

**THIRD MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA
ADVISORY GROUP 4
ON THE DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT REVISION**

23th of June 2016, Tirana, Albania

Draft minutes

List of participants

ALBANIA co-chair	Linda Pustina
AUSTRIA	Nicole Guthan
BELARUS	Valentina Simkhovich
BFUG Secretariat	Françoise Profit
COUNCIL OF EUROPE	Jean-Philippe Restoueix
ENIC NARIC President	Claudia Gelleni
ESU	Tijana Isoski
EU COMMISSION	William O'Keefe
EU COMMISSION	Mette Moerk Andersen
EUA	Hanne Smidt
EURASHE	Michal Karpisek
FINLAND	Susanna Kärki
FRANCE	Jean Louis Gouju
ITALY	Maria Sticchi Damiani
Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee Vice-President	Allan Brun Pedersen
ROMANIA	Antonela Toma
ROMANIA, co-chair	Cezar Mihai Haj
UNESCO	Lene Oftedal

The representatives of Armenia, Russian Federation, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United-Kingdom, Business Europe and EI/ETUCE were excused.

1. Welcome and introduction to the meeting by the Vice-Minister for Education, Mrs. Nora MALAJ

The Vice-Minister for Education, Mrs. Nora MALAJ underlines the importance for Albania of holding the meeting of the advisory group, in her country since it is engaged in many reforms for improving quality in higher education: implementing priorities of the Bologna process, developing quality assurance, national qualifications framework, academic standards. The modernization of the curricula of the universities is necessary to bring it close them to the European standards of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The full implementation of the Directive on regulated profession and automatic recognition are very important

as well. This meeting is the first one held by Albania in the framework of the Bologna process, proving the involvement of this country in the EHEA.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Since the German colleague could not attend the meeting, his presentation is postponed. With this modification, the agenda is adopted.

3. Adoption of the second meeting minutes

The minutes of the second meeting of the advisory group held in Berlin on 25th of May are adopted.

4. Updates

The representative of the European Commission reports on the “skills agenda”, launched formally on June 10. He presents the ten actions of the agenda and focuses on employability, looking forward to enhancing the level and type of skills, the revision of the European Qualification Framework for Life Long Learning (EQF), the “Digital skills and Job coalition” and gives the main guidelines concerning the “Blueprint for sectorial cooperation on skills” and the revision of the Europass Framework including the Diploma Supplement revision. Concerning the call for a study on possible digitalization of the Diploma Supplement (DS), the European Commission is evaluating the proposals and will send the results in writing within the next two weeks.

The representative of the Council of Europe informs the participants on the ETINET platform on ethics and corruption in higher education. He also informs on article 7 of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) and on the necessity to draft a subsidiary text on recognition of qualifications of refugees which has been discussed during the meeting of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee held in Paris last spring. A monitoring report on the implementation of the LRC in the countries that ratified it will be sent to the BFUG in order to make it public, as requested by the BFUG and the Yerevan Communiqué.

Refugees are also a preoccupation of the ENIC NARIC networks which held their annual meeting on the 21st of June. During this meeting, the project of setting a global convention on recognition and the assessment of qualification mills, diploma mills, accreditation mills and visa mills were discussed. The process concerning quality assessment of the ENIC NARIC centers has been presented as well.

Concerning the skills agenda, and particularly the revision of the EQF, the consequences for higher education and higher institutions that have implemented the EHEA-QF have to be underlined: there might be consequences on national level and on the role of higher institutions in the future. The Council of Europe will organize a meeting on this issue in Strasbourg on the 2 of September 2016. In the skills agenda, the revision of the Europass framework and possibly the introduction of ESCO are other topics to be discussed among EHEA countries.

The representative from UNESCO gave an update on the 6 regional recognition conventions that UNESCO coordinates incl the Lisbon Recognition convention together with Council of Europe. The revised Asia-Pacific Convention (Tokyo Convention from 2011) has been ratified by 3 member states, the revised Africa Convention (Addis Convention from 2014) has no ratifications yet. Together with the African states UNESCO has established an informal working group to speed up the ratification process. The revision of the Latin American and Caribbean Convention has started, and a working group has been established to revise the convention. UNESCO also looks into the possibility of a global recognition convention that will build on the regional conventions. A drafting committee has been designated together with the member states. The report from the committee, incl. a draft global recognition convention, will be discussed at the next UNESCO General Conference in November 2017.

5. Work Session 1 on chapter 4 (sections 4.2 and 4.3)

The Finnish representative, Susanna Kärki, presents the document concerning the best practices identified. [See document in annex]. The conclusions of the study held in 2008 with ENQA and the ENIC NARIC Network remain valid.

Concerning the purpose of the DS, it is needed to make it clear that is concerned both employers and academic mobility. Some information that are more used by employers than the DS can be detailed inside the CV, especially 10 years after graduation.

A discussion follows concerning section 4.2 closely connected with 4.3 and the “learning outcomes”. Most of the time, this section is read as a copy of the presentation of the programme. It is necessary to clarify the aim of this section since there are many misunderstandings concerning the meaning of “learning outcomes” and to propose to use some kind of wording such as “the student can do ...”

The main points risen concerned what the level of specificity the DS should be: does it have to be general or individual? It should be able to distinguish different categories of competences (transversal, generic and disciplinary ones). It is necessary to keep in mind that this section has to be filled in with information that universities already have in their possession. The transcript can be mentioned via a link or put aside as an annex.

The users' guide has to be revised in order to be up-dated and to give consistent information on how to fill in the DS. It has to be connected with the EAR manual and the ECTS users' guide to identify inconsistencies.

6. Work Session 2

CHAPTER 1

Section 1.4

This part is necessary as it is.

CHAPTER 2

Section 2.1

The name of the qualification must not be translated, as specify in the LRC. It can be transliterated, from Cyrillic to Latin alphabet for instance.

Section 2.2

It should be mentioned in the users' guide to add ISCED classification when available to correlate the field.

Sections 2.3 and 2.4

Add in the users' guide an up-dated definition of joint degrees and double degrees and give references to subsidiary text. Make sure that in the template, in case of joint degrees, details concerning the quality assurance of institutions are produced. Information on accreditation such as “... by agency X registered in EQAR” should be mentioned.

Section 2.5

The relevant information concerning studies abroad should be given in section 6.1 and/or after 4.2

CHAPTER 3

Section 3.1

Add to the users' guide the reference to the qualifications frameworks such as “in relation with the 2 overarching QF: QF-EHEA and EQF” and the achieved level in each of these qualifications framework.

Section 3.2

Start the guidelines with the credits system description.

Start the DS template with “credits and years” (switch the current order).

Section 3.3

It is relevant to keep it clear, concise and as short as possible. It is not individual information but education information.

It should be relevant to shift the full explanation of section 3.3 to section 8.

CHAPTER 4

See the discussion in work session 1.

Section 4.2

Rename the title of the section in the template as “Achieved LO “

7. Any other business and end of meeting

Maria Sticchi (Italy) and Susanna Kärki (Finland) volunteer to propose a draft document, to be reviewed in close consultation with co-chairs, BFUG Secretariat, ENIC NARIC President and LRCC Vice-President before the next meeting, to be presented and discussed during the next meeting.

The next meeting will take place in Vienna on 27-28 October 2016.

DRAFT VERSION