



Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

Third Meeting, Hosted by Austria, Online*
Friday, 21 January 2022
10:00-12:30 (Brussels time)

Minutes

List of Participants

Country	Name	Last Name
Albania	Linda	Pustina
Austria (Co-Chair)	Helga	Posset
Bulgaria (Co-Chair)	Ivana	Radonova
EUA	Maria	Kelo
European Commission	Lucie	Trojanova
European Commission/Eurydice	David	Crosier
Italy (Co-Chair)	Ann Katherine	Isaacs
Romania	Madalina	Matei
Co-chair of TPG A	Karin	Riegler
Co-chair of TPG B	Hélène	Bekker
Co-chair of TPG C	Magalie	Soenen
BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Oltion	Rrumbullaku
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari

EURASHE did not attend the meeting.

Welcome by the Co-Chairs

The Co-chairs welcomed everybody to the third BICG meeting for the 2021-2024 work period. Helga Posset (Co-Chair) expressed the desire to meet in person in 2022 and introduced new members of the group and informed on their respective roles within the institutions they represented.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.

For more detailed information, please see [BICG FR AZ 3 Draft Agenda](#)

2. Update from the BFUG Secretariat

Oltion Rrumbullaku (BFUG Secretariat, Head) gave an overview of the activities that have resumed after the BFUG meeting, held on December 1-2, 2021. Mr. Rrumbullaku provided information regarding the EHEA website and the current updates. Furthermore, he updated on the preparations of the BFUG Board meeting, to be held on 9 February 2022.

3. Update from the BICG Co-chairs (BFUG Meeting December 2021)

Helga Posset (BICG, Co-Chair) gave a summary of the BICG's activities, and updates that were made in the BFUG Board meeting and BFUG meeting, respectively. Ms. Posset highlighted the work of the three TPGs including the finalization of the Work Plans and Country Plans for each TPG. The issue of non-EU countries being unable to participate in the Erasmus+ Call due to the



call restrictions, despite being EHEA country members was also raised. It was highlighted that for the next call, the European Commission informed they would find a solution for the non-EU countries to participate as well. Ms. Posset stressed the importance of commencing the Erasmus+ projects, so that the TPGs may begin their work through the Umbrella Projects.

4. Umbrella Projects, EC support Update

Lucie Trojanova (European Commission) explained the reason behind the restrictions of the current call, stating that the feedback acquired by the members to include the non-EU countries in the next call had been taken in consideration and would be included accordingly in the next call. Ms. Trojanova notified that the evaluation of the present call had finished and the Commission would notify the applicants on the results shortly. According to the timeline, the signature of contracts would be completed by the end of March/beginning of April. Additionally, the EC informed through the BFUG Secretariat, that the new package for Higher Education (including the European Strategy for Universities) had been adopted and she would update on this matter in the upcoming meetings. The EC notified that it is following up on the EHEA and ENIC-NARIC calls, underlining that the objective of the calls is becoming broader by focusing on the implementation of Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), recognition of qualifications of refugees, etc.

5. Update from the Co-chairs of TPGs

5.1. Update from Co-Chair of TPG A

Karin Riegler (TPG A, Co-Chair) provided an update on the Country Work Plans, with eleven replies received by the country members thus far. Ms. Riegler informed that a reminder would be sent to the members in the following weeks. There were no differences in the content of these responses compared to the priorities stated in the survey conducted in summer 2021, with countries focusing on three main issues that had already been highlighted as key themes for the working groups (micro-credentials; self-certification; short-cycle).

Next step was to ask the members in which working group they would like to participate. The third meeting of TPG A will take place at the end of March/beginning of April, and the working group meetings will be held in the spring/early summer. Furthermore, if the pandemic situation permits, the first Peer Learning Activity (PLA) on micro-credentials will be held in-person in Riga in autumn 2022.

Ms. Isaacs reminded that the full implementation of the ECTS (a topic that is recurrently overlooked), is at the core of the KC. Although this topic does enter into the area of micro-credentials, self-certification and short-cycle, there are many aspects, such as the use of learning outcomes and the actual implementation of tools that make mobility within and across countries possible, namely components in the User's Guide. The ECTS User's Guide is one of the most important Bologna tools. Thus, it was advised to keep this topic a priority. On this note, Ms. Riegler informed that there are two PLAs included in the TPG A Work Plan, as well as the Umbrella project concerning this topic:

1. Learning Outcomes on module/shorter program level (Vienna, Austria, spring 2023)
2. Learning Outcomes on a program level (Tallinn, Estonia, spring 2024)

5.2. Update from Co-Chair of TPG B

Hélène Bekker (TPG B, Co-Chair) gave a summary of the Work Plan 2021-2024, focusing on general information and country profiles. The working methodology follows the application of peer support approach and includes the organization of a combination of panel meetings and



smaller group activities. The monitoring of the outcomes will be conducted based on the country profiles and through two questionnaires to be organized in summer 2022 and at the end of the working period, respectively. An overview of the TPG B on LRC activities and a list of the completed country profiles was provided, with a total of 26 countries already having delivered this information. Furthermore, an overview of the first meeting was provided, with a plenary session in which the survey results and presentations were delivered, followed by a discussion among three groups about the Work Plan's thematic orientations. The second meeting, aimed at exchanging experiences on digital technology and diploma supplement for the recognition agenda, followed a similar format, with a plenary session¹ and breakout discussions² on digitalization development and practices. Next steps include the organization of a PLA on digital technology for the recognition agenda to be organized in autumn potentially. Moreover, the third TPG B meeting is being planned to be held in-presence in France on June 2022, with main focus on the topic of alternative pathways, as one of the priorities identified in the survey.

