

Minutes of the Bologna Follow-Up Group

Vienna 6 April 2006

The meeting was held at the Parkhotel Schönbrunn from 10.00 on Thursday 6 April to 13.00 on Friday 7 April. A list of participants is appended.

Welcome and introduction to the meeting

1. The Chair (Barbara Weitgruber) welcomed members of the BFUG to the meeting and particularly new member country representatives. Apologies had been received from Azerbaijan, Bulgaria and Italy.
2. The Chair also thanked members for the timely preparation of papers. This allowed all members to prepare their contributions to the meeting.

Adoption of agenda

Documents: BFUG8 1a Draft agenda
BFUG8 1b Draft annotated agenda

3. The agenda was adopted without comment.

Minutes of the last BFUG and Board meetings

Documents: BFUG7 Minutes of the BFUG meeting Manchester
12 – 13 October 2005
BFUGB11 (Board) Minutes of the Board meeting
Vienna 25 January 2006

4. The minutes were approved subject to an amendment to BFUG7 Minutes proposed for item 5, Bologna Work Programme 2005-2007, pages 6-7 and to item 12, approval of way forward, page 14, as follows: E4 would liaise with Germany over their plans to hold an event on quality assurance. This replaced: ENQA would liaise with Germany over their plans to hold an event on quality assurance.
5. The minutes of the Board meeting were circulated for information.

BFUG work programme: progress reports from working groups

Documents: BFUG8 4a (i) Update from Stocktaking Working Group
BFUG8 4a (i) Draft National report Template
BFUG8 4b Update from Qualifications Frameworks Working Group
BFUG8 4c(i) External Dimension Interim Report
BFUG8 4c(ii) External Dimension General Working Plan
BFUG8 4d Update and discussion paper from Social Dimension and Data on Student Mobility Working Group
BFUG8 4e(i) & (ii) External Dimension: international

cooperation; Mexico (i) and China (ii) meetings

6. The Chair invited each working group chair to give an update on their activities and progress. She drew attention to the fact that the web version of the Bologna Work Programme now included dates of all BFUG meetings between now and London 2007. This provided a timeframe for members to plan ahead for their work.

Stocktaking Working Group – Andrejs Rauhvargers

7. Andrejs Rauhvargers gave an update from the Stocktaking Working Group. Since the last BFUG meeting in Manchester in October 2005, the working group had held two meetings, in December in Riga and in February in Brussels. In addition, there had been group discussions by email and consultation with other organisations. Using the Bergen Communiqué and the discussion at the Manchester BFUG as the starting point, the group was proposing 11 indicators. Some of the previous indicators had been merged or revised to reflect developments since the previous exercise. New indicators had been developed on the recognition of prior learning and the establishment and recognition of joint degrees. Areas such as flexible learning paths and the employability of bachelor graduates would be addressed in the textual element of the stocktaking report. Information for stocktaking would be taken from the Eurydice “Focus” report. To ensure comprehensive coverage, the Secretariat would distribute the Eurydice questionnaire to countries outside the Eurydice network. National reports would provide additional information on progress, the deadline for completion of which was 15 December 2006.

8. There were a number of issues for the working group to address. Most information sources, such as the ENQA survey on the implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, did not cover all 45 countries. Further, most surveys were due to be completed during 2006 and therefore would not reflect the up-to-date picture when the Ministers met in London in May 2007. However, there was extensive cooperation with partners in information gathering and a good level of participation and commitment to the task within the working group. Particular thanks were due to the EC and Eurydice, for including all 45 countries in the next “Focus” report.

In discussion the following points were made:

Belgium French Community (Chantal Kaufmann) queried if the introduction of legislation during the course of stocktaking would affect the final outcome. It was confirmed that stocktaking would record the latest stage of legislative developments.

There was a need for clarity in the language used in the indicators. For example, there was a need to make clear that the stage of implementation of the first and second cycles referred to the percentage of the total number of students enrolled in the first and second cycles in 2006/07.

There was also a need to ensure the language used in the indicators reflected

the diversity of practice across the EHEA. In areas such as the format of Diploma Supplements, there was however a need for a degree of uniformity, if their purpose of increasing knowledge and understanding of the qualification held was to be achieved. Further, while it was understandable that some institutions might seek to recover the cost of producing Diploma Supplements, the Berlin Communiqué made it clear that they should be produced free of charge.

