



Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Ministry of Civil Affairs

## Working Group to Support the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's Accession to the EHEA

Fifth Meeting, Hosted by San Marino  
14-15 February 2023

### Minutes

#### List of Participants

Country	First Name	Last Name
Andorra (Co-Chair)	Jordi	Llombart
Andorra (Expert invited)	Miquel	Nicolau
Council of Europe	Sjur	Bergan
EUA	Maria	Kelo
EUA*	Enora	Pruvet
Finland (Co-Chair)	Maija	Innola
France Education International*	Katarina	Perales
Holy See	Melanie	Rosenbaum
Italy (Expert invited)	Luca	Lantero
Lichtenstein	Eva	Meirer
San Marino	Maria Elena	D'Amelio
San Marino	Marica	Montemaggi
San Marino	Remo	Massari
San Marino	Paula	Cenci
San Marino	Monica	Cavalli
San Marino (Director)	Laura	Gobbi
San Marino MP of Grand Council (Guest)	Giuseppe Maria	Morganti
San Marino MP of Grand Council (Guest)	Maria Katia	Savoretti
San Marino MP of Grand Council (Guest)	Mirko	Dolcini
San Marino MP of Grand Council (Guest)	Riccardo	Stefanelli
San Marino MP of Grand Council (Guest)	Matteo	Rossi
BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Oltion	Rrumbullaku
BFUG Secretariat (online)	Edlira	Subashi
BFUG Secretariat (online)	Enis	Fita
BFUG Secretariat (online)	Patrik	Bardhi

#### Online participation\*

Monica Castellucci (Italy) sent regrets for not attending the meeting.

#### 1. Welcome by HE Mr. Andrea Belluzzi, Minister of Education

The Minister thanked everyone for their involvement in the Working Group on San Marino Roadmap and for helping San Marino with this challenge, including the staff of the University of San Marino and the staff of the Ministry. It was acknowledged that they were all together in this path to implement the roadmap, knowing that it was a difficult path, but they embarked on it with enthusiasm as it was the right path to bring the higher education system in San Marino towards the goals set for them by the country. It was considered an opportunity to take steps ahead to enhance the higher education system. The Minister expressed the hope to continue collaborating in this way and thanked everyone for their continuing support.

## **2. Information by the Co-Chairs**

The Co-Chairs welcomed everyone to the fifth meeting of the Working Group (WG) to support the implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's accession to the EHEA

### **2.1. Adoption of the agenda**

An outline of the agenda was provided, which was adopted without any changes.

For more information, please see: [WG SMR SE BA 5 Agenda](#)

### **2.2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The members of the Working Groups suggested some minor changes, focusing mostly on the distinction between nomination and appointment of the experts, and this should be reflected in the minutes. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate the last version of the MoMs of the 4th meeting among the members of the WG.

## **3. Current state of play of the implementation of San Marino roadmap**

### **3.1 Qualifications framework**

Maria Elena D'Amelio (San Marino) presented the latest developments on the national qualifications framework (NQF). After the appointment of the two international experts in the development of the Sammarinese NQF (Luca Lantero and Miquel Nicolau), a meeting was held to discuss contextual issues, and they provided comments on the San Marino national qualification framework. Changes were made to the NQF draft, including a visual representation showing that access to *Master universitario di primo livello* and *Master Universitario di secondo livello* is only possible after completing the first and second cycle respectively of the higher education system comparable to EHEA system.

The final draft of the initial qualifications framework included a suggestion to specify the learning outcomes and competences acquired when pursuing a *Master universitario di primo livello* and *Master Universitario di secondo livello*, as complementary to a first cycle and second cycle degree in the QF-EHEA cycle. Although learning outcomes were similar, the key difference was that *Master universitario di primo livello* and *Master Universitario di secondo livello* were considered professional qualifications, which qualify the holder for the exercise of a professional activity but not for access to a study program at the next level. The San Marino education authorities considered the necessity not to diverge too much from the Italian system.

The possibility of holders of short cycle, TVET diplomas, and professional diplomas being able to transfer into Bachelor and Master's degrees was discussed by members of the WG. It was unclear whether the San Marino QF followed the same decision as the Italian system. Clarification was requested regarding this issue, which will be given in the written form in the report.

