

Rules of Procedures of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG)

DRAFT - 4 February 2024, revised in consideration of feedback received from the BFUG members at and after the Madrid BFUG (up to 13 December)

The present document comprises the rules of procedure by which the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will be governed. It includes two major sections:

- **Part 1** sets out the Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area (RoP-EHEA), which provide the overall framework. Any change of these rules shall be subject to the decision of Ministers.
- **Part 2** sets out the Rules of Procedures of the Bologna Follow-up Group (RoP-BFUG) and its sub-structures. It can be subject to changes, decided by BFUG, as far as these are in full compliance with the RoP-EHEA (part 1). Otherwise, such changes require endorsement by Ministers, and, if needed, a change in the RoP-EHEA. In case of a conflict between the two sets of rules, the RoP-EHEA shall prevail over the RoP-BFUG.¹

The RoP-EHEA shall come into force when adopted by Ministers. The RoP-BFUG shall come into force when adopted by the BFUG following the 2024 Ministerial Conference.

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PART 1 RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

WE, the Ministers responsible for higher education of the States, which are members of the European Higher Education Area, meeting in Tirana on 29 and 30 May 2024;

Considering that over its 25 years of existence, the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area have provided a successful and unique model for coordinated policy reform, taken forward through cooperation between public authorities, higher education institutions, students and staff, respecting the roles and prerogatives of each;

Reaffirming our continued commitment to the European Higher Education Area through cooperation on and coordination of higher education reform and policy development across Europe with the participation of public authorities, higher education institutions, students, and staff through their representative organisations; as well as cooperation with international institutions and governmental and non-governmental organisations with competence in higher education;

Reaffirming that the aim of the European Higher Education Area is to enhance the quality of higher education as well as academic mobility and cooperation;

Reaffirming that the aim of the European Higher Education Area is to strengthen the role of higher education, in and its contribution to our societies, to make them more inclusive, sustainable and resilient, to maintain and strengthen a culture of democracy and human rights, and to build peaceful relations marked by mutual confidence across Europe, and with global partners;

Reaffirming that through its policies and practice, the European Higher Education Area shall foster and consolidate the fundamental values of higher education: academic freedom, academic integrity, institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, and public responsibility for and of higher education;

Considering that at its present stage of development, the European Higher Education Area requires an enhanced framework to fulfil its ambitious mission and achieve the changes that our higher education sectors but also our societies require;

ADOPT these Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area. Its provisions are valid for the Ministerial Conferences, the Bologna Follow-up Group and its working structures, including the Secretariat of the European Higher Education Area.

I GUIDING PRINCIPLES

I.1 A process built on European cooperation

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) builds on the Bologna Process, a voluntary intergovernmental approach, through which develops its members and consultative members jointly develop policies, adopted by the competent public authorities of its member States and implemented within each education system, in collaboration with and consultation of the higher education community of institutions, students and staff.

I.2 Policies and instruments

Ministers identify the policy areas and measures through the declarations and communiqués they adopt at their regular Ministerial Conferences or in any other setting they may find appropriate for decision making. They may decide to establish frameworks, standards, guidelines, and other mechanisms to further and ensure implementation through coordination, cooperation and mutual support at European level.

I.3 The Bologna Follow-up Group

Between Ministerial Conferences, the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), where all members and consultative members are represented, develops and adopts the work programme of the EHEA, in accordance with the priorities set by Ministers.

I.4 Co- and Vice-Chairs

The EHEA and its structures are chaired by two Co-Chairs appointed for a period of six months, normally from 1 January to 30 June and from 1 July to 31 December. One Co-Chair represents a European Union member State and the other a non-European Union member State of the EHEA.

The order of the European Union Co-Chairs shall normally follow the order of Presidencies of the Council of the European Union, that of the non-European Union Co-Chairs the names of the States in English alphabetical order. The order may nevertheless be modified.

The Vice-Chair of the European Higher Education Area represents the member State hosting the forthcoming Ministerial Conference and holds office for the period between two Ministerial Conferences.

I.5 Ethics

The EHEA shall be developed, maintained and governed in accordance with its fundamental values and in observation of high ethical standards. The BFUG is to develop a specific Code of Ethics for its own work and its working structures, including the Secretariat.

I.6 Implementation of agreed policies

All members shall do their utmost, within their respective education systems and contexts, to further the implementation of policies and decisions adopted by Ministers.

II MEMBERSHIP

The Higher Education Area has members and consultative members, as listed in Annex 1.

II.1 Members

States party to the European Cultural Convention are eligible for membership of the EHEA provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives and commitments of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education². The European Commission is equally a member of the EHEA.