There was some concern that the textual element of the stocktaking report might duplicate work being taken forward by other working groups. This was not however the intention of the Stocktaking Working Group. It was agreed that the scope of the final report would be discussed in greater depth at the next BFUG meeting.

The UK (Rachel Green) highlighted the fact that the UK did not use legislation to effect change in the HE sector. Stocktaking should capture the outcome, rather than the means used to achieve change. The need to avoid a 'one size fits all' approach also applied to the use of ECTS. Ministers had not definitely agreed that all countries should use ECTS, but rather that all credit systems should be compatible with ECTS. Peter van der Hijden pointed out that the Ministers in Berlin called for ECTS as a transfer and accumulation system and did not use the term 'compatible'.

ESIB (Nina Gustafsson Auberg) asked BFUG to note that ESIB did not accept the definition of "access" being used in stocktaking.

UNICE (Christoph Anz) queried how the working group would assess the employability of bachelor graduates. This had been recognised by the working group as being a complex area, about which few data were available.

There was some concern that the stocktaking report might extend beyond the remit agreed in the Bergen Communiqué. This was not however the intention. It was agreed that stocktaking would be discussed further at the next meeting.

It was agreed that:

The Chair of the Stocktaking Working Group would revise the indicators to reflect the discussion and circulate them, together with the revised National Report template, to BFUG for any further comments prior to sign off by April 24.

The scope of the textual element of stocktaking would be discussed in more detail at the next BFUG meeting.

Qualifications Frameworks Working Group – Mogens Berg

9. Mogens Berg reported on the progress of the Qualifications Frameworks Working Group. The self-certification pilots in Ireland and Scotland linking their systems to the qualifications framework had started and the results would be available before the next BFUG. The working group had decided to leave work on

surveying the use of credits to ECTS counsellors. Members of the group had taken part in the Budapest Conference looking at the development of the proposed European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). The group would continue to follow the development of this proposal.

10. The group was planning to have a draft final report available for discussion at the October BFUG meeting. The report would include: criteria for self certifying against the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: the procedures for self certifying; the relationship between the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA and the EQF and good practice for establishing national qualifications frameworks.

11. Four regional workshops were being set up, to allow groups of ten neighbouring countries to meet to discuss how to develop qualifications frameworks. Details of the workshops would be available on the Bologna website in work in progress.

It was agreed that:

The draft report from the Qualifications Framework Working Group would be discussed at the October meeting of BFUG.

External Dimension & feedback on Holy See seminar- Toril Johansson & Padre Friedrich Bechina

12. Toril Johansson outlined the group's approach to their task and the associated timetable. The group was looking at interactions within the EHEA and with other parts of the world. The main themes arising from the group's first meeting focused on the triangular relationship of attractiveness, competition and co-operation. A draft report on the external dimension would be available for discussion at the September seminar, allowing a preliminary report to be presented to BFUG for comment at the October meeting. The working group would meet again in November, with a view to the final report and associated strategy being completed by December, allowing a final discussion at the March BFUG. A study entitled, 'Perceptions of European Higher Education in Third Countries' undertaken by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) would be of interest to the group, which investigated the perception of European higher education in other parts of the world.

13. Padre Friedrich Bechina reported on the Holy See seminar and thanked the EC, CoE and UNESCO-Cepes for their assistance. Representatives of 40-50 countries had attended. The programme had covered: common academic values; how the heritage of the past informed the future; the importance of the humanities; and the rich diversity and cultural heritage within the EHEA and European universities. The seminar was a first step only. It was hoped that some academics might explore further the main themes discussed during the seminar. The themes would also be discussed in the External Dimension Working Group. Plans were also in hand for the main points and outcomes of the seminar to be published in co-operation with UNESCO-Cepes and the Council of Europe (CoE).

In discussion the following points were made:

CoE (Sjur Bergan) considered the seminar had made an important

contribution to the elaboration of the values underpinning the Bologna Process which might be reflected in the London Communiqué. When considering the heritage of European higher education, it was important for the future development of the EHEA to recognise how higher education had adapted and evolved over time.

