

Report on the Activities of the CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue (GPD)

The central task of the CG1 is to promote ‘ongoing global dialogue’ on significant matters of interest to HE worldwide, and to prepare and organize the Global Policy Forum that will be held in conjunction with the Rome 2020 Ministerial Conference. Furthermore, it must build the premises for on-going dialogue after 2020.

The Coordination Group 1 (CG1) was intended to be a very small operational group, not an broad ‘advisory group’ as in the run-up to the Paris Conference. In the event, however, there are 17 members: all committed, expert and prepared to collaborate proactively in the CG.

First meeting:

Because of the greater than expected numbers, the start-up phase took longer than planned: the organization of the first meeting coincided with the holiday season, and it was only possible to hold the first meeting at the beginning of February.

The meeting was very fruitful, and the discussion useful. Most of the work of the group was foreseen to be conducted by means of virtual meetings and electronic communication, but it is essential to have a some face-to-face meetings together as well together, and there to be able to discuss ideas, clarify orientations and tasks to be carried out. The first meeting allowed us to review our ToR and the background documents in detail, and to map the areas of particular expertise of each member.

Second and third face-to-face meetings

The second face-to-face meeting of the CG1 will be held in Bologna in the morning and early afternoon of the celebrations on 24 June. The third face-to-face meeting will be held in Rome in conjunction with the October meeting at the EU Representation.

Follow-up after Paris:

Among the first activities is giving feedback to non-EHEA Ministers who attended the Bologna Policy Forum (BPF) in Paris, and also to those who were invited but did not attend. More broadly, initial tasks are to devise ways of being in contact with significant representatives, countries and organizations, in order to establish dialogue about HE with other macro-regions. The intention is to engineer a situation in which the Global Policy Forum is understood as a venue for dialogue among equals: the EHEA and other macro-regions: a time and place in which countries can act together to create areas of agreement and cooperation relating to the organisation and enhancement of HE, as well as to mobility of students and staff.

A standard text for letters to Ministers has been drafted and polished, and is now being sent to parties around the world. A closely related idea is to create a letter and information sheet to Ministers of countries that have not yet participated in previous BGFs.

A regular newsletter on what is happening in the Bologna Process could also be sent to these international partners. This seems useful, not only for international partners, but also for use in the countries within the EHEA, in order to create more awareness among all stakeholders (especially within the HEIs) on the state of play within ‘Bologna’, as many persons might not link current developments in HE to the BP anymore. The CG has asked the Secretariat to consider whether and how this can be implemented.

A Subgroup has been set up to work on the lists of countries, organisations and contact persons, building on the lists from Paris.

Future events:

The CG is mandated to create specific events or to participate in/designate/promote existing events (events planned and carried out by others) as useful for Global Policy Dialogue.

The first considered was the Council of Europe's Global Forum on Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and the Future of Democracy, to be held on 20-21 June 2019. The BFUG Vice-Chair, one of the CG1's Co-chairs, will participate in the opening panel and will address the theme from a global perspective.

The second event is the celebration of the 20 year anniversary of the Bologna Declaration on June 24-25: the CG members are encouraged to propose contributions to the scientific conference, and one of the Co-chairs has presented an abstract for a contribution on what can be the key theme for the Rome GPF.

A third event will be autonomously organized by the CG1, with the support of the EU Representation in Rome and the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research: it will be a conference held in the Europa Hall of the Representation, probably in mid-October, to which representatives of all Embassies located in Rome will be invited, and where the EHEA and the aims of the Rome Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum will be illustrated. The objective is to clarify the importance of the event and to encourage the flow of information to non EHEA Ministries and stakeholders.

Other important conferences of ASEM, UNESCO and so forth have been indicated or will be indicated as contributing to global policy dialogue.

Overall orientations for the Global Policy Forum (GPF):

The CG for GPD will formulate the Draft GPF Statement, under the aegis of the Drafting Committee for the Rome 2020 Conference.

Particular regions will not be specified as focal points of the GPF.

The focus will be macro-regions dealing with higher education; with regard to single countries, it is still to be decided whether all countries or only those most active in promoting regional cooperation for HE should be invited.

The remit of the CG is to create bases for dialogue that will go on beyond 2020.

Specific plans for how to organize the GPF itself and how it can best interact with the rest of the Ministerial Conference Programme are being discussed, and will need to be coordinated with the general plans being made by the BFUG.

Members consider successful the idea of embedding the GPF in the EHEA meeting, but this may take too much time for the EHEA ministers. Possibly the GPF can be partly embedded and there can be an additional day for specifically GPF matters.

Parallel sessions, when the topics and the moderators are well chosen, are successful, and should be used.

The focus will be on HE's contribution to the SDGs, not only but certainly SDG 4, as the general world goals most widely recognized by Ministers.