It was underlined that the University of San Marino decree and the NQF decree were to be approved after the SM law on HE was passed, as the parliament suggested approving a higher education framework law for the entire San Marino higher education before presenting decrees specific to certain areas. The approval of a law in the San Marino system was more complex than approving a decree. However, they are on a good path to approving the law before June 2023, which would allow for the approval of the NQF decrees, and the University of San Marino decree. The NQF decree was expected to be a simple act of approval, and the offer to share it one final time with the experts and the WG was accepted.

### **3.2 Quality assurance**

Paola Cenci (San Marino) stated that the Independent Assessment Body (IAB) report on Quality Assurance (QA) was presented to the Rector and the General Director of the University in January

2023, and it was accepted. The report was to be shared to the directors of the university's courses and to the stakeholders involved in the QA procedures. For external QA, the agency was not yet selected, and it was expected to be chosen by November 2023. San Marino participated in the TPG C and found the participation in the mobility program interesting, and they wanted to rejoin the program.

There was a discussion about the progress on quality assurance and the internal process. The University is working on it through the Independent Assessment Body (IAB) and involving all stakeholders, including students, staff, teachers, directors, and sector-specific people, in the procedure.

### 3.3 Recognition of qualifications

Monica Cavalli (San Marino) stated that in January 2023, San Marino expressed interest in participating in the Council of Europe project on the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees. The request was accepted, and delegates are participating in training and meetings as part of the program, which is endorsed by 49 countries through the Rome Communiqué. This is a step towards the recognition of qualifications and a more inclusive society. In a case at the University of San Marino in 2022, a refugee from Ukraine was successfully evaluated for prior learning and enrolled in two courses for free. This was seen as an example of inclusion and a first step towards recognition under the Lisbon Recognition Convention's article VII (LRC). It was noted that when the number of cases increases, it may provide a challenge for the public university and the state.

There was a discussion about the need for a formalized assessment procedure for accessing higher education without a regular diploma. The first step towards this was already taken with the inclusion of Article 6, paragraph 3 in the draft Law on Higher Education. The European Qualification Passport for Refugees was also mentioned as a tool for accessing higher education and the labor market. The need for an appeals procedure was raised, with reference to LRC, which foresees the possibility of appeal to a different body than the one that made the decision. It was suggested that the future implementing decree of the Higher Education Law should include provisions for an appeals procedure.

### 3.4 Lifelong learning / social dimension of higher education

Paula Cenci (San Marino) presented some of the main initiatives that fulfill partly some of the principles and guidelines on Social Dimension. In the previous meeting, it was suggested to incorporate the principles and guidelines on Social Dimension. The principles were useful because they helped to identify what they had achieved, but they acknowledged the need to work on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

It was noted that a reference had been established in the new law regarding the Social Dimension, providing a legal basis for work in this area. It was discussed about the Territorial Pact (TP) as the ideal setting to promote inclusiveness through different levels and representatives, including finance, employment, and social services. The need to expand data collection to track wider data on completion rates was emphasized. Counseling and guidance services were already in place, but it was agreed that they needed to be expanded to support students transitioning from one level to another. Grants for income and merit were available but it was recognized that they were not sufficient to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Mobility programs were available to all students with no restrictions. It was acknowledged the importance of increasing community engagement in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, and fostering dialogue between higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

It was discussed that most of the projects undertaken by the university are in collaboration with ministries and some research projects become courses. All these projects were financed by the university and led by a professor with expertise in the specific area. The university also offers seminars on various topics, such as San Marino's path towards the European integration, education programs, prevention of repression and gender-based violence, labor law reform, and the penitentiary system. In addition, the university has established collaborations with surrounding cities and institutions. For example, there is a partnership with the Association of

Engineers, which allows representatives to come and speak to students about enrolling in the Register of Engineers and Surveyors of San Marino. Overall, the university has made significant progress in creating an image that goes beyond San Marino's borders.