EUA (Roderick Floud) advised that concurrently EUA had adopted 'a Vision for the EHEA and the EUA', copies of which would be made available to BFUG and the External Dimension Working Group.

EI (Monique Foulihoux) welcomed the opportunity to reflect on values and heritage, rather than processes. For future events, it would be desirable if greater consideration could be given to gender balance and diversity among participants. It would also be preferable to have an opportunity to discuss conclusions and recommendations. The Chair referred to the guidelines for Bologna seminars which have governed the seminars all along.

It was agreed that:

The External Dimension Working Group would arrange for BFUG to have access to the ACA report.

The Secretariat would re-circulate the guidelines for Bologna seminars for reference.

Social dimension and Data on Student Mobility Working Group – Annika Persson

14. Annika Persson summarised the Terms of Reference for the Social Dimension Working Group and explained how the group was approaching its task. In the first instance, the group was focussing on defining the social dimension. Data collection on the social and economic condition of students and staff and student mobility would follow thereafter. This aspect of the task was being taken forward by a sub-group, chaired by Germain Dondelinger. The sub-group membership included data collection experts, Eurydice, country and consultative members, Eurostat and OECD.

15. In elaborating the concept of the social dimension, the working group was conscious of the need for the definition to be broad, flexible and inclusive. Once defined, the intention was to identify political commitments and actions that might be taken to deliver those commitments. Two aspects had been identified: the social dimension in the home country of the student and the social dimension of mobility. The definition had been structured into objectives, strategies and possible actions for implementation by Ministers, institutions and other stakeholders. BFUG was being invited to comment on the proposed concept for the social dimension and identify which actions were the most important for the social dimension in Bologna countries.

In discussion the following points were made:

Some concerns were raised about the cost implications for institutions and others of the possible measures identified. It would be advisable to assess

the cost implications, before making any recommendations to Ministers.

It might be helpful to explain the rationale for the social dimension in the final report to Ministers. There might also be merit in including a catalogue of measures and examples of good practice, from which individual countries might select actions appropriate to their own circumstances.

16. Germain Dondelinger reported on the work of the sub-group looking at data on socio/economics of students and mobility of staff and students. To ensure data were reliable and comparable, the sub-group had agreed to use data collected by international organisations such as Eurydice, Eurostudent, UNESCO, OECD and the Luxembourg Income Study. Each had a different focus that could contribute to the group's work. There were however differences in the scope and timescales for each survey: they were not uniform across all 45 countries, either geographically or thematically. Data collection was helpful in order to reinforce understanding of the current situation and thereby influence future policies. Longer term, BFUG would need to consider how much human/financial resource should be put towards data collection, if uniform data were to be produced. Initial discussions within the sub-group suggested that the stocktaking/benchmarking approach to the social dimension and mobility might not be appropriate.

In discussion the following points were made:

Mobility raised different issues for staff and students. Mobility of students did not have the problems as staff mobility regarding pension contributions, health insurance and other social security related issues. It may therefore be desirable to address the issues separately.

Given the constraints on the group, and the fact that not all the issues raised fell within the remit of the Ministers responsible for Higher Education, there might be merit in focussing on raising awareness of the current situation and the variety of approaches to the social dimension and mobility in place across the EHEA. Collecting the available data was a good first step in this regard.

The working group was obliged to take forward the aspects relating to the social dimension and mobility outlined in the Bergen Communiqué. This might require looking at issues beyond the remit of the Ministers responsible for Higher Education. There were a number of commitments given in the Bergen Communiqué, such as simplifying visa application processes that implicitly widened the scope of BFUG's work.

Ultimately, BFUG and Ministers, rather than the working group, would need to decide on any indicators on the social dimension. This might include taking a decision on whether or not to invite Eurostudent to collect data on a comprehensive basis across all 45 participating countries.

It was agreed that:

There would be a further discussion about the social dimension and mobility at the next meeting of BFUG, with a view to reaching a decision on delivery expectations

for the working group.

External dimension: international cooperation, Mexico and China meetings update

Documents: BFUG8 4e External Dimension: International co-operation

17. Gottfried Bacher gave a brief account of the meeting in Mexico with reference to the paper presented. The event was hosted by the Mexican Ministry of Education and designed to provide information to HE institutions in Mexico on the implementation of the Bologna Process in Europe. The perception of Bologna was slightly confused: initially it was thought that it was based on an EU Treaty and not a voluntary process. Discussion groups covered how Bologna objectives were implemented and had concluded that there should be closer cooperation between HE institutions in Mexico and Europe. The importance of establishing strong networks among Mexican universities for transatlantic cooperation was recognised.

