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**EHEA Ministerial Conference and Fourth Bologna Policy Forum**

**Yerevan, 14 – 15 May 2015**

- Evaluation report -

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# Short overview of the events

On 14-15 May 2015, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia organised the ninth edition of the Bologna Process/EHEA Ministerial Conference and the fourth edition of the Bologna Policy Forum in Yerevan.

The two events gathered at the Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concerts Complex (SCC) 498 participants from 47 countries and 28 international organisations. The Ministerial Conference brought together the 44 EHEA Ministerial delegations (Azerbaijan, Malta and Slovenia were not present), the representatives of the European Commission as well as the Bologna Process consultative members (UNESCO was not present) and data collectors.

The delegates present at the Ministerial Conference attended both plenary and parallel sessions. During those sessions the participants had a chance to discuss the current status of the Bologna Process implementation and challenges ahead, the future of higher education and the Bologna Process, as well as the [Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué](http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info/files/YerevanCommuniqueFinal.pdf).

The 2015 EHEA Conference was organised in conjunction with the Bologna Policy Forum, which brought together members and heads of delegation from 2 non-EHEA countries along with representatives of international organisations from the field of higher education outside the EHEA.  The focus of the Bologna Policy Forum was on the Mediterranean region and non-EHEA countries that have borders with the EHEA. The Fourth Bologna Policy Forum sought to widen the regional cooperation in higher education as well as to make the dialogue permanent. The two sessions of the Bologna Policy Forum concentrated respectively on discussing the regional initiatives of cooperation similar to the Bologna model and such common trends in higher education as mobility, recognition and quality assurance. The Bologna Policy Forum was finalised with the adoption of the [Fourth Bologna Policy Forum Statement](http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info/files/FourthBolognaPolicyForumStatement.pdf).

The 16 delegations were headed by the Ministers and 11 by the Deputy Ministers. The total number of students present at the events was 55 (from 18 countries).

With the aim of establishing and enhancing international cooperation in the field of higher education, countries and organisations met for a number of bilateral meetings facilitated by the organisers on 13 May at Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan and on 14-15 May at SCC.

On 13 May the delegates also had an opportunity to attend one of the five universities (Yerevan State University, Yerevan State Medical University, State Engineering University of Armenia, American University of Armenia and French University in Armenia), which are located in Yerevan.

The organisers arranged a cultural programme on 15 May providing three options to the participants to choose from: the Matenadaran (repository of ancient manuscripts, research institute and museum) in Yerevan; the Echmiadzin Cathedral (Mother Church of the Armenian Apostolic Church) in Echmiadzin, Armavir; and the Genocide Monument and the Yerevan Brandy Factory in Yerevan.

Additional information regarding the Yerevan Ministerial Events is available on the official website of the Conference at <http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info>.

# Evaluation form and methodology

Following the event, the BFUG Secretariat carried out a survey meant to assess the Yerevan Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum.

An evaluation form was circulated electronically to all the participants registered for the events in Yerevan. For the form see below:



The participants were given 14 days to complete the form. Moreover, the evaluation form was designed to assess *event sessions* and *administrative aspects* regarding the organisation of the Yerevan Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum*.* A standard five-level Likert scale (namely “Poor”, “Fair”, “Good”, “Very Good” and “Excellent”) was used to assess the satisfaction rate of various aspects regarding the two events. The survey also provided open-ended questions, giving the opportunity for respondents to share their views.

# Results

The BFUG Secretariat received a total of 68 evaluation forms over the 14-day period from the participants of the Yerevan events.

The overall response rate was 13.7 % (68 responses out of 498 participants). Below you can find the summary of the responses **on the event sessions** (I) and **administrative aspects** (II).

## EVENT SESSIONS

The surveyed participants scored their overall satisfaction with the EHEA Ministerial Conference and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum as “Very good” on 52.9% of the cases, “excellent” on 35.3% of the cases, “good” on 10.3% of replies and only 1.5% rated the event with “fair”.

