



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

*Italian Presidency of
the Bologna Follow-up*

***Minutes of the meeting of the Board
of the Bologna Follow-up Group
under the Italian Presidency
Rome, 15 November 2003***

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda. The Agenda of the meeting was approved.

Item 2. Open discussion on the implementation of the activities according to the decisions taken in the BFUG meeting of 14 November 2003, regarding in particular:

- ***Work programme and working methods***
- ***Possible Working Groups***

Work programme and priority issues.

The majority of the delegates (Finland, European Commission, Belgium, Council of Europe, Austria, Norway) expressed themselves in favour of considering all the themes and actions quoted in the Berlin Communiqué as possible issues on which to organize the Bologna events. The Irish delegate, on the contrary, was in favour of the identification of some priorities, given the limited time available to the Bergen Conference in 2005. The delegate of Flemish Belgium proposed the next meeting of the Board in Oslo on 29 January 2004 to check for possible overlapping of some proposals, and to suggest, where appropriate, a possible re-orientation of some events or possible synergies with other member countries to jointly host a seminar.

The Chair concluded that no priorities should be identified and that all the actions and themes of the Berlin Communiqué will be considered as legitimate in order to organize a Bologna event. The Chair further noted that all "Bologna events" must include an invitation to all the BFUG members and circulation of the final results and recommendations to all. Moreover, the Board in its meeting



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of 29 January in Oslo will look at the proposals carefully in order to avoid overlaps.

The Austrian delegate proposed a paper to be drafted with a definition of the main features that a Bologna event should have and an outline of a "road map" of Bologna events compatible with the Presidencies. The Vice Chair noted that in the short time available it will not be possible to accommodate more than 10 seminars. The Council of Europe pointed out that a list of "Bologna related events" should also be prepared, including events such as the ACA Conference (on which the German delegation circulated a paper).

As to the timetable, the Secretariat recalled that, in the provisional list of proposed events prepared by the Presidency, there are not events foreseen for the first half of 2004. The European Commission objected that a concentration of events in the second half of 2004 and in the first half of 2005 will be inevitable. The Secretariat proposed to prepare a framework of Bologna events and that the new proposals to be sent directly to the Secretariat or to be sent jointly to the Secretariat and the Presidency.

The Chair concluded that the main address of the BFUG is the Presidency and therefore the proposals of Bologna events shall be addressed to the Chair.

Other issues were also raised by the delegations. The Austrian delegate observed that the new member countries required particular support in order to familiarize themselves with the complexity of rules and procedures of the Bologna Follow-up Group. Therefore, it would be very helpful to organize for the delegations of the new members pre-meetings before the BFUG meeting, in order to explain the Agendas. Ms Weitgruber proposed the new members to be assisted by the Secretariat.

The Finnish delegate recalled the good job made in this direction by CoE, EUA and ENQA. The Council of Europe pointed out that similar difficulties existed in other areas including new representatives of the "old" delegations and representatives of that delegations which never, or very seldom, participated in the BFUG meetings. The Greek delegate suggested the National Reports provided by the new members could be a good starting point in order to identify the best supporting measures towards them. The Secretariat proposed to go through the National Reports of the new countries and the establishment of a small Working Group with the CoE and other participants in order to find ways to give advice to the new members.



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The Vice Chair raised also the issue of the organization of the European Qualifications framework project, proposing that the Secretariat and the Danish delegation to draw up a paper in order to prepare the discussion in time for the BFUG meeting in Dublin on March 2004.

The Chair concluded that the BFUG shall be proactive in respect to the representatives of the new member countries and to all the other delegations which need to be assisted with supplementary information. He invited the Secretariat to take appropriate initiatives in this direction, with the support of the Council of Europe, and to organize special sessions or pre-meetings of information on Bologna dedicated to the delegations above mentioned.

Working methods.

The Vice Chair recommended the use of a large range of working methods, including Working Groups. The Secretariat circulated two papers concerning suggestions on the work programme and on the use of different working methods.