It was reported that the Territorial Pact includes a wider group concerned with the realities of San Marino. Focus groups are planned for diversity, inclusion, and identity. Research projects are organized by the University's departments on the introduction of foreign languages from primary school to university. The Ministry of Education organizes the Permanent Observatory on Education. The University reports its progress to the TP, and an example of success is the plurilingualism project that aims to boost cognitive and intercultural skills alongside language learning for young children. It was reported that the Territorial Pact includes a wider group concerned with the realities of San Marino. Focus groups are planned for diversity, inclusion, and identity. Research projects are organized by the University's departments on the introduction of foreign languages from primary school to university.

The recognition of prior learning is a challenging issue that requires further discussion and systematization. There are legal and governance aspects that need to be considered, and the university is facing some resistance towards the recognition of prior learning. More time is needed to address this topic.

#### **4. Interaction between the members of the WG and the Members of the Parliament**

The members of the Working Group welcomed the members of the parliament in the discussions. The members of the parliament were: Matteo Rossi — *Noi per la Repubblica*, Riccardo Stefanelli — *Democratico Cristiano Sammarinese*, Mirko Dolcini — *Domani Motus Liberi*, Maria Katia Savoretti — *Repubblica Futura*, and Giuseppe Maria Morganti — *Liberal Party*.

##### **4.1 Models of governance of the Higher Education Institutions in the European Higher Education Area**

Enora Pruvot from the European University Association (EUA) presented governance models of universities in Europe. EUA is an independent voice for the university sector across Europe, which also focuses on governance and funding. They use Autonomy Scorecard to assess the regulatory framework governing university activities and the relationship between public authorities and universities. The Scorecard assesses the extent to which universities can make decisions on certain aspects and provides a ranking. The EUA has collected data over the last decade and can track changes and trends across Europe.

In the last decade, there has been an ongoing discussion in Europe on ways to improve university governance. There are various models of leadership for selecting the Rector, including an election body, Senate body, appointment, and hybrid models. The election model is the most common. In terms of leadership criteria, it is often required for the university leader to be an academic with a doctoral degree or full professor, and to be selected from the current staff. Involvement from public authorities is usually a formality, and in most cases, there is no involvement at all.

It was discussed that the role of the university leader and the selection process is closely linked to the competencies required for the position. Different universities have varying leadership models, with some rectors sharing competencies with other executives while others have full strategic responsibility. Three roles were identified as strategic, executive, and coordination. It was emphasized that investing in the development of executive leaders is crucial for universities with greater autonomy. Accountability models for the leader were also discussed, with emphasis on the governance bodies' vote of no confidence and the term of office. The possibility of a second mandate is usually allowed without any extension beyond the second mandate. Financial remuneration and accountability towards public authorities were also touched upon, with the possibility of removing a rector due to gross misconduct or penal offenses typically included in the law.

The bodies of a university vary depending on the governance model of the institution, but typically the main governance body is the senate, which is composed of academic staff and sometimes

students. In addition to the senate, there may be a board or council type of body, which includes representation of external members such as industry and business representatives, public authorities, academics from other universities, and sometimes alumni. Academic staff and students may also be included in the board, while non-academic staff are less commonly represented.

The number of external members and their level of involvement in decision-making can also vary depending on the governance model and the country. In terms of the selection of external members, there are different practices across Europe. Some countries involve the university community in the selection process, while others have external members appointed solely by the Ministry. The role and decision-making power of external members can also vary depending on the governance model and the country.

During the meeting, it was noted that the University of San Marino has joined the EUA through a rigorous selection process. The university has demonstrated compliance with the association's values of independence, integrity, and transparency.

#### 4.2 Presentation of the Bill on higher education and discussions

Remo Massari (San Marino) introduced the draft law for higher education legislation as presented in the first reading in the Parliament in November 2022. It will go through an examination in the Parliamentary Commission, followed by a second reading in the Parliament for final approval, expected in summer 2023. Article 1 states that San Marino has joined EHEA, ensuring international mobility, cooperation, and freedom in research and education. Higher education institutions are to promote progress through teaching and research, with a focus on inclusion. Article 3 establishes the National Qualifications Framework, which includes bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Article 4 outlines the process for establishing higher education institutions, with authorization from the Congress of State. Article 5 allows for partnerships with other institutions of higher education. Article 6 sets criteria for accessing higher education, including recognition of foreign qualifications as considered by LRC and internal criteria and conditions of access.