II.2 Consultative members

European representative organisations with a legitimate interest in and commitment to higher education and intergovernmental organisations representative of public authorities with competence in higher education policy at European level are eligible for consultative membership of the EHEA.

II.3 European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) was established under the Bologna Process, with a mandate related to quality assurance. It may participate in the BFUG and its structures, without voting rights.'

II.4 EHEA partners

The BFUG may grant organisations that do not fulfil the criteria for consultative membership an association with the EHEA. Any such decision shall be communicated to Ministers and shall be considered to modify Annex 2 to these Rules of the EHEA, which lists the currently associated EHEA partners.

III ACCESSION, WITHDRAWAL AND EXCLUSION

III.1 Accession

Ministers have the exclusive competence to accept new members and consultative members of the EHEA, usually at the regular Ministerial Conference. Applications are to be submitted to and supported by the BFUG and will be examined in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the BFUG. (see RoP-BFUG)

III.2 Withdrawal

Any member, consultative member or partner may withdraw from the EHEA upon notification in writing duly signed by its appropriate authority, to the Secretariat of the EHEA, in attention to the Co-Chairs, Withdrawal will be effective after one month.

² Cf Berlin Communiqué.

III.3 Suspension and exclusion

Ministers may decide to suspend or exclude a member or consultative member should it pursue policies or actions that significantly contradict the commitments of the EHEA, constitute a significant violation of its values or confirm an intention to do so.

IV GOVERNING BODIES

IV.1 Governing bodies of the European Higher Education Area

The EHEA has the following governance bodies:

- The Ministerial Conference
- The BFUG, which comprises its Board, the two Co-Chairs and the Vice Chair

IV.2 The Ministerial Conference

i. Role and composition

The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making authority of the EHEA. It is composed of Ministers responsible for higher education or their substitutes of the States members of the EHEA and of representatives of the highest possible rank with competence in higher education policy of the European Commission and of the consultative members. Delegations representing countries/education systems shall also include a leader of a higher education institution and a student representative.

ii. Process and schedule

The Ministerial Conference shall meet in regular session at least every three years, and as far as possible in physical presence. Extraordinary meetings of Ministers shall be held by decision of the Co-Chairs or when requested in writing by at least one third of the Ministers and duly authorised representatives of the European Commission and the consultative members.

iii. Competences and tasks

The Ministerial Conference sets its own agenda and take the decisions as Ministers consider appropriate. It has exclusive competence in matters concerning:

- Determining the major goals and priorities of the EHEA.
- The adoption of declarations and communiqués.
- The adoption of standards, guidelines, and other instruments, which have been formally agreed and are therefore considered as binding on the EHEA and its members.
- The admission or exclusion of members and consultative members of the EHEA.
- The decision on host and venue of Ministerial Conferences and Global Policy Fora.
- Any modification of the present Rules of Procedure for the EHEA (RoP-EHEA).

IV.3 The Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG shall oversee and direct the development of the EHEA between Ministerial Conferences, ensure the implementation of commitments adopted by Ministers, develop its work programme on this basis and prepare issues for discussion and decision by Ministers. It is made up of duly authorised representatives, with competence in higher education policy matters, of the members and consultative members of the EHEA. The BFUG, its Board, its Co-Chairs and Vice-Chair, other working structures and the Secretariat shall conduct their work in accordance with Rules of Procedure adopted by the BFUG.

The BFUG Board is an advisory committee of the BFUG to support it in its activities, including the preparation of its meetings, to enhance efficiency in the management of the EHEA, and ensure its continuity. As such, the responsibilities of the Board consist of coordinating and monitoring the effective implementation of the work programme.

The members of the Board are the present, outgoing, and incoming Co-Chairs of the BFUG, the BFUG Vice-Chair, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, EUA, ESU, EURASHE. One of the Co-Chairs of each of the BFUG working structures (Working Groups, Coordination Group, Task Forces, BICG) of the respective period is invited to participate in Board meetings.

IV.4 Working language

The working language of the EHEA is English. The host of the Ministerial Conference may, at its discretion, enable the use of other languages.

V DECISION MAKING

V.1 Consensus

At all levels, decisions concerning the EHEA shall, as far as possible, be made by consensus.

V.2 Voting

If, in spite of the best efforts of the Co-Chairs, no consensus can be achieved, decisions shall be taken by vote. Votes shall be limited to the members of the EHEA. Each member shall have two votes and shall indicate to the Co-Chairs who casts the votes on its behalf. Where a delegation is made up of more than one constituent, one of these may vote on behalf of the other constituent provided the latter expressly authorises it to do so by indicating this to the Co-Chairs.

