UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Strasbourg, October 30, 2017

BOLOGNA FOLLOW UP GROUP Tartu, November 9 – 10, 2017

Introduction

The Council of Europe is a consultative member of the BFUG and Board. It is a member of the Advisory Groups on the Belarus Roadmap, Non-Implementation, and the review of the Diploma Supplement. With UNESCO, the Council of Europe is the co-depository of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the only legally binding text of the EHEA, which had been ratified by all EHEA member States but one as well as by several non-EHEA countries.

Framework

The Council of Europe's Education program is overseen by the Steering Committee on Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE), made up of the representatives of all 50 States Party to the European Cultural Convention, including all 48 EHEA members. The Chair of the CDPPE is Etienne Gilliard (Belgium), the Vice Chair Maria Fassari (Greece). A sub-group on higher education advises the CDPPE and its Bureau.

The Education Department is part of the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, encompassing Education, Culture and Youth. Culture was integrated into the Directorate as of September 1, 2017. The Director is Matthew Johnson, the Head of the Education Department Sjur Bergan. The Education Policy Division is headed by Villano Qiriazi, the Division for Cooperation and Capacity Building by Sarah Keating and the European Centre for Modern Languages, located in Graz, by Sarah Breslin. Stefania Kruger (Education Policy Division) is Secretary to the CDPPE.

The Council of Europe Education program

The Education program[1] aims to strengthen the contribution of Education to the Council of Europe's overarching goals of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Higher education is a policy area within the program as well as a part of several transversal projects, in particular:

  ➢ Competences for Democratic Culture
  ➢ Ethics, Transparency, and Integrity in Education (ETINED)
  ➢ Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

The democratic mission of higher education

The Council of Europe organized a conference on "Higher Education for Diversity, Social Inclusion, and Community: A Democratic Imperative"[2] in cooperation with the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy, the European Wergeland Centre and other partners at LUMSA University in Rome on June 15 - 16, 2017.

The conference was part of a series of conferences, called Global Fora, focusing on the democratic mission of higher education and held every three years on average. The trans-Atlantic cooperation on this issue draws on the different perspectives and strengths of partners in the US and Europe. While student and staff participation is a strong point of European higher education, US institutions overall gave a stronger record of engaging with their local communities, even if a number of European institutions also play an important role in this respect. On June 14 the Council of Europe and the Anchor Institutions Task Force organized a meeting, held at the Congregation for Catholic Education, of a number of European universities interested in developing their democratic mission in their local communities.

The conference in Rome will give rise to a volume in the Council of Europe Higher Education Series.

The next Global Forum will be held in 2019 and focus on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. It will most likely be held at Council of Europe Headquarters in Strasbourg.

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[1] See https://www.coe.int/en/web/education
[2] http://www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/faculties,_institutes_and_centres/centres/iace/2017_rome_global_forum

Education provision for refugees

The Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee will meet for an extraordinary session in Strasbourg on November 14 to consider a draft Recommendation on the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons, and persons in a refugee-like situation. The draft was considered by the ENIC and NARIC Networks[3] at their annual meeting in København on June 26 - 27.

In 2017 the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs of Greece have run the project "European Qualifications Passport for Refugees" (EQPR) aiming to facilitate the recognition of qualifications held by refugees even when these cannot be adequately documented. The project has relied on the strong participation of the ENICs of Greece, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom. The methodology used for issuing the EQPR has successfully been tested thanks to on site and online evaluation sessions. 73 out of the 92 refugees who were interviewed by qualified credentials evaluators received the EQPR. The aim of the follow-up project, to be implemented with the support of existing and additional partners, is two-fold: to establish a sound methodology for assessing and describing refugees' qualifications in a common format and to gain broad acceptance for the EQPR so that neither refugees nor public authorities need to repeat the assessment process if and when refugees move to new countries.

A documentary on the European Qualifications Passport for refugees and its benefit on refugees' lives will be launched on November 13, on the eve of the meeting of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in Strasbourg.

Ethics, Transparency, and Integrity in Education (ETINED)

ETINED is a network of specialists appointed by the 50 States parties to the European Cultural Convention. Its core mission is to exchange information and good practice on ethics, transparency and integrity in education with special attention to the fight against corruption and fraud in education and research. Its mandate is based on the assumption that issues regarding quality education and corruption can only be effectively addressed if all relevant sections of society commit fully to fundamental ethical principles for public and professional life rather than rely only on top-down regulatory measures.

Its work objectives are:
    A. Combatting education fraud
    B. Promoting integrity in higher education
    C. Supporting the effectiveness of ethical codes for the teaching profession as a mean of fostering ethics in education.

