

BFUGB5 Minutes  
21 December 2004

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD  
OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP  
OSLO, 9 DECEMBER 2004**

The meeting was held at Raumergården Hotell, near Oslo. A list of participants is appended.

**1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Documents: BFUGB5 1a Draft agenda 24 Oct 04  
BFUGB5 1b Draft annotated agenda 24 Oct 04

Action:

*The agenda was adopted.*

**2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BFUG AND BOARD MEETINGS**

Documents: BFUGB4 Minutes of the Board meeting 13 Sept 04  
BFUG 3 Minutes of the BFUG meeting 12-13 Oct 04

Action:

*The minutes of the Board meeting on 13 September 2004 were approved.*

**3. ENQA PROJECT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Document: BFUGB5 3 Outline for report to Bergen (ENQA)

ENQA Chair Christian Thune had sent his apologies. An outline report had been submitted based on agreement among the E4 members, with the aim of presenting a single joint report to the Ministers in Bergen addressing both aspects of the mandate given in the Berlin Communiqué. The proposed standards, procedures and guidelines for quality assurance now include European standards for quality assurance agencies. The previous proposal for a European Quality Assurance Committee had been replaced by a structure called the European Register Committee, whose task will be to decide on applications for inclusion in the proposed register. ENQA will submit the final report to the BFUG on 18 February 2005.

Representatives of the other E4 partners commented briefly that the last meeting of the E4 had been a good one. A new draft of the report will be considered over Christmas and discussed at a meeting on 19 January. ECA has also produced a report on quality assurance, and has been encouraged to cooperate with ENQA in reporting to the Bergen conference.

The Vice Chair welcomed the statements of the E4, stating that the outline provided is in itself evidence of progress. It is comprehensive and covers all aspects of the mandate given by Ministers in Berlin, with the guidelines also covering the system level. The cooperation between the E4 now seems to be going well. The final report is eagerly anticipated. The Chair also welcomed the outline as concise and reflecting cooperation, adding that the proposed European Register Committee constituted an improvement on previous drafts. The Chair thanked Christian Thune, ENQA and the other E4 partners for a substantial contribution to the Bologna Process.

Action:

*The Board took note of the information given.*

#### **4. WORKING GROUP ON OVERARCHING QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

Documents: BFUGB5 4a Note on Meeting of European Framework Group  
29 October 2004  
BFUGB5 4b Invitation: A European Qualifications Framework;  
meeting of Commission expert group 10 November 2004

Working Group chair Mogens Berg had sent his apologies. On behalf of the group, Ian McKenna commented that the final text was almost ready, meaning that an agreed report would be available in good time before the Copenhagen meeting in January. There had been some concern about the role of the EU and its expert group, cf. agenda item 5, and that the two processes might possibly be competing. However, the Chair and other members taking part in both groups had stated that there is no conflict and that the processes are complementary. The importance of the Commission expert group is to ensure coordination, with the aim of arriving at a seamless framework. With regard to national frameworks, the report establishes some key principles.

The meeting welcomed the information. ESIB expressed its satisfaction that in the report ECTS is expressed not only in terms of learning outcomes, but also workload, as indicated by the BFUG in Noordwijk.

Action:

*The Board took note of the information given.*

## **5. RELATIONS BETWEEN BOLOGNA OBJECTIVES AND EUROPEAN COMMISSION ACTIONS**

Documents: BFUGB5 5 Relations between Bologna objectives and European Commission actions  
See also EU Commission proposal for a recommendation on mutual recognition of QA systems and assessments across Europe, at [www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/Part\\_org/EU/041012\\_EC\\_quality.pdf](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/Part_org/EU/041012_EC_quality.pdf)

The Bologna Process is running in parallel to the Lisbon Process towards 2010. In presenting the tabled document, the Secretariat referred to concerns that Bologna and EU processes might be competing. With regard to qualifications frameworks, such concerns had been largely put to rest by the information given under agenda item 4. However, the Commission had also presented a recommendation on quality assurance. At the BFUG meeting in Noordwijk, several delegations had expressed the view that quality assurance systems should be retained under national control. The document suggested an alternative also mentioned by the Commission, namely that accreditation abroad, if relevant, should come on top of national accreditation. With regard to the proposed register, it might be acceptable with the changes made in the new ENQA draft. The intention behind the document was to draw attention to possible conflicts.

