

## Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Seventh meeting, Rome (Hybrid)

26 May 2023

10:00 – 16:00h (CEST)

### List of participants

Country	Name	Surname
Albania (Co-Chair)	Linda	Pustina
Belgium Flemish community (Co-Chair)	Liesbeth	Hens
Belgium French Community*	Caroline	Hollela
Belgium French Community*	Adriana	Gonfroid
Belgium French Community*	Justyna	Nerkowska
Cyprus	Cleo	Savvidou
EI – ETUCE*	Hanna	Tanskanen
ENQA*	Anna	Gover
EUA*	Elisabeth	Colucci
EUA	Michael	Gaebel
European Commission (Co-Chair)*	Fiorella	Perotto
European Commission*	El Moufid	El Mehdi
France	Mathieu	Musquin
Germany	Tim	Maschuw
Holy See*	Melanie	Rosenbaum
Ireland	Orla	Lynch
Italy (Co-Chair)	Ann Katherine	Isaacs
Italy	Vera	Lucke
Italy	Teresa	Morales de la Fuente
Malta	Valerie	Attard
Malta	Jon	Vercellono
Netherlands	Jenneke	Lokhoff
Romania*	Madalina	Matei
UNESCO*	Andreas	Snildal
United Kingdom*	Ella	Ritchie
BFUG Secretariat (Head)*	Edlira	Subashi
BFUG Secretariat	Enis	Fita
BFUG Secretariat	Patrik	Bardhi

\*Online attendance.

Austria, Spain, Kazakhstan and ESU did not attend the meeting.

### 1. Welcome by the Co-Chairs of CG on Global Policy Dialogue

Liesbeth Hens (Co-Chair) welcomed the participants to the seventh CG meeting. A tour de table took place, during which all of the participants introduced themselves and their roles. The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.



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For more detailed information, please see [CG GPD 7 SE BA Agenda](#)

## **2. Update by the Co-Chairs: Update on the presentation of CG GPD activities to the Stockholm BFUG**

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) provided an update on the presentation of CG GDP activities to the BFUG. The presentation briefly described the organization of CG, its composition, and the five subgroups along with their respective tasks. The main emphasis was on the accomplishments of each subgroup and their outcomes. The plans and ongoing work of both the CG Regional Subgroups and the Functional Subgroups were illustrated. It was mentioned that the Global Policy Forum (GPF) subgroup has already conducted one meeting, while the Global Policy Statement (GPS) subgroup has had four meetings and is currently finalizing Draft 2 of the GPS.

Ms. Isaacs underlined an important idea that emerged during the meeting, although it was not originally comprised in the CG's plans and terms of reference. This idea was that the CG's function should extend beyond engaging in dialogue with other parts of the world, also creating opportunities for dialogue between other parts of the world and the other BFUG Working Groups (WGs). This concept received enthusiastic support from the WG on Social Dimension (SD) during the Board Meeting in Sarajevo and the BFUG Meeting in Stockholm.

Furthermore, Ms. Isaacs mentioned that the WG on SD had already completed the Principles and Guidelines document during the previous work period. They are now completing descriptors and indicators for its various principles. However, the published document itself can already be shared with individuals and organizations working from different perspectives on the social dimension in other macro regions. She highlighted that this outcome was the most tangible and positive result of the Board and BFUG meetings, and stressed the need to promote this idea with other WGs, such as Learning and Teaching, to establish a connection with colleagues working on similar themes in other parts of the world. Positive feedback was received regarding the possibility of implementing communications between non EHEA countries and global macro regional organizations with the BFUG's WGs. It was considered a potentially significant development that the global policy dialogue should not be confined solely within the CG, but also extend to other BFUG WGs.

## **3. Update by IN-GLOBAL Project**

Vera Lucke (Italy) provided an overview and update on the IN-GLOBAL project. Firstly, she mentioned that the project's website had been established. A number of events have been conducted, and she noted the upcoming EHEA-Africa Conversation organised by the Africa Subgroup on June 6, where IN-GLOBAL will provide technical support and interpretation into English, French and Portuguese by the project. A calendar has been set up for both BFUG and stakeholder events, serving as a valuable tool for staying informed about present and future higher education events. Ms. Lucke emphasized that project outcomes would be incorporated in the future, and there were plans to create a glossary page on the IN-GLOBAL website, explaining BFUG terminology for further convenience and clarity. She highlighted the establishment of a Twitter account aimed at promoting activities within the Bologna process and the EHEA. Additionally, she announced that countries would soon be contacted regarding the translation of the Rome Communiqué. The objective was to gather existing translations, provide support to countries requiring assistance with translations, and subsequently publish them on the IN-GLOBAL and EHEA websites.



