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Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education



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**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
Copenhagen, 30 November 2011, 10:00 – 17:00**

Draft Minutes

List of participants

Country/ Organisation	Representative
Poland	Maria Boltruszko
Poland	Bartlomiej Banaszak
Poland	Zbigniew Marciniak
Armenia	Karine Harutyunyan
Armenia	Gayane Harutyunyan
Denmark	Helle Damgaard Nielsen
Denmark	Jacob Fuchs (Chair of the meeting)
Denmark	Ditte Mesick
Azerbaijan	Azad Akhundov
Cyprus	Despina Martidou-Forcier
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Aida Duric
Germany (invited)	Peter Greisler (Chair of the Mobility WG)
Romania	Adrian Curaj
European Commission	Adam Tyson
European Commission	Frank Petrikowski
Council of Europe	Sjur Bergan
EUA	Lesley Wilson
ESU	Allan Pall
EURASHE	Stefan Delplace
BFUG Secretariat	Ligia Deca
BFUG Secretariat	Viorel Proteasa

Welcome and introduction to the meeting by the hosts

Denmark welcomed the participants, introduced the meeting and started an introductory tour de table.

1. Information by the upcoming Danish EU Presidency and Azerbaijan and by the current Polish EU Presidency and Armenia

Denmark raised attention to the change of government which took place in November 2011, which implied the renaming of the Ministry responsible for higher education as the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education. The overall objectives of the new government in the field of higher education are: increasing the number of higher education graduates, cohesion, flexibility, while respecting the different missions of the higher education institutions. Denmark underlined that it views the 'Erasmus for All' programme as one of the most important issues in its upcoming mandate as the EU Presidency. The European

Commission proposed a substantial increase in the budget for education, which Denmark supports and takes as a good sign for the importance of the subject in the current context.

Azerbaijan announced that it started planning for a number of events related to the upcoming BFUG Chairmanship mandate, with an immediate focus on the BFUG Board meeting to take place in Baku on 21 February 2012. Azerbaijan would also like to organise other events of interest for the Bologna Process countries, for example on the implementation of qualifications frameworks – as Azerbaijan is in the final stages of developing its national qualification frameworks. The Azeri representative also underlined that evaluating learning outcomes is not just a national challenge, but one for most EHEA countries, so discussing the problems encountered in various contexts could be useful.

Poland underlined the very good cooperation with Armenia as BFUG Chair, the BFUG Secretariat and Denmark. The Polish Chair noted that there is a sense of common direction in the BFUG and that is positive for the overall EHEA.

Armenia underlined the very good cooperation with Poland and the BFUG Secretariat for the duration of the second semester of 2011. On 8-9 December 2011, Armenia will organise a conference on student participation in the governance of higher education institutions, with the support of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Students' Union (ESU). Armenia recalled that the discussion on financing of higher education within the Bologna Process started with the event organised in Yerevan in September 2011; it emphasised that it should remain a focus in the Bologna Process, while committing to chairing a working group on this topic within the 2012-2015 BFUG workplan. Finally, Armenia wished good luck to the new Chairs and underlined the need to keep the work within the Bologna Follow-Up Group outside of other political discussions.

2. Adoption of the agenda

Due to the participants' flights schedule it was agreed that some agenda points would be discussed earlier than initially planned, such as those linked with the EHEA accession and the EQAR item on the any other business agenda point. The agenda was unanimously adopted with these minor changes.

3. Adoption of minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Yerevan, 7 September 2011 and taking note of the outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Cracow, 13-14 October 2011

The Yerevan BFUG Board minutes were adopted without amendments. The BFUG Board also took note of the Cracow BFUG meeting draft outcome of proceedings.

4. Status of BFUG WG/ network reports

Denmark introduced the situation of the BFUG WG/ network reports, based on the existing background document. The BFUG Secretariat mentioned that the Report on the Bologna Process implementation will be circulated to the BFUG members at the beginning of December, with a deadline for feedback of 2-3 weeks (until the end of the year). Other

reports will be sent for consultation as soon as they are ready, in order to allow for ample consultation time prior to the January 2012 BFUG meeting. The networks have largely announced in their meetings that they will follow their Terms of Reference and not necessarily issue policy recommendations unless it was already in their mandate. The BFUG suggestion for a stronger link with the BFUG working groups was generally welcomed.