The European Commission commented that the Bologna Process should go ahead, aiming at strong and meaningful conclusions for Bergen. The proposals from the Commission lean heavily on what has been done within the Bologna Process, and can only be realised if the Bergen conference is a success. So far, the standards and register for quality assurance do not exist, and the EU recommendation will probably not be adopted until the end of 2005. Points d) and e) in the proposal had also met with resistance in the EU Council. The proposals should be regarded as a vision for the future, depending on the approval of national authorities. They were not for a directive, but a recommendation. The 1998 recommendation on quality assurance had also taken long to implement. With regard to qualifications frameworks, seamlessness is needed, therefore a working group had been established with strong Bologna representation. Decision-making processes – Bologna and EU – should be kept clearly different. Therefore, neither the draft recommendation on quality assurance nor the blueprint for a European qualifications framework will be tabled in Bergen. The Commission papers will be further elaborated when the BFUG frameworks working group and ENQA have presented their proposals and these have been discussed by the BFUG. The proposals from ECA should be coordinated with the Bologna working groups.

The proposal on quality assurance is for a joint recommendation between Council and Parliament. If they have different views, they will have to negotiate.

Several members of the Board underlined that the discussions in the Bologna context must be allowed to develop naturally; they should not be pre-empted by the EU. Results must be presented in such a way that the 15 non-EU Bologna ministers feel that they are equal partners. The Bologna Process is further advanced than the work in the VET sector. The two sets must articulate. In a wider sense, the agenda point was seen to be about the relationship between the Bologna Process and other international organisations and processes. While quality assurance is about higher education policies, the discussion on qualifications

frameworks goes beyond higher education and also involves issues such as access and mobility.

The EUA pointed out that the word “allow” in the proposal from the Secretariat (No. 4) was unfortunate, since higher education institutions have already for a long time been accredited by bodies in other countries. The question is rather about recognising such accreditations.

The Vice Chair pointed out that the Commission had just published a new document entitled “Towards a European Qualifications Framework”, which referred to the presentation of a blueprint in April 2005 and discussion of the higher education part of the blueprint in Bergen. The Vice Chair underlined that what is tabled in Bergen will be the proposals of the Bologna Follow-up Group. In conclusion, the Chair and Vice Chair welcomed the information provided by the Commission.

Action:

*The Board welcomed the information given by the European Commission.*

## **6. DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR THE BERGEN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

Document: BFUGB5 6 Draft Programme for the Bergen Conference  
BFUGB5 6a Programme for the Berlin Conference

A programme outline had been presented by the Vice-Chair at the BFUG meeting on 12-13 October, based on the programme of the Berlin Conference. In the BFUG meeting it was argued by consultative members that the outline did not properly reflect their role in the Bologna Process. The BFUG had asked for a more detailed programme outline to be prepared, taking into account the discussion in the meeting, in particular with regard to the role of the higher education sector.

The Vice Chair presented the revised outline, where the role of the stakeholders was made more explicit. This was welcomed by the meeting. The Vice Chair further invited discussion of the proposed themes for the parallel sessions in Bergen, pointing out that the themes were very wide and that various issues could be incorporated or stressed.

The Board endorsed the overall topics proposed. Several speakers underlined that the discussions in Bergen should be forward-looking, and that it is important to ensure that the results are made use of. The presence of a large number of high-level people should be used for brainstorming on what is next. The follow-up should be the main objective. The Process is going into a phase where the national and institutional elements are important; the discussions should stimulate developments at these levels. The aim should not be to introduce new issues, but to deepen existing themes.

With regard to the theme of lifelong learning, one possibility of taking it up might be to focus on the importance of learning outcomes. The theme could also be linked to the Lisbon strategy and the relationship between the Bologna and Lisbon processes. The question of access might be touched upon, including recognition of previous experiential learning, not least by universities. Another important issue is financing. Lifelong learning is costly; who is

going to finance it? It was also pointed out that the discussions in Bergen will provide an opportunity to take in external partners, e.g. employers.