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Furthermore, it was shared that in June a survey on the perception of the Bologna process would be distributed to stakeholders within and outside the EHEA. The survey would remain open until the end of July, with a deadline extension until the end of August. The resulting report is expected to be ready by the end of September, potentially for use at the BFUG Board and BFUG meeting. Potential support by the project concerning the graphics for the GPF and the GPS was mentioned.

Ms. Lucke provided an overview of the Bologna events planned within the IN-GLOBAL project. It was mentioned that discussions need to take place with the Asia subgroup regarding the Asia Pacific event scheduled for September, in Italy. The Asia-Europe Foundation had approached the project to organize a Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Development in Higher Education, inviting 10 Asian policymakers for a 2-3 day program to coincide with the CG on GPD meeting. Furthermore, an event for Latin America is planned, with the format to be decided, potentially online or in hybrid model. Emphasis was placed on supporting events in the Arab region or providing assistance to CG members promoting the EHEA in those regions, including potential trips to Africa or in the Arab region.

It was also announced that an expert in international higher education would be hired to support the CG. Their role would involve providing information on higher education events in different world regions, identifying opportunities for the CG's involvement, sharing relevant higher education publications with the CG, updating the list of stakeholders from regions outside of Europe, and assisting in disseminating questionnaires on international stakeholders' perceptions of the Bologna process.

An update was given on the IN-GLOBAL project's support for the TF on Enhancing Knowledge in the EHEA Community. This included the questionnaire on the perception of the Bologna process, the development of an EHEA Toolkit for Bologna events, the creation of guidelines for internal and global communication within the EHEA, and the organization of three focus groups to explore effective communication and knowledge sharing practices within their respective education areas and with various stakeholders. Ms. Lucke mentioned her participation in the cluster meeting of all EHEA projects scheduled for June 20, where she would present the IN-GLOBAL project.

There were comments and questions regarding support for the final verification of the Rome Communiqué translation, assistance from the project in translating the Tirana Communiqué, and the deadline for the survey. It was unanimously agreed that the survey deadline would remain at the end of August. Regarding the translations, it was confirmed that there would be support for the final version of the Rome Communiqué translation. However, the possibility of support for the translation of the Tirana Communiqué would be assessed to determine whether it can be included in the project's plans. Furthermore, a suggestion was made to share data from ENQA surveys conducted through another project on the European quality assurance framework. These surveys gathered views from stakeholders on the benefits they perceive from having a quality assurance framework across the EHEA. The idea of merging these data sets was well-received and agreed upon as an excellent approach.

#### **4. State of play of the initiatives taken by the three regional subgroups and their plans**

##### **4.1. Africa subgroup**

Fiorella Perotto (Co-Chair) highlighted the significant progress made by the subgroup and outlined upcoming plans. Since the beginning of this year, the subgroup has primarily focused on organizing a second online conversation between the EHEA and Africa on academic recognition. In December of the previous year, the first online conversation with Africa took place, primarily discussing how public





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authorities perceive and act on recognition. A summary of this conversation can be found on the EHEA website. The second conversation, scheduled for June 6<sup>th</sup>, will center around the topic of recognition for lifelong learning. The event will include a plenary session and three separate breakout sessions, each supported by interpretation services provided by the IN-GLOBAL project. During the plenary session, a panel of experts will provide a comprehensive overview. The panel will consist of Professor Cristina Ghitulica, the BFUG representative for Romania and Vice-president of ENQA, representing the EHEA, and Professor Michael Mawa, the head of the quality assurance and Qualifications Framework Unit of the Inter-University Council for East Africa. Three language-specific breakout sessions will respectively cover three different themes: the English session will focus on micro-credentials, the French session will center around the valorization and validation of non-formal learning outcomes, and the Portuguese session will address the recognition of digital learning. The main objective of the plenary session is to introduce the topic broadly, identify common challenges between Europe and Africa in the area of recognition for lifelong learning, and mutually inspire common solutions. Following the breakout sessions, the rapporteurs from each session will present the key outcomes to the plenary. This will be followed by a brief discussion to finalize the session, culminating in a general conclusion.