Figure 1. Overall satisfaction rate with the Yerevan MC and BPF

### EHEA Yerevan Ministerial Conference

Regarding the content of the discussions during the parallel and plenary sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference, 95.6% participants were satisfied with the way the sessions were managed and included all the inputs of the participants on the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué. When evaluating the discussions during the parallel and plenary sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference in terms of balance and managing to include all the inputs of the participants on the Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué, the participants rated these aspects as “Excellent” (35.4%), “Very good” (42.6%) and “Good” (17.6%).

Figure 2. Feedback on the MC parallel and plenary sessions

When reviewing the plenary sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference most respondents have assessed positively the “quality of moderation” (97.1%), “relevance of questions and answers” (99.9%), “interactivity in discussions” (89.7%) and “time planning of the session” (98.5%).

However it should be mentioned that 10.3% of participants felt there was a lack in the level of interactivity during the plenary sessions rating their answer with “poor” and “fair”.

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| --- | --- |
| Figure 3. Quality of moderation | Figure 4. Relevance of questions and answers |

|  |  |
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| Figure 5. Interactivity in discussion | Figure 6. Time planning of the session |

### Bologna Policy Forum

The survey also focused on the Bologna Policy Forum and the way its structure was seen as fit for purpose.

The distribution of respondents in the four parallel sessions of the Bologna Policy Forum is described within the chart below. Meanwhile, it should be noted that according to the answers 36.8% of respondents didn’t participate in any of the BPF sessions.

Figure 7. Respondents’ participation in the BPF parallel sessions

Respondents were also asked to assess their level of satisfaction with the parallel sessions of the Bologna Policy Forum. Similar to the EHEA plenary and parallel sessions, the Bologna Policy Forum parallel sessions were rated in most cases as “Excellent”, “Very good” and “Good” in terms of the *“quality of moderation”*, the *“relevance of the questions and answers*”, the *“interactivity in discussions*” and the “*time planning of the session”*. The interactivity in discussions during these sessions was rated lowest in comparison to the other assessed features.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Figure 8. Quality of moderation | Figure 9. Relevance of the questions and answers |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Figure 10. Interactivity in discussion | Figure 11. Time planning of the session |

The respondents were also asked to answer if their country/organisation would be willing to organise an event under the Bologna Policy Forum umbrella (conference, seminar, training, roundtable etc.). Below you can see the chart with the answers (yes / no) to the abovementioned question.

Figure 12. Interactivity in discussion Willingness to organise an event under the Bologna Policy Forum umbrella

In the case of a positive answer to the above-mentioned questions, the respondents were asked to clarify the preferred topics. For the list of answers, please refer to the Annex 1 in the present report.

Further on, the organisers have asked respondents to express their views on how they would like to see the Bologna Policy Forum evolving. Participants were also asked whether the focus of the forum should be primarily on exchanging regional and national experiences or if it should focus on sharing updates regarding the evolution of the Bologna Process. For the opinions expressed, please refer to the Annex 2 in the present report.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS

### Organising team

The support and assistance provided by the organisers before the event was rated in general as highly positive. 67.6% of the respondents rated their satisfaction of the support and assistance before the event with “Excellent”, 26.5% rated “Very good”, the remaining minor part rated as “Poor” and “Good”.

Figure 13. Support and assistance provided by the organisers before the event

The respondents also rated the flexibility and promptitude of the organisers in adapting to different requests before the Conference. Vast majority 58.7% rated it “Excellent”, 29.4% as “Very good”. Only 1.5% of respondents missed the answer of this question.

Figure 14. Flexibility and promptitude of the organisers in adapting to different requests

Majority 58.8% of the respondents rated the EHEA Ministerial Conference and BPF Manual as “Excellent”, and 30.9% as “Very good”, 5.9% did not answer this question.

