**Task Force for future monitoring of values:**

**Proposal for organising one or more "Hearings" with experts**

 **Context**

The Guidelines for the Task Force on monitoring Fundamental Values specify the following tasks:

* To consider how fundamental values such as academic freedom and institutional autonomy can be clearly understood in higher education systems across the EHEA.
* To propose a methodology for future reporting to Ministerial Conferences on the issues defined as the fundamental values in the Paris Communiqué that recognises the limits of governmental self-reporting, and goes beyond this approach
* To recommend indicators of fundamental values, as well as the evidence required to fill them, and the source for such evidence.

While the Task Force members have considerable professional experience and expertise to bring to these tasks, it is also vitally important that the Task Force has the opportunity to consider the views of relevant organisations, academics and individuals. One possibility for doing this is to organise one or more "hearings" where experts can be invited to respond to specific content questions, and where the Task Force members can discuss and examine the ideas and proposals that are set out.

The notion of a "hearing" in this context is not intended to suggest any legal or parliamentary process (although the term is often associated with such matters). Rather it is understood as an opportunity for people to outline substantive arguments to support particular proposals and ideas. Experts may be invited to give suggestions on the key issues that the Task Force needs to address – eg approaches to information collection that will provide a better understanding of respect for fundamental values, methodology, sources of evidence for indicators, and developing indicators themselves.

The Task Force will be responsible for the format and organisation of any such hearings. In a first phase of initial preparation, the recent positive experience of the Council of Europe in organising a "Hearing on Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) and Higher Education" in October 2018 could be considered as one possible model. Hence the programme and list of participants for that event is attached as an appendix to this paper.

**Identifying experts**

The Task Force will have the responsibility to identify the experts that should be invited to the hearing(s). Each member of the Task Force is invited to consider potential experts who could be of most help to the work.

**Format of hearing(s)**

The format of the hearing(s) should aim to provide maximum benefit to the work of the Task Force. In other words the format should enable members of the Task Force to consider as much relevant information as possible in an effective way. The format would necessarily depend on a number of factors – including the number of participants. Two different possibilities (suggested only as possibilities, and not as the only possibilities) would include:

1) A format based on mixed plenary and workshop sessions. This could enable different types of discussion and inquiry to be pursued. It would also have the advantage of (hopefully) bringing together participants to commonly agreed conclusions in a final plenary session.

2) A format which distinguishes clearly the roles of Task Force members from those of invited experts, and is organised as a number of Question and Answer sessions. In each session, a panel of Task Force members would ask questions of individual experts, and then consider their responses. Thus the role of the Task Force member would be to ask questions and consider the answers received. Meanwhile the role of the expert would be to provide answers to the questions posed. One potential advantage of this format is that it would give ample opportunity to explore in depth the proposals of experts. However, it would perhaps only be suitable if a small number of "experts" participates in a hearing.

**Preparation of Questions**

Whatever the format of a hearing, the Task Force members need to prepare carefully the questions that they would ask of the experts. The ultimate question for the hearing would probably be:

What proposal would you like Ministers to adopt in 2020 to enable fundamental values to be properly monitored in the future?

There will necessarily be a great deal of other questions to address before this one can be answered…

Appendix:

Hearing on Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) and Higher Education, Council of Europe programme and list of participants