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**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP  
Zagreb, 15 January 2013, 09:00 – 16:00**

**Draft minutes**

**List of participants**

<b>Country/ Organisation</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Armenia	Karine Harutyunyan
BFUG Secretariat	Gayane Harutyunyan
BFUG Secretariat	Ani Hovhannisyan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Aida Durić
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Petar Marić
Council of Europe (CoE)	Sjur Bergan
Croatia	Ružica Beljo Lučić
Croatia	Loredana Maravić
Croatia	Ana Tecilazić Goršić
Croatia	Biljana Birač
Cyprus	Despina Martidou-Forcier
Georgia	Nino Svanadze
Ireland	Laura Casey
Ireland	Christy Mannion
Lithuania	Jolanta Spurgienė
Lithuania	Jolanta Navichaitė
ESU	Karina Ufert
EUA	Jonna Korhonen
EURASHE	<i>Apologies</i>
European Commission (EC)	Adam Tyson
European Commission (EC)	Frank Petrikowski
Reporting on the Bologna Process Implementation WG	Andrejs Rauhvargers
Structural Reforms WG	Sjur Bergan
Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG	Karina Ufert
Mobility and Internationalisation WG	Gottfried Bacher

**Welcome to the meeting by Prof. Ružica Beljo Lučić, Assistant Minister for Higher Education, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia**

Ms Ružica Beljo Lučić, Assistant Minister for Higher Education of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia welcomed the participants on behalf of the Croatian Minister of Science, Education and Sports and outlined the main priorities of Croatia in the field of higher education.

The Assistant Minister emphasised that Croatia would make the most of its potential as highlighted in the title of the Bucharest Communiqué and at the same time underlined that Croatia is looking forward to the accession to the European Union in July 2013.

The Chair, Mr. Christy Mannion (Ireland), opened the BFUG Board meeting and thanked Croatia for the hospitality. The Chair congratulated the outgoing BFUG Co-Chairs, Cyprus and Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the productive six-month period of the BFUG Co-Chairmanship and also for the smooth handover of the BFUG Co-Chairing responsibilities to Ireland and Croatia, which took place on 14 January 2013 in Zagreb. The Chair also expressed his gratitude to the Armenian Secretariat for the good preparation of all the documents for the Zagreb Board meeting.

**The Board was notified that there were 24 participants present at the meeting and the formal apologies were received from EURASHE.**

#### **1. Information by the outgoing BFUG Chairs: Cyprus and Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Ms Despina Martidou-Forcier (Cyprus) stressed the importance of the thorough discussion of the 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan during the Nicosia BFUG meeting as it will be the BFUG roadmap till the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan and wished every success to the incoming BFUG Co-Chairs, Ireland and Croatia, at the same time expressing her readiness to assist them in carrying out their activities during their BFUG Co-Chairmanship.

Ms Aida Djurić, The Bosnian and Herzegovinian Co-Chair, introduced the three major events organised under the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Co-Chairmanship of the Bologna Process namely the Sarajevo Board meeting and the two international conferences indicated below:

- International Conference on European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and Synergies with the European Research Area (ERA) Focusing on Mobility;
- Fostering Entrepreneurial Learning at Tertiary Level: University – Industry Interaction.

Both conferences were in line with the main priorities of the Bucharest Communiqué and the conclusions can be found on the website of the Federal Ministry of Education and Science of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Last but not least the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Co-Chair informed the participants that 2013 marked the 10 year anniversary of joining the Bologna Process and thanked both the European Commission and the Council of Europe for the enormous contribution and input in the national reforms of higher education (HE).

**The BFUG Board members took note of the information provided by the outgoing BFUG Chairs.**

## **2. Information by the incoming BFUG Chairs: Ireland and Croatia**

Ms Ana Goršić, the incoming Croatian Co-Chair, noted that in terms of policy developments, Croatia had initiated many legislative changes such as revision of an overall legislative framework for higher education, Croatian qualifications framework and elaboration of the strategy of education, science and technology.

The Croatian Co-Chair also briefly introduced the events to be organised under their Co-Chairmanship which are available in the .ppt below:



BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_  
Croatian Priorities.ppt

Mr. Christy Mannion, the Irish Co-Chair noted that the general overview of the Irish EU Presidency's priorities had already been introduced both during the Sarajevo Board meeting and Nicosia BFUG meeting. He drew attention to the main events to be held during the Irish BFUG Co-Chairmanship which are:

- Conference on Rankings and the Visibility of Quality Outcomes in the European Higher Education Area (30-31 January 2013);
- Conference on Quality Assurance in Qualifications Framework (12-13 March 2013);
- BFUG meeting in Dublin (14-15 March 2013);
- DG HE meeting (22-23 April 2013).