The theme of quality assurance and recognition in global perspective might refer to the OECD/UNESCO project on cross-border education as proposed in the document. However, another possibility would be to focus on understanding of Bologna degrees in the rest of the world. This would integrate the external dimension. The importance of informing the rest of the world about what the Bologna Process involves was underlined by several speakers. The impression left must not be that its main result is reduction of the first degree from 4 to 3 years. A possible dimension for all the discussion groups might be how to get information out to a wider community and encourage people to identify with the decisions that have been made.

Institutional autonomy and governance was seen by some as a tricky issue, as it touches directly on the legal framework for national systems. It is also about accountability, public responsibility etc. Other speakers noted that the notion of public responsibility still needs to be defined. The Council of Europe is currently running a project on governance, and offered to contribute to a discussion group on this theme.

Other issues were also mentioned. It was agreed that the four general themes proposed might be elaborated with a more detailed list of issues for each.

The Vice Chair concluded that there was support for the four main themes. Cross-cutting themes can be introduced as keywords or elements, introduced in papers etc. A more precise description will be worked out for the Board meeting in January, with mention of some key players that may help present the issues, possible speakers, rapporteurs etc. At this meeting a first version of the invitation will also be presented, containing an indication of the main themes, but not a detailed description. As organiser of the Bergen conference Norway will try to ensure that the results of the discussion groups are fed into the follow-up process in a more systematic way. The Vice Chair noted that the workshops at previous ministerial conferences have also provided significant contributions, e.g. the one on joint degrees in Berlin.

Action:

*The Board took note of the information given by the Vice Chair and the views exchanged. A more detailed plan for the discussion groups at the Bergen conference will be presented to the Board meeting in January.*

## **7. DRAFTING THE BERGEN COMMUNIQUÉ**

Documents:           BFUGB5 7 Drafting the Bergen Communiqué  
                              BFUGB5 7a Preliminary draft dated 24.11.04

At its meeting on 13 September, the Board had asked that an outline for the Bergen Communiqué should be presented at the next Board meeting and thereafter to the BFUG. Before opening the discussion on the tabled documents, the Chair raised the issue of adoption of new members. This should be put on the agenda for the Board meeting in January, to allow for consultation in each member state before the BFUG meeting in March, including contacts with the national ministries of foreign affairs where relevant. Discussion by the BFUG in

March would in turn allow for further consultation if needed. The reports received from applicant countries should be included in the documents for the Board meeting.

The Secretariat pointed out that in addition to Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine an application had been received from Kazakhstan, which is not eligible. In general the Central Asian countries have shown great interest in the Bologna Process. Could some kind of working relationship be developed? The application may be taken as a sign of the countries' wish for a closer relationship with the Process. This contributes to the discussion about relations with the rest of the world, also including organisations. Is it possible to establish some kind of "outer circle" of countries and organisations?

Several speakers pointed out that the Bologna Process must be kept manageable, and that new and increased possibilities for taking part should therefore not be opened. On the other hand means of cooperation, information etc. might be considered. The Process tends to be associated with decision-making structures, but involves much more. It was argued that these other aspects should be kept as open as possible. A balance needs to be struck; associate membership or other avenues might be considered. It was pointed out that such a discussion could be built into the proposed discussion group about the global perspective, that acceptance of interest from other parts of the world is important for the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area, and that the Bologna Process should seek to cooperate with similar structures in other parts of the world.

The Chair concluded that the discussion should continue at the next Board meeting on the basis of a paper from the Secretariat.