#### 4.2. Americas subgroup

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) provided an update on the recent colloquium held in December with MERCOSUR and Latin American countries. She also mentioned the plan to organize another global colloquium to be hosted by Argentina in June, with a final confirmation expected. In the meantime, as an alternative, an agreement has been reached with the American Association of Quality Assurance Agencies to hold a colloquium on quality. Ms. Isaacs emphasized that the sub-group has several plans, one of which involves conducting a conversation with the WG on SD. This conversation will focus on the work done by the Institute of Evidence-Based Change and North America in ensuring a broad social spectrum in student admission and retention on campuses. She expressed her delight at being invited to speak at the Latin American, Caribbean, and European Universities Summit in Santiago de Compostela. During her speech, she highlighted the distinction between the European perspective and the broader and specific meaning of the EHEA. This difference could pave the way for the creation of a potential European Latin American and Caribbean Higher Education Area. Ms. Isaacs also mentioned that she has been requested to participate in an interview on American public radio on Monday, discussing the EHEA.

#### 4.3. Asia subgroup

Liesbeth Hens (Co-Chair) expressed her apologies for not having much to present, citing the recent staff change as a contributing factor. On the other hand, Ms. Isaacs mentioned that certain members of the CG, in collaboration with the University of Pisa, have developed and presented a proposal for an Erasmus Plus Coordination partnership called EUCAHEA. This proposal was specifically requested by the Kazakh government and encompasses the Central Asian republics, supporting CAHEA (Central Asian Higher Education Area). If the proposal receives approval, it could potentially become an additional branch of the Asian group, further expanding its scope.

### **5. Report from Global Policy Statement Subgroup and discussion**

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) provided an update on the progress of the GPS subgroup. She mentioned that the subgroup has held several meetings and online conversations to ensure that the





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draft of the statement is prepared in a timely manner. The objective is to consult with various countries and regions to incorporate a global perspective into the document. Emphasizing the need for effectiveness and conciseness, she expressed the importance of keeping the document brief, no longer than two pages, and avoiding unnecessary repetitions.

Ann Katherine Isaacs highlighted the efforts made to ensure that references to fundamental rights and overarching aims are compatible with not only our EHEA orientations, but also in a broader context. She noted that the Drafting Committee (DC) for the Tirana Communiqué has presented only the outline of their intended completion to the BFUG in Stockholm, and no written content has been presented yet. The structure of the Global Policy Statement is envisioned to be simple, consisting of a preamble, general statements, discussions during the EHEA Global Policy Forum and conclusions.

Given the impact of the pandemic and the Ukraine situation, Ms. Isaacs emphasized the need for a more energetic and proactive statement compared to what was produced in 2020. She mentioned the availability of numerous suggestions and alternative texts, which are being incorporated into a cohesive whole. She stressed that the preparation of the statement and final report should address a long-standing question facing the Bologna Process in the EHEA, namely finding a clear formula for the recognition of countries globally that identify or align themselves with the Bologna Process in various ways. She expressed hope that the DC for the communiqué has already included a potential section to address this matter, which needs to be agreed upon and included in the final statement.

Some comments and questions arose regarding the distinction between the Statement and the final report. It was clarified that the final report pertains to the mandate of the CG, focusing on its terms of reference and achievements within that framework. The report is not intended to be a political document but rather serves as a summary of the work done, providing background material. It does not form part of the decisions made by the EHEA ministers but rather supports them. Regarding the proposed formula for including recognition of countries or macro regions outside the EHEA, it was suggested that this document could be annexed to the Ministers' Communiqué, which holds decision-making authority within the EHEA. The participants agreed that the Statement should remain an open draft, with the hope of finalizing and reaching an agreement that incorporates the perspectives of all invited participants from around the world. It was acknowledged that the current draft represents a good starting point for establishing significant milestones in the statement.

Additionally, it was agreed that comments and suggestions related to the statement would be circulated among the participants, allowing for input and feedback to be shared within the group via email. The emphasis was placed on facilitating discussion, gathering ideas, and compiling a list of items that have already been decided upon. A draft list (page 2 - After discussions during the EHEA Global Policy Forum) was presented, outlining a practical and universal strategic approach towards common understanding. The aim was to explore whether these fundamental aspects could be considered valid globally, though acknowledging the variations and differing emphases on inclusion and other topics in different parts of the world. The importance of establishing connections and building confidence in a systematic manner was emphasized, with the ultimate goal of reaching a general agreement on foundational aspects that are universally shared among participants.