In Article 7, the Study Programs are outlined. The first cycle is a bachelor's degree with 180 ECTS credits, followed by a second cycle of two years and 120 ECTS credits for a master's degree, and finally, a third cycle of three years leading to a research doctorate and PhD. Other courses may be offered based on learning outcomes and formative credits.

It was discussed that education requires a system of quality assurance in higher education. This system includes both internal and external quality assurance, with the latter being commissioned by the ministry. The external quality assurance must be periodic. Standards and guidelines for quality assurance are set at the European level, with the European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) providing documentation. The internal quality assurance requires consistent monitoring of all functionalities, including scientific, academic, administrative, and documents.

Sjur Bergan (Council of Europe) focused on the relationship between public authorities and the University of San Marino. It was acknowledged that while public authorities are responsible for the education system, each HEI is responsible for its own teaching, learning, and research. However, in a small country where everyone knows each other, things can be more complicated. The significance of taking the worst-case scenarios into account was acknowledged. It was discussed the issue of ensuring university autonomy in the appointment of the rector, especially in a less consensual political environment. The concern was raised that the current provision may not be fit for such scenarios, and it was asked how the law can ensure a fair and reconciled system.

Members of the WG raised a question about Article 3 of the Qualification Framework, suggesting that the higher education law should specifically reference the overarching Qualification Framework for the EHEA (QF-EHEA). It was emphasized the importance of mentioning the framework since it has been signed by ministers responsible for higher education. It was noted that the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF), which is currently mentioned in Article 3, is compatible with the QF-EHEA but not identical with it, and that a

reference to both would be needed.

A concern was raised about the potential presence of transnational education in San Marino. They appreciate the regulation's inclusion of the article on the protection of the names of institutions but suggest considering how to manage foreign institutions that request to open transnational institutions in San Marino. It was noted that allowing foreign providers to operate without being part of the system may pose a risk to the quality of education and the reputation of San Marino's higher education system.

The representatives of the parliament asked about the best model of university governance to apply to San Marino. It was explained that there is no single model considered more appropriate for the purposes of the EHEA. It was stated that traditional models primarily focused on research and teaching, while newer models have emphasized external representation and competence in the societal mission of higher education. Finding the ideal balance between internal and external representation was underlined, and that a system without student and administrative staff representation would not be adequate. In addition to governance, it was noted that defining goals for institutions and using financing models are other approaches to direct the educational system. It was emphasized the importance of recognizing that it is possible to respect institutional and governmental autonomy while still guiding the system towards desired outcomes.

## **5. Preparation of San Marino's NQF and discussion with 2 international experts**

Miquel Nicolau (Rector, University of Andorra) explained the NQF specifics in Andorra. It was mentioned that the country is unique in that it is a non-EU country situated entirely between two EU countries. This has presented both advantages and difficulties in terms of the education system. When higher education was first introduced in Andorra in 1988, it was a copy of the Spanish system. However, when the EHEA was implemented, Andorra took the opportunity to rethink its system and make changes to better align with EHEA principles. Some people were hesitant about this change, but it allowed for more diversity and transparency in the system.

In Andorra, the higher education system is relatively new, being only 35 years old. Unlike universities with a long history like Bologna or Salamanca, Andorra did not have the burden of history. In 1997, Andorra passed its first university law, which was similar to the Spanish system. In 2003, Andorra officially entered EHEA at the Berlin Ministerial Conference. A new higher education law was passed by the parliament in 2008, which included new decrees. Andorra chose a new name for the first degree which is "bàtxelor" after the English word "bachelor" hoping this would not lead to confusion with the word "batxillerat" which is the name of the Upper Secondary Leaving Certificate.

In 2008, a new law was implemented in Andorra, followed by the publication of the first national qualifications framework in 2010, for higher education only, numbered from 1 to 5 levels of the QF. In 2020, the last national qualification framework was approved, using the international standard classification of education from 1 to 8 levels of QF. Despite concerns about recognition, Andorra succeeded in adopting a 3+2 system for bachelor and Master degrees, which was eventually accepted by Spain when it comes to recognizing an Andorran bachelor of 3 years at the same level as a Spanish bachelor of 4 years.

