

THIRD MEETING OF THE BFUG WG1 ON MONITORING

Valnu iela 2, Riga (Latvia) 26 April 2017
Venue: Ministry of Education and Science

Draft Minutes

Country/organisations	Name
Armenia	Lusine Fljyan
Austria	Helga Posset
BFUG Secretariat	Gayane Harutyunyan
Czech Republic	Tomáš Fliegl
EI/ETUCE	Rob Copeland
EQAR	Melinda Szabo
Eurydice (Co-chair)	David Crosier
ESU	Blazhe Todorovski
Eurostudent	Kristina Hauschildt
France	Hélène Lagier
Germany	Marius Michalski
Latvia (Co-Chair)	Andrejs Rauhvargers
Lithuania	Laura Stračinskiene
Norway (Co-Chair)	Tone Flood Strøm

The representatives of Albania, Cyprus, Italy, Luxembourg, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Russian Federation and EUA apologized.

1. Welcome and introduction by the WG1 Co-Chairs

Mr. Andrejs Rauhvargers, the Latvian Co-Chair and the host of the 3rd meeting of the working group welcomed the participants at the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science.

Ms. Tone Flood Strøm, the Norwegian Co-Chair in her turn welcomed the members and suggested to have a roundtable introduction of the participants taking into account the new comers.

2. Adoption of agenda

The Agenda of the meeting was adopted without additions.

3. Brief feedback from the recent meetings.

Ms Tone Flood Strøm briefed on the recent meetings:

- In December 2016 during the Bratislava BFUG meeting the draft structure of the 2018 Implementation report was presented. There were only few comments made by the BFUG members. It was stressed that old and new indicators now form a good balance and that the new structure of the 2018 Implementation Report seems to be more ambitious than the previous ones. There were also specific comments related to gender based statistics, recognition, digital learning and most of the countries supported the proposal to have a stand-alone document for non- implementation of the three key commitments.
- In March 2017, during the Oslo Board meeting, the work of the working group was presented to the Board and it was reported that the data collection is going ahead as planned. The Board was content that the work of the WG is according to plan, and the WG received positive feedback on how things are running. No major comments related to the tasks of the working group were received.

The representative of France expressed her concern regarding the possible ranking of the EHEA countries that media could make based on the 2018 Implementation Report. It was underlined that this problem was not new. It was stressed that the separate report related to non- implementation will avoid duplication of information from the Implementation Report and will highlight the issues of non-implementation asked for by the ministers in Yerevan. The content of the stand-alone document is not under the responsibility of WG1.

4. Data collection: present situation, i.e. feedback on the questionnaires

Mr David Crosier, the Eurydice Co-Chair reminded that the 2018 Implementation report will be more ambitious than the previous ones since it will be based on more sources than in the past. The questionnaire sent to BFUG members, was divided in two parts. The idea for part 1 was to keep the old indicators as shown in the 2015 report: this would hopefully simplify the task of the countries that only have to confirm the information for 2016/17 and explain if changes occurred since the last reporting period. An assumption was made on the basis of previous experience that just a few indicators will change for most of countries. It was the first time that it is done in this way and, despite some minor technical problems, it is working well. The deadline for answering was April 21. A group of countries have already submitted their answers and there was a steady flow of questionnaires coming in.

The second part of the questionnaire is mainly related to new topics with new indicators but also asking questions related to indicators that need revision. For this part of the questionnaire, the "Lime Survey" tool is used as it was done in former data collections. There was a testing phase with participation of the working group members that covered all aspects of the second part of the questionnaire. The testing was very helpful to identify potential technical problems as well as some content issues.

The second part of the questionnaire is challenging for countries in terms of the large number of questions asked, but unfortunately this is unavoidable. At first sight, these questions could seem to be duplicating information from the first part, but in fact this is not the case. Indeed, this part targets the questions on indicators that were agreed, which means that there are particular areas that were updated and, thus, require a slightly different focus of analysis.

For example, the ECTS might be a routine topic covered by the existing indicators, but considering the adoption of the new revised Users' Guide in Yerevan, there is a need to reflect; in the Report, on its implementation. Therefore, there are questions related to the new content in the Users Guide to allow the topic to be treated properly. The same logic applies to a number of areas.