It was agreed that the BFUG WGs/ networks should be allowed to exist until the first BFUG meeting after the Bucharest Ministerial Conference. This was perceived as a strive for continuity, while in the same time it was acknowledged that the current structure should not be taken for granted, since the upcoming Communiqué and overall implementation results will probably motivate changes in the future.

5. Nomination of experts for the review of the EHEA accession applications

Denmark introduced the current status-quo related to this agenda item. The Council of Europe recalled the EHEA accession procedure currently in place.

Based on the mandate given by the BFUG in its Cracow meeting to the BFUG Board, it was proposed that a small standing committee should be assembled to evaluate the applications received by the 1 December deadline. The members of such a committee could come from: Denmark (as incoming BFUG Chair), Armenia (as outgoing BFUG Chair and non-EU country), Luxemburg, ESU, EUA, the Council of Europe and the European Commission (pending confirmation). The standing committee could be assisted by the BFUG Secretariat.

The BFUG Board agreed with the proposal made and a tentative date for a meeting of the standing committee to evaluate the received applications for EHEA membership was advanced for 12 December in Brussels. The conclusions of the meeting will feed into the discussions on this matter at the Copenhagen BFUG meeting in January 2012.

6. Executive Summary of the Report on the Bologna Process implementation

The Chair introduced the draft Executive Summary and the BFUG Secretariat detailed the consultation process, which will result in a revised version to be presented in January 2012. It was also argued that the BFUG Board can give an indication on possible key issues that could be touched upon in the Executive Summary, in line with the data collection findings.

A discussion followed, where the following general points were put forward:

- Some of the language used in relation to the state of the Bologna Process implementation is somewhat negative and a rephrasing should be considered in the final version of the document, which is in line with the evidence presented by the report and also motivates new commitments within the EHEA. The new text should also acknowledge the contribution made by higher education institutions and other stakeholders in the implementation process and encourages them to pursue and enhance the full implementation of the Bologna Process, while acknowledging the need for more commitment of national authorities.

- The Executive Summary should give a clear indication of the areas where the ministers need to commit further and where new action needs to be taken (as well as by whom), so that it can be further linked with the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué. Also, the Executive Summary could focus on groups of countries with different level of performance in some implementation areas and issue specific recommendations in relation to them.

Also, the following points were put forward in relation to specific thematic aspects within the Executive Summary:

- The inclusion of research in the current internal and external quality assurance is still an issue which has not been decided, so it is perhaps premature to include it in the Executive Summary;
- The text talks about a new 'quality initiative', but the understanding of the term is different in the Bologna Process context. There is a need to clarify what is meant with this new phrasing and to acknowledge the limits of what quality assurance can achieve;

The Chair concluded by underlining that negative statements should be reconsidered and all actors should be motivated to get involved in the consolidation of the EHEA. He also stressed that the BFUG Board acknowledges the importance of the Executive Summary and asks the Reporting Working Group to continue its revision in line with the feedback provided, so that it can constitute a key input for the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué

7. Information on the Future of Higher Education – Bologna Process Researchers' Conference (FOHE – BPRC), Bucharest, 17-19 October 2011

Romania presented the main highlights of the event and introduced the background document which was sent to the BFUG. It was underlined that the conference was attended by approximately 300 participants from 31 countries. CDs with the final papers will be disseminated in the January 2012 BFUG meeting and the printed volumes with the final conference papers will be distributed at the Bucharest Ministerial Conference to all participants. The conference participants stressed the need to repeat such encounters between HE researchers and policy makers before ministerial conferences or similar events. The message of the researchers was that there is a need to go beyond the Bologna Process as currently known and make the process more open and systematic. Other themes which were highlighted as important by the conference participants were: reforming university governance, strengthening university leadership and management, promoting inter-disciplinarity, stimulating entrepreneurship and emphasizing engagement (as a broader integration of the social dimension into the current global context). Finally, Romania underlined that the conference opened the way for new research themes. In this context, Romania would like to gather contributions on these new themes in a structured way in the near future and aims to contribute to a future edition of an encounter between HE researchers and policy makers.

EUA said that it was happy to be associated with the conference, as it brought more insight into the elements which influence and are influenced by the Bologna Process at the institutional level. The topics raised in the final part of the information document are very relevant and should be taken into the discussions about the future of the Bologna Process. EURASHE expressed its interest to contribute to developing further themes such as entrepreneurship, employability and inter-disciplinarity.

The Chair thanked Romania for taking this initiative and also recalled the November meeting of the BFUG Board with representatives of various higher education researchers' networks, which concluded with suggestions on concrete ways to keep the two communities closer together.