In physical meetings, votes shall be conducted by secret ballot if so requested by one or more delegations. In votes conducted by electronic means, arrangements shall enable the votes to be cast anonymously, with due controls ensuring that only those entitled to cast a vote are able to do so.

There shall be no vote in absence.

V.3 Voting regime

Votes shall be decided by a majority of the valid votes cast. On matters concerning the following, decisions nevertheless require two thirds of the valid votes cast:

- Adoption of the priorities of the EHEA³.
- Adoption of communiqués, standards, guidelines, and binding policy instruments or goals.
- The admission and exclusion of members or consultative members.
- Any decision on the financing of the EHEA.⁴
- Modifications of the present Rules of the EHEA.

The quorum for all votes shall be two thirds of the members entitled to voting. In case no quorum is reached, voting takes place at the following ordinary session or, if the matter needs to be decided sooner, at an extraordinary session, held in physical presence, or online, to be called with a notice of a minimum of two weeks. The vote shall then be held, and a decision considered to be valid even in absence of a quorum.

VI GLOBAL POLICY FORUM

VI.1 Organisations

A Global Policy Forum is normally organised in conjunction with Ministerial Conferences.

Countries and organisations, that are or will be invited to participate, should be involved and consulted in the preparation of the Global Policy Forum as well as on the draft statement to be submitted to it for adoption. Invitations should be agreed by the BFUG, which shall consult the host of the Ministerial conference.

VI.2 Activities between the Global Policy Fora

The BFUG shall seek to establish dialogues on policies and actions of common concern with partners in other regions during the work period between Global Policy Fora.

VII EHEA SECRETARIAT⁵

The Secretariat operates under the authority of the BFUG, and be fully accountable to it, and be independent of the country or organisation within which it is located. It should be appropriately equipped, in terms of staff and resources, and sustainable, especially regarding its funding model, and should be strictly non- profit. The Secretariat should be able to accept secondments from EHEA

⁴ Pertinent only if there is a decision to have an EHEA budget, most likely in the case of a permanent Secretariat.

⁵ These are generic principles and requirements are valid for any Secretariat. However, once the decision on the future model of the Secretariat has been taken, this section may require some revision.

members or consultative members. The cost of the Secretariat shall be borne by EHEA members according to the decision of the Ministers.

Further details are laid down in the RoP-BFUG.

VIII FINAL PROVISIONS

VIII.1 Adoption and modification of Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area

The present Rules of Procedure for the EHEA were adopted on 29 and 30 May 2024 at the Ministerial Conference of the EHEA in Triana. They may subsequently be modified by the Ministerial Conference.

VIII.1 Safeguarding and dissemination of the Rules to members and consultative members

The Rules of the EHEA shall be kept by [to be determined]⁶, which shall provide the competent authorities of all members and consultative members with a duly certified copy.⁷

⁶ This may depend on the nature of the Secretariat. It could be the authorities of the country where the Secretariat is hosted, or the organisation which hosts it. An alternative would be to appoint a custodian with sufficiently good routines to ensure its safekeeping and also to make it available when needed

⁷ Subject to the decision to establish a permanent secretariat, and its legal form and location.

PART 2 RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP

The present Rules of Procedure of the BFUG (RoP-BFUG) have been adopted by the BFUG at its meeting **on DATE/ in VENUE**.

They build on and complement the Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area (RoP-EHEA) adopted by Ministers **on 29 and 30 May 2024 in Tirana**. Should a provision of the RoP-BFUG be considered to contradict a provision of the RoP-EHEA, the latter shall take precedence.

I BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP

I.1 Role and responsibilities

The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) oversees and directs the development and implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) between the Ministerial Conferences. It shall meet at least once under each Co-Chairmanship. Regular meetings shall as far as possible be held in presence. Extraordinary meetings of the BFUG shall be held by decision of the Co-Chairs or when requested in writing by at least one third of the BFUG (members and consultative members), They shall be called with at least two weeks' notice and shall consider only the issues for which they were called.

I.2 Competences

The BFUG decides on all matters not reserved for the decision of Ministers, including:

- The development, adoption and implementation of its work programme based on the priorities decided by the Ministerial Conference;
- The organisation of its work, in order to implement the work programme, including by setting up working structures, conducting or commissioning studies and projects, and collaboration with any other parties, such as policy makers, organisations, experts etc. in the field of higher education, or related issues. Arrangements for preparing the draft communiqué for the Ministerial Conference and the draft statement for the Global Policy Forum;
- Invitations to any participants other than members and consultative members of the EHEA to the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum, as well as the status of any such participants at the conference. (see RoP-EHEA VI);
- The sequence of Co-Chairs of the BFUG, including any modifications
- The representation of the BFUG towards third parties.
- Examination of and support to requests to join the EHEA, and preparation of a recommendation for the decision of Ministers.