18. Rachel Green gave an account of the joint EU/China event organised under the UK Presidency. It was attended by around 35 European and over 70 Chinese representatives from HE institutions, as well as Rectors and Ministers. There had been rapid expansion of HE in China and the participation rate was around 17%. China sent many students around the world. Some were government funded but most funded themselves. The capacity of HE had increased but not enough to satisfy demand. There was a great deal of interest in the EU and the Bologna Process, particularly in the area of recognition.

BFUG work programme: topics for discussion

Documents: BFUG8 5 Paper on Portability of Grants and Loans

19. The Chair reminded BFUG that, following discussion in Manchester, it had been agreed that the Netherlands, with other interested countries, would undertake further work on the proposed working group on the portability of grants and loans and produce a detailed paper for discussion at this meeting.

20. Aldrick in't Hout then presented proposed ToR for the working group. The work would be complimentary to the work of the Social Dimension Working Group and would contribute to mobility. The starting point for the group would be that each country was responsible for its own student support system and that it would be up to each country to determine its own approach and timescale for considering the portability of grants and loans. There was no intention for portability to be part of the next stocktaking exercise. The group planned to produce for Ministers in London 2007 a 'toolkit' for countries to implement actions to make grants and loans portable. The intention was for the group to include a broad range of countries from across the EHEA and to keep in close touch with BFUG and the Social Dimension Working Group. The Netherlands was willing to chair the group.

In discussion the following points were made:

There was broad support for setting up the working group. It would make a useful contribution to the mobility agenda by exploring the complex legal and

technical issues relating to portable grants and loans.

Denmark (Mogens Berg) expressed an interest in taking part in the working group.

Turkey (Aybar Ertepinar) suggested the group might also consider cost of living issues for students who go abroad.

There was a need for the work of the group to be put in context. Introducing portable grants and loans alone would not achieve the full social dimension aspect of mobility.

It was agreed that:

The Working Group on the Portability of Grants and Loans would be officially set up.

Countries interested in joining the Working Group should contact the Secretariat by 24 April 2006.

Initial proposals for 2007 Ministerial Event

Documents: BFUG8 6 Bologna Process – Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education London May 2007

21. The UK (Rachel Green) provided an update on the plans for the London 2007 conference. The outline proposals took into account comments from BFUG7 and BFUGB11 (Board). The agenda presented was a very preliminary outline with similar timing to the Bergen conference. It was planned to have participative discussions and to avoid a long series of feedback reports. It was hoped the event would be as forward looking as possible putting Bologna in the wider context of university reform in Europe and the internationalisation of higher education. A letter about the event would be sent to all Bologna Ministers in the next couple of months to note the date for diaries. BFUG members were therefore being asked to let the Secretariat have correct contact details for their Ministers by 1 May.

In discussion the following points were made:

Malta (Joseph Mifsud) agreed with the forward looking approach and suggested that Ministerial discussion should be the main focus of the event. There were few opportunities for Ministers from outside the EU to meet their counterparts.

CoE (Sjur Bergan) suggested that consideration should be given to how best to handle contributions from the consultative members, now that there were eight.

It was agreed that:

BFUG members would send contact details for Ministers to the Secretariat by 1 May 2006.

Candidates for 2009 Ministerial Conference - information

Documents: BFUG8 7 Letter from Barbara Weitgruber to those countries that expressed an interest
BFUGB11 3a (Board) Letter from Croatia indicating expression of interest
BFUG11 3b (Board) Letter from the Slovak Republic indicating expression of interest
BFUG11 3c (Board) Letter from the Benelux Countries indicating expression of interest

22. The Chair advised that following discussion at the January BFUGB11 Board meeting in Vienna and discussion with the countries concerned, it had been agreed that the countries concerned would take this forward amongst themselves. This would be an information item at the next BFUG meeting.

