



Ministry of Education and
Science of Georgia

Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Seventh Meeting, Online

10 November 2023

Minutes of meeting

List of participants

Country/Organization	First Name	Last Name
Albania	Entela	Haloçi
Austria	Helga	Posset
EQAR	Melinda	Szabo
European Commission/ Eurydice (Co-Chair)	David	Crosier
EACEA	Olga	Davydovskaia
EACEA	Daniela	Kocanova
EACEA	Anna	Horvath
ESU	Iris	Kimizoglu
EUA	Michael	Gaebel
France	Rosaly	Datchi
Moldova	Velisco	Nadejda
The Netherlands	Robert	Wagenaar
Norway (Co-Chair)	Tone Flood	Strøm
Norway	Ingrid	Skrede
Romania	Camelia	Mircea-Sturza
United Kingdom	Christopher	Starbuck
EUROSTUDENT	Kristina	Hauschildt
BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Edlira Adi	Kahani Subashi
BFUG Secretariat	Blerina	Caslli

Cyprus, Czech Republic, EI-ETUCE, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan and Malta did not attend the meeting.

1. Welcome remarks and approval of the agenda

The Co-Chairs welcomed all participants to the seventh meeting of the Working Group for the Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process for the 2021-2024 work period. Mr. David Crosier (Co-Chair) provided a summary of the agenda, emphasizing the aim of this meeting as to have a consultation process for the preparation of the 2024 Bologna Process Implementation report to present at the BFUG Meeting LXXXVI. The consultation process will continue later with written feedback on the draft report. The agenda was officially adopted without any changes. The minutes of the 6th meeting of the group were also approved.

For more information, please see: [Agenda of the meeting](#)



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2. Updates on BFUG meetings

2.1 BFUG Meeting LXXXIV (11-12 May 2023)

David Crosier (Co-Chair) provided an overview of the meetings that took place since the last WG on Monitoring meeting, starting with the BFUG Meeting in Stockholm, and stressed the importance of having a meeting of this WG prior to the upcoming BFUG. He highlighted that the main discussions contributing to the development of the report were focused mostly on indicators. Therefore, the main points of the discussion and many indicator-related comments and proposals were put on paper and integrated into the report. This process would follow later with reactions and comments on the draft report.

2.2 BFUG Board Meeting LXXXV (02 October 2023)

In relation to the Tbilisi Board meeting, members noted the non-participation of Serbia in this process since no questionnaire response was received from their side. This raised the question whether any action should be discussed at the BFUG on how to deal with countries that do not participate in the monitoring process, but nevertheless noting at this stage only the non-participation of Serbia.

2.3 Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) (25 September 2023)

Helga Posset (BICG Co-Chair, Austria) provided a summary of the last BICG meeting, where she underscored that updates from all three Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs) were discussed, and there was an expectation of draft reports from each TPG to prepare for both the upcoming Board meeting and the BFUG meeting in Madrid. However, only draft reports from TPG A and B have been received so far. Consequently, ongoing discussions and drafting are in progress, contingent on the outcomes of the TPGs and BICG, aiming to incorporate results and finalize a report for inclusion in the Communiqué.

Participants underlined that the monitoring report is based on the Rome Communiqué, also when referencing the commitment of the Rome Communiqué to cultivate a more inclusive, innovative, and interconnected European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Additionally, it was suggested that the monitoring report should contain points that could be referenced in the Communiqué, a notion supported by Mr. Crosier.

2.4 WG on Social Dimension (24-25 October 2023)

David Crosier (Co-Chair) provided an update from the recent WG on SD meeting held in Ghent. He characterized the discussion as highly productive, emphasizing that the current emphasis is on their proposal to introduce indicators to facilitate implementation at both national and institutional levels. The group received commendation for their strong support and collaborative efforts in shaping the Social Dimension chapter.

2.5 WG on Fundamental Values (06-08 November 2023)

Tone Flood Strøm (Co-Chair) presented the latest updates from the meeting of the WG on FV held in Romania. She stated that the draft statements on the fundamental values were completed from the WG's side and those will be discussed at the BFUG meeting in Madrid. She also highlighted that the WG is working on a proposal for a monitoring framework for the fundamental values.