It was discussed the importance of having a clear and comprehensive national qualification framework (NQF) for small countries like Andorra and San Marino. They used the example of Spain's official and non-official master's degrees and how it can be confusing for foreigners. The speaker emphasized the need for clarity in the NQF to avoid fraudulent use of degree names. In Andorra, it is forbidden to use the terms bachelor and master for degrees outside of the NQF.

The Rector voiced concern regarding the difficulty in identifying different educational levels in Italy due to the use of the word *Dottore* in all degrees. Also, they questioned whether the Master *Secondo Livello* degree should be categorized as Level 8 considering that its competencies might not correspond to that level. The necessity for a straightforward structure for degree classification was raised by the speaker. He made a proposal to divide Level 7 into two parts, with the first level master as 7A and the master degree as 7B. Similarly, Level 8 would consist of 8A for the second level master and 8B for the PhD. The speaker suggested that this would be a clearer and

more straightforward structure.

Prof Nicolau emphasized the importance of introducing sustainability in the learning outcomes of all degrees and adding ethical considerations to various competencies. He suggested reserving the competency of handling unpredictable circumstances for higher degrees than the Bachelor level. For the master's level, it was proposed multi-disciplinarity and effective communication with various audiences, while interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary projects would be important for a PhD. The speaker believes that introducing these concepts is crucial for going beyond the borders of knowledge and making valuable contributions to society.

Luca Lantero (CIMEA, Italy) expressed his opinion that San Marino should be able to make decisions about its education system without being influenced by Italy. It was noted that it is possible having multiple degrees at the same level, if their learning outcomes are at the same level. The term "master" is a bit problematic, but it was used in Italy to replace the pre-Bologna structure of "*Corsi di Perfezionamento*" to make them more marketable.

It was discussed why the term "*Dottore*" is used in Italy even for those who hold a "*Dottore Magistrale*" degree. This is because the PhD was only introduced in Italy in 1980, and many university professors today do not have a PhD. Additionally, the legal duration of courses was almost 4 years, plus the period of the thesis, which made the only qualification to express eligibility for a position of research the "*Diploma di Laurea*", a pre-Bologna process qualification. Therefore, the term "*Dottore*" is used for the integrated master's degree, which is now called "*Laurea Magistrale*" in Italy. The naming convention has undergone some changes, with "*Specialistica*" being replaced by "*Magistrale*" in 2004 to make it clearer.

The topic of qualifications and their translations across different countries was discussed. Mr Lantero emphasized the need for a clear understanding of the specific qualifications in each country, especially when making decisions that could affect students and faculty. He provided examples of confusing translations, such as the different meanings of "*Master Universitario*" in Spain and Italy, and suggested using more accurate translations, such as "postgraduate degree" instead of "University Master." It was also proposed including information on translation in promotional materials to avoid confusion.

It was advised not to have too many sub-levels for degrees, as it can lead to confusion. Qualifications should either be a basis for further study or for the labor market and if a qualification is not a basis for a study program leading to a higher qualification, it needs to be described carefully. The use of intermediate qualifications was also discussed.

Participants were questioning the competent authority column in a qualifications framework document that lists the *Segreteria di Stato per il Lavoro*, which does not concern higher education, as the competent authority for a Level 3 qualification. It was acknowledged the need to consult the public authority responsible for the labor market, but they question whether the Ministry of Education should have ultimate responsibility for the education system and qualification framework. It was suggested that this issue requires a clear explanation.

During the meeting, concerns were raised regarding the competent authority responsible for the qualifications framework. It was noted that the *Segreteria di Stato per il Lavoro* is in charge of the entire qualification's framework, including EQF Level 3 qualifications, which falls outside the realm of higher education. The importance of consulting with the public authority responsible for the labor market was emphasized, as they have a strong interest in the qualifications. It is important for the Ministry of Education to be the authority in charge of the qualification framework to ensure coherence and responsibility. If the Ministry of Labor has a part of the National Qualifications Framework, it would limit the Ministry of Education's ability to make changes.

During the discussion of the overarching framework, it was considered that the ECTS system allows students to take credits that are not directly in their main area of study, but in areas that support their main area or for their own interest. For example, a political science student concentrating on South America could take credits in Spanish or Portuguese, even if they are not at the master's level. ECTS credits are essentially higher education instruments, although there have been attempts at the EU level to develop a similar system for vocational education.

