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**FOURTH MEETING OF THE AD-HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVISION OF THE ECTS USERS’ GUIDE**

**Brussels, 16 October 2013, 09:00 – 17:00**

**Draft minutes**

**List of participants**

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| **Country/ Organisation** | **Representative** |
| Armenia | Nerses Gevorgyan |
| Austria | Regine Bolter |
| BFUG Secretariat | Marta Simonyan |
| Belgium/Flemish Community | *Apologies* |
| EC | Adam Tyson |
| EC | Margie Waters |
| EC | Daphne Scherer |
| ENQA | *Apologies* |
| ESU | Nevena Vuksanović |
| EUA | *Apologies* |
| EURASHE | Sandra Kraze |
| Germany | Volker Gehmlich |
| France  | *Apologies* |
| Hungary | *Apologies* |
| Italy | Maria Sticchi Damiani |
| Lithuania | Raimonda Markeviciene |
| Moldova | *Apologies* |
| Netherlands  | *Apologies* |
| Norway  | *Apologies* |
| Sweden | Janerik Lundquist |
| UK  | *Apologies* |

1. ***Opening***
* ***Welcome by Adam Tyson (Head of Unit “Higher Education, Modernisation Agenda; Erasmus”, DG EAC)***
* ***Objectives of meeting, agenda, administrative issues***
* ***Adoption of the Minutes of the 3rd meeting***

Mr Adam Tyson (EC), the Chair of the Ad-hoc working group (WG) on the Revision of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) Users’ Guide welcomed the participants to the fourth meeting of the WG.

The Chair outlined the objectives of the meeting: to arrive to an agreement on the current version of the ECTS User’s Guide after the work done by the experts at drafting session, include other elements which are not yet there, and plan the way forward. The Chair presented the agenda of the meeting, which was adopted without any amendments.

The Chair excused Ms Béatrice Delpouve (FR), appointed to a new assignment in Africa, will keep on providing her expertise by emails. An additional FR expert will be appointed at a later stage.

The Minutes of the 3rd meeting were adopted unanimously.

1. ***Presentation of the draft revised Guide***

Ms Maria Sticchi (Italy) presented the draft version of the Guide, prepared by a group of 4 experts (Raimonda MARKEVICIENE, Volker Gehmlich, Maria Sticchi Damiani and Nevena Vuksanovic), as well as latest changes taking into consideration the comments sent via email by the WG members. The WG members discussed the context and structure of the Guide, endorsed the document produced by the drafters and made additional comments which were taken into consideration

During the deliberations, the following points were outlined:

* ECTS should not be a bureaucratic tool, but rather a tool for innovation, balancing old and new features;
* Implementation of ECTS should benefit from the increased and active involvement of teachers and students;
* Language of the Guide needs to be simplified to be understandable for everyone, and terminology needs to be coherent throughout the document.

The results of the discussion are given in the revised version of the draft ECTS Users’ Guide (see document below):

[Annex revised draft Guide here]

1. ***Parallel discussion on elements not yet included in the revised guide***
* ***Discussion in small groups on elements to be included in the revised guide and reporting to Plenary***

In order to achieve better results, the participants were split into 3 subgroups and held discussions on 3 different topics.

* + Short cycle, doctoral studies and JPs in the revised Guide;
	+ New modes of learning (OER, MOOCs, etc.);
	+ Lifelong Learning (informal and non-formal learning, RPL).

Daphne Scherer (EC) in her presentation highlighted points that the WG had earlier agreed to include in the guide under these headings, but that needed some further input from the group.

More information is available in the ppt below.



The discussions resulted in the following proposals:

Subgroup 1: Short cycle, doctoral studies and JPs in the revised Guide

* The group acknowledged the contribution of the ad-hoc WG on the third cycle to the revision of the ECTS Users’ Guide
* The ECTS Users’ Guide should include the possibilities for doctoral studies to use ECTS even if use of ECTS varies across countries and across doctoral programmes;Assessing process of LOs should be clarified in the Guide.

Subgroup 2: New modes of learning (OER, MOOCs, etc.);

* The role of students should be strengthened through their increased participation in evaluation of the programmes and quality assurance and through the improvement of student centred learning;
* Educational components should include new modes of learning ;
* The guide should include guidelines that would help HEIs in recognising new modes of learning (e.g. MOOCs) and of mobility (e.g. virtual mobility), informal and non-formal learning, including RPL

Subgroup 3: Lifelong Learning (informal and non-formal learning, RPL)

* The focus should be on the identification of LOs also for informal, non-formal learning, with flexibility in assessing them, when traditional exams are not suitable.
* LOs assessment methodologies for informal and non-formal learning might be differing. The assessment could include the portfolio, job performance and other personal achievements.
* The challenge is to define the methodologies of revealing what the learner has achieved in terms of LOs. So far countries have been using RPL to award whole degrees or credits towards obtaining the degree: e.g. Latvia- up to 30%, Germany-up to 50%, France-up to 100%. Moreover, there is a need to validate these percentages at the national level. In some countries, e.g. Germany, the LOs of informal and non-formal learning are reflected with those of NQFs with the intention to enter them into the respective level. The consequences of this could be the final credits allocation corresponding to those of the specific level.
* Also there is a need of exchange of information between ECTS and ECVET.
1. ***Discussion on the way forward***

The working group discussed the need for a broader consultation, the results of which should be reported to the BFUG in 2014. The Structural Reforms WG will be invited to comment on the draft version of ECTS Users’ Guide.

The group agreed on consultation of stakeholders:

1. A face to face meeting to be held at the end of January 2014 with representatives of EU-level stakeholder organisations in the higher education sector, higher education institutions, Bologna Experts, HEREs, and other actors in higher education across the European Higher Education Area.
2. Structured requests for input will be sent in advance of the above-mentioned meeting to the invited participants, asking them to assess the work done by the ad-hoc Working Group on the revision of the ECTS Users’ Guide and suggest areas for discussion and improvement which they would like to raise during the meeting.

The combination of these two channels should provide a wide range of input from key actors with a stake in higher education.

The Chair mentioned that the M&I WG meeting would take place in Madrid on 21-22 October. Maria Sticchi will represent the group and will report on the group’s work on description of study programs.

Finally, it was agreed that following earlier agreement of the WG, the EC will prepare and circulate a draft letter on behalf of the WG on the ESG revision.

1. ***AOB and closing of the meeting***

The WG is planning to have 2 more meetings; one to be held in February 2014 and the last one in the spring 2014.