- The association of organisations with the EHEA other than through membership or consultative membership, and the criteria and rules for such association.
- Regulations and guidelines for its own work and that of its subordinate bodies, including the Secretariat, in so far as these do not contradict the Rules of Procedure for the EHEA as adopted by Ministers.
- Oversight and steering of the work of the Secretariat, and the right to select, and dismiss the Head of Secretariat⁸.
- Oversight of the finances of the EHEA, and the budget of the Secretariat.

I.3 Preparation of the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum

The BFUG shall oversee, in cooperation with the authorities of the host country, the organisation of the Ministerial Conferences and the Global Policy Forum and advise Ministers on all matters put before the Ministerial Conference or otherwise referred to the Ministers for decision.

I.4 Implementation of the EHEA work programme

The BFUG develops and implements the EHEA work programme according to the priorities adopted by Ministers. The work programme shall be completed until the following ministerial meeting, and the BFUG shall report to Ministers on its implementation. It may entrust the implementation of parts of the work programme to Working Groups and similar structures (see Annex 3 Annex 3), the terms of reference of which shall be adopted by the BFUG. All working structures thus established shall report and submit their proposals to the BFUG in accordance with the timetable established by the BFUG.

I.5 Minutes of Meetings

In follow-up of all meetings of the BFUG, the BFUG Board and working structures, the Secretariat drafts the minutes, and submits them within 10 days to the relevant Co-Chairs, for comments and endorsement within 10 days. Afterwards the Secretariat circulates them to the participants for feedback within 10 days, and, if necessary, recirculates them for adoption. Once finalised, the Secretariat publishes them on the EHEA website. The exchanges usually take place by electronic consultation. In the case of diverging views on the meeting reports and the decisions made, the meeting reports shall be adopted at the following meeting.

I.6 Participation in and representation at the BFUG

Each member and consultative member of the EHEA shall designate its BFUG representatives, shall be represented by a maximum of two representatives at meetings of the BFUG and shall make every effort to attend each BFUG meeting. Members and consultative members shall notify the EHEA Secretariat of any changes in their BFUG representation and update the contact details of their delegation as required. Members and consultative members of the BFUG shall have the right to speak to and submit proposals under all items on the agenda.

I.7 Rights and suspension of members and consultative members

The right to vote is reserved to members and be conducted in accordance with Articles V of the RoP-EHEA.

The BFUG may decide to suspend the right of representation in the governing bodies and participation in the work programme of any member or consultative member judged to have acted in ways warranting their exclusion from the EHEA under Article III.3 of RoP-EHEA. Unless it would decide to revoke the suspension, it would continue, until such time that Ministers, at a regular Ministerial Conference or otherwise, decide to prolong or lift the suspension, or to exclude the said member or consultative member.

I.8 Preparation of the BFUG meetings

BFUG meetings (and Board meetings) is scheduled at least 6 months in advance, to enable all parties to participate.

A draft agenda is circulated at least one month before the meeting, asking for comments and suggestions.

The documents for meetings of the BFUG, the BFUG Board, and other BFUG structures shall be circulated by the Secretariat to all delegations at least two weeks prior to the meeting, unless imperative reasons dictate otherwise. Delegations are encouraged to submit major changes in writing to the Co-Chairs and the Secretariat⁹ at least 5 days prior to the meeting. who shall circulate any proposed amendments to all delegations before the meeting.

The BFUG Co-Chairs, in consultation with the Board, may invite experts to contribute to BFUG meetings under specific agenda items for which they have the required expertise.

I.9 Rules and guidelines for the work of the BFUG

The BFUG shall develop the necessary rules and guidelines for its own work, and that of its working structures.

II THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP

II.1 Role and responsibilities

The Board of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG Board) supports the BFUG in its activities, to ensure the efficiency and continuity of its management and organisation. The BFUG Board shall prepare the meetings of the BFUG and oversee the work between the meetings of the BFUG.

The Board

- coordinates and monitors the effective development and implementation of the work programme;
- provides consultation and support to the BFUG Co-Chairs
- prepares and follows up the meetings of the BFUG, including proposition of the agenda, collection of feedback from the working structures, and review of the documents, to ensure that they are adequate for discussion and decision making at the BFUG;
- provides advice to the BFUG, in particular on complex and contested matters, in sharing with the BFUG its deliberations.
- takes up specific tasks, roles and make decisions, as delegated to it by the BFUG.