## 6. Peer learning activities

### 6.1 Short cycle inside first cycle (EHEA-QF) - qualification level 5 (EQF) in France

Katarina Perales a representative from the French National Academic Recognition Information Center presented the French Qualification Level 5. The new French Qualification Framework has eight levels, aligned with the EQF, with Level 5 being from Higher Education. This level requires the mastery of skills and know-how to analyze and interpret information, develop solutions to new problems, and translate skills, know-how, and methods.

She presented the *Diplôme d'études Universitaires Scientifiques et Techniques (DEUST)* as a two-year program designed for baccalaureate holders who wish to pursue short university studies. There are over 100 specialties to choose from, with courses lasting 8-10 weeks and including lectures, and tutorials. The diploma leads to a qualification as a senior technician in fields like commerce, IT, and real estate, among others. Students obtain 120 ECTS, and job prospects are good. Many graduates continue their studies for a professional bachelor's degree or pursue their classical bachelor's degree at university with a very good school record.

Furthermore, she presented *Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie (DUT)*, which used to be a two-year diploma for students who wanted to pursue short studies in university. However, since the start of the 2021-22 academic year, it has become the intermediate diploma of the Bachelor of the University of Technology (BUT), which is a three-year national diploma. The BUT integrates the DUT and confers 180 ECTS and a position of level 6 of the French qualifications framework. DUT offers good job prospects, particularly in chemical engineering, chemistry, civil engineering, mechanical production engineering, and IT. Graduates can continue their studies for the Bachelor of University of Technology, other professional bachelor, or they can also continue for the classic bachelor.

The last short-cycle format presented was the *Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS)* as a national diploma that meets the expectations of companies and allows graduates to join the labor market or continue their studies. It can be obtained through formal education or alternative training approaches, such as apprenticeships or distance learning. The training for the classical route includes lectures, tutorials, and internships in a company, and takes 3 years with 120 ECTS. BTS holders have good job prospects in various fields, and about half of them continue their studies for a professional bachelor.

In conclusion, it was mentioned that after completing the short cycle program, students can proceed towards a Bachelor's degree. Generally, all credits earned in the short-cycles program are recognized, but it depends on the program and the higher education institution. Students are expected to continue in the specialty of their degree, and admission to higher education institutions is determined by their academic records, courses, and motivation.

### 6.2 A presentation of Holy See's NQF, including short cycles

Melanie Rosenbaum presented the Holy See qualifications framework. There are two legal frameworks, Code of Canon Law and the Higher Education Act, governing all degrees granted by the Holy See across countries. The Holy See qualification framework consists of Canon Law and other 70 specialized areas of study with 8 years of non-chronological study. There are three cycles of study: *baccalaureatus*, *licentia*, and *doctoratus*. The first cycle typically lasts for three years and includes introductory courses, with 180 ECTS and an academic degree of *baccalaureatus* at the end. Despite being clear, the framework is complicated due to existing pre-Bologna qualifications that cannot be changed in the higher education act, requiring the preservation of traditions. EQF is not yet referenced, and the discussion was focused on QF-EHEA.

Moreover, in theology, a philosophical basis qualification is a prerequisite due to the inherent connection between philosophy and theology. As such, two years of philosophical studies are required before starting a three-year cycle of theology, resulting in a total of 300 ECTS. Alternatively, a short program of 120 ECTS in philosophy can be taken before accessing the 180 ECTS first cycle of theology. However, this does not lead to a first cycle degree unless an additional 60 ECTS are completed to become a full philosophical *baccalaureatus* of 180 ECTS.



Topping up with one year leads to the real first cycle degree in philosophy.

In the field of theology, the second cycle degree, *licentia*, is necessary for lower-level teaching in the seminaries. The third cycle is the *doctoratus*, which allows teaching in the university. *Doctoratus* in canon law and those in philosophy require three years plus two years plus three years minimum. In theology, the doctoral level is more complex and may skip the *licentia* if integrated in the doctorate. The system is fair if looked at from top to bottom, with entrance requirements such as language or philosophy not counting towards the degree itself.