8. Bucharest Communiqué – Draft 0

The Chair introduced this agenda point and asked the BFUG Secretariat to detail the drafting process of the initial version of the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué, as well as the logic of the text.

The BFUG Secretariat underlined that the current version aimed at providing a more motivating introduction, which refers to the achievements of the Bologna Process, the role of higher education for building sustainable societies and strong economies in the current crisis and beyond, as well as the main focus and aims of the European Higher Education Area. It also attempted to link the Executive Summary of the Report of the Bologna Process implementation with the Communiqué, while focusing the ministerial commitments on three areas: access and success in higher education, Bologna tools with a focus on the full implementation of learning outcomes and Bologna in a wider context. A more systemic approach was preferred.

The following points were made with regard to the Communiqué existing text and the direction to be taken further:

- It is important that the key messages in the Communiqué are linked with the evidence provided within the report on the BP implementation;
- The current structure tries to accommodate the recommendations from each WG or network report and perhaps this makes the structure too heavy. It was felt that not all WG recommendations are as politically relevant;
- Some of the key issues to be addressed should be:
 - o Access to increase the number of graduates in line with the foreseen demand for the jobs of the future. The communique should emphasize the need to draw on wider sections of the national populations by attracting more diverse groups into higher education with the help of student support, funding systems, modes of delivery etc.;
 - o Standards of quality and relevance needed for social and economic integration. Learning outcomes are a key element in answering this question. In the

regulated professions learning outcomes are never used as an approach and perhaps the ministers should say something about that.

- Employability, since most ministers come from countries with increasing levels of unemployment. A solution should be found not only for low employment rates, but also for increasing the quality of employment – jobs with requirements lower than the qualifications graduates have.
 - Mobility, with an emphasis on the main issues that should be improved, such as recognition, portability of student support, as well as the use of ECTS and learning outcomes.
 - Governance and funding. A new challenge of the EHEA member states is to review their funding systems and see whether they support the delivery of the needed results of each national higher education system;
 - Role of universities in innovation and economic development. More links to research are necessary, but HEIs need to help graduates develop entrepreneurial skills and help in the economic recovery.
- EHEA Ministers should commit to doing their part, but also to help HEIs to be fully involved in the Bologna Process implementation.
 - There is a need for shifting from the national authorities to the HEIs, as implementation is mainly done at the institutional level. HEIs should have the implementation of the Bologna Process higher on their priority list and they need to be supported by the national authorities in order to put it into practice.
 - The current Communiqué draft was appreciated as being a good start. It was underlined that the shift of roles between institutional, national and European level is key to unlocking the potential of the EHEA. It was also pointed out that incoherent implementation can undermine the structures, tools and principles that EHEA countries now have in common.
 - The focus on learning outcomes is very good, but it was thought that the various missions of higher education should be reaffirmed in the early part of the Communiqué, as the situation in the global context might be different if education had provided all the skills which go beyond employability: ethics, transferable skills such as planning for the long term etc.
 - Access was also seen as very important because we cannot afford to not make the best use of our talent (economically), but all members of society should have the possibility to realise their potential and ambitions to the full (social justice). This is achieved not just through access in higher education, but also through progress and completion.
 - It was mentioned that the feedback received from universities warns that in a time of crisis, HEIs are cutting investments exactly in the areas that the Bologna Process sees as important: innovative pedagogy, student centered learning, social dimension etc. In this context, the Communiqué should commit governments to provide more incentives to the HEIs for implementing the Bologna Process in a holistic manner, while still functioning on the basic activities. It was thought that the Communiqué should also clearly note what the governments can do to support HEIs: increase autonomy, guarantee adequate levels of funding and provide the necessary incentives.

- It was thought that the first draft of the Communiqué already includes most of the issues that need to be said, but the language needs to be more explicit. A specific reference to student centered learning should be made. Less repetition of what was already assumed by the ministers in previous meetings was advised. As concrete suggestions, it was underlined that the role of higher education for the long term development of societies and economies should be emphasised more in the beginning, that higher education financing should be a theme within the document and more policy solutions need to be added on the topic of social dimension. Finally, it was suggested that the Communiqué could also address governments as a whole, as some issues need more than the commitment of ministers responsible for higher education.