23. Marie-Anne Persoons informed the group that a first meeting had been arranged at Leuven.

24. EUA (Roderick Floud) highlighted the fact that one of the suggested dates for the 2009 Ministerial event would cause considerable difficulties for EUA. In the event that that country was to host the event, he asked if the date for the Ministerial event might be reconsidered to allow EUA to make a full contribution to the event.

Candidates for Bologna Board

Documents: BFUG8 8 Election of Board Members

25. Four countries had applied for the three places on the Board by the 10 March deadline. The Secretariat (Ann McVie) introduced the voting procedure agreed at Mondorf in March 2005. After clarification on the voting slips and the number of votes per country the voting slips were distributed by the Secretariat and, following voting by BFUG members, were collected in a ballot box. The votes were counted and checked by Austria and the Secretariat.

The outcome was that:

France, Georgia and Romania would join the Board as elected members for the period July 2006 until May 2007.

The Secretariat would write up the agreed voting procedure to ensure this was clear for use during the next ballot.

BFUG work programme: progress reports from projects

Documents: BFUG8 9a Report of E4 Group on Quality Assurance
BFUG8 9b EUA Report Doctoral Programmes Follow-up 2005-2007

European register of Quality Assurance Agencies – Peter Williams

26. ENQA (Peter Williams) reported on the work of the E4 Group on Quality Assurance since Manchester. The difficult stage of setting-up and gaining common understanding of the task had taken longer than expected and the commissioning of a consultant had been consequently delayed slightly. However, the consultant was expected to be appointed by mid April. The E4 Group were grateful to the EC and the Swiss Government for funding the project. The consultant was not being asked to make a recommendation on the register, but rather to present a number of possible models, identifying the implications of each model.

27. On the implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, the ENQA survey suggested that most countries were looking to introduce peer reviews within the next three years.

28. Apologies were extended to Germany about the misunderstanding over the arrangements for organising the first European Quality Assurance Forum. The E4 Group and Germany would be jointly organising the forum which would take place in Munich in November 2006.

29. The E4 Group had invited the Secretariat to attend future meetings as an observer.

In discussion the following points were made:

There was a need for the consultant to recognise the responsibilities of signatory countries within national quality assurance systems. This suggested there should be close collaboration between the E4 Group project and BFUG.

Concerns were expressed about the timescale for the project. Would a clear recommendation on the QA Register be available for the Ministers when they met in London?

Once the E4 Group, together with the consultant, had developed some possible models for the register, there would be an opportunity for discussion at BFUG. It was hoped that a draft report would be available for circulation in early October, two weeks before the next BFUG meeting.

It was agreed that:

E4 Group would ensure the consultant was apprised of the points raised by BFUG.

The topic would be on the agenda for the BFUG meetings in October and March.

A member of the Secretariat would attend E4 Group meetings as an observer.

EUA Principles for doctoral programmes

30. EUA (Lesley Wilson) gave an update on the doctoral programmes project. The aim was to organise a series of events to allow as many stakeholders as

possible to discuss the 10 principles for doctoral programmes conceived at the Bologna Seminar in Salzburg. The issues concerned researchers as well as university staff, and a considerable number of funding bodies. The timetable for, and focus of, each event was outlined. BFUG members were invited to take part in the remaining events, particularly the event on funding taking place on June 1 and 2 under the framework of the Austrian Presidency 'A researchers labour market: Europe – a pole of attraction? The European Charter for Researchers and the code of conduct for their recruitment as a driving force for enhancing career prospects', and EUA Bologna Workshop (2) in Brussels 12 -13 October. A report of the first stakeholder workshop was almost complete. The final seminar would be in France in December 2006, with the final report being completed by March 2007 for BFUG.

It was agreed that:

*BFUG members interested in attending the finance workshop at the beginning of June should email Lesley Wilson **by April 24 2006.***

BFUG members would advise Lesley Wilson if they were interested in attending the October event. If interest was high, EUA would consider rearranging the dates, to avoid a clash with BFUG.

BFUG work programme

Documents: BFUG8 10 Draft guidelines for national action plans for recognition

31. The CoE (Sjur Bergan) outlined the background to the draft guidelines prepared by ENIC-NARIC to assist countries with the task of producing national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications. The guidelines covered four main areas, not all of which would be equally relevant to all countries. Eight countries had not yet ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention. It had been suggested that the guidelines might include a reference to ECTS. Consideration would be given to any further comments raised by BFUG, before the guidelines were endorsed and issued for completion at national level by 15 December 2006, in line with the deadline for completing national reports.

