

bologna process

Interim report of Bologna Stocktaking working group to BFUG Board meeting in Vienna, Jan 25, 2006

Activities.

During the period between Manchester BFUG meeting and the current BFUG Board meeting the Stocktaking working group:

- had one group meeting on Dec 9 in Riga (see agenda in the annex 1)
- carried out consultations with other organisations
- carried out electronic discussions/consultations among the group members

Work done/ work in progress

Scope of stocktaking 2007. The working group has analysed the experience of the previous stocktaking and the requests for widening stocktaking in the Bergen ministerial communiqué.

Taking into account the new needs for a widened stocktaking as well, the wish to keep the indicators used in 2005 where practicable, as well as the wish to keep the scorecard, the group came to list of 12 indicators (see Annex 2) for the 2007 stocktaking – which implies merging some of the previous indicators and shifting some of the issues to the textual part of the report.

Timeline

Working group has prepared a draft timeline (Annex 3) of the stocktaking exercise to be presented to the BFUG for adoption.

Draft indicators for 2007

First drafts of the 12 indicators have been prepared and currently a round of electronic consultations among WG members is being carried out. In its next meeting scheduled 27 February in Brussels the Stocktaking WG will approve them as drafts and submit to April BFUG meeting for adoption.

When drafting the indicators, the group paid attention to the fact that while ministers expect e.g. 3-cycle system to be established by 2007, some other issues like introduction of qualifications frameworks and full implementation of standards and guidelines for quality assurance should be started by 2007 but their full implementation should rather be expected by 2010.

Revising/amending 2005 indicators.

Taking into account that countries are progressing in achieving Bologna goals over time, it was usually necessary to shift the grades for a each criterion one level down - i.e. what was required for “green” in 2005 will be a requirement for “light green in 2007”. This exercise implied drafting new higher requirements for “green” and in some cases revising requirements for “red”.

Indicators on the 3-cycle system. Two indicators “Stage of implementation” and “Level of enrolment” have been merged with the reasoning that it was necessary to

accommodate an indicator on introduction of qualifications frameworks, but it seemed impossible to keep 4 indicators for the degree system alone. Indicator on “Implementation of national qualifications framework” was drafted with input from Qualifications frameworks working group.

Indicators on quality assurance. Again, to keep no more than 3 indicators for quality assurance and to accommodate an indicator in implementation of Standards and Guidelines, the 2005 indicator “Stage of development” was merged with “Key elements” and “Student participation ” with “international participation”.

Indicators on recognition. The indicator on ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention was replaced by one on “Implementation of principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in the national legislation”. The issue of the remaining countries that have not ratified the Convention as well as the institutional implementation of the Convention were decided to be dealt with in the textual part of the report.

New indicators. First drafts have been prepared for: two new indicators on Lifelong learning one on the ‘Introduction of flexible learning paths” and one on the “recognition of prior learning” and one indicator on Establishing and recognition of joint degrees””

Cooperation with partners

Qualifications framework WG provided advice to Stocktaking WG on the issue of the principles and format of the draft new indicator for implementation of national qualifications frameworks.

Eurydice. The working group chair had a consultation meeting with Eurydice and discussed further cooperation, Eurydice will participate as of the next working group meeting. Eurydice is preparing its questionnaire that will be sent out in March 2006 and information will be collected by the end of May, 2006. Stocktaking WG chair raised an issue whether this early data collection will allow Eurydice report to fully reflect the changes in countries between the two ministerial conferences. It was clarified that Eurydice had ad-hoc mechanisms in place to be able to integrate most recent information in their presentations by country and comparative analysis until the Eurydice report is sent to the printer i.e. end of March 2007. According to Eurydice, it means that it should be possible to provide Stocktaking WG with the most recent information at the time it will need it. Further clarification of this issue will take place in the Stocktaking WG February meeting.

EUA representative in the Stocktaking working group informed the WG regarding the methodology of Trends V, in particular, the questionnaires EUA is sending out to HEIs and Rectors’ conferences.

ENQA was consulted with regard to the survey it is carrying out among its members to find out what are the plans of national QA agencies in implementation of Standards and guidelines. The survey results could be available in March.

Taken that not all national agencies of the Bologna countries are members, the ENQA survey cannot provide all the national information needed for stocktaking so national reports will have to be used as information source for a least part of the countries. Therefore, the results of ENQA survey will be used to formulate the quality assurance part in the template for national reports.

ENIC/NARIC. Chair of stocktaking group participated in the annual meeting of the NARIC network to discuss the stocktaking on the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The Networks provided advice on the new draft indicator and confirmed their readiness to assist in information gathering for stocktaking where appropriate.

Council of Europe recently came up with an interesting initiative that will help providing comparable information of the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. CoE has developed an electronic tool for information gathering and automatic generation of reports on implementation of a certain convention. It has been tested and is found useful. Council of Europe has offered to adapt the electronic tool for information gathering on the Lisbon Convention. The issue will be further discussed on Jan 31 when Chair of Stocktaking WG will participate in the bureau meeting of CoE higher education and research committee.

Involvement of expert

- Secretariat has contacted Ms Cynthia Deane who worked as expert in the previous stocktaking phase. She is willing to continue the work and will participate as of the next WG meeting in February although the funding issues have not yet been solved. All trains are leaving early

Some issues to be taken into account

- Most relevant organisations are starting their surveys before stocktaking methodology is finally approved at April BFUG (ENQA, EUA, Eurydice)
- Eurydice can only check what is in legislation, not the “progress”
- Not all national QA agencies are ENQA members - separate survey needed,
- The funding for the expert is not yet available
- There is some danger that there may be two different settings of descriptors in qualifications frameworks may affect stocktaking group work. Stocktaking group will notify Budapest seminar on EQF with regard to the need to take into account the commitments 45 countries have made in Bergen.

Work to be done before BFUG April meeting

Before the BFUG April meeting the following work will be done:

- The 2007 stocktaking indicators will be discussed and final draft formulated,
- Stocktaking –related parts of the draft template for national reports will be prepared together with Bologna Secretariat
- Consultations will be carried out with a view of including the new stocktaking – related issues in the Eurydice survey,
- Consultations with partner organisations will continue to ensure coherence and proper inclusion of results of other reports and surveys in Stocktaking report.

All the documents of the first meeting of the Stocktaking WG including the minutes are available on the Bologna website

*Prepared by
Stocktaking WG chair
Andrejs Rauhvargers*