During the discussion, Article 7³ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention was mentioned, with 29 countries having no legal procedures in place for the recognition of refugee qualifications. In such cases, it was proposed that the TPGs support these countries in implementing such qualifications that at present are either non-existent or incompletely adopted via organizing specific events and/or discussions on the matter.

During the discussion a general issue was addressed that applies to all TPGs. It was underlined that the objective of the TPGs is to ensure that the (structural) foundations of the EHEA are in place and working in a compatible manner. The key challenge noted was ensuring that some appealing themes (i.e., micro-credentials) do not become an impediment to reaching the BICG and TPGs' principal objective, which is to work toward the full implementation of the three Key Commitments using the peer support approach. Moreover, it is important to motivate both countries that can provide support and countries that need to work on further implementation to work together in these TPGs (which can be of benefit to both), as well as to strike a good balance between attractive new initiatives and thorough basic implementation of the Key Commitments themselves.

With regard to the TPG B, on the subject of the LRC, it was explained that while some topics, such as digitization, are enticing, they are also fundamental. It was stressed that digitalization had been identified as one of the key topics for TPG B. It was emphasized that presentations and discussions during the 2nd TPG B meeting showed how critical interoperability of databases, digital maturity and generally speaking digital transformation were to the LRC's implementation. During the discussion, a PLA on establishing procedures for refugees was underlined as part of the TPG B thematic priorities. On a more general note, it was emphasized that the PLAs' program can be formulated to encompass not only appealing topics, but also the main commitments.

For more information, please see: [TPG B on LRC Presentation](#)

5.3. Update from Co-Chair of TPG C

Magalie Soenen (TPG C, Co-Chair) presented the state-of-play of TPG C, starting with an update on the group composition with two new countries (Bosnia & Hercegovina and the Republic of

¹ Guests from EQAR, Europass, European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (EBSI) and Nuffic (Dutch Enic-Naric) were invited to share developments and practices on digital technology.

² The need for digitalized recognition procedures was addressed, with the majority of countries identifying the issue of not being able to process digitally mature data.

³ Recognition of qualifications held by refugees (Art VII – LRC)



North Macedonia) joining the peer group. A brief summary on the webinar supporting staff mobility of the ministries and QA agencies was provided, with the project being finalized on 17 November 2021. The Action Plan was developed on 9 December 2021, with 16 countries having sent their input so far, and a follow up with the remaining countries to be done in the upcoming weeks. The thematic orientations of the Action Plan were listed, with some specific new priorities being: QA of micro credentials; QA of European Universities; Digitalization of QA processes. Ms. Soenen indicated that the Action Plan ("Implementation and Innovation in Quality Assurance through peer learning") provides a balance in the work on the general thematic orientations related to the key commitments and new initiatives. Furthermore, the project is expected to span three years, including ARACIS (RO), ENQA and EQAR as full partners. The next meeting of TPG C is planned to be in-presence on May 2022; TPG C meeting schedule: a total of four physical meetings and two online meetings to be organized. With regard to the umbrella project, the staff mobility program from the previous working period would be continued, focusing on the individual needs of each country. Three in-presence PLAs have been foreseen, focusing on the basic key commitments such as the alignment of the legal framework with ESG, cross border QA and the European approach. Other work packages include the more recent thematic areas such as the QA of micro credentials and European Universities, for which subgroups will be formed. To conclude, it was stated that the mapping on the process of digitalization would commence by April-May 2022.

The staff mobility program, both physically and virtually organized, proved highly beneficial for the countries in the last working period (2018-2020). From reports on this program, it was identified that a combination of both physical and virtual mobilities proved to be useful, as well as creating benefits for other professionals working in QA agencies or ministries who did not take part in the mobility personally. The previous mobility program resulted in structured cross-national cooperation, which will be a focus point in the forthcoming program, with a match-making committee comprised of the TPG C Co-Chairs, ENQA, and EQAR to guide countries in making decisions and matching requests with offers.

For more detailed information, please see: http://ehea.info/Upload/Final_report_MMC.pdf

For more information, please see: [TPG C on QA Presentation](#)

6. Next meeting / further meeting schedule

The date of the upcoming meeting was decided among the members as 29 March 2022, 10:00-13:00 (CET). The agenda of the next meeting is to be provided at a later stage. It was suggested that input in terms of meeting participation be provided in the upcoming BICG meeting, so that proposals can be made for the TPG Co-Chairs to motivate the less active countries to participate.

No other business was brought forward, therefore, the third meeting of the BICG was concluded.



Annex: Discussions in the BFUG Board Meeting, 9 February 2022

A topic that was raised during the update of TPG B, but is an important matter for the work of BICG and all TPGs:

The key challenge noted was ensuring that some appealing themes do not become an impediment to reaching the BICG and TPGs' principal objective, which is to work toward the full implementation of the three Key Commitments using the peer support approach.

Moreover, it is important to motivate both countries that can provide support and countries that need to work on further implementation to work together in these TPGs (which can be of benefit to both), as well as to strike a good balance between attractive new initiatives and thorough basic implementation of the Key Commitments themselves.

In the discussion that followed, the question was raised of how to motivate the countries to participate in TPGs, to attend the meetings as well as work on implementation of the respective KCs nationally.

Another point made in this discussion was that communication nationally among members in different working structures of the BFUG, be the WGs or Task Forces or TPGs, is essential for progress in the EHEA. This is also a point that was taken up in the Board meeting in February and should be discussed during the BFUG meeting in April.