New publications in 2017 included studies on the *Codes of conduct for teachers in Europe, a background study* and *South-East European Project on Policies for Academic Integrity.* This latter study focuses on academic integrity in higher education in six countries of South East Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". It provides an overview of policies and practices used in several higher education institutions in the region and also provides recommendations, examples of good practice and guidelines for policy makers and education professionals with a specific focus on plagiarism, academic dishonesty, examination cheating and ghost-writing.
All ETINED publications are available on: www.coe.int/etined

The next ETINED plenary session will be held on February 15 and 16, 2018 in Strasbourg. It will *inter alia* include a reflection on a possible policy framework document on education fraud covering the following themes:

- Contract cheating,
- Fraudulent credentials,
- Technology for cheating,
- Plagiarism,
- The transnational dimension of education fraud and cross-border cooperation.

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[3] http://www.enic-naric.net/

Strengthen Integrity and Combat Corruption - Capacity Building programs

Armenia

The first capacity building program in this field is being carried out under the EU/CoE Eastern Partnership Cooperation Framework 2015-2020 in Armenia "Strengthening Integrity and Combatting Corruption in Higher Education in Armenia". Expected outcomes include that education professionals and students have improved knowledge in strengthening integrity and combatting corruption in HE through training modules and a contribution to the effective implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Government of Armenia.

About 120 staff and students from 16 higher education institutions have been trained in the application of three toolkits enhancing transparency and accountability in higher education governance, human resource management, student assessment and curricula development as well as on development of a Code of Ethics for their institutions. Through cascade training some 120 additional academic staff have been trained in the toolkit enhancing transparency and accountability in student assessment and curricula development.

South East Europe

In South East Europe, three higher education programs in Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo[*] focus on strengthening integrity and anti-corruption measures within **the European Union - Council of Europe Horizontal Facility** (2016-2019) for the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Montenegro

As a part of the overall reform of the higher education system in Montenegro, the Ministry of Education intends to adopt the Law on Academic Integrity by end of 2017. At the request of the Ministry, Council of Europe will provide technical assistance in developing this legislation. Specifically, technical assistance is being sought in connection with supporting the country's efforts to put in place an effective framework supporting academic integrity that is in compliance with relevant international standards with special emphasis on plagiarism. In order to provide assistance, Council of Europe will mobilise relevant expert(s) who will work with a working group tasked with the development of the law.

Members of ethical commissions at higher education institutions in Montenegro will also be trained under the auspices of the CoE project. The Ministry of Education has also requested assistance in the provision of capacity-building to the newly established Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The project will support the development of the training needs assessment for the Agency`s staff.

Serbia

In Serbia, the project complements the national strategy of development of education and also supports Serbia in its EU accession process.

Following the baseline assessment on integrity of higher education and the recommendations given, the main focus of the project is on filling the crucial gaps in the process of improvement of the integrity and anti-corruption mechanisms in the higher education system. The Council of Europe project will, *inter alia*, result in the development of a code of ethics for students to be introduced in all public universities.

The action will also develop a training course for students the focus of which will be integrity, ethics and awareness-raising. As with the code, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development with the help of the Anti-Corruption Agency plans to introduce this course in all public universities in Serbia.

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[*] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

Kosovo*

In Kosovo*, codes of conduct have been developed for the following categories: academic staff, students and for Members of Boards, Rectors, Pro-Rectors and other staff with managerial responsibilities. The documents are expected to create a good basis for ethical conduct of all actors in universities and for appropriate measures to be taken in case of violation of any norms.

A series of awareness-raising activities are being held with academic staff and students of public universities in order to improve their knowledge of the risks of corruption risks and to enhance academic integrity in higher education. Experts on issues of plagiarism and contract cheating will hold lectures in various public universities to speak about plagiarism, ways of detecting plagiarism and risks.

Competences for Democratic Culture

By early 2018 the Council of Europe will present a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC)[4] consisting of:

➢ A model, comprising 20 competences and adopted by the Standing Conference of Council of Europe Ministers of Education in Brussels in April 2016
➢ A set of descriptors for each competence
➢ Guidance documents. The first six guidance documents cover curriculum development, pedagogy, teacher education, assessment, the whole school approach and resilience to radicalization and violent extremism.

The descriptors and the guidance documents were presented at the Prague Forum on October 26 - 27 and will then be presented to the CDPPE. In the next phase (2018 - 19) emphasis will shift toward implementation but some further development work will also be undertaken, in particular on guidance documents on higher education and vocational education and training as well as on descriptors for the youngest learners.

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[4] https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/competences-for-democratic-culture