In discussion the following points were made:

It was suggested that guidelines might refer to the use made of ECTS and Diploma Supplements as recognition tools. There might also be merit in asking countries to describe plans for improving recognition, as this might benefit others. Information on work to reduce the often extensive delays on recognition issues would also be helpful.

It was agreed that:

*BFUG members would let the Secretariat have any further comments on the guidelines for the national action plans on recognition **by 24 April 2006.***

Thereafter, the guidelines would be endorsed by BFUG and issued for completion at national level.

Contribution from the European Commission: From Bergen to London

Documents: BFUGB11 8 (Board) European Commission contribution to the process. Bergen to London

32. The EC (Peter van der Hijden) presented the paper on the EC's contribution to the Bologna Process over the period 2005-2007. A considerable number of possible sources of support were available, all of which were listed in the paper. Around 50% of the possible sources of support were available to non EU countries. The document would be finalised after the BFUG meeting, and translated thereafter.

In discussion the following points were made:

Questions were raised about the purpose of the 'Quality labels' referred to in the paper. Concerns were expressed about the status of such labels and their awarding bodies and how they might relate to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance and the Register of Quality Assurance Agencies.

The EC explained that the labels were being offered in response to demand from professional sectors e.g. engineers, musicians, for transnational evaluation of university programmes. The expectation was that the awarding bodies could apply for inclusion on the Register in the normal way.

It was suggested that the paper might include examples of action being taken to promote cooperation and prevent "brain drain" from non EU countries.

No decision had yet been reached on the future status of the Tempus programme.

It was agreed that:

The EC would provide the Secretariat by 1 May 2006 with further information about the proposed Quality labels for circulation to BFUG.

Capacity building: feedback from Council of Europe – Austrian Bologna Process Information Seminar for new accession countries

Documents: BFUG8 12 Council of Europe: Austrian Bologna Process Information Seminar

33. The CoE (Sjur Bergan) described the background to the introductory meeting supported by the CoE and the Austrian Presidency for the five new countries and Albania. It was hoped that the event had been helpful and informative.

It was agreed that:

The event had been informative and a valuable opportunity both to learn more about how BFUG operated and to share information about work under way on Bologna reforms in the countries concerned.

Consultative members – contribution to the Bologna Process

Documents: BFUG8 13a EUA's Contribution to the Bologna Process
BFUG8 13b Update on ESIB

34. Consultative members provided short feedback on their contribution to the Bologna Process.

EUA - Lesley Wilson

35. EUA (Lesley Wilson) talked about EUA's paper on their contribution to the Bologna Process. She highlighted in particular work on Trends V. Around one thousand questionnaires had been returned, including many from the Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Analysis of the responses was under way, but early results suggested considerable progress had been made since the previous survey under Trends III. The programme of site visits was continuing and it was hoped the new countries would be included. A handbook on the Bologna process and good practice was in production and due in the summer. Four updates a year were planned. Institutional evaluations were being carried out by the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme at the request of the governments and the National Rectors Conferences in Cataluña, Slovakia and Portugal following on from a similar exercise in Ireland in 2005.

ESIB – Nina Gustafsson Aberg

36. ESIB (Nina Gustafsson Aberg) drew attention to the ESIB papers circulated for the meeting. She thanked the Austrian Presidency for their support for the recent ESIB Convention. ESIB was considering a long-term strategy to help students in Belarus, following the incident of an ESIB-member expelled from her university. The next ESIB Convention would be supported by the Finnish Presidency and would consider higher education post 2010. Work was under way on the next report "Bologna through student eyes". Input to the report would be mainly through questionnaires from Student Unions.

It was agreed that:

*ESIB would circulate **by 1 May 2006** further information about the methodology that would be used for their report on Bologna through Student Eyes.*

Council of Europe – Sjur Bergan

37. CoE (Sjur Bergan) highlighted a number of the events and publications listed in the CoE paper on their contribution to the Bologna Process in 2005-2006 circulated with the meeting document package. He cited in particular two examples of good practice arising from recent events: Moldova's work to produce bi-lingual Diploma Supplements and Albania's work to develop a Master Plan for Higher Education. CoE had recently adopted a statement on the lack of academic freedom

in Belarus, a copy of which was on the CoE website.

