

Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

6th Meeting, Hosted by Austria, Online*

28th March 2023

10:00-13:00 (Brussels time)

Minutes of Meeting

List of Participants

Delegation	First Name	Family Name(s)
Austria (BICG Co-Chair)	Helga	Posset
Austria (TPG A Co-Chair)	Karin	Riegler
Belgium Flemish Community (TPG C Co-Chair)	Magalie	Soenen
Belgium Flemish Community (TPG C Co-Chair)	Liesbeth	Hens
Bulgaria (BICG Co-Chair)	Ivana	Radonova
EUA	Maria	Kelo
EURASHE	Jakub	Grodecki
European Commission	Lucie	Trojanova
European Commission/Eurydice	David	Crosier
Italy (BICG Co-Chair)	Ann Katherine	Isaacs
Italy (TPG B Co-Chair)	Chiara	Finocchietti
Romania	Madalina	Matei
BFUG Secretariat (Deputy Head)	Edlira Adi	Kahani Subashi
BFUG Secretariat	Aida	Myrto
BFUG Secretariat	Ana	Zhibaj

***Note:** This BICG meeting was held online.



*Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ministry of Civil Affairs*

1. Welcome from Co-Chairs

Ivana Radonova (BICG co-chair) opened the meeting by welcoming all participants. The agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved without changes.

For more information, please see: [BICG 6 Agenda of Meeting](#)

2. Update from the Secretariat (Board, BFUG, other events)

Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi (BFUG Secretariat Deputy Head) presented updates from the Secretariat. She first notified the BICG that the upcoming Board and BFUG meeting would be held in Sarajevo on March 31, 2023, and Stockholm on May 11-12, 2023 respectively. She then informed that Bosnia and Herzegovina has expressed interest in joining TPG B, the BFUG has been notified, and should there be no objections, it would be added to the group. Then, Ms. Subashi gave an update on the Secretariat team, including her appointment as the Deputy Head of the Secretariat, and mentioned, among others, the addition of a communication expert who will be responsible for the website update. The Secretariat stated that they have had successful meetings with BICG co-chairs. Noticeable improvements in the Secretariat's work were underlined and appreciation was expressed by the Co-Chairs and members.

Finally, the BPIR questionnaire was sent to the Secretariat by the Working Group on Monitoring; this year it was sent to each country member separately by the Secretariat. So far, 1/3 of the recipients have confirmed receiving the email, and the Secretariat stated that they would send out frequent reminder emails.

In regard to this last question, David Crosier (Eurydice) drew attention to some issues related to statistical data collection. He mentioned that the call for tender last autumn had no responses the first time, so the procedure had to be updated this year. The contracting had just been finalized, but the statistical data collection would be slightly behind schedule.

3. Update from the BICG Co-chairs (Board Meeting)

Helga Posset (BICG Co-Chair, Austria) provided an update on BICG's work, highlighting the importance of communication in all TPGs and their substructures.

It was advised to focus the WG reports on achievements and results, and less on the procedural and technical aspects. There was another recommendation to add procedural details to the report, and have the presentations outline outcomes.

4. Update from EC (what is happening with regard to Higher Education)

Lucie Trojanova (European Commission) provided updates on two topics during the meeting. Firstly, she presented the recently published EU Recognition Report, which was due to be released four years after the adoption of Council recommendation. The report highlighted the increased prominence of automatic recognition in political debates and an increase in countries adopting higher education legislation. The necessary framework conditions, results, and challenges were outlined in the report, with conclusions stating that member states should consider inconsistencies in implementation and integrate automatic



**Albanian BFUG Secretariat
2021-2024**



*Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ministry of Civil Affairs*

recognition into external QA procedures. Future steps included developing trust among national education systems, increasing capacities in NARICs, and continuous support from the EC through funding.

Secondly, she gave an update on the Bologna Cluster projects meeting. Although there were scheduling conflicts, the group was looking to reschedule for mid or late June.