The BFUG Secretariat underlined that for the redrafting of the Communiqué it would be useful not just to identify the priorities, but also what tools and policy solutions should underpin them. Some policy solutions were not identified and the text can only say what is assumed by the BFUG in this area.

The Chair underlined that the Communiqué has to convince the ministers and the governments, but also the academic communities. The BFUG and the BFUG Board should indicate what the Communiqué should say on issues such as financing, where there was no official WG/ network providing policy recommendations.

More comments on the main political points that the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué needs to underline were put forward, amongst which:

- The Bologna Process should be shifted to the role of HEIs and what is expected of them. Employability was also stressed as a broader issue, not just for the labour market. A well trained philosopher is also desirable for fulfilling the other missions of HEI;
- There is a need to explain how the Bologna Process will reach its goals and why it is the right reform at the present time in order to receive more support;
- The case needs to be made for encouraging more diversified missions of higher education, as well as quality in every one of these missions. Innovation should be encouraged, especially in areas such as implementation of learning.
- Sometimes public authorities are not always a model in encouraging the employability of the first cycle and this should probably be changed through a commitment in the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué.
- The Communiqué should underline the high return of higher education and offer the reasons why investment in this sector should be protected from the cuts seen in other sectors. At the same time, HEIs should be able to draw on wider sources of funding, such as public competitive funding for excellence in various missions. Removing the barriers for alternative funding was seen as a key solution and the Bologna Process ministers should commit themselves in that direction;
- Targeted funding to priority areas, such as student centered learning, was seen as a possible way forward to enhance Bologna Process implementation. Also, it was pointed out that there is an increasing disconnect between HE and research funding, which will surely become a problem in the long term. Furthermore, the need to convey a message

acceptable to all those concerned was stressed. The impact of the Bologna Process in terms of effectiveness is not proven. Students blame the Bologna Process for many negative trends, which are sometimes not linked to the initial reform agenda, but emphasising some issues might trigger more discontent and more support is needed among academic communities. For example, ECTS implementation meant more workload, but less returns in terms of employability. It was thus felt that one needs to be careful about what messages are sent.

- The Communiqué should be talking about 'parity of esteem for different HEIs'. There is a lot of attention given to global research universities and sometimes everything else is seen as irrelevant in some national contexts. Therefore, the Communiqué needs to talk about diversity of HEIs and how to encourage it. For example, in the EUA lifelong learning charter, it is underlined that governments need to remove the barriers for HEIs to mainstream lifelong learning in their mission. Finally, it was stressed that only if countries have a large pool of highly trained graduates, they will be able to respond to the global research agendas. In this sense, the link between higher education and research also includes the social dimension.

Finally, the issue of rankings was raised and how they should be addressed in the Communiqué. During the discussion that followed, it was pointed out that there should be incentives for a diversified system before rankings can be justified, while achieving more transparency with a multitude of tools is key to ensuring the consolidation of the EHEA. It was also stressed that other indicators should be found, apart from those linked to research performance, since quality of teaching is already suffering from this polarisation. Some BFUG members felt that acknowledgement of the U-Multirank initiative would be useful in the Bucharest Communiqué, especially in light of the needed data collection exercise for the project to progress.

The Chair concluded that more clarity should be achieved in the Communiqué regarding the achievements of the Bologna Process. It was also pointed out that most of the things brought forward can be grouped under the heading 'Unlocking resources': social dimension, improving the dialogue on higher education governance and financing, as well as using the Bologna Process tools better in a synchronised way. The Chair also indicated that the first draft of the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué will be circulated to the BFUG members before Friday, 16 December, in light of the revisions that need to be made.

9. EHEA Mobility Strategy

The Chair of the Mobility WG was invited by the BFUG Chair to introduce the revised EHEA Mobility Strategy and the proposed way forward.

The Chair of the Mobility WG (Germany) suggested that the BFUG should adopt the EHEA mobility strategy and ask the ministers to endorse it in the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué. It was also suggested to send it to the BFUG members, together with the draft Communiqué and BPF Statement for further comments. Some main points in the strategy were underlined as well, such as:

- the benchmark of student coming into the EHEA as a measure of the EHEA attractiveness;
- the view that more balanced mobility should be achieved, but at the existing higher levels;
- the commitments for more freedom of choice between the national quality assurance agencies listed in EQAR and the increase in fair recognition based on a learning outcomes approach.