The Chair of the communiqué drafting group (CDG), Germain Dondelinger, then introduced the two documents tabled. The first (BFUGB5 7) illustrated the work of the CDG, how it had arrived at its first draft. Its starting-point had been that the Bergen Communiqué should not necessarily be a replica of the one from Berlin; and secondly, that it should be brief and concise. The second document (BFUGB5 7a) was the outcome of the brainstorming in the CDG. The discussion in the Board should centre on this, i.e. the draft communiqué. He suggested that the discussion could be structured under three headings:

- General outline
- Priorities for 2007
- Towards 2010

#### General outline

Several speakers stressed that Ministers should come home from the Bergen meeting with a sense of accomplishment. This might stem from 1) policy decisions, e.g. on quality assurance; 2) commitments to implement those policies in their own systems, e.g. by elaborating national qualifications frameworks; 3) a demonstration that at mid-term real progress has been made in implementing the Bologna Process, cf. the stocktaking. The outline will change as the content develops. Goals from previous communiqués which have not been achieved should not just be repeated.

There was general agreement that the communiqué should be structured around central issues. For each major decision area, it could start with a stocktaking perspective on what has been achieved, then move on to the challenges ahead. The orientation should be international, with

the relationship between the Bologna Process and the rest of the world as an important perspective, including making European higher education an example to the world. The style should be made edgier, less smooth, less procedural. The focus should be both on the co-ordinated effort at the European level and the national efforts that also need to be made.

The EUA stressed that the communiqué should meet the expectations of the higher education institutions. They would expect existing priorities to be maintained and the European dimension to be emphasised. The communiqué should focus more on 2010 and beyond than on 2007, which is just a step. How can the dynamics of the Bologna Process be used to promote the attractiveness of European higher education? There is a need to bring back a vision, an impulse from Bergen; otherwise the Process may seem mechanical. In this context the Bologna Promoters could play a role.

The secretary of the CDG commented that the text will become more explicit as inputs become available, especially from the stocktaking. Focus will be on the BFUG projects (quality assurance, the European qualifications framework, stocktaking). The outcomes of seminars will mainly be reflected in the general report, not in the communiqué. Results and recommendations that take the Process further will, however, be taken on board.

#### Priorities for 2007

A discussion ensued on new intermediate goals. After Prague, there had been a sense that the Process might lose momentum because there were no mid-term goals. This changed with the Berlin Communiqué, where precise goals were set in three areas. Several speakers argued that the same should be done in Bergen, stressing that the intermediate goals should be seen as a step on the way to 2010. Although some achievements may lack in the priority areas from Berlin, other areas should now be chosen.

There was some disagreement as to whether the draft communiqué ought to specify targets in the priority areas proposed. It was pointed out that the Bologna Process suffers from a lack of precise goals and measurements. For instance, everyone agrees that mobility is important, but what are the goals? According to the institutions, mobility is *decreasing*. Some speakers stated that the same degree of precision should be aimed for in the Bergen Communiqué as in the “stocktaking” part of the Berlin one. Ministers would then undertake to implement the goals set in their respective countries. Others argued that Ministers should concentrate on political priorities, whereas the measuring of progress is a matter for officials. It was also pointed out that the reports from the quality assurance and qualifications frameworks projects will provide precise goals for the next two years, albeit not necessarily in the new priority areas chosen. However, the working groups work under a remit from the BFUG; their role is not to set the agenda, but to provide professional expertise and facilitate progress.

Some areas where it would be possible to set precise targets were mentioned. With regard to the new degree structure, it could be stipulated that a certain percentage of the students, e.g. more than half, should be in bachelor/master programmes, either by 2007 or 2010. A commitment to implement Bologna goals in national higher education legislation would also be measurable. There is an interaction between policy-making at the European level and national implementation, and it was argued that both should be measured.

It was also pointed out that with regard to mobility there is an interaction between higher education and other policy areas such as visa regulations and social security. This applies both to students and to academic staff. Commitments can be made, though not by education ministers alone. The Board meeting in January might flag some issues to the BFUG, indicating that backing must be secured by consultation at the national level if the issues are to be raised. In general, there was considerable scepticism towards going into other policy areas. The proposal from the Noordwijk seminar to establish a pan-European fund for mobility was mentioned as an example. It has not been authorised by finance ministers, and empty promises must not be made. Similarly, it was argued that it would not be possible to make the necessary preparations for raising the visa issue in the time available before Bergen.