Figure 15. EHEA Ministerial Conference and BPF Manual

The average satisfaction level related to the provided support and assistance by the organizers at the Ministerial Events, including the responsiveness to resolving requests, was higher than satisfactory. 85% of the surveyed participants rated their satisfaction level both during and after the Events “Very good” or better, that is to say “Excellent”.

Figure 16. Satisfaction with the support and assistance provided by the organisers during and after the events

Furthermore, the participants considered the information provided at the Conference and BPF official websites (public and restricted area) useful and according to the responses the Secretariat received, more than 80% of respondents rated their satisfaction level as “Very good” or “Excellent”. Also the guests seemed to be content with the given possibilities of interaction during the events and the percentage of “Very good” and “Excellent” satisfaction levels taken together exceed 80%.

Figure 17. Satisfaction with possibility for interaction in between the events

### Location of the event

With respect to the venue of the conference Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concerts Complex (SCC) participants valued in a high proportion the conference location and meeting rooms - ”Excellent” (47.1%) and ”Very good” (35.3%).

Figure 18. Satisfaction with the conference location and meeting rooms

With regards to the facilities of the events, half of the participants rated it as “Excellent”. For the distribution of the percentages see the pie chart below:

Figure 19. Satisfaction with the event’s facilities

As for the accomodation and transfers, 63.2 % of the participants considered it “Excellent”, while only 1.5 % rated it as “Fair”. The details in the percentages are available in the pie chart below:

Figure 20. Satisfaction with the accommodation and transfers

With respect to Wi-Fi access the majority of the participants (20.6 %) rated it equally as “Fair” and “Poor”. For the distribution of the percentages see the pie chart below:

Figure 21. Satisfaction with Wi-Fi access

### Satisfaction with the registration process

The process of the registration was rated highly positive by the vast majority of the respondents (”Excellent” 58.8 % and ”Very good” 23.5%). Only 7.4 % rated the registration process in the venue of the conference as “Fair”.

Figure 22. Satisfaction with the registration process

### Satisfaction with the Welcome Cocktail, Cultural Programme and official dinner at “Ojakh” restaurant

The participants expressed a high satisfaction level with respect to Welcome Cocktail evening hosted at the TUMO Center in the eve of the Yerevan Ministerial Conference, on 13 May.

Figure 23. Satisfaction with the Welcome Cocktail

In the afternoon of 15 May, the participants were offered to join one of the three cultural programmes, which were as follows: the Matenadaran (repository of ancient manuscripts, research institute and museum), Yerevan; the Echmiadzin Cathedral (Mother Church of the Armenian Apostolic Church), Echmiadzin, Armavir; the Genocide Monument and the Yerevan Brandy Factory, Yerevan.

The participants’ replies show highly positive reflection with respect to the cultural programme. More than 75% of respondents, who had taken part in any of the three programmes offered, rated their satisfaction level “Very good” and “Excellent”; while 32.3% of respondents had not been involved in any cultural programme.

Figure 24. Satisfaction with the Cultural Programmes

The majority of the respondents (70.6%) said they were impressed with the official dinner provided by the organizers at “Ojakh” restaurant and rated it as an “Excellent” event. 7.4% of respondents did not join the dinner.

Figure 25. Satisfaction with the dinner offered at “Ojakh” restaurant

### Satisfaction with the bilateral meetings and visits to the universities

Taking into account the requests from different countries to establish and further enhance cooperation within and outside the EHEA in the field of higher education, all delegations were given an opportunity to hold bilateral meetings with preferred countries/organisations according to their national priorities. In order engage counterparts as much as possible and make the discussions as efficient as possible the delegations provided the topics and key issues of discussions beforehand. This also aimed to ease negotiation on governmental level and it proved to be reasonable, since a number of agreements were reached in the filed of higher education during the Ministerial Events.

The delegations, which had requested bilateral meetings, held a total of 20 meetings on 13 May at Armenia Marriott Hotel Yerevan and on 14-15 May at SCC. 72% of the respondents said they had not requested bilateral meetings. 9% of respondents rated their satisfaction level as “Excellent” and 16% as “Very good”.