For further information on the study, please find a link to the publication here: [REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad](#)

In the discussions following the reporting, participants were informed on the survey on Quality and Recognition conducted by the TPG B, with a response rate of over 200 answers. After the upcoming TPG B meeting in Tirana, TPG B will hold a seminar on Higher Education Institutions' Diploma Supplements and their implications for automatic recognition. There was a question about the development of the European Quality Assurance and Recognition System report, which was currently being analyzed, and would be followed by consultations with relevant stakeholders. Regarding the question on the Secretariat's involvement in the cluster projects, it would be confirmed with the team, and the Secretariat would be notified.

Finally, the discussion focused on the objectives of automatic recognition, namely that there should not be aspirations for complete automatic recognition, as some lack of recognition should not be regarded as a bad thing. One of the issues raised was how misleading the term "automatic recognition" is, and how it tends to be misunderstood.

5. TPG Updates

5.1. TPG A updates

Karin Riegler (TPG A Co-Chair) provided updates on the group's work, meetings, and working groups. The TPGs held a review online where it was discussed how to include credentials in the micro-credential reports, as tools to combat staff shortages and upskill employees. The structure of the following meeting would begin with a PLA on Learning Outcomes (an essential part of the qualification frameworks, as well as the ESG), followed by the TPG meeting on the second day, to provide an opportunity for reflection on the topic. The focus of the upcoming meeting was policy priorities in the context of learning outcomes. Ms. Riegler invited the TPG A members to reflect on their achievements in the last 2 years of their work.

Ms. Riegler also shared a few observations on the process of collaboration, emphasizing the importance of in-person meetings, encouraging peer learning activities that include countries that have struggled, and recognizing the value of interpersonal relationships.

Following a question as to whether the PLA meeting would be open to institutions from outside, it was announced that there would be funding for a few outside institutions, and the organizers would be grateful for the additional promotion.

5.2. TPG B Updates



**Albanian BFUG Secretariat
2021-2024**



*Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ministry of Civil Affairs*

Chiara Finocchietti (TPG B Co-Chair) updated on the group's progress, meetings, and public seminars, as well as on ad hoc peer support and staff mobility activities. She provided an overview of the working groups established and discussed instruments to support the recognition of qualifications. Upcoming activities included the fifth TPG B meeting to be held in Albania in April 2023, followed by a public seminar. TPG B is currently conducting a survey on quality and recognition for HEIs, has a working group on the digitalization of the Diploma supplement, and is conducting a survey of practices and case studies on micro-credentials. The next TPG B meeting will set priorities for implementing the LRC, followed by a PLA establishing division of work and responsibilities. Finally, after the three PLAs on digitalization, TPG B will produce a report based on the inputs.

There was a suggestion to consult a similar study ([ESQRA's Effective Involvement of Stakeholders in External Quality Assurance Activities](#)), which could be beneficial with regard to stakeholder involvement.

5.3. TPG C Updates

Magalie Soenen (TPG C Co-Chair) gave an update on TPG C's work plan, composition, and previous and upcoming meetings. She informed everyone that the focus of the previous meeting was exchanging information about the staff mobility programs, specifically gathering observations on the mobility experiences. Following the Kazakhstan meeting in June, an online one will take place in November and two additional in-person meetings would be held in 2024. Ms. Soenen continued by informing on the second work package of their project, the staff mobility program. The first mobility call finished recently, and the next steps are evaluating the different mobilities. While there are no final figures yet, Ms. Soenen specified that they still have one month to send in reports and understand how many mobilities took place.

Ms. Soenen informed everyone that the second call was launched from January to March 31. More QA agencies have applied in the second call, and the selection process will occur during the third TPG C meeting in Kazakhstan. The mixed profiles of applying countries were brought to attention, ranging from orange to dark green, with a prevalence of dark green.