A comment was made regarding the timeline for approval of the Report and the Statement. It was pointed out that the Report needs to be approved by the Board and BFUG Meeting in October-



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November 2023, whereas the Statement must be finalized in spring 2024 before the Ministerial conference. In order to include global dialogue partners in the Statement, it is necessary for the proposal to receive approval from the BFUG Board Meeting on the 2nd of October 2023. Subsequently, the proposal would need to be approved by the Ministers, as it represents a new category, and this approval could potentially influence the Forum.

The Co-Chair further addressed the matter of acknowledging countries that seek closer alignment with the group. During the discussions, it was emphasized that a document had been distributed, and participants were encouraged to contribute their input to formulate a concrete proposal for the approval of the BFUG. The previous documents on this topic had undergone significant changes. Notably, there was no mention of countries that cannot become members without being signatories of the European Convention or members of the Council of Europe. Another recent development was the increasing interest from countries wanting to engage in longer-term collaboration, viewing the EHEA as a model of international cooperation. The Co-Chair emphasized that the Bologna Policy Forum aimed to be receptive and attentive rather than prescriptive, as the purpose was to listen and engage. However, several complexities arise when considering aspects such as vetting dialogue partners and determining whether there should be a particular category of 'dialogue partners'.

A proposal was presented to create a small group to study these complexities and provide insights. Participants suggested the need for a shared document to facilitate discussions and brainstorming, as well as the importance of reviewing the group's cooperation with other partners. It was noted that an agreement should be reached within the CG and subsequently presented to the BFUG for a final decision. In conclusion, it was agreed to circulate a document for further discussion at the next CG meeting. The objective is to formulate a concrete proposal before the next Board meeting in October.

## **6. Planning the Global Policy Forum: Report from Subgroup and discussion**

Linda Pustina (Co-Chair) introduced a proposal for the format of the Tirana Global Policy Forum, which had been shared with the participants in advance. She suggested organizing the GPF in a sandwich format, with the second day of the meeting in Tirana dedicated to it. The first day would focus on the Ministers of the EHEA and discussions related to the participation of ministers from other countries involved in the GPD.

Ms. Pustina outlined the suggested agenda for the second day of the GPF, which would commence with a welcoming speech by the host, followed by brief welcomes from EHEA Ministers. Additionally, there would be speeches or pre-recorded videos from various ministers or organizations, depending on the number of participants involved, with specific details to be decided later. The plenary session would then proceed to present the draft statement for discussion. The second session would feature presentations of "good or interesting practices" from the CAHEA, Western Balkans, EU-LAC region, ASEM, and other regions, with the specific cases to be selected. Ms. Pustina highlighted the need for discussions on the format and time allocation for each area. The third session would involve breakout groups, and topics for discussion in these breakout sessions were open for proposals, and the selection of the most interesting topics would be made collectively. Several topics were already presented in the document, but they remained open for further discussion. Afterwards, a brief plenary session would resume, where rapporteurs would report on the outcomes of the breakout sessions. The draft statement would be adjusted if necessary and then presented for approval. Ms. Pustina noted that the



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Regional Subgroups of the CG should propose the invitation list for the Forum. She initiated an open discussion among the participants regarding the presented document and its contents.

It was acknowledged that the statement would not be subject to adjustment but rather be presented and discussed with various stakeholders before the forum. There was a concern that topics related to the statement should be discussed in regional meetings to gather further input, and the topics that would be addressed in the breakout sessions should also be included in the statement. A suggestion was made to have breakout sessions on different topics that involve both ministers and stakeholders, allowing for mixed panels. The similarity of the proposed format to that of Paris, with the sandwich model of combining the EHEA Ministerial and the GPF, was noted. There was a desire to discuss what should be proposed to the BFUG regarding the participation of observers, such as ministers and organizations from other countries worldwide, who could be present or even speak at the EHEA Ministerial Conference.

Questions were raised about the date and agenda of the Ministerial. Ms. Linda Pustina explained that the Ministry is currently preparing draft documents for the Council of Ministers, not only related to the Ministerial Conference but also concerning the re-setup of the Secretariat. This includes considerations for more flexibility, as well as addressing logistical aspects and the necessary work to be done during this period. Additionally, preparations are being made to establish a working group that will manage the entire organization, involving various entities such as the municipality of Tirana, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and other relevant agencies.