Iris Kimizoglu (ESU) mentioned that during the WG on FV meeting, there was a discussion about the preliminary version of the monitoring framework for the New Fav project, with the goal of finalizing it by the end of the





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year. In the following year, the framework will undergo testing using countries or higher education systems as case studies. After the Ministerial Conference, it will be important to review the framework to evaluate its effectiveness and explore potential enhancements, potentially in collaboration with the monitoring working group.

2.6 WG on Learning and Teaching (05 September 2023)

Michael Gaebel (EUA) reported on the WG on Learning and Teaching meeting, that took place prior to the Tbilisi Board meeting. Although a policy statement has been formulated, it has not yet undergone discussion. The statement is scheduled for presentation at the BFUG meeting in Madrid. Ongoing discussions involve exploring a 'friends of Bologna' initiative and determining how countries can be associated with the Bologna process. While no additional group meetings have been convened, periodic activities, such as the Peer Learning Activity (PLA) in Ireland focusing on transformative material approaches to learning and teaching, took place, including a WG meeting in early September.

3. Preparation of the 2024 BPIR – Information on state of play

David Crosier (Co-Chair) presented an update on the status of the implementation report, revealing that three chapters covering Key Commitments, Social Dimension, and Learning and Teaching were sent out for comments by the end of October, while the remaining chapters on Fundamental Values, Key Data, and Mobility & Internationalization will be distributed before the Madrid BFUG meeting. Challenges faced included limited resources, a demanding questionnaire leading to delays in submissions, and a lack of communication. Deadlines were met by only 30% of countries close to the Stockholm BFUG meeting and another 30% by the end of May, with the remaining 40% of answers missing. This caused delays in the overall process, along with other content-related issues in the questionnaires – such as lack of supporting documentation, and internal coherence issues.

The delay in sending out three chapters was also linked to collecting statistical data – a process managed through outsourcing, and where a contract delay had occurred. Despite challenges, the contractor's work was praised, and the lost time has been mostly recovered. The team's strength and wealth of gathered material were highlighted, with draft chapters nearing completion.

Countries and working groups can provide written feedback until November, and a pre-final report for the next BFUG meeting is expected then to be finalized. For the 2027 Ministerial Conference, a more focused monitoring approach was suggested due to the validity of materials and the stability of data in many policy areas. After the presentation of the current status, group discussions ensued, recommending a more concentrated and in-depth exploration of certain topics and contemplating future monitoring strategies. The objective is to generate a high-quality report that significantly contributes to the overall Communiqué.

4. Draft chapter on Key commitments

David Crosier (Co-Chair) invited the participants in a discussion to give their feedback related to the chapter on Key Commitments. It was clarified that the report follows a common structure referencing the Rome Communiqué in each chapter to address the main issues. However, there may be a need to reword sections for clarity and accuracy.



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4.1 Development of the degree structure, Short-cycle programmes

The complexity and absence of consensus regarding the short cycle in education were deliberated upon. It was emphasized that even though the short cycle is part of the Qualifications Framework as an integral part of higher education, different countries interpret and approach it diversely. This disparity underscores the necessity for clearer definitions and policy discussions to address inconsistencies in understanding and implementing the short cycle.

Helga Posset expressed appreciation for the inclusion of a chapter on key commitments. She underscored the efforts of the three TPGs in contributing to this chapter. Notably, she mentioned the presence of a subgroup within TPG A specifically focused on the short cycle, which is actively working on providing recommendations.

4.2 Recognition of qualifications

Attention was drawn to the fact that the effectiveness of automatic recognition depends on proper implementation at the level of degree structures and quality assurance. The monitoring of the Lisbon Recognition Convention by the Council of Europe, covering refugee-related issues, was mentioned, with the observation that 50% of the countries lack processes covered by the EHEA. It was suggested to cross-check reported data with LRC monitoring and ENIC-NARIC. However, it was emphasized that ENIC-NARIC should have been contacted by BFUG representatives when questionnaires are completed, involving ministries in recognition issues. Communication at the national level involving all responsible parties was stressed.

David Crosier proposed the use of a commenting template for ongoing discussions on each country, tracking comments separately from working groups. The deadline for receiving written comments was fixed on November 30, aiming to produce a second draft by the end of the year. When discussing the approach to handling political comments, the Co-Chair emphasized the importance of objective reporting on commitments, focusing on whether they were implemented or not, while avoiding individuals' political views.