Figure 26. Satisfaction with the bilateral meetings

Upon the request of the participants, in the afternoon of 13 May visits were organised to the five Armenian Universities, namely Yerevan State University, Yerevan State Medical University, State Engineering University of Armenia, American University of Armenia and French University of Armenia. A total of 193 participants visited the universities. However, among the 68 respondents of the survey only few attended the universities, thus making it impossible to assess the satisfaction rate with this.

# *Annex 1*

***Would your country/ organisation be willing to organise an event under the Bologna Policy Forum umbrella (conference, seminar, training, roundtable etc.)?***

* on “Creating a Supportive Working Environment in European Higher Education”
* University as “person building” reality, not only technical/professional capacities, but also an art of living in the global society
* QAA would in principle be happy to work with the Bologna Policy Forum on a range of activities and would welcome further information about possible dates and locations
* Sorry to say so, but we will be busy organizing the events during our presidency and some other planned Bologna conferences & seminars on learning outcomes
* This should be further explored/discussed internally
* Possibly. We were attending the ministerial conference this time. With a larger delegation we would maybe be interested
* How to enhance the academic cooperation in the field of education? What does it mean ‘internationalisation of HE’? The impact of educational technological developments on HE? Timing: second half of 2017
* I have no decision power in this regard

# *Annex 2*

***How would you like to see the Bologna Policy Forum evolving? Should it aim primarily at exchanging regional and national experiences or should it focus on sharing updates regarding the evolution of the Bologna Process?***

* The two must come together, but it would be useful to pay more attention to regional and national experiences.
* To concentrate on regional and national experiences.
* It is disappointing that only a few of the invited countries attended, and it certainly raises the question of what should be the future of this initiative.
* Both dimensions, duly balanced.
* It should focus on sharing updates regarding the evolution of the Bologna Process.
* I do not see any need in continuing the BPF in its current form. I would rather see it as a separate event on a BFUG delegate level.
* The Arab countries and universities do not belong to the EHEA, but some are eagerly interested to somehow join the process as a means to stimulate regional changes.
* Policy Forum should involve the exchange of ideas, more opportunities for communication and discussion should be provided.
* It should focus on the regional and national impact of the Bologna implementation.
* Perhaps it should also give the opportunity for the EHEA members to learn from experiences from other regions/parts of the world.
* There is a need to rethink the concept since only the EHEA ministers spoke in the plenary sessions.
* More attention should be paid to common/worldwide trends in Higher education, for instance online education.
* It should focus on sharing updates regarding the evolution of the Bologna Process.
* It is difficult to give a straightforward answer to this question. From our view, we should reconsider the whole concept of the Bologna Policy Forum in order to guarantee a full engagement of third countries at the BPF but also during the in-between periods.
* I would like to see further elaboration on topics discussed and openness to new and different ideas. Regional and national experiences need to be taken into account because that is the only way that the Process will evolve. I would like to see a critical eye on experience and not the instant invalidation of everything that seems not to fit in a preconceived idea of how higher education should function. There is a need to attempt to focus more on the students and their experiences and adapt to their needs, making sure they are receiving the best education possible.
* Both
* More focused on other Regions and other countries not involved in the Bologna process.
* This issue should be discussed in depth in the BFUG.
* Both
* It should aim at enhancing the academic cooperation and exchange with other regions in the world, not only the neighbouring countries or the Mediterranean countries. The discussion should focus on developments in QA, relevance of HE, educational technology, etc.
* It would be great to combine both exchanging experiences and sharing updates regarding the evolution of the BP. Moreover, we would suggest concentrating more on best practices implemented in the EHEA countries.
* Both
* Focus on exchanging regional experiences.
* We need to concentrate on both of the issues, maybe more focused on sharing national experiences.
* Both
* It should focus on sharing updates regarding the evolution of the Bologna Process.
* I think it would be better to focus on sharing updates regarding the evolution of the Bologna Process.