According to the EUA, preliminary results from the *Trends IV* study show that the Bologna reforms in the respective countries are mainly perceived in a national context. Some thinking therefore needs to be done on how to “redynamize” the European dimension. The Chair of the CDG commented that the Process needs to be deepened; it must be ensured that what is happening is not the reverse of what was intended. The Vice Chair concluded that the question of priority areas must be explored in more detail, mainly in the drafting group.

#### Towards 2010

There had been some discussion in the CDG as to where the “vision” element ought to be placed. Possibly, it should be placed at the beginning. All the Ministers present in Bergen should have the opportunity to discuss the vision, since only 29 of the countries were there in 1999. There was some discussion on the wording of the paragraph.

The EUA stated that the more the Bologna Process is implemented, the more the institutions will have to be taken into account, including the internal dynamics at the institutional level. The situation is not like in 1999, where governments fixed goals and institutions followed them. In response the meeting invited the EUA to submit a written proposal on the role of the higher education institutions with a view to inclusion in the draft communiqué. Even though *Trends IV* will give a clearer picture, it was argued that it would be very useful to include this thinking at an early stage of the drafting, as a preliminary structure is being developed awaiting the results from the BFUG working groups as well as *Trends IV*. The EUA stated that it would try to bring some comments to the Board meeting in January. EURASHE stated its willingness to contribute.

#### Decision:

*The Communiqué Drafting group will produce a new draft for the Board meeting in January on the basis of the discussion in the meeting. The EUA, in cooperation with EURASHE, is invited to submit a proposal on the role of the higher education institutions with a view to inclusion in the draft communiqué. The Secretariat is asked to prepare a document for the January meeting on accession of new members and possible cooperation with other countries and organisations not taking direct part in the Bologna Process.*



## **8. DRAFT DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR THE BERGEN CONFERENCE**

Document: BFUGB5 8 The EHEA- A common understanding or a legal instrument?

At the BFUG meeting on 13 September, the Secretariat had been asked to prepare a paper on how to lay the foundations for a discussion by the Ministers in Bergen on what the Bologna Process should lead to in 2010 and whether it should be institutionalised in a more formal way. The Secretariat stressed that the tabled document was only meant as a basis for discussion in the Board, not as a draft document for the Ministers.

The CDG Chair stated that the discussion about 2010 and beyond is one that Ministers ought to be able to have among themselves, in a “tour the table”. What should the Process look like at that time, and what instruments might need to be put in place? Such a discussion needs structuring, similar to what is done in EU ministerial meetings, where there is usually a document which sets the themes and suggests three or four questions. Other speakers supported the idea, pointing out that 2005 will be a benchmark, and as such an important date to take a forward perspective. The Ministerial meeting should be informal. The conclusions may not be very precise, but there should be room for including a few sentences in the communiqué. For instance, the Ministers might ask the BFUG to explore the topic further up to 2010. This would be sufficiently flexible to allow an airing of different points of view. It was suggested that this was also an issue that might be “flagged” in January in order to allow consultation with ministers before the BFUG meeting to ascertain if they would be willing to engage in such a debate.

It was concluded that the Secretariat should develop a document on the basis of the discussion in the Board. Questions and counter-arguments should be added in order to ensure a broad exploration.

Decision:

*For the Board meeting in January, the Secretariat is asked to draft a document which may serve as a basis for discussion by Ministers in Bergen on the Bologna Process in 2010 and beyond.*

## **9. WEB PAGE FOR THE WORK ON THE DRAFT COMMUNIQUÉ**

Document: BFUGB5 9 Timetable for electronic consultations on draft communiqué

In its meeting on 12 September, the Board asked for a feedback mechanism in relation to the BFUG/Board for consultation on the draft communiqué. The Secretariat demonstrated the solution for electronic consultation via the Bologna-Bergen web page. The timeline presented indicated when the draft will be accessible for all the members of the BFUG. Each round of hearing will start with a “clean sheet”, i.e. a fresh draft, but the historical log of comments will also be preserved. Technically, comments are made by e-mail to the Secretariat. Everyone sending a comment will receive an acknowledgement. For each new version, a general e-mail will be sent to the relevant group. The password will be changed for each hearing. The first hearing for the full BFUG will start on 8 February. A communication will

be sent to all members immediately after the Board meeting on 25 January, with a schedule for further consultations.