In the discussion, the following points were made:

- It was stated that the EU Council of Ministers adopted its conclusion on modernisation of higher education and one of the main points is mobility. The text now reflects a compromise. Another document is the EU Council conclusions on a benchmark for learning mobility. The benchmark related to higher education now has 15 ECTS or 3 months duration as a threshold. Smaller mobility schemes are to be measured, but not included in the benchmark. A call for a harmonisation of the EHEA and EU benchmarks was already made in the EU context.
- It was agreed that the Ministers should endorse the strategy and refer to it as it is currently done in the draft Communiqué. Some more concrete comments were also put forward:
 - o On item 3 – the principle of balanced mobility should be looked at the macro level. In the phrase ‘High levels of incoming degree and credit mobility can also be seen as burdensome by governments as well as higher education institutions and deserve our attention.’, perhaps ‘burdensome’ does not send the best message.
 - o When it comes to administrative burdens, it is not only about procedures, it is also about lack of political will to remove those burdens and this should perhaps be included in the text.
 - o We should talk about avoiding rigid regulations, but not about removing state responsibility on some issues. The phrasing needs to make this distinction.
- With relation to the target for inward mobility it was asked why the 5% threshold was chosen and whether this is an appropriate level. In the introduction of the strategy, it was pointed to the need to talk about better matching between supply and demand to which mobility contributes to at EHEA level. The reference to the EU directive can be interpreted as EU centric, but there is a point to be made. The text should perhaps encourage EHEA countries to collaborate with the Economy Ministers, not the European Commission, as the proposal for the Directive revision would have already be launched by the time the EHEA Strategy is adopted. The text on social security for academic staff should be adapted to the existing EU initiatives.
- A proposal to revise the EU Visa regulations for teachers and students will soon be launched by the European Commission.

Germany clarified that the target of 5% EHEA inward mobility is ambitious, because it doubles the current EHEA average calculated at 2.4%. It also stressed that some mobility imbalances can be good and these situations should be raised into discussion. In the field of

visa regulations and work permits, it is indeed not only an administrative problem and this issue should be addressed in the internationalisation/ mobility strategies of the EHEA countries. The EU directive was not assessed as an EU centric problem, mainly due to its impact on the use of learning outcome for regulated professions.

It was further argued that the Communiqué should say that the 5% benchmark is only one of the possible indicators for attractiveness. On the reference to the EU directive regarding the recognition of qualifications, it was stated that the revision process is already very advanced. The link of professional recognition with learning outcomes has been already agreed, but the problem now is how to implement it. Perhaps this issue would be a good candidate for a BFUG WG. The revised directive should allow for a process of continuous improvement and this is where the Bologna Process would have a big role to play, especially for the professions which are regulated in some countries and not in others. On the issue of de-regulation, it was proposed to perhaps start with a pilot project – the joint degrees.

The BFUG Chair congratulated the group for its work and concluded that the comments made should be taken in by the Mobility WG. The BFUG Board should not commit on the detailed outline of the communiqué at this point but it agrees that the EHEA Mobility Strategy should be adopted by the BFUG and most likely endorsed by the EHEA ministers as an enclosure of the Communiqué.

10. BPF Statement – Draft 0

The Chair introduced the document and the BFUG Secretariat explained the consultation process that led to the first draft version.

The following main comments and proposals were made:

- It was underlined that the text is not very specific and that for example on paragraph two, the text on employability should be balanced with more text on social cohesion. It was also suggested that the IO WG could be assisted by the BFUG Board in the drafting process;
- There is a need to clarify the purpose of the event and then the BPF Statement can be reshaped;
- The relevance of the BPF could be improved if more bilateral dialogues are fostered, such as between Europe and North Africa for example;
- It was recalled that the Bologna Policy Forum was so far regarded as a symbolic event aimed at policy dialogue, which underlined that the EHEA remains open for dialogue.

Several points were then made on the need to have more dialogue at the level of stakeholders and policy experts, as well as dialogues according to the specific problems of every region. Doctoral education was seen as an area with a lot of global interest.

It was proposed that if the idea of a statement is to be kept, then it should be very simple: it should state that the ministers met, discussed the issues on the agenda and committed to extending the cooperation beyond the EHEA boundaries (with concrete examples). It was

also argued that the text on the global imperative for cooperation in paragraphs 1 and 2 should be maintained.

The BFUG Chair concluded that an attempt to shorten the text will be made, while also inserting more concrete initiatives, provided they will be put forward by the participants.

