on 4 May in Brussels. The website offers a comparison of the 2005 and the 2015 ESG.

EUROSTUDENT refers to the invitation to candidate for the board of EUROSTUDENT which has been sent to BFUG members. Linda Pustina volunteers and the delegates agree with her as being the BFUG observer.

ENQA refers to the written report.

ESU reports of having published a new policy paper and the new "Bologna with student eyes" publication. Other publications and tools are accessible via the website or the links provided.

EQAR refers to the written report and informs the BFUG about the self-evaluation report which has been published the day before the meeting.

13. Information by incoming co-chairs

Documents: *BFUG_NL_MD_50_13a [presentation Slovakia]*
                    BFUG_NL_MD_50_13b [presentation Montenegro]

The delegates from Slovakia and Montenegro briefly present their countries and education systems. The co-chair thanks the incoming co-chairs for their presentation and announces the next board meeting on 24 October in Podgorica and the next BFUG meeting on 8-9 December in Bratislava.

14. AOB

The co-chairs thank the Netherlands for organising the meeting, the BFUG members for their contributions and the Secretariat for the preparation.

END OF THE MEETING