Within the system of the Holy See, only the titles of *baccalaureate*, *licentia*, and *doctoratus* are allowed. Although there is an article in the law that permits using the denomination of universities around them, it is not applicable to Italy. The issue is that using another country's degree title can be misleading and make it appear as though the degree is from that country's system. For example, using "*Laurea Magistrale*" for a non-Italian degree could lead to confusion and make it difficult for the degree to be recognized as a foreign degree.

### 6.3 Short cycle inside first cycle (EHEA-QF) – qualification level 5 (EQF): Andorra

Miquel Niculau (University of Andorra) presented the main short-cycle program as a two-year vocational training called Advanced Professional Program with 120 credits, which is a NQF level 5 diploma. Access to this program and the bachelor's degree is the same, requiring an upper secondary school qualification. Upon completion of the program, students can proceed to a bachelor's degree and recognize a maximum of 60 credits in the same discipline. The program includes transversal competences such as communication skills, teamwork, professional applicability, ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability.

In Andorra, there are five universities, four private and one public, and only one offers the Advanced Professional Program in Accounting Management, which has a focus on transversal competences related to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. The program consists of four semesters with a new teaching methodology that emphasizes transversal modules rather than individual subjects. Students must complete an internship worth 18 ECTS.

It was mentioned that more than 50% of students with this type of qualification express interest in continuing their studies in the Bachelor program, although not always immediately after completing the degree. Many students enter the job market first before enrolling in the Bachelor program, with the Bachelor of Business Administration being a popular choice.

### 6.4 NQF self-certification in Liechtenstein

Eva Meirer presented the Liechtenstein's NQF self-certification. The country recognized the need for National Qualifications Framework to provide better comparability and recognition, especially with the expansion of education opportunities in the higher education sector. The small country had to consider neighboring countries, Switzerland, and Austria, in choosing educational pathways for students. The labor market is also important, given the large number of commuters into Liechtenstein. There is a strong connection with Switzerland and Austria, particularly in terms of student mobility, with few students studying in Germany.

Furthermore, she stated the Liechtenstein's efforts to establish a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to improve comparability and recognition of qualifications. The government enacted an NQF for higher education in 2004 and established a framework across all levels in 2008. The School Board was tasked with coordinating the expert working group and preparing the self-certification report. The government was responsible for supervising and adopting the regulations. The framework was developed with input from national interest groups and oriented towards Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and other countries in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

In 2004, the Higher Education Law was adapted as a guiding principle for the qualification's framework in Liechtenstein. The principle was to consider all higher education institutions as equal at a systemic level and different at an institutional level. The focus was on specifying programs and courses in terms of learning outcomes. The qualifications framework referred to EHEA and EQF for lifelong learning as a basis, and the self-certification report was based on the principles

and criteria developed by the EHEA. The expert group ensured coherence with the national qualifications framework and legal foundations of the higher education system.

The self-certification report is divided into two parts: the seven criteria developed by the report on qualifications framework submitted to the BFUG on February 12, 2009 and the six standards for the self-certification process. The responsibilities and scopes are clearly defined and fulfilled, with a table specifying who is responsible for what and when. Learning outcomes are defined at the institutional level, with the workload specified using ECTS, and qualifications are generally included through the accreditation process. Liechtenstein has a multi-level QA procedure, with a quality management system at the institutional level.

#### 6.5 NQF self-certification in Italy

A national level working group was later established, which consulted with stakeholders to approve the framework within the Ministry through a high-level directorial act. In 2009, the Italian qualification framework based on the Bologna Process was created. Last year, it was officially approved by law as an NQF that accommodated EQF in Italy.

However, there were still some unresolved questions from the working group like the following:

- Whether to have one framework for both, the university and non-university sectors or separate frameworks.
- Where to place "*Diploma di Specializzazione*," a qualification specific to medical doctors?
- Whether to connect academic qualifications and degrees with professional licenses to help people entering the professional world. Decisions were made based on consultation processes, not solely by the minister.

Previous qualifications were included in the framework, such as "*Diploma Universitario*" and "*Diploma di Stato*". Information on professional licenses was also provided, such as the qualifications needed to become a nurse. It was acknowledged that the building the NQF was a challenging process.