**The BFUG Board members took note of the information provided by the incoming BFUG Chairs.**

## **3. Adoption of the agenda**

Documents: BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_3a [draft agenda]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_3b [draft annotated agenda]

While introducing the agenda, two items were proposed to be included under the 'AOB' section, which were:

- transparency of information and provision of BFUG documents to the third parties;
- access to the basic line of the Backoffice for the researchers.

Taking into account the importance of the topics, it was agreed to hold a separate discussion on this issue in a future BFUG meeting rather than include the items in the 'AOB'.

**The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.**

#### **4. Adoption of the minutes of the BFUG Board meeting, Sarajevo, 31 May 2012 and taking note of the outcome of proceedings of the BFUG meeting, Nicosia, 28-29 August 2012**

Documents: BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_4a [BFUG Board Sarajevo draft minutes]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_4b [BFUG Nicosia draft outcome of proceedings]

**The Sarajevo BFUG Board meeting minutes were adopted with a slight amendment. The Board also took note of the draft outcome of proceedings of the Nicosia BFUG meeting and suggested some rephrasing.**

To the inquiry of the Board concerning the changing of the BFUG Co-Chairing order between Iceland and Kazakhstan, the Secretariat stated that the issue had been discussed several times with the Kazakh BFUG representatives; however the Secretariat has not received any official confirmation regarding the proposed change of the chairing order.

#### **5. Reports from the Chairs of the working groups**

Documents: BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_5a [Report and ToR\_Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process WG]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_5b [Report and ToR\_Structural Reforms WG]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_5c [Report and ToR\_Social Dimension and Life Long Learning WG]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_5d [Report and ToR\_Mobility and Internationalisation WG]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_5e [Report and ToR\_Third Cycle Ad-Hoc WG]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_5f [ToR\_ECTS Users' Guide Ad-Hoc WG]

Mr. Andrejs Rauhvargers (Latvia), the Co-Chair of the **Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process WG**, informed the Board that the first meeting which took place on 16 November 2012 in Riga hosted 25 participants out of 36.

The meeting discussed the strong and weak points of the 2012 report, gathered ideas for the 2015 report as well as produced the timeline of the WG's work.

The following important points were made during the meeting:

- WG should be more independent. It should enjoy greater autonomy and political interference should be minimised;
- 2015 report should be more outcome-oriented and less process-oriented;
- 2012 report was somehow lengthy; therefore the 2015 report should be as concise

as possible.

While discussing the indicators, the WG suggested new ones for employability, social dimension, lifelong learning, internationalisation, portability of grants/loans and EURYDICE, EUROSTUDENT and EUROSTAT were asked to check the possibility to offer indicators in these areas taking into account measurability, data availability as well as possibility to develop several categories with a view to use the indicators as scorecard indicators.

It was also stressed that there would be enough time for the discussion of the draft indicators with the other working groups.

The data collectors and the WG Co-Chairs will meet in April or at the beginning of May. The next meeting of the WG is scheduled for 2 July 2013 in Luxembourg.

The Board made the following comments:

- Importance should be given not to the length of the report but rather to its readability and the report should not be shortened at the expense of its accuracy;
- Countries should meet the deadline for providing data for the report and the BFUG should resist the changing data for the 'political convenience';
- It is crucial to have trustful information and reliable data.

Mr. Sjur Bergan (CoE), the Co-Chair of the **Structural Reforms WG**, presented the main outcomes of the first meeting of the WG held on 13-14 December 2012 in Brussels. The WG is rather large with nearly 40 members and four Co-Chairs and it will have one meeting per semester before the BFUG meetings while the Co-Chairs intend to meet once between the WG's meetings. The WG also hopes to have a joint session with the EQF Advisory Group, possibly in September 2013.

The Co-Chair highlighted that one of the challenges of the WG is that the mandate of the group covers the four relatively well-defined working areas, i. e. quality assurance, qualifications frameworks, recognition and transparency instruments, while the main aim of the group is to bring the four policy areas together at the same time avoiding the establishment of substructures for each of the policy areas.

The Co-Chair advised that the meeting discussed and agreed on its ToR which will be presented to the BFUG in Dublin. He also advised that there are two issues that were not included in the ToR of the WG as a decision should be made whether:

- Recognition of prior learning should be addressed by the Structural Reforms WG or by the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG;
- Joint programs and degrees should be included in the ToR of the Structural Reforms WG or in the ToR of the Mobility and Internationalisation WG.

These points were now specifically submitted to the Board for its opinion and advice in preparation of the BFUG meeting, which would need to adopt the final ToRs.