Item 3. Organisation of the stocktaking. The Chair invited the EUA and the Secretariat to give a short presentation of their respective documents on the subject. The relevant document of the Secretariat was circulated. The EUA illustrated the content of its paper and stated that the stocktaking exercise should contemplate three levels: the three priorities, all the action lines and themes of the Berlin Communiqué, the HE Institutions and students. Whereas the stocktaking is a national responsibility, the EUA underlined the importance of being involved in the project, having regard to existing material coming from several sources, such as the TRENDS III or the Quality Culture Project. The Secretariat referred to its document and pointed out that the first steps should be to decide who will be responsible for the Stocktaking Project and the most appropriate method for carrying it out. Dr Nyborg proposed the setting up of one or several Working Groups to work on the subject and to report to the BFUG on March 2005. The Vice Chair recalled the importance of the involvement of the European Commission in the project and underlined that a crucial aspect will be to establish proper relations between the stocktaking and other possible reports. Against the proposal of the Chair to make use of questionnaires, several delegates (Finland, ESIB, Austria, French Belgium, EUA, Council of Europe, European Commission) objected that the Group has already at its disposal a great amount of data collected from different



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sources and stated the great importance of having all the actors involved in the stocktaking project. The need of drawing political considerations from such an exercise was also emphasised (Belgium, ESIB).

The Chair concluded by asking the Secretariat to prepare a discussion paper to be presented at the Board meeting in Oslo on 29 January 2004 - taking into account the working documents presented by the European Commission and the EUA. He suggested the setting up of Working Groups for the preparation and the monitoring of the stocktaking exercise. The final decision, however, will be taken during the BFUG meeting of 9 March 2004 in Dublin.

Item 4. Contacts with the ENQA in view of the work to be accomplished in accordance with the objectives defined in the Berlin Communiqué. On the basis of the document illustrated by Dr Christian Thune, President of the ENQA, the day before, and of a document of the EUA circulated electronically before the meeting, a debate followed, with the participation of several delegations. The Finnish delegate proposed to invite Dr Thune to attend all the Board meetings, but the Vice Chair objected that it was more appropriate to leave to the Chair the decision of inviting the President of ENQA, as well as others, in the meetings of the BFUG or the Board.

Item 5. Financial support by the European Commission to the Bologna activities. The European Commission informed that, in February 2004, the EC intends to publish a "Call for Proposals" specifically meant to provide financial support to the activities related to the Bologna Process. The EC will communicate the deadline for application in the BFUG meeting in Dublin, March 2004. As far as the countries not participating in the Socrates programme are concerned, any decision will be taken in late May 2004. Given that the probable time table of the Bologna events will be from June 2004 to May 2005, the EC will consider all the proposed events and will select and support activities which relate to the interests of the European Union.

Item 6. Candidatures for the General Rapporteur to the Ministers in the Bergen Conference. Several delegates (European Commission, Belgium, Norway, Finland, Council of Europe, Austria) expressed their reservations on having a General Rapporteur for the Bergen Conference, putting forward different reasons, such as: in Bergen there will be the results of the stocktaking and the ENQA report and it



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is not advisable to have too many documents to submit to the Ministers; there is a need for a shorter document (maximum 5-6 pages) easily understandable for everybody. The Irish delegate replied that a detailed report represents a source of useful information and a guide for future actions. The Finnish and the Austrian delegates expressed the need for a document reflecting the political conclusions to be drafted from the results of the Bologna implementation 2003-2005 and proposed to appoint a Working Group, supported by an external expert, to prepare a paper on this subject. The Norwegian delegate underlined the necessity of having a report 2003-2005 while stating that the Secretariat should not be responsible for political conclusions. The EURASHE emphasised that for the transparency of the process and the dissemination of information a report is indispensable.

The Chair concluded that the role of the General Rapporteur appears to be no longer essential and suggested that the Secretariat be given the task of preparing a short report to the Ministers in Bergen on the BFUG activities 2003-2005.

Item 7. Candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference of 2007. The final deadline of December 2004 was reconfirmed.

Item 8. Proposals by the delegations to host Bologna events. The Chair will ask the BFUG delegations to send further proposals to host Bologna events within the deadline of 15 December 2003. The delegations will be also asked to send a paper with a short presentation of the events, explaining more in details the relevant content.

Item 9. Next meetings of the Board. The next meeting of the Board will take place in Oslo on 29 January 2004.

Item 10. Any other business. None