



Thematic Peer Group A – Qualification Frameworks

Hosted by Georgia, Second meeting, Online
4 November 2021
10:00-11:30 (Brussels Time)

Minutes

List of Participants

| No. | Country | Name | Last Name |
|-----|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Albania | Ermelinda | Durmishi |
| 2 | Andorra | Jordi | Llombart |
| 3 | Armenia | Ani | Mkrtchyan |
| 4 | Austria (Co-chair) | Karin | Riegler |
| 5 | Austria | Carmen | Heidenwolf |
| 6 | Azerbaijan | Vusala | Gurbanova |
| 7 | Belgium Flemish Community | Nina | Mares |
| 8 | Bulgaria | Ivana | Radonova |
| 9 | Council of Europe | Jean-Philippe | Restoueix |
| 10 | Croatia | Slaven | Zjalić |
| 11 | Cyprus | Kyriacos | Charalambous |
| 12 | ESU - European Students' Union | Kristel | Jakobson |
| 13 | European Commission | Maya | Ivanova |
| 14 | Georgia | Ketevan | Panchulidze |
| 15 | Georgia (Co-chair) | Khatia | Tsiramua |
| 16 | Germany | Christian | Tauch |
| 17 | Italy | Paolo | Cherubini |
| 18 | Italy | Maria Antonietta | Ciclista |
| 19 | Latvia (Co-chair) | Baiba | Ramiga |
| 20 | Latvia | Sarmite | Rutkovska |
| 21 | Malta | Valerie | Attard |
| 22 | North Macedonia | Borcho | Aleksov |
| 23 | Poland | Jacek | Lewicki |
| 24 | Romania | Antonela | Toma |
| 25 | Romania | Tiberiu | Dobrescu |
| 26 | San Marino | Monica | Cavalli |

Czech Republic sent in its regrets. Belarus, EI-ETUCE, Estonia, EURASHE, Greece, Kazakhstan, The Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom (Scotland) did not participate.



1. Welcome by the Co-chairs of TPG A

The Co-chairs welcomed everybody to the second meeting of the group. The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes and the minutes of the first TPG A meeting were approved without additional remarks.

2. Survey results

Karin Riegler (Co-chair) provided an overview of the survey results, highlighting the purpose of the survey to identify the priorities of the members for the work period 2021-2024 and to determine where each country member stands in terms of their priorities. The timeframe to complete the survey was set from June 21, 2021 to August 16, 2021, with a response rate of approximately 15 countries. The key priorities identified included:

- Micro-credentials;
- Use of QF by stakeholders;
- Relationship between QA and QF;
- Implementation of ECTS Users' Guide;
- Short cycle;
- Self-certification.

The topic on micro-credentials was identified as the main priority for the majority of the group. Publications and statements were shared by the group to provide further insight on this topic.

For more information on the recommendation on micro-credentials published by the German Rectors' Conference HRK (November, 2020), please see: <https://www.hrk.de/resolutions-publications/resolutions/beschluss/detail/micro-degrees-and-badges-as-formats-of-supplementary-digital-credentials/>

For more information on a statement on the topic of micro credentials from ESU, please see: <https://www.esu-online.org/?policy=bm80-statement-on-micro-credentials>

3. Umbrella project application

Baiba Ramiņa (Co-chair) presented an outline of the Umbrella project application 'QUARTA' (Qualification Frameworks for trusts, transparency and diversity) in support of the work of TPG A. She highlighted the aim of the umbrella project to provide peer-to-peer support opportunities for the country members, in order to ensure the fulfilment of key commitments that are essential for the functioning of the EHEA. A list of coordinators, partners and associated partners was provided. Moreover, the activities of the project were listed as follows:

- TPG A meetings;
- Peer-learning activities (PLA):



- PLA on Micro-credentials and use of QF by stakeholders

This PLA aims to provide an opportunity for the EHEA country members to discuss and share their expertise in regards to the positive experiences and challenges in implementing micro-credentials at a national level in the context of QF, as well as support for countries which have not yet developed their regulatory enactments on defining and developing micro-credentials in their countries.

- PLA on Implementation of QF and ECTS-Focus on Learning Outcomes

This PLA will focus on the fundamental role of learning outcomes in the areas of knowledge, skills and competence of the EQF and EHEA QF, developing learning outcomes that allow for constructive alignment; inviting HEI representatives to provide concrete examples of learning outcomes for modules and study programmes and providing insights into government incentives and regulations, to establish learning outcomes in the context of QF.

