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PARIS COMMUNIQUÉ DRAFT 2.0

Please note that titles and sub-titles are tentative and will be changed

Preamble/Introduction

We, Ministers, meeting in Paris on 24 and 25 May 2018, 20 years after the Sorbonne declaration, are proud to recognize that the vision which inspired our predecessors has given rise to the European Higher education area (EHEA) where 48 countries with different political, cultural and academic backgrounds cooperate on the basis of open dialogue shared goals and common commitments.

The Bologna Process has allowed to set the basis for dialogue and convergence among our higher education systems. Through our cooperation, which has become a point of reference for other regions of the world, we have paved the way for student mobility, comparability and transparency of different national higher education systems and increased quality and competitiveness for European higher education.

Since the Sorbonne and the Bologna Declarations, the society has changed in many regards and the fundamental values of higher education are challenged in Europe and beyond. Welfare is unevenly distributed, and unemployment, especially among the young, is high in many countries; intolerance, populism, polarization and radicalization have increased

It is thus essential that we renew our vision for the EHEA and agree on new goals to consolidate the EHEA structure and to strengthen further developments.

I. Roles and Objectives of Higher Education

Higher education provides opportunities for individual development throughout life and improves for the prospect of employment, and thereby active participation in society. It has a key role to play in furthering intercultural understanding, civic engagement, ethical awareness, tolerance and respect of others in an inclusive society. Higher education should therefore be equally accessible to all, irrespective of social, economic or cultural background.

We want higher education to promote effective and active citizenship in a multicultural and inclusive society.

Facing the challenges that society and democracy have to encounter today, the fundamental values linked to academic freedom, institutional autonomy and participation of staff and students in higher education governance are of outmost importance for EHEA development together with the implementation of the Bologna process principles in our 48 different national contexts. Academic integrity, social responsibility, transparency, commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, are also essential to fostering high quality education and research.

46 We stress the importance of inclusiveness of higher education and reaffirm our commitment to
47 the fundamental values of the EHEA as well as to the responsibility of public authorities in
48 ensuring that they are a living reality. Furthermore, we recognize the role and responsibility of
49 higher education institutions and we encourage them to engage in critical self-analysis and
50 strategic value development.

51
52 At the same time, societal changes require that we explore new aspects of the fundamental
53 values, which go well beyond the legal relationship between public authorities and the academic
54 community.

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56 We will ensure that policy measures are compatible with and further the fundamental values of
57 the EHEA, together with encouraging the contribution of higher education institutions to society
58 and we encourage them to continuously improve their system of governance.

59
60 **II. Challenges of the EHEA**

61
62 ***Implementation***

63
64 The success of the Bologna Process depends on the full commitment to its implementation by
65 all parties: it relies on national policy makers, institutions, staff, students and other stakeholders
66 to make the EHEA a reality. The functioning credibility and development of the EHEA depends
67 on successful implementation of our agreed goals. Progresses have been made but
68 implementation and completion of the reforms varies among the 48 countries.

69
70 We reaffirm our commitment to paying attention to the remaining issues identified in the
71 “Bologna Process Implementation Report”.

72
73 In accordance to the Yerevan Communiqué, the Bologna Follow-up Group identified three key
74 commitments to reinforce and support the quality and exchanges inside the EHEA (i) a three-
75 cycle system compatible with the Qualification framework of the EHEA and scaled by ECTS; (ii)
76 the compliance of recognition practices with the Lisbon Recognition Convention; and (iii) a
77 quality assurance system in conformity with European Standards and Guidelines.

78
79 We will strengthen our efforts in implementing in all our national systems all the commitments in
80 order to make the EHEA effective and attractive.

81
82 To improve the implementation of the three key commitments, we adopt... *[waiting for joint peer*
83 *support approach from AG3-WG2-in collaboration with WG1]*

84
85 We recognize that the implementation of our common commitments is complex, and
86 acknowledge that the task might be difficult for some topics and for some members. We
87 underline the role and responsibility of higher education institutions to reach these goals. On the
88 basis of the conclusions of the report and the recommendations of the BFUG on the Belarus
89 roadmap since this country joined the EHEA in 2015, we undertake to... *[waiting for*
90 *recommendations and debates from AG2]*

91
92 Implementation is only measured at national level so far and we now need to move beyond and
93 take into account the reality of cross-border exchanges in education, teaching and research.

94
95 ***Learning and teaching***

96
97 We, Ministers, are determined to support the development of new teaching methods and
98 modern approaches to teaching and learning and teaching enhancement and to support

99 including integration of the digital transformation in order to enhance digital competences of
100 students and staff.