A comment was made regarding the attendance of observers at the GPF who may not participate in the first day of the EHEA Ministers' meeting. The experience from Paris was mentioned, where observers joined virtually and did not engage in the discussions. It was acknowledged that it would be difficult to provide a definitive answer without having the agenda in place. Another comment emphasized that the EHEA Ministers should have exclusive discussions since they are responsible for the restricted Communiqué that is specific to the EHEA. A suggestion made was that the EHEA Ministers' meeting could be scheduled closer to the end or the beginning, perhaps even encompassing both, allowing for a dedicated time frame that extends from lunch to lunch. This would provide the EHEA Ministers with additional time for bilateral meetings. It was mentioned that all ideas were valid, and there was a belief that individuals from outside the EHEA should be invited to the Ministerial Conference. Additionally, the GPF was seen as an opportunity for everyone to participate in sessions and engage in open discussions.

Ms. Pustina emphasized that the aim is to have Ministers in attendance for the entire duration of the conference, including an engaging social program. The participation of non-EHEA members in the first day's events was acknowledged, and it was suggested that the BFUG would discuss whether non-EHEA participants should be involved in every session of the ministerial meeting or only in sessions not closely related to EHEA matters. The value of breakout session topics was highlighted, as they provide a platform to focus on hearing specific recommendations and ideas from countries. The selected topics align with the working groups, enabling interaction and a more structured and practical approach.

Specific cases of "good practice" were discussed, and examples of macro-regional cooperation, such as CAHEA, were proposed for presentation. The suggestion of using Lightning Talks, quick brainstorming conversations, was raised as a means to facilitate the sharing of learning in a fast-paced manner. Ms.



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Pustina mentioned the Western Balkans as a process involving six countries that are part of a global political dialogue and share similar objectives and key commitments. Kosovo, for instance, aligns with various key commitments. The idea is to showcase good examples of cooperation between countries, focusing on mobility, exchange of experiences, recognition, and other relevant topics. The Co-Chair emphasized a willingness to accommodate any proposals that would improve the overall outcome, as discussions were considered the best way to enhance the conference.

Working on the topics outlined in the present draft of the Statement was encouraged. It was also recommended that events involving macro-regionals focus on these topics, with the intention of gathering relevant insights. These events should be coordinated to ensure that input is collected prior to the Forum, facilitating the preparation of the Statement for final approval during the Forum.

### **7. "The Caribbean Perspective", presentation by Myriam Moïse, Secretary General of Universities Caribbean**

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) provided an update that the planned discussion with the interlocutor from the Caribbean would not be able to take place due to technical issues.

### **8. Next activities: regional meetings, format and contents of the Report for Tirana, distribution of tasks and timeline**

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) gave the floor to Vera Lucke to discuss the potential upcoming regional meetings. Ms. Lucke communicated that she had been in contact with ASEF, that expressed a preference for holding the meeting in September in Rome instead of Venice, as it would be more accessible for participants from Asian countries. The proposed plan would involve a one-day meeting of the CG GPD, followed by an afternoon session with Asian policymakers from universities, student representatives, and ministries. On the second day, ASEF intends to organize a policy dialogue focused on their research on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in higher education, aiming to derive recommendations for the ASEM Education Ministerial Conference scheduled for January 2024. Additionally, it was discussed to bring the Asia subgroup's discussions to the CG to address the state and content of the GPS or the GPF, incorporating input from dialogue with the Asian stakeholders. It was mentioned that the North African-Northern Middle East Region was foreseen to exist in the IN-GLOBAL project, while the CG did not have the strength to create a subgroup for this. Fiorella Perotto (Co-Chair) remarked that the second conversation of Africa subgroup will also include representatives from the South Mediterranean and from the Near East. The Africa subgroup still have the third conversation to hold, and perhaps defining a focus on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) mentioned that there should be a document on possible ways of looking at potential global dialogue partners and suggested that there be a small working group to prepare it before the CG meeting in September. She pointed out that the writing of the Final Report in general is a different thing: the Report for the previous work period had a number of points that were purely mechanical, such as how many meetings were held, which countries were represented. The actual writing was the executive summary, followed by a brief general description of what CG does, how it was organized and the conclusions and recommendations. She emphasized that the CG still has sufficient time to ensure that the Final Report encompasses the accomplishments of the group over the next six to eight months. She highlighted that the key topics requiring approval are the Forum, the Statement, and the possible recommendation regarding the inclusion of a category of "friends" of the



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Bologna process. These are the areas where the CG should have a clear understanding and proposal ready for the Board Meeting in October, while the rest of the Report could be prepared by spring.

The dates for the upcoming meeting were agreed upon. On September 27, there would be the CG on GPD meeting in Rome. On September 28 and 29, the ASEF Meeting would take place. Finally, on September 29, there would be a discussion within the CG involving the Asia group.

No other business was brought forward, thus the seventh meeting of the CG GPD was concluded.



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