5. Draft chapter on Social Dimension

David Crosier (Co-Chair) presented the progress of the Social Dimension report, which was developed in close consultation with the WG on SD. The objective of this chapter was to develop indicators to evaluate the implementation of Principles and Guidelines (PAGs). The discussion focused on the overall situation and challenges faced, while Mr. Crosier expressed satisfaction with the overall conceptual development of the chapter. It was highlighted that the social dimension statistical data is included in the first chapter unlike previously.

The presentation was followed by a group discussion for feedback and comments. The participants expressed that the chapter provides detailed information on the situation, but the questionnaire may not accurately depict the situation. However, it was acknowledged that some information may be misleading to the way certain nations may have responded to specific questions, and the questionnaire could benefit from context information. Advice for future monitoring reports was to explore various sources and use a more profound analysis.

Concerns were raised about the transformation of adopted PAGs into indicators, with potential for distortion and bias. Despite choosing a logical path in alignment with the agreed-upon PAGs, it was acknowledged that this may not be the most accurate approach for country comparisons. However, some participants argued that





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the evaluation reflects the reality, while acknowledging that the choice of indicators may be influenced by a country's development goals and not cover all necessary aspects. The recommendation was for countries to use the information to identify areas needing improvement and align their policies with established principles and guidelines.

A debate emerged regarding Nordic countries and their funding schemes for the social dimension in higher education. The red category indicator for these countries led to a potential misrepresentation of the European situation related to funding for the social dimension. This discrepancy arose because Nordic countries have inclusive systems and a general support system that deviates from the targeted support specified in the PAGs. The issue may be brought up in the BFUG meeting to seek a solution.

Concerns were expressed about countries not fully implementing agreed PAGs, particularly in the social dimension aspect. Reference was made to a prior survey from two years ago, revealing that many countries, including those outside of Europe, do not include students from economically disadvantaged or physically disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, the goal of providing equal opportunities for students from varied socioeconomic backgrounds was not fully realized.

A suggestion was made for a revision of the PAGs, as they were deemed helpful in generating discussion and awareness but less effective as a checklist or for defining indicators.

6. Draft chapter on Learning and Teaching

Mr. Crosier (Co-Chair) introduced the Learning and Teaching draft chapter focusing on identifying challenges and appropriate actions to point out government roles in education and its support to learning and teaching. It was agreed on a mapping exercise approach, rather than direct policy commitments for national authorities and making strict policies. The focus was on defining areas that need government support in education, evaluating how policies were implemented, as well as question framing. It was explained that the questionnaire and chapter development are more exploratory, focusing on developing a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. The draft has a solid structure with key indicators but is still being clarified with feedback from countries. It includes data from various sources, such as the BFUG, EUA and other institutions, and it will have a Eurostudent indicator in the final version.

The discussion centered on the significance of recognizing prior learning in higher education within the context of the Bologna Process, emphasizing the imperative for countries to make advancements in this area. The report was recognized for its valuable information, seen as crucial for future analysis and exploitation. Interest was expressed in observing the reactions of the BFUG or authorities and potential promotion strategies. The possibility of unresolved issues surfacing during the BFUG discussion was acknowledged, leading to the agreement on allocating a 20-minute time slot for each group's discussion, with the aim of ensuring completion within the designated time.

Acknowledgment was given to the contributions of countries, recognizing the thoroughness of the exercise. Given the absence of apparent changes in the data, a suggestion was made to prepare a more detailed analysis of issues and submit a proposal before the period leading up to the Tirana Ministerial.

A proposal for a larger report every couple of years was put forward, with a suggestion to focus future reports on specific topics like the social dimension or micro-credentials. Additionally, it was recommended to consider focus groups or quicker consultations as more effective methods than surveys, contributing to the enhancement of the overall process and service coordination.





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The group contemplated a different approach for the next round of reporting, aiming to focus on tasks that could be distributed among other working groups. They plan to discuss and consider adopting a different approach before the end of the mandate. Given the positive reviews of the prior report, it was advised that the next phase could involve providing a different kind of report.

7. AOB

The Co-Chairs stated that after receiving the members' feedback, they plan to hold a meeting in the new year to discuss a different type of monitoring. They thanked everyone for their contributions and the seventh meeting of the WG on Monitoring was successfully concluded.



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