Action:

*The Board took note of the information given by the Secretariat.*

## **10. CRITERIA FOR NEW CONSULTATIVE MEMBERS**

Document: BFUGB5 10 Conditions for admission of new consultative members

The Board had asked the Secretariat to prepare a short paper on conditions for admission of new consultative members, spurred by the application of ETUCE. Since then, other organisations had also shown an interest, but without necessarily wanting to become BFUG members. Several members of the Board expressed the view that there should not be a significant increase in the size of the decision-making bodies in the Bologna Process. To develop the Process through association was therefore a good idea. However, “associated contacts” was not felt to be a good term.

There was some discussion as to what such association would involve. Parties outside the Bologna Process are already invited to seminars, and the Bologna-Bergen web page lists a number of organisations with an interest in the Process, such as FEANI for engineering education. Status as an associated partner would therefore have to involve more. Associated status should be given primarily to partners that can make a horizontal contribution to the Process, rather than just a topical one (individual seminars etc.), but without being too restrictive. Some speakers suggested a more systematic consultancy/information procedure for associated partners, whereas others were sceptical, arguing that new forums would be an added burden. Such partners might be invited to Bergen if the BFUG decides that they should be.

It was questioned whether all the organisations mentioned in the document should be regarded as eligible for associated status. ENQA is working on a mandate from the Ministers in its project on quality assurance. Eurocadres is a lobbying group at the EU level. The value of having employers’ organisations as partners was generally recognised. This would also be in line with the recommendations from the Bled seminar on employability. On the other hand there was some disagreement regarding professional associations and trade unions, including those of academic staff. While the latter might be a valuable consultative partner at the national level, the same might not necessarily be the case at the European level. Nevertheless, several speakers argued in favour of including them in the Bologna Process to a greater extent.

The proposed criteria for consultative membership were generally regarded as good, with some adjustments. Prospective consultative members should be fully representative in their field of interest. There was some argument on the issue of representativeness; while some held that the organisation in question should be *present* in a minimum number of Bologna countries, possibly 30-35, to ensure that it goes beyond the EU (in addition to accepting organisations from all member states as full members), others argued that the organisations might be asked to open up after being granted consultative member status.

The Chair concluded that the Board should advise against accepting new consultative members. Instead relations with partners should be developed through association. The Secretariat should redraft the document for discussion in the next Board meeting and then the BFUG, showing what the proposed criteria would mean in each case for the organisations which have expressed an interest.

With reference to the interest shown both in Central Asia and Latin America, it was suggested that some kind of associated status might also be granted to interested countries outside Europe. The Vice Chair pointed out that any decision on formally extending the range of countries would have to be taken by Ministers. Cf. agenda item 7.

Decision:

*The Secretariat is asked to present a new draft of the document to the Board meeting in January on the basis of the discussion in the meeting. Focus should be on developing the Bologna Process through association rather than new consultative members. The new version of the document should also contain concrete recommendations for each of the organisations that have expressed an interest on the basis of the proposed criteria.*

## **11. INFORMATION ON APPLICATIONS FROM POTENTIAL NEW CONSULTATIVE MEMBERS**

Document: BFUG5 11a “Pan-European Structure” (application from ETUCE)  
BFUGB5 11b “EUROCADRES involvement in the Bologna process”  
BFUGB5 11c “The Bologna Process: UNICE’s position and expectations”

Action:

*The Board took note of the information provided.*

## **12. BFUG FOLLOW-UP OF SEMINARS IN THE BFUG WORK PROGRAMME**

Document: BFUGB5 12 BFUG Follow-up of Seminars in the Work Programme

The BFUG had asked the Secretariat to prepare a paper for its next meeting on how recommendations from the seminars from September 2004 onwards should be treated. In the intervening period, preliminary decisions on the handling of recommendations should be made by the Board. Introducing the document, the Secretariat pointed out that the discussion would also form part of the preparation for the general report, where the results and recommendations of the seminars will be reported. The organisers will be consulted before the descriptions are finalised.