- PLA on Self-certification

This PLA aims for country members to discuss the state-of-play and best practices of the self-certification process within the Bologna process, as well as the further development of the QF in the EHEA and the self-certification of NQF.

- PLA on Assessment of Learning Outcomes on program level

Due to the challenges of assessing the actual compliance of learning outcomes at a program level with level descriptions of relevant NQF, this PLA aims to assess whether learning outcomes could be achieved in view of the design of the program. Furthermore, it aims to provide input and real tools for countries to assess learning outcomes at a program level, in addition to focusing on the topic of implementation of QF and ECTS.

- Working Groups

The Co-chairs decided to establish three working groups on QF-related topics. There are no restrictions on how many working groups the members can participate in.

1. Working group on micro-credentials: This WG will be led by the Academic Information Centre in Latvia and will focus on the inclusion of micro-credential in the NQF, the use of ECTS at other education levels and in other sectors and the use of micro-credentials to improve access to lifelong learning.
2. Working group on self-certification: This WG will be led by the National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement in Georgia with the objective of reviewing existing self-certification mechanisms and ideas for the future and supporting other countries to complete their self-certification.



3. Working group on short cycle higher education: This WG will be led by the Academic Information Centre in Latvia and will include an exchange of best practices on short cycle qualification and pathways and solutions to reach recognition by learners and labour market.

At the end of the project, the Co-chairs will organize a Final Conference with the purpose of disseminating the results from the PLAs, as well as the results from the Working Groups. The project evaluation results will be announced in February, 2022 and expectantly an agreement will be reached in March/April 2022.

Literature on the QF in the HEA will be published by the CoE at the beginning of 2022, which could be of interest to the work of this group.

4. Workplan and Country Action plans

Khatia Tsiramua (Co-chair) presented an overview of the Action Plan for TPG A on QF, indicating that the feedback and priorities identified from the survey results served as the starting point for the Work Plan. Three key areas were discussed:

4.1. TPG A Scope and Thematic Orientations

It was underlined that the planned activities of the group are in line with the Bologna Declaration (1999) and the Communiqués. Further, TPG A will specifically address the latest commitments made in the Rome Communiqué, which focus on building an inclusive, innovative and inter-connected EHEA. The thematic orientations included the following topics:

- Self-certification of the national qualification frameworks to the overarching QF of the EHEA;
- Implementation of the ECTS User's Guide;
- Short cycle HE;
- Multiple purposes and use of the QFs by the stakeholders;
- Study programs outside of the Bologna three-cycle structure;
- Relationship between the QF and QA;
- Micro-credentials.

4.2. TPG A Working Methodology and Work Plan

Working methodology is based on a mixed model with:

- TPG A meetings (devoted to the implementation of Key Commitment 1);
- PLAs;
- Working group meetings (with focus on micro-credentials, self-certification, short-cycle).



A monitoring of outcomes of the peer group will be completed by the Co-chairs through the meeting minutes, meeting reports, Country Work Plan and progress report.

4.3. TPG A Member Country Work Plan

An outline of the Country Work Plan was provided with key areas to be completed by the country members, including:

- Current challenges and an overview of the country situation for the respective Key Commitment;
- Country progress to be achieved by 2024;
- A list of concrete actions to tackle the identified challenges, as well as to achieve the Key Commitment.

The template of the Country Action Plan will be sent to the members in two weeks' time, with a deadline of completion set for January 14, 2022. Along with the template, the members should submit their responses on which working group they want to contribute in. Following, the Co-chairs will formulate the TPG A Work Plan and share it with the members in March, 2022.

Looking at both the project proposal and TPG A Work Plan, a remark was made that the final conference is not included in the TPG A Work Plan, as it is planned to take place after the Ministerial Conference (end of 2024). Thus, the peer group will work with two different timelines. Furthermore, it was discussed whether the working groups will be composed of country members that have great experience and expertise in that area or members that need to further progress in that area. The working groups serve as peer learning opportunities, therefore, it is a twofold situation. Members with expertise on a specific area were encouraged to become part of the group to share knowledge and provide recommendations to other members that are still working on that area so that the latter can benefit from the expertise and achieve tangible results. Moreover, the Co-chairs stressed that members ought to partake in the working groups only if they plan to actively participate and contribute strongly to the recommendations.

5. Next meeting & AOB

The Co-chairs proposed for the next meeting to be organized in March, 2022, with potential dates to be sent to the peer group late January/early February. The BFUG Secretariat provided an update on the meetings' schedule. In regards to the survey results, the Co-chairs will send a statistical summary of the specific priorities. No other business was brought forward, thus, the second meeting of the TPG A on QF was concluded.