#### 6.6 NQF self-certification: Andorra

Jordi Llombart presented the NQF self-certification process in Andorra. During the process of self-certification and referencing, Andorra faced some challenges and came up with some recommendations for others embarking on this journey. One recommendation was to ensure the Secretariat of Education in San Marino is ready and allowed to start the process by the competent authorities, which was not the case for Andorra initially. Despite having a framework for higher education in 2010, it was waited until they had a framework for the whole education system before beginning the certification process. This decision was made after a ten-year process of changing the secondary education system from objectives to competencies. Finally, in 2022, Andorra had the political determination to continue with the certification process.

The need for a National Qualification Framework (NQF) was emphasized in the 2005 Bergen Communiqué, signed by the ministers of EHEA. As a member of EHEA, San Marino must comply with this decision, which also requires self-certification of the NQF to the QF - EHEA. It is important to note that there are two frameworks and two separate processes, each with its own legal document.

The self-certification process was based on a report on qualifications framework submitted to the BFUG on February 12, 2009, which included seven criteria and six standards. The Leuven-Louvain Communiqué stated that every state should have the national qualifications framework self-certified by 2012, but most countries did not meet this deadline.

Although challenging to find, the necessary documents for the self-certification process can be obtained with some effort.

## **7. Discussion on the structure of the final report of the WG**

The draft final report was discussed, with the group agreeing to flesh out the structure and division of labor. The draft zero followed the roadmap structure, with chapters including the mandate of the work and the working group, roadmap implementation, and conclusions and recommendations. There were questions marked in red under each chapter. It was suggested that more context be added regarding San Marino's pre-EHEA accession, with a description of the work, an assessment of the working group, and inclusion of San Marino best practices. It was acknowledged that the authors had done a good job, but it was suggested that a description of the San Marino higher education system be included in the report for the benefit of most readers, who are members of BFUG.

In the implementation section, it was proposed that a third column be added to the roadmap and San Marino implementation to highlight achievements and their respective dates. The group expressed its appreciation for the work done by San Marino and their openness in meeting with the authorities and this should be highlighted in the final report. It was proposed to use the bullet points in chapter 4, conclusions and recommendations, as starting points for writing the conclusions.

San Marino was advised to prioritize their work, starting with the approval of the Law on Higher Education and then the approval of the decreto delegato/statuatorio about NQF and the University of San Marino. It was suggested that the next period (2024-2027) should be focused on completing this work and then considering if any TPGs could help further their efforts.

During the meeting, it was emphasized that San Marino is officially part of the process and can both learn from and add value to the process. San Marino was encouraged to be proactive and organize events, and to be an active participant in TPGs. It was suggested that San Marino can invite other BFUG members for events and showcase its work. San Marino was reminded that they have the power to influence how the process is developing San Marino was also reminded that they will be co-chair in the future and should start thinking about how they will use this role.

It was suggested to include the Territorial Pact as a good practice and identify more such examples. For governance, the discussion in parliament about the law needs to be followed carefully as there is a delicate balance between recognizing specific circumstances in San Marino while expressing concerns about how the rector is identified/appointed/elected.

It was agreed that the input of all the members of the working group is needed for the next version of the draft final report. The drafting needs to be carefully done and it is important to get the facts straight from San Marino. The WG aims to present a draft final report in the autumn 2023 BFUG meeting. In order to achieve this the next WG meeting will focus on the work for the final report. Depending on the progress of the implementation in San Marino there might be a need to make some minor additions and updates in early 2024 but the main content and assessment of the implementation should be ready for the BFUG meeting in the fall. In that case it was recommended that the co-chairs be given authority to make small modifications to the report to reflect any developments.

Finally, it was suggested that any future accession to the EHEA be accompanied by a roadmap and a roadmap working group.

## **8. Wrap-up of the meeting and future plans**

### **6.7 Date of the next WG meeting**

The Board and the BFUG will be informed of the latest development in this Working Group. It is suggested that the September meeting takes place in Andorra on 5-6 October 2023.

The Co-Chairs thanked the guests and members for their contributions and input to the meeting. The fifth meeting of the WG on San Marino Roadmap was successfully concluded.