Forthcoming events which might be of particular interest to BFUG include:

Forum on Democratic Culture in Higher Education CoE Headquarters Strasbourg
22-23 June 2006

Third CoE Forum on HE Quality Assurance CoE Headquarters Strasbourg
19-20 Sept 2006

Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR) - plenary session

CoE Headquarters Strasbourg
21-22 Sept 2006

Role of the student (part of Russian Chairmanship of CoE)

Moscow
1-3 November 2006

Education International – Monique Fouilhoux

38. Education International (EI) (Monique Fouilhoux) referred to the EI paper circulated to the meeting. EI had circulated information to its members to raise awareness of the Bologna Process. Work was in progress for EI's Bologna seminar to take place in February 2007. It was hoped the event could draw on the work of the Social Dimension and Data on Mobility Working Group and would include a contribution from ESIB. The next meeting of EI would take place in June for OECD and European affiliates in Athens in conjunction with the OECD Education Ministers meeting.

EURASHE – Stefan Delplace

39. EURASHE (Stefan Delplace) circulated an update from EURASHE. He referred to the recent seminar in Blois on short cycle qualifications. There appeared to be increasing interest in this area, since the Bergen conference.

40. EURASHE's next annual conference would take place in Dubrovnik, Croatia on 27-28 April 2006; all BFUG members were invited. A regional conference in Kazakhstan was planned for October 2006 on Quality Assurance in a national and transnational context. EURASHE was pleased to be continuing to take part in the work of the E4 Group.

ENQA – Peter Williams

41. ENQA (Peter Williams) advised that a survey of members on engagement with the European Standards and Guidelines for QA was underway. This would be one of the main themes of an ENQA seminar taking place in September in Brussels. ENQA had been considering how it might develop as an organisation. There was a desire both to maintain its high membership standards and increase co-operation with quality assurance agencies still under development. This might lead to the introduction of affiliate and associate categories of membership. TEEP 2 was coming to an end, the final report on which was due to be published in June. ENQA

was organising a seminar at Warwick University in June to discuss the use of English as the international language for QA. A further seminar taking place in Spain in the autumn would look at student involvement in QA.

UNICE – Christoph Anz

42. UNICE (Christoph Anz) reported that UNICE had held a joint conference on quality assurance and employability with ENQA last year. A key conclusion had been that there should be significant engagement of employers in QA. The Bologna Process provided a stimulus for this. Three action lines were of particular interest to employers: three cycles; qualifications frameworks; and QA. The employability of graduates was the key issue for employers, a UNICE paper on which was being prepared for presentation at the UK Bologna seminar on graduate employability.

UNESCO-CEPES – Jan Sadlak

43. UNESCO-CEPES (Jan Sadlak) advised that UNESCO-CEPES had been invited to give a presentation on the Bologna Process at the Russian G8 summit. An appropriate statement would be presented in October in Bucharest. Current UNESCO-CEPES projects included an outline of doctoral degree studies; the impact of demography on HE; and a possible methodology for international rankings; publishing findings from the Warsaw meeting on private institutions in the Bologna Process; two monographs were at the printers; The Ukraine and Turkey: recognition/structure and the impact of the Bologna Process.

Any other business

44. It was agreed that a list of “homework” items and deadlines would be circulated by email on 10 April 2006 from the Secretariat.

45. Germany invited BFUG members to attend the Joint Degrees seminar on 21-22 September. Questionnaires to inform the seminar would be sent out to BFUG members. BFUG members were asked to complete and return the questionnaires to the seminar organisers.

46. Greece invited BFUG members to the Athens seminar taking place on 24-26 June. Some BFUG might also be able to take part in the associated OECD event. However, delegations for the OECD event would be restricted to one per country.

Next Board meeting BFUGB12 13 June Vienna

47. Current Board members, Chairs of Working Groups and ENQA should register for the 13 June Board meeting **by 28 April** to secure their accommodation. Rooms would not be held thereafter, as Vienna would be very busy with other Presidency events at that time.

Next BFUG meeting BFUG9 12-13 October Helsinki

Yvonne Clarke
Bologna Secretariat