Some comments were made on the document. Several Board members stressed that the seminars are a great resource to the Bologna Process, and that it is very important not to

forget any points from seminars that have already been held. The Chair concluded that the outcomes of seminars are a resource to the Process and of future value.

Decision:

*Following the seminar on Public responsibility for higher education in Strasbourg, confirmation of the principle of equal opportunity and of public responsibility for funding and stimulating higher education should be considered for inclusion in the draft Bergen Communiqué.*

*Similarly, the recommendations relating to the Noordwijk seminar on Mobility should be considered for inclusion in the draft Communiqué, with due regard to developments in EU law that may pose problems in relation to portability of loans and grants.*

### **13. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS AND CONSULTATIVE MEMBERS**

Documents: EURASHE: "Further Contributions to the Bologna Process 2005-2007" (tabled in the meeting)

EURASHE informed the meeting of a planned seminar on short-cycle higher education on 24 January 2005. An analysis had been carried out in 33 Bologna countries. A planned extension to new countries had so far not been realised. Other developments in the area were referred to. The target group of the seminar would be higher institutions and employers of graduates from short-cycle programmes, mainly small and medium-sized enterprises. BFUG members would be invited. The Vice Chair pointed out that while the Berlin communiqué and the JQI descriptor refer to "higher" education, EURASHE referred to "tertiary" education. This is important because "tertiary" also covers ISCED 4. EURASHE stated that the term should be "higher".

Other comments related to the implications of the Bologna Process for short-cycle higher education. EURASHE pointed out that there is enormous development in higher education outside traditional universities, and that the Process is also about transparency. More transparency is needed; would it for instance be possible to agree on one common name in English for non-university higher education institutions, i.e. the ones authorised by law to offer degrees? The importance of short-cycle higher education for lifelong learning was also mentioned.

The Council of Europe provided information about a meeting in Wroclaw on 9-10 December in connection with the 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention. A declaration would be adopted. Further, it had organised seminars for two applicant countries to the Bologna Process, Georgia and Moldova. Thirdly, a new publication series had been launched. The next publication will be based on the Bologna seminar on public responsibility in Strasbourg. The Vice Chair acknowledged the Council's initiatives to help countries develop their systems towards possible membership.

ESIB referred briefly to its general assembly, which had taken place in early November. A new executive committee had been elected. Just before the Board meeting, a convention had been organised on democratic universities, with quality assurance, governance and financing as important themes. With regard to seminars for national students' unions, a planned seminar

in Ukraine had been postponed. There may be a student convention in Luxembourg in February or March.

Action:

*The Board took note of the information given by EURASHE, the Council of Europe and ESIB.*

#### **14. DATE AND PLACE FOR THE NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Document: BFUGB5 14 Timetable for Board meetings January-May 2005

The following changes and additions were made to the tabled document:

- The Board and CDG meetings on 25 January will take place at Brussels airport, as follows: Board meeting 09.30-13.00, CDG meeting 14.00-17.00.
- The CDG meeting on 11 March will take place at Brussels airport.
- The CDG and Board meetings on 25-26 April will take place in Luxembourg, starting at around 10.30 on 25 April to allow for only one overnight stay.
- A Board meeting should be held in June or early July, rather than on 20 May in Bergen, to keep the Process going between the Bergen conference and the BFUG meeting in Manchester in October. 15 June was suggested as a tentative date. The date should be fixed in consultation with the UK.

Decision:

*The next Board meeting will be held on 25 January in Brussels.*

#### **15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Some countries which have been accepted as members of the Bologna Process, do not engage actively in it. The national reports to be submitted by 14 January 2005 will give an indication. It was suggested that the question of reactions in such cases might be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting, without any document.

The meeting thanked the Norwegian organisers for their hospitality. The contributions of the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Secretariat were acknowledged. In addition the contribution of ex-chair and outgoing Board member Ian McKenna (Ireland) was acknowledged.