



Ministry of Education, Culture and
Science of the Netherlands



Ministry of Education
of the Republic of Moldova

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Paper on work progress of Advisory Group 4

Name of AG/WG: **Advisory Group Diploma Supplement Revision (AG 4)**

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Date: February 2016

Update of the work (will be updated for all BFUG meetings)

The Terms of Reference were discussed and validated.

After brief presentation from the EC, CoE, UNESCO and Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee representatives, the group discussed the general context of the group's activity:

- the revision of the Europass together with the revision of the Modernization Agenda
- the revision of the DS needs to take into account the view of EC, CoE, UNESCO and LRC.

A presentation on the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, based on the 2015 Implementation Report and on the conclusions drawn by the 2012-2015 Working Group on Structural reforms was made by the Bologna Follow-Up Secretariat representative. The conclusions were discussed within the group.

As main conclusions:

- Not all countries issue the DS automatically;
- Learning outcomes/qualifications are not included or not well defined;
- The intended audience and purpose are not clear;
- The DS is not connected with the vocational education;
- The language used is not very easily understood;
- There is no common understanding on the intended use of the DS;
- The current format is not flexible enough;
- The internationalization component is not included in the DS;
- There is a need for user guides (for HEIs, employers, etc.) and good practice examples.
- The DS label was appreciated and should continue;
- There is an increased need for digitization.

The participants agreed that AG4 should discuss about the possible inclusion within the DS of:

- internationalization in the DS format (mobilities, double degree);
- non-formal education and recognition of prior learning.

The European Commission insisted on the importance given to the DS as transparency tool to easier access in terms of work opportunities in the framework of the Innovation agenda 2020 and particularly within the Agenda for new skills and jobs.

EUA and ESU agreed to prepare a short written contribution regarding the DS in the student use perspective.

The European Commission remarked that the EC European skills/competences, qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) initiative may prove useful regarding a better description of the skills in the template that fits with employers' expectations. Council of Europe underlined that the notion of learning outcomes encompasses skills or competences from an employability perspective.

The Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee representative informed the group that all changes regarding DS template must be submitted to the annual meeting of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee. An extraordinary meeting could be scheduled.

AG4 underlined that BUSINESSEUROPE should be involved in the work of the AG.

The group agreed on the working methodology and the main focus of the next two meetings.

Calendar ((what have you done and what is planned to + indicate which events you want to include in the general tentative schedule)

According to the ToR, AG4 discussed:

- the recent developments in higher education;
- *Diploma Supplement content in relation with the Revised ECTS Users' Guide*
- the context of the AG's activity in supporting Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee, the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO in reviewing the Diploma Supplement.

What is planned to do:

- In the next meeting, it will be useful to have the opinion of the Business Europe representative.
- to request studies/questionnaires from AG4 members regarding DS or LO plus good practice examples on the issuing of the DS.

Topics to be discussed:

- *A better information on Learning Outcomes to better help diplomas recognition*
- *Improved content of Diploma Supplement to help automatic recognition*
- *Digitalization of the Diploma Supplement – challenges and practical issues*
- *Introducing Doctoral Supplement – model, common base, content & challenges*

Events:

The next meeting will be held in Brussels (Belgium) or Vienna (Austria) on the 1st of April 2016. Location needs to be confirmed. The topic to be discussed will be the objectives and perspective of the Diploma Supplement.

The third meeting on Learning Outcomes will be hosted in Tirana, Albania on 23d June 2016. The venue to be confirmed.

Romania proposed to host the final meeting of 2016 either in October prior to the BFUG Board or in November prior to the BFUG meeting.