Beyond these tasks, the Board itself does not take decisions, but contributes to preparing the decisions of the BFUG. However, in exceptional situations which require immediate action, and do not leave time for consultation of the BFUG, the Board, led by the Co-Chairs, may take the necessary steps. These actions and decisions shall be shared with the BFUG as soon as possible for endorsement (either in written procedure or during an extra-ordinary meeting). The BFUG may revoke the decision taken by the Board.

II.2 Composition

The Bologna Board is made up of the Co-Chairs of the BFUG in the semester concerned, the Co-Chairs in the immediately preceding and following semesters, the Vice-Chair, and representatives of the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the European University Association, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, and the European Students Union (the Board members).

In addition, one Co-Chair of each Working Group, Task Force and similar BFUG working structures participates in the meetings of the Board, to report on progress, without the right to vote.

II.3 Working methods

Regular meetings of the BFUG Board shall be held at least once under each Co-Chairmanship, in presence if at all possible, and usually at least one month, preferably six weeks before the BFUG meeting, hosted by one of the BFUG Co-Chairs.

Additional ordinary BFUG Board meetings may be held, in presence or online, as judged preferable. Extraordinary meetings of the BFUG Board shall be held by decision of the Co-Chairs or when requested in writing by at least one third of the members and consultative members represented in the Board and shall consider only the issues for which they were called.

III THE CO-CHAIRS AND THE VICE-CHAIR

III.1 Roles and responsibilities

The Co-Chairs in close collaboration with the Vice Chair and assisted by the Secretariat, are responsible for the diligent and timely preparation of the BFUG Board and then also of the BFUG, and take necessary actions to ensure this, such as communications with Board members, preparatory meetings etc.

The Co-Chairs and the Vice-Chair must exercise their chairing tasks with the necessary neutrality. Whenever they speak and act in their capacity as national BFUG delegates, they have to make clear that their intervention reflects their country's position.

III.1 Time in office and tasks of the Co-Chairs

Countries take turns in Co-Chairing, by designating the person in charge of the tasks of the chairmanship for the mentioned semester, following the agreed schedule (see RoP-EHEA Article I.4). The Co-Chairs open and close the BFUG and BFUG Board meetings, chair the discussion of all items of the agenda, and summarise outcomes and decisions at the end of each agenda point. They lead the way towards decision-making, and finding the necessary compromises, and if required, organise votes in accordance with the rules (see RoP-EHEA Article V).

III.2 Time in office and tasks of the Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair is assigned by the States member hosting the forthcoming ministerial conference and shall serve for the duration of the work period concerned. The Vice-Chair shall in particular ensure the liaison between the BFUG and the authorities of the hosting country of the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum. The Co-Chairs shall consult the Vice-Chair as appropriate in the preparation of the meetings of the BFUG and Board. Should two or more States members jointly organise the Ministerial Conference, they shall appoint one Vice-Chair acting on behalf of all the host countries.

IV DRAFTING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIQUÉ AND THE GLOBAL POLICY FORUM STATEMENT

The Ministerial Conference adopts a Communiqué, which states state of play, achievements and challenges of the past working period, and sets out the main goals for the next period. The BFUG establishes a drafting committee to assist it in drafting the Communiqué, to be submitted to the Ministerial Conference for adoption.

The Global Policy Forum shall adopt a statement outlining its main topics and results, and, if appropriate, plans and goals for the next working period. The BFUG decides on its drafting arrangement, in consideration also of the interest and participation of international partners.

The Drafting Committee starts its work during the first semester of the year preceding the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum. It is composed of the Co-Chairs of the three semesters before the Ministerial Conference, the Vice Chair, and one consultative member who is proposed by the

consultative members and subject to approval of the BFUG. The BFUG may appoint the chair(s) or leave it to the Drafting Committee to decide on the chairing arrangements at its first meeting. The Drafting Committee shall submit a roadmap for its work to the BFUG for approval.

V WORKING STRUCTURES

V.1 Remit and terms of reference

The BFUG may establish working structures, such as Working Groups, Task Forces, Thematic Peer Learning Groups and similar (see Annex 3 for a typology). Such structures have no decision-making authority but submit proposals and provide advice to enable the BFUG to take decisions, develop recommendations, reports, instruments, etc. for Ministers to adopt. The BFUG may also commission research or launch projects to assist it in implementing the work programme and in preparing decisions on matters within its competence.

The working structures are usually set up at the beginning and for the duration of the work programme. They can nevertheless be established at any time and for any period necessary for them to fulfil their terms of reference subject to the BFUG's decision. The terms of reference of the working structures are developed on the basis of the communiqué, the work programme and discussion and decisions of the BFUG. They shall specify the purpose and goals, main tasks and ways of working, and also the tentative schedule and the profile of participants.