The following points were outlined by the Board:

- The key challenge of the WG is to bring together the four policy areas without losing the specificity of each of them;
- The assessment of the implementation of each of the policy areas should refer to the assessment of the impact and effectiveness of measures and reforms in this area.

Concerning the two issues proposed by the Structural Reforms WG for the particular attention and discussion, the Board agreed that:

- The recognition of prior learning should be under the remit of the Structural Reforms WG as it is rather broader than just simply being a social dimension issue;
- The question of joint programs and degrees is important for both of the WGs, thus further deliberation between the two WGs will be necessary for making a decision about which of the two WGs should cover the issue.

The report of the **Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning WG** was introduced by Ms Karina Ufert (ESU), the Co-Chair of the WG, who advised that the first meeting of the WG was organised on 13 December 2012 in Brussels with 9 country representatives and 4 organisations present.

The agenda of the meeting covered the following important aspects:

- Identifying the expectations of the new mandate (2012-2015);
- Discussion of the 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan;
- Learning about the policy developments on social dimension;
- Presentation of the priorities of the Irish EU Presidency;
- Presentation from the European Commission on relevant policy developments;
- Exploring the idea of peer learning and peer review in social dimension; mainly the Peer learning for social dimension (PL4SD) project.

The WG also agreed on the ToR. The Board was notified that the next meeting of the WG would be held in Dublin on 17 April 2013.

The Chair gave the floor to Mr. Gottfried Bacher (Austria), the Co-Chair of the **Mobility and Internationalisation WG**, who informed the Board that the first meeting of the WG was on 5-6 December 2012 in Berlin. 11 countries and 9 organisations were present at the meeting.

The Austrian Co-Chair highlighted that although Romania had expressed its willingness to Co-Chair the group during the Nicosia BFUG meeting, no information has been received from the Romanian side since then, and thus, only 3 Co-Chairs were present at the first meeting.

The meeting started with the distribution of the work of the WG amongst the 3 Co-Chairs and the WG members. The ToR of the WG was also discussed and finalised.

The WG Co-Chair introduced some of the important topics covered during its first meeting, which are:

- Current barriers to staff mobility and potential measures to overcome them;
- Improvement of the international attractiveness of the EHEA;
- Portability of grants and loans;
- Establishment of a benchmark for incoming mobility;
- Liaison with the Reporting on the Implementation of the Bologna Process WG.

Four highly interesting and relevant studies were presented at the meeting:

- "Internationalisation of Universities" the audit project carried by the German Rectors' Conference;
- "Steeplechase Project" based on the results of the EUROSTUDENT-related investigation analysing the obstacles encountered by the students while being temporarily enrolled abroad.
- "Mobility benchmark" presented by the European Commission and stressing the recent developments concerning the mobility benchmark;
- A Dutch study on the economic effects of internationalisation in higher education.

The Board was informed that the next meeting of the WG would be on 15-16 April, 2013 in Berlin.

The Board noted that:

- The emphasis on the 'staff' mobility is very much welcomed; however the group should come up with the definition of 'staff' as underlined in the specific tasks of the ToR of the WG;
- The WG should look at the practical ways of assisting the institutions in implementing the existing BFUG guidelines and recommendations;
- The issue of possible common standards for portability of grants and loans is one of the important tasks of the WG.

Ms Gayane Harutyunyan, the Head of the Bologna Secretariat, introduced the Report of the **Ad-hoc WG on the Third Cycle** on behalf of the Ad-hoc WG's Co-Chairs as they are not Board members.

The first meeting of the Ad-hoc WG took place on 10-11 December 2012 in Rome. Initially 4 countries (Italy, Romania, Spain, and Denmark) and 1 organisation (EUA) expressed their willingness to Co-Chair the Ad-hoc WG; however during the discussion held before the first meeting Denmark and EUA withdrew their candidacies and remained as regular members. Thus, the 3 Co-Chairs (Italy, Romania and Spain) shared the responsibilities of the Ad-hoc WG's work.

During the meeting 15 out of 19 interested countries/organisations were present. The WG members agreed that the group will function until July 2014 with three more meetings being organised during that period. The final report of the Ad-hoc WG will be included in the Structural Reforms WG's integrated report.

The ToR of the WG with the main emphasis on the three macro-areas was presented:

- Implementation of the Salzburg II Recommendations and of the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training, mapping exercise based on NQF and links between the second and the third cycle;
- Proposals for improving quality and QA procedures and tools to increase transparency;
- Proposals to increase mobility, internationalisation and employability.