101
102 We will ensure the new digital technologies help tackle inequality in the access to higher
103 education and build a more inclusive learning and teaching community by ensuring integration
104 of social and diverse student population and integration of academic practitioners in the design
105 and implementation of new pedagogical initiatives.

106
107 We promote a more flexible access to higher education that takes into account the rapid
108 changes in our societies and in employment landscape throughout lifelong learning
109 development and support the idea of short cycles as part of higher education and as part of a
110 flexible study path.

111
112 We will promote recognition of prior learning as it can both help individuals in acquiring new
113 qualifications and migrants in getting their skills recognized at international level and national
114 level in their new country.

115
116 We will promote further the principles set by the Lisbon Recognition Convention, in particular for
117 refugees and persons in a refugee-like situation.

118
119 We support that it is necessary to develop joint or transnational programs and stress
120 “interoperability” between the EHEA higher education systems in order to foster mobility of
121 students and staff, as these are key pillars of the Bologna process, increase collaboration in
122 teaching and research, developing high quality research and maintaining high level of didactical
123 competences and skills.

124
125 ***International cooperation in the field of higher education, including promotion of mobility***

126
127 Increasing pace and complexity of internationalization has impacted specifically on higher
128 education which as a whole has opened up to the world in recent years combined to the digital
129 and media transformation and with the issues raised by migration in several regions.

130
131 As a space of dialogue and co-construction the EHEA which encompasses a very wide
132 geographical area is contributing to the geopolitical interactions between the concerned
133 countries and should keep contributing positively at a time when one can observe backlash
134 against globalization (or internationalization) in parts of the world, combined with changing
135 geopolitical relations, and this spells uncertainty for the global knowledge economy of the future.

136
137 Although there is still work to be done across the EHEA on reaching inter-operability in many
138 areas to sustain student mobility, the model of dialogue and convergence between national
139 systems fostered by EHEA based on voluntary mutual adjustment among members is still a
140 appealing one.

141
142 We support the idea of an EHEA forum in order to enter into dialogue with other international
143 fora in order to develop international staff and students exchanges, foster joint programs and
144 research programs and enhance multicultural understanding and inclusiveness.

145
146 We want the EHEA to develop an innovative vision in order to foster a sustainable international
147 dialogue in our changing and connected societies as other internationalization initiatives or
148 strategies might be evolving around the globe.

149
150 We recommend the EHEA to develop a more thorough approach of international cooperation
151 based on closer and elaborate contacts - such as thematic workshops - with other regional, or

152 international higher education organizations and establish a dialogue with key international
153 stakeholders.

154

155 **III. New goals (next period) and perspectives for the future EHEA beyond 2020**

156

157 ***Higher education and active citizenship***

158

159 We encourage the higher education institutions to rethink their strategies and activities to
160 respond to the complexities and diversities of society. Joint programs and mobility should be
161 developed as a way to participate to a better understanding of each other and as participating to
162 the construction of a shared European culture.

163

164 We therefore renew and strengthen our commitment to the fundamental values and core
165 principles of the EHEA by recognizing the importance of the civic and social role of higher
166 education, and the importance of the free and informed pursuit of knowledge and freedom of
167 thought and expression which are at the heart of democratic culture and societies.

168

169 Good quality teaching rests on good research; the principle that all higher education should be
170 research-based, should be reinforced and we reaffirm that the initiation of undergraduates into
171 research is necessary.

172

173 Teaching, learning and research are all three necessary key elements in the development of
174 critical and creative thought. We encourage HEIs to ensure that synergies between teaching,
175 learning and research should be considered in a more systematic way and therefore we
176 encourage more and further interaction between the EHEA and the European Research Area

177

178 ***Renewed vision of the EHEA***

179

180 We call for a concerted reflection and action on the perspective of European universities. We
181 will promote cooperation between higher education institutions at international and regional
182 levels in order to contribute to growth, creativity and societal development.

183

184 We will work on creating truly European higher education institutions tackling ambitious goals
185 concerning the mobility of students and will support multilingualism across the EHEA.

186

187 We strongly call for reflection from the BFUG on the issues of the EHEA visibility and
188 collaboration with other stakeholders and a wider audience at the international level. A renewed
189 Bologna Process needs to affirm its values and visibility.

190

191 We mandate the BFUG to engage in a reflection upon its governance, the process and its
192 structure as well as to identify effective solutions to the period after 2020.

193

194 ***The future of the Process after 2020***

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196 We call on the Bologna Follow-up Group to present to us at our next Ministerial Conference in
197 2020 in Italy, a proposal on how to take the EHEA further beyond 2020, in particular with a new
198 governance and revised working modes with a view of improving effectiveness and ownership
199 by including higher education institutions and stakeholders to a larger extent.

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204 Annexes: tbd

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206 Revised Diploma Supplement
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