11. List of countries and organisations to be invited at the Third BPF

Romania introduced the proposal for a list of countries and organisations to be invited at the Bucharest Bologna Policy Forum and asked the BFUG Board to agree with sending the list to the BFUG and allowing for a five day consultation period, after which the invitations could be sent out in order to ensure a high level of participation.

It was suggested to add Kosovo to the existing list, even if they are not formally recognised as a country by all EHEA members, due to the high level of cooperation between the EU and Kosovo and to the presence of the Palestinian Authority in the list as a similar case.

The BFUG Board agreed that the list should not be sent again to the BFUG, as this was a subject of the Cracow BFUG meeting and the list was already revised in line with the comments made. It was thought that an endorsement of the list by the BFUG Board should be enough to send out the invitations as soon as possible.

The BFUG Chair concluded that the BFUG Board endorses the list which should be used for sending out the invitations in the near future. Romania will look into the issue of inviting Kosovo to the Bucharest Bologna Policy Forum. Following a consultation with the BFUG Chairs Romania will finally make a decision.

12. Thematic session (EIT) at March 2012 BFUG meeting

Denmark announced its intention to invite the Chair of the EIT Board for a presentation at the thematic session.

It was proposed to insert the presentation of the Climate KIC as it outlines how cooperation between universities and business works in practice. Mary Ritter could be a possible speaker on this topic. It was also argued that also the Energy KIC is quite interesting, especially on the education side.

The Chair concluded that Denmark and the European Commission will continue to cooperate closely for organising the thematic session and will announce further details at a later stage.

13. ESU Convention 16-20 March 2012

ESU announced that it will organise a European Students' Convention on 17-19 March 2012. The main theme for the first two days will be employability and the effect of the economic crisis on higher education. The third day will be dedicated to the Bologna Process and ESU will launch the new Bologna With Students' Eyes (BWSE) report. ESU underlined that they would like the BFUG members to attend the launching presentation as well as a social event together with the participants in the ESU Convention. ESU also announced that they will

probably have some of the key BWSE conclusions available for the January 2012 BFUG meeting.

It was agreed that Denmark will look into organising the events in the specified format in order to increase interaction between the student representatives and the BFUG members and to allow for a presentation of the BWSE to the BFUG.

14. Agenda of the BFUG meeting, Copenhagen, 18-19 January 2012

The agenda was adopted with three minor changes: the point on the list of BPF countries and organisations would be removed as the decision was taken in the BFUG Board and two additional points will be inserted: one on the EQAR external evaluation and another one on the language regime.

The Council of Europe announced that it had modelled the QF thematic session for the January 2012 BFUG meeting according to the successful format of the last QA thematic session. Alex Young (UK/ Scotland) will chair the 1h20min for debates. Overall duration will be of 2h30min with no break.

Denmark announced that Chairs' proposal for the BFUG will be that the language regime be left to the host country to decide and it should be announced when an application to host an upcoming ministerial meeting is made. No pressure should be exerted on the country afterwards. Also, the countries which will submit the application for hosting the 2015 Ministerial Conference will be asked to provide information at the January 2012 BFUG meeting about what language regime can be offered.

15. Next BFUG Board meeting, Baku, 21 February 2012

Azerbaijan underlined that the BFUG Board members are welcome in Baku for the next BFUG Board meeting. The commitment from the authorities was secured and the invitation will be sent out on 16 December 2011. Further communication will take place with the Danish Co-Chairs and the BFUG Secretariat on the preparation needed for the meeting.

16. Any other business

a. EQAR

It was underlined that EQAR will be as strong as the countries make it be. The Polish national law regarding higher education is already contributing to the EQAR recognition, as it allows to establish the new HEI or department by any foreign Higher Education Institution which was accredited by any agency listed in the Register. It was thought that if other countries follow the same path, the Register will be established more quickly.

Finally, it was concluded that this suggestion should feature in the Bucharest Communiqué.

b. EP report on the Bologna Process

The BFUG Board welcomed the European Parliament initiative report "The contribution of the European institutions to the consolidation and progress of the Bologna Process", which

was presented on 23 November 2011 and will be voted in January 2012 in the CULT Committee's meeting.

c. The dates for the 2012 BFUG meeting in in the second semester of 2012

Cyprus announced that the BFUG meeting in the second semester of 2012 will take place on 28-29 August 2012. The preparatory BFUG Board meeting will take place in the first part of June 2012 and will be organised by Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another two events might be organised in the second semester of 2012, based on the priorities set by the Bucharest Communiqué.