The Head of the Secretariat also indicated the need to clarify what kind of reporting is expected from the Ad-hoc WGs and Networks during the Board and BFUG meetings taking into account that the new streamlined structure of the Work Plan assumed fewer reports.

The Chair proceeded to the last report of this agenda point and gave the floor to Mr. Adam Tyson (EC) who noted that the first meeting of the **Ad-hoc WG on the ECTS Users' Guide** would be held on 25 February 2013 in Brussels. During the first meeting the WG members will discuss the aspects of the Guide that need to be updated.

The report of the Ad-hoc WG after its first meeting will be presented during the Dublin BFUG meeting.

**The Chair concluded that all the comments received from the Board members would be taken into consideration by the WG's Co-Chairs.**

#### **6. Updates on the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition, Steering Committee on the ESG revision, Financing and Governance of HE component of the work program**

Document: BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_6 [EC update]

Mr. Adam Tyson (EC) updated the Board on the activities of the **Pathfinder group on automatic recognition**.

The EC representative stated that the group was composed of 10 country representatives including Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, Germany, Portugal, Luxemburg, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Belgium/French Community and Belgium/Flemish Community.

At the first meeting the group members agreed on the following points:

- To work at the system level, i. e. shifting from the recognition of individual qualifications to recognition at system level based on qualifications frameworks;
- To concentrate on the EQF levels 6 and 7;
- How to use existing Bologna tools.

It was outlined that first of all the group aims to look at the ways of using the existing Bologna tools like quality assurance and qualifications frameworks as a basis for automatic recognition and highlighted that the draft work program of the group reflects the deliberations and experience of the WG members.



Each of the countries has produced a short report on the way that academic recognition systems work in their countries. Some examples of interest include –

- An agreement between the Flemish region and the Netherlands, they will explore if this can be extended to Luxembourg and Belgium French region.
- The Nordic countries have an automatic recognition system. They will explore whether the same kind of model could be extended further in the countries of the Baltic Sea.

The next meeting of the group will take place in mid-February and the group will report to the Structural Reforms WG about its progress. The group will also report to the BFUG in March.

Generally the Board agreed that the work of the Pathfinder group on automatic recognition was progressing in the right direction. In particular, the decision to focus on system level was welcomed. The Board did, however, point out that there are important recognition issues linked to short cycle – and possibly also third cycle – qualifications and therefore questioned whether the decision to focus entirely on first and cycle qualifications was well advised.

Ms Karina Ufert (ESU) introduced the updates on the **ESG revision** by recalling the Bucharest Ministerial Conference and the agreement of the Ministers to ask the E4 group (ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE) in cooperation with Education International (EI), BUSINESSEUROPE and EQAR to revise the ESG and submit to the BFUG before the next Ministerial Conference.

Thus, two groups were organised for this process-the Steering Group (E4, EI, BUSINESSEUROPE and EQAR) working on the policy issues and the Drafting Group. The Steering Group already had two meetings with the presence of the Drafting Group.

The Steering Group has also proposed a thematic session on the ESG Revision to be organised during the BFUG meeting in Vilnius.

The update on the **Financing and Governance of HE** was presented by Ms Karine Harutyunyan (Armenia) who outlined the decision of the BFUG during the Nicosia BFUG meeting not to set up an Ad-hoc WG yet but rather to organise one or two seminars in order to open a dialogue on the issue. Based on the outcome of the events, the BFUG will decide whether there is a need to set up an Ad-hoc WG.

Three countries (Armenia, Romania and Denmark) that have expressed their interest in Co-Chairing the group in case of its existence, keep communicating and the main issues under discussion are the place and date of the first seminar. Most probably the first seminar will be organised in Bucharest in spring. The Co-Chairs have also agreed to develop a draft ToR of the Ad-hoc WG and Armenia will lead on this.

**The BFUG Board members took note of the information provided.**

## **7. 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan with its substructures**

Document: BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_35\_7 [BFUG Work Plan with its substructures]

Ms Gayane Harutyunyan, the Head of the Bologna Secretariat introduced the last version of the 2012-2015 Work Plan which has been modified as the result of the first meetings of the WGs as well as based on the comments received from the BFUG members after the Nicosia BFUG meeting.

**The 2012-2015 BFUG Work Plan with its substructures was endorsed by the Board members.**

## **8. Peer learning and peer review initiative**

Document: BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_8 [Peer Learning and Review Initiative]

The Board welcomed the draft paper presented under this agenda point. At the same time it was agreed that any proposed framework must consider the following questions:

1. What is the level of the enthusiasm of different countries?
2. In terms of the transferability of the learning experience from one country to another, what kind of profiles and/or activities would be useful for the range of the EHEA countries?
3. What kind of format could encourage the wide participation of the EHEA countries?
4. How to make the process manageable?