The BFUG shall have the final decision-making authority on all matters concerning working structures, including whether to discontinue them, or to redefine their purpose, tasks and format.

V.2 Participation in BFUG working structures

Participation in working structures, and any modification thereof, shall be subject to the approval of the BFUG, in consideration of the terms of reference, and the requirements of the work programme.

In principle, all BFUG members and consultative members may participate in any working structure. However, the BFUG may decide to limit participation in a working structure and stipulate in the terms of references how and by what criteria the participants are to be selected.

Interest in participating in a working structure shall normally be expressed when the group is established. It may, however, also be expressed in the course of the work of the group, and the request for participation shall then be decided by the BFUG at its earliest opportunity, this may be done by way of written procedure, by circulating the request to the BFUG members (silent procedure). Members and consultative members appoint representatives with a suitable profile to participate in working structures and ensure regular participation, as far as possible by the same person.

Participants in working structures shall keep their ministry, institution or organisation duly informed of the work of the group.

V.3 Working arrangements

Working structures are chaired by one or several chairs, either appointed by its members, or by the BFUG. At least one Co-Chair of each working structure shall represent a member or consultative member of the BFUG.

The chairs, in collaboration with the group's participants and with the support of the Secretariat, are responsible for the smooth, consistent and efficient work of the group, among others to

- plan and implement its workplan and schedule, in close collaboration with the working structure's members and in line with the terms of references;
- facilitate the working structure's collaboration, through proper preparation and follow-up of meetings, and any other means that the structure perceives as fit-for-purpose and is deemed useful for its work, such as for example exchanges with other structures, expert hearings, good practice sharing. In case these exchanges and collaborations are a more regular arrangement, they should be approved by the BFUG in advance;
- ensure that collaboration with dedicated projects is effective and appropriate, and does not lead to a deviation from the structure's goals, tasks and work plan;
- ensure that the working structure's activities, such as meetings, result into accurate and clear minutes prepared by Secretariat, which contain conclusions and decisions, but also open issues and points of disagreement within the structure;
- report progress to the BFUG and the BFUG Board, and also indicate any major changes in the structure's workplan and schedule;
- represent the structure's work to outside parties, or delegate this task, while clearly distinguishing between the structure's preliminary results, and adopted policies and positions of the Bologna Process.

VI DECISION MAKING

Decisions are made, as far as possible by consensus, and, if despite the best efforts of the Co-Chairs, consensus is not possible, by vote - in full accordance with Article V of the Rules of Procedure for the EHEA.

VII SUPPORT TO NEW MEMBERS

VII.1 Assessment of applications for membership and consultative membership

The BFUG shall assess applications for membership and consultative membership, on whether they meet the goals and purpose of the Bologna Process, and its values, and in such as case, recommend Ministers to formally include them.

The BFUG establishes an Advisory Group, to assist it in the preparation of recommendations to Ministers on any application of a new member. The Advisory Group shall guide the applicant during

the entire admission process. Its reports shall enable the BFUG to provide recommendations and advice to Ministers on the application. The BFUG shall select the participants of the Advisory Group according to their institutional and individual expertise and capacity.

VII.2 Roadmap

The admission of new members shall be accompanied by a Roadmap for the period between the Ministerial Conference at which the new member is admitted and the following Ministerial Conference. The purpose of this Roadmap is to guide the competent public authorities of the new member in implementing the necessary reforms to fulfil the requirements of an EHEA member. The implementation of the Roadmap shall be supported by a group consisting of BFUG members, with the suitable institutional and individual expertise, and representatives of the new member. The group shall report to the BFUG.

VIII EHEA SECRETARIAT

VIII.1 Role and tasks

The EHEA Secretariat shall provide neutral, administrative, technical and operational support to the BFUG, the BFUG Board, Co-Chairs, BFUG Working Groups and other structures and initiatives established by the BFUG.

While the BFUG and its working structures are responsible for and in charge of the strategy and implementation of the work programme of the EHEA, the Secretariat shall provide at all stages support and neutral advice, in particular to the Co-Chairs, pointing to potential administrative/organisational short-comings and risks, but also to opportunities for enhancement of the overall planning and schedule, and its specific actions and activities.

The Secretariat contributes to the overall planning, and to preparation and implementation of meetings and events. It draws up the minutes of meetings and may be tasked to contribute to analysis and background papers.