The survey on QA of micro-credentials was sent out, with interviews with stakeholders to follow. TPG C has several working groups, which will contribute to the overall publication. Furthermore, TPG C is working on the feasibility of QA studies in European Universities, which is a follow-up of a unique project according to Ms. Soenen. a unique follow-up project. Lastly, TPG C is working on the digitalization of QA processes, including mapping the digitalization processes, data management, and sharing, and the impact of the pandemic. It was informed that Romania is the work package leader and recently shared with the team a draft survey for the QA agencies, which was also presented at the meeting.

Ms. Soenen responded to a question regarding the applications that were not eligible for the call by stating that several countries filed more than the authorized two applications per country.

Nonetheless, the countries who received remarks on the content of their proposals were given the opportunity to resubmit their applications. With regards to the second call, there may be an additional budget available for certain countries to have a third person, but this will be announced in the future.





*Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ministry of Civil Affairs*

The team wished Magalie Soenen success in her new capacity as a Director of EQAR and thanked her for her entire contribution as a TPG C co-chair.

5.4. BICG Final Report – Draft Structure

Ann Katherine Isaacs (BICG Co-Chair) proposed and discussed a possible draft structure for the BICG final report, first presenting the final version published at the time of the Rome Ministerial Conference. She observed that in the final version, the order of the parts had been changed with respect to the draft prepared by the BICG, probably with a view to having all the 2020 Reports have a similar structure. She shared the outline of the Report, which consists of the executive summary, activities and structure, intended outcomes, and TPGs activities and meetings.

Overall, the table of contents of the 2024 Report would remain similar. It is not necessary now to change the structure. However, the emphasis of the document should change to describe more incisively the accomplishments of the BICG, thanks to the work of the TPGs, as this working period will be longer than the previous one, and concrete results are expected and must be convincingly described.

There was a recommendation to keep the structure consistent and make a comparison of which countries participated in which TPGs, for both terms. Regarding the question of who would be drafting the report and the deadlines for doing so, Ms. Isaacs referred to the practices of previous years, where a drafting committee was established, consisting of several members of the BICG, tasked with writing the general parts of the document and harmonizing the texts presented by the TPGs. The drafts of course are shared with the BICG; however, it was stressed that section two of the document will depend heavily on the input of the TPGs.

Another suggestion proposed a chapter four, consisting of reports on the achievements of TPGs and WGs. As for the deadlines, the team could decide collectively, keeping in mind that the final document must be ready in a year, but that a near-final version will be needed much sooner. In conclusion, the path forward would consist of making use of the existing structure, filled out using texts presented by the TPG co-chairs. There was a suggestion to include in Chapter Four a part on the cooperation between the TPGs and the topics they have addressed in common (such as micro-credentials and digitalization). There should be a strong emphasis on showing the results achieved since the Paris Communique, also showing which countries have participated, as well as presenting scorecard indicators for the “Key Commitments”, where, hopefully, color changes will be evident.

5.5. BICG Proposal for the Tirana 2024 Communique

The BICG Co-chairs were asked to provide initial input for the Tirana 2024 Communique, to which they provided a draft but commented that it would not be realistic to have a final version this early.

The document was shared with the members, inviting them to reflect on the TPG’s collective vision for the description of their work in the Communiqué. It was emphasized that the BICG had not seen a first draft from the Drafting Committee, therefore its focus, for now, should be on the BICG Report, and the text suggested for the final communique would be extracted from the proposed chapter four.





*Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ministry of Civil Affairs*

6. Next meeting / further meeting schedule

Finally, Helga Posset opened the discussion on the next meeting dates. It was decided that the next meeting should take place the week before the next Board meeting and should consider the response time. Therefore, the proposed dates were on week 39 (25-29 September), from 10:00 – 13:00, taking care to avoid schedule conflicts with other meetings.

7. AoB

Liesbeth Hens (TPG C co-chair, Belgium Flemish Community) introduced herself and informed everyone that she would be the new TPG C co-chair for Belgium Flemish Community representative.

No other business was brought forward, thus the sixth BICG meeting was successfully concluded.



Albanian **BFUG** Secretariat
2021-2024