The deliberations on the topic underlined that:

- The objective for both processes should be to support the countries in their implementation of the Bologna action lines;
- Peer learning process should involve not only countries but also individual institutions and other relevant stakeholders;
- Peer learning and review should be seen as part of the same process;
- The mechanism for the realisation of the two processes should be defined;
- The availability of the outcomes of the processes needs to be clarified;
- The timetable of the activities should be represented at the Dublin BFUG meeting or the latest at the Board meeting in Georgia;
- The Reporting WG can provide advice and expertise related to the selection of activities and/or profiles, their implementation and assessment of the outcomes in terms of their relevance to the Bologna principles.

Finally, the Commission noted that in 2014 the EU Erasmus for All program would provide countries with funding possibilities for peer learning and review events on the basis of a solid work program agreed by the BFUG.

**The Board concluded that the BFUG Co-Chairs together with the Secretariat should redraft the paper and present it during the Dublin BFUG meeting for the BFUG's consideration and endorsement.**

#### **9. Future thematic sessions (including the EIT)**

BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_9a [Draft outline of the thematic session (EIT)]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_9b [Revision of the ESG]  
BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_9c [Proposals for Future Thematic Sessions]

The postponed EIT thematic session was finally agreed to be held during the Dublin BFUG meeting, while the proposed thematic session on the Revision of the ESG was suggested to be held at the BFUG meeting in Vilnius, 7-8 November 2013.

The Secretariat presented the proposals for future thematic sessions (without background documents) received from the BFUG members after the call launched by the Secretariat on 6 November 2012.

It was noted that during the autumn BFUG meeting in 2014, the three WGs will introduce their reports which will take up a significant amount of the BFUG meeting and it may not be possible to have a thematic session. Thus taking into consideration the limited timeframe, there is a need to decide which thematic session should be organised during the 2014 spring BFUG meeting.

From the two thematic sessions, Funding and Joint Programs and Accreditation, the Board gave the preference to the thematic session on Funding to be organised at the BFUG meeting in spring 2014.

#### **10. Agenda of the BFUG meeting, Dublin, 13-14 March 2013**

Document: BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_10 [Agenda of the BFUG meeting Dublin, 14-15 March 2013]

As host country, Ireland briefly introduced the main topics on the draft agenda for the Dublin BFUG meeting (14-15 March 2013).

The Board stressed the following points:

- With the establishment of the streamlined structure of the 2012-2015 Work Plan, the BFUG would expect streamlined reporting from the WGs/Ad-hoc WGs/ Networks, which would imply that some of the subgroups would report to their parent structure which in its turn would report to the BFUG;
- The reports of the WGs/Ad-hoc WGs/ Networks would also include the draft ToRs of the corresponding structures.

The Board also suggested some shifting of the agenda points due to the importance of the topics and time constraints.

The Chair notified the Board about the EQAR's proposal to have a possible brief session to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the EQAR within/during the Dublin BFUG meeting.

Taking into account the fact that the EQAR's General Assembly is a day before the Dublin BFUG meeting, the Board agreed to suggest to the EQAR to organise the session after the General Assembly on the same day, while the BFUG members would be encouraged to attend the event.

#### **11. Next BFUG Board meeting, Batumi, 17 September 2013**

Ms Nino Svanadze (Georgia) underlined that the Board members are welcome in Georgia for the next BFUG Board meeting and advised that Georgia has launched a new wave of higher education reforms in the country.

It was noted that the venue of the meeting is Batumi, however the Board members expressed their concerns as the transportation to Batumi would be rather difficult and that Tbilisi would be more convenient.

**The Georgian representative took note of all the concerns raised and assured the Board that they would be taken into account and Georgia would come up with a final decision concerning the venue for the next Board meeting.**

#### **12. Point of information related to the priorities of the Lithuanian EU Presidency and planning of the BFUG activities in the second semester of 2013, under the Lithuanian and Georgian Chairmanship**

Ms Jolanta Spurgienė (Lithuania) introduced the overall priorities of Lithuania during its EU Presidency in the field of higher education which are quality and efficiency.

The main events to be organised during the Lithuanian EU Presidency are:

- BFUG meeting in Vilnius, 7-8 November 2013;
- DG of HE meeting, 23-24 September 2013;
- Conference on the Internationalisation of Higher Education, 5-6 September 2013.

**The BFUG Board took note of the information provided by Lithuania.**

#### **13. Any other business**

**The Chair noted that there were no items to be included in 'AOB' and closed the meeting, while thanking the hosts, the outgoing and incoming BFUG Co-Chairs as well as the Secretariat.**