It has a central role as contact point for all communications and ensures dissemination of information and documentation to the BFUG and its working structures. But is also an external contact point for the EHEA and may also represent the BFUG in settings and on occasions to be agreed with the Co-Chairs. The Secretariat further supports the preparation of the EHEA Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum and maintains the EHEA website.

The BFUG may adopt specific Terms of Reference related to the Secretariat applicable to the work period for which the Secretariat is established.¹⁰

The Secretariat shall meet the following general requirements:

¹⁰ This may need re-consideration depending on the final decision on how the Secretariat will be established in the future, and possibly also a transition clause.

i. Independence and Accountability

The Secretariat shall be independent of the country or organisation within which it is located. It shall operate under the authority of the BFUG and be fully accountable to the BFUG. If a member or consultative member provides the Secretariat, or actively contributes to it, specific provisions need to be in place to prevent conflicts of interest.

The Secretariat reports to the BFUG. The BFUG shall approve the appointment and, if needed, request the dismissal of the Head of the Secretariat. It may appoint a group to oversee the work of the Secretariat.

ii. Sustainability

The arrangements for Secretariat, including its organisation and its funding model, shall be sustainable and shall be in place for the foreseen period of operation. (see RoP-EHEA VII)

iii. Staff requirements, profiles and competences

The Secretariat shall have a sufficient staff in terms of numbers and qualifications to carry out its tasks. The Secretariat arrangements shall make it possible for the Secretariat to define and recruit its required staff profiles and its competence requirements (e.g. knowledge and understanding of European higher education policy, management and administrative competence, a high level of English, etc.), unrestricted by standard post descriptions or competence requirements of the hosting organisation/country.

The model and arrangement for the Secretariat, i.e. the rules by which its legal entity is governed, and the legal framework and employment rules of the country where it is based shall allow contracting and dismissal of staff on open-ended contracts, including staff from other EHEA countries.

iv. Secondments

In addition to its own staff, the Secretariat shall be able to accept a limited number of secondments from members or consultative members. Secondments should follow rules approved by the BFUG, ensuring a reasonable geographic balance as well as securing the independence of the Secretariat from seconding members or consultative members.

v. Relation to the country hosting the Ministerial Conference

The Secretariat shall cooperate closely on the organisation of the ministerial conference with the authorities of the host country. The authorities of this country shall second a staff member to the Secretariat to act as a liaison for the organisation of the ministerial conference, in accordance with the rules established for all secondments to the Secretariat.

vi. Legal framework and location

The Secretariat shall be established within a legal framework and in a location that allows for the various requirements to be fulfilled. In particular, rule of law shall be ensured so that the Secretariat may operate without undue external influence. The country in which the Secretariat is located shall not have legal regulations that prevent the receipt of external funding.

vii. Cost of the Secretariat

The cost of the Secretariat shall be borne by EHEA members according to the decision of the Ministers.

viii. Non-profit principle

If the Secretariat is provided by or hosted within an existing organisation, this organisation shall not gain a profit or surplus out of the Secretariat's operation. Any surpluses remaining from the income allocated to the Secretariat exceeding the costs of it shall be reserved for the Secretariat and cannot be allocated to other functions/parts of the organisation.

IX HOST AND VENUE OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AND GLOBAL POLICY FORUM

IX.1 Selection of the host of the next Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum

The BFUG shall invite expressions of interest in hosting a year in advance of the forthcoming Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum. The call shall include the deadline and the terms of reference, the conditions to be fulfilled by the host and information to be provided by the prospective host. The Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum may be hosted jointly by several EHEA members. The BFUG makes a recommendation on the selection of the venue to Ministers.

X EHEA COMMUNICATION

X.1 General tasks for BFUG and Secretariat

The BFUG, supported by the Secretariat, is in charge of and responsible for the internal and external communication of the Bologna Process and the EHEA, which shall be transparent, accountable, and therefore appropriately documented and accessible.

This includes, among others:

- ensuring that all BFUG members and all participants of working structures receive all relevant and necessary information in due course, and usually at the same time;
- ensuring that information shared, whether internal or external, is clearly worded, based on reliable facts, and as much as possible neutral and objective. It should leave no ambiguity about what has been agreed by the BFUG or one of its bodies or structures, and about what was expressed publicly as the view of an individual or a group of members or participants;
- publishing all documents for BFUG meetings and BFUG Board meetings, at least two weeks in advance, as well as notifying BFUG/BFUG Board members of the publication;
- provision of secure spaces for sharing draft documents, internal calendars etc., either established by the Secretariat, a hosting party, or through a reliable service provider;
- provision of appropriate information and information materials for the European and international higher education community and stakeholders, and for the general public;

- organisation of events on its work, engaging stakeholders at European and national levels
- updating the pages of BFUG Working Groups and other structures, in collaboration with the Co-Chairs;
- inviting members and consultative to update the information on their systems, organisations and representatives at least once a year;
- organisation of the handover of relevant documents and information and the transfer of the website to the incoming Secretariat, and assistance during the transition phase in order to guarantee a seamless continuation of the work of the BFUG¹¹;

The Secretariat shall ensure in close collaboration with the Co-Chairs:

- the availability of the appropriate physical and virtual infrastructures and means for meetings and events, whether physical or online;
- prompt and timely information transfer, before, during and after events, including registration procedures, and participants' lists etc.;
- coordination of scheduling processes to avoid collision of meetings of the BFUG, BFUG Board and of other BFUG structures.

X.2 Website

The BFUG is responsible for the development and regular update of the EHEA website www.ehea.info. It shall include all recent documents of the BFUG and its working structures, and make them accessible to the wider public, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. It will also give access to the archive of the EHEA.

X.3 Information sharing through the BFUG

Relevant information provided by individual members and consultative members may be disseminated to the BFUG and published on the website. In principle, this service is also open to other parties, which are not BFUG members or consultative members. The decision on what information to circulate and publish shall be taken by the Co-Chairs.

X.4 Calendar

The website's calendar shall contain all events organised by the BFUG and its working structures. External events may be published provided they are relevant and related to the EHEA (if organised or supported by a member or a consultative member).

¹¹ To be deleted or rephrased, in case of the Permanent Secretariat

Annexes

Annex 1 EHEA members, consultative members and EHEA institutions

The countries, institutions and organisation listed below have been accepted as members, consultative members or partners of the EHEA. Membership of the EHEA is governed by Article II of the RoP-EHEA. EQAR is an institution of the EHEA.

Members
Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belarus (suspended from participation in the EHEA work programme and representation in all EHEA governing bodies as of 12 April 2022)
Belgium Flemish Community
Belgium French Community
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
European Commission
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Holy See
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Kazakhstan
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Moldova
Montenegro
Netherlands
North Macedonia
Norway

Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation (suspended from participation in the EHEA work programme and representation in all EHEA governing bodies as of 12 April 2022)
San Marino
Serbia
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Türkiye
United Kingdom
United Kingdom (Scotland)
Ukraine
Consultative Members
BUSINESSEUROPE
Council of Europe
Education International
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
European Students Union (ESU)
European University Association (EUA)
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
As an independent institution established by the EHEA, participating without voting rights
European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

Annex 2 EHEA PARTNERS

Partners
Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)
European Association for International Education (EAIE)
Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff (EUROCADRES)
European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (EURODOC)
EUROSCIENCE

Annex 3 Working structures of the BFUG

As stated in Article V RoP-BFUG, the BFUG may establish Working Groups and other structures, in order to fulfil its tasks. The following table lists the most common types of working structures and their functions. It does not strictly exclude different use of existing, and development of new types of working structures.

Approach	Description	Example
Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually a larger group open to participation of all BFUG members and consultative members established to conduct work on core tasks, and to contribute to policy development some are standing WGs, or continue over several working cycles 	Working Group on Monitoring Working Group on Social Dimension Working Group on Values
Coordination Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees and coordinates activities, also in collaboration with parties or stakeholders who are not BFUG members 	BFUG Coordination Group of Implementation of key commitments (BICG) Coordination Group on Global Dialogue
Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accompanies a verification process and/or elaborates a document for the BFUG, to advise Ministers for decision taking. 	Advisory group Support of the Belarus Roadmap, Advisory group for the Social Dimension Advisory group for Learning and Teaching in its 2018-2020 work programme.
Ad Hoc Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> established as such or be a substructure of a WG by the decision of the BFUG. established to explore or fulfil certain limited and concretely described tasks 	Ad hoc group on Fundamental Values in the 2018 – 20 work programme
Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> established to explore or fulfil certain limited and concretely described tasks limited in duration may be of limited in participation, to ensure expertise on the issues and fast results. 	Task Force on Knowledge Sharing Task Force for the revision of the Rules of Procedure A Task Force is also established to assist aspiring members and consultative members
Support to the Roadmap of new members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> established to assist a new member or consultative member during its first period of membership participants are representative of the new member, and of the BFUG, selected due to their individual and institutional capacity. 	There have been two roadmap groups, for Belarus in 2015-2018 (Advisory Group), and for San Marino (Working Group), in 2021-2024
Thematic Peer Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> established to enable mutual learning and enhance implementation of key commitments at national level 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• usually requires the creation of action plans from members in order to pursue objectives related to the implementation of the key commitments• involvement of experts and stakeholders	
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