Countries have already submitted answers for the second part of the questionnaire. For those countries that have difficulties in answering the questionnaire Eurydice will offer a webinar to address their questions on line. This webinar session will take place a week before the BFUG meeting in Gozo.

D. Crosier mentioned that Eurostudent is an established partner in the reporting exercise while the contribution of ESU is new. Several indicators will be provided by students. This questionnaire is close to being ready for launching with some minor corrections under discussion.

Currently, EUA is working on two projects that are interesting for the 2018 Report. There is an agreement between EUA and data collectors for data to be used, with details of how it would be presented to be settled later. The first of the two projects is the "Trends" update, which focuses on teaching and learning, a new topic for the 2018 Implementation report, and it will be interesting to complement the data collected by the different countries with the institutional data collected by the EUA.

The second project is related to the Autonomy scoreboard. Issues concerning fundamental values, institutions' autonomy and academic freedom are the most challenging topics for the Implementation report since it is difficult to identify the most meaningful questions to address to governments. EUA scoreboard will complement the information gathered from the questions asked regarding these topics.

Eurostudent explained that the data is collected from the 28 EU countries and its broad overview will be presented in Malta. No new topics will be added from the previous round; the report will be more extended on the topic of mobility and will include information on mobility destinations, jobs, etc.

ESU informed the participants that there is an agreement with Eurydice on the topics. The data that will be used are extracted from the study *Bologna with Student Eyes*. It was stressed that the language of the questions asked to the student unions and national governments should be consistent so that responses are comparable.

6. New topics and new indicators

The session started with explanations on the document that was prepared by the Co-Chairs for the discussion on new topics and indicators. It was stressed that this document puts together potential new indicators that are foreseen on the basis of the developed questionnaires.

Considering the indicator on the mapping of external QA activities across EHEA, EQAR stated that it will share the data collected from its annual monitoring exercise on the number and type of external QA activities of EQAR-registered QA agencies within and outside EHEA¹. The data will also be complemented by information from ENQA surveys

¹ More information on EQAR's annual update: <https://eqar.eu/index.php?id=461>

Furthermore, it was highlighted that there are around 50 statistical indicators that should be included in the report. The task of compiling and verifying statistical data has been sub-contracted and the indicators will be ready to be integrated in the Report in October.

The WG went through the document and the new indicators chapter by chapter.

Chapter 1 is mainly focusing on areas that are led by governments. It concerns the role and the ways governments support institutions to achieve the democratic goals.

- It was stressed that data collectors are aware that these questions are difficult to answer and that the analysis of answers received may be tricky.
- The questions sound very relevant and it is important that answers are evidence-based.
- It was also mentioned that the BFUG is very concerned about this issue and there will be a separate discussion on fundamental values during the next BFUG meeting in May. Results of the discussion will help to confirm the nature of desired indicators. There has been always a lack of data on this topic and, however successful or unsuccessful this exercise, it will be the first step to collect data that might facilitate further discussions.
- It was also mentioned that it is important to remember that information received through the questionnaires will be contrasted with other sources, and this will hopefully present a better picture of the actual situation.

Chapter 2 is new, but consists of indicators taken from the 2015 Report and supplemented by potential new ones.

- It was stressed that countries should provide evidence regarding policies promoting digital learning and digital provision.
- Indicators on ECTS are still in construction and the questions will be asked in the same way to by? ESU. It is obvious from previous reports that this is one of the areas in which several countries have dissenting opinions between the students and the national authorities on how the ECTS has been implemented. Thus, in the next report, these differences will probably become apparent.
- Another group of questions will focus on the role of teaching and on whether it is recognised as an important task of academic staff of HEIs – for example, in comparison with research.

Chapter 3. Degrees and qualifications:

There will be a slightly different presentation of the old indicators trying to identify the programmes that do not comply with the 3-cycle structure. This chapter will also reflect on the situation with short cycle programmes taking into account the political commitment to include the short cycle in the Bologna degree structure concept. There is a clear political signal that short cycle programmes should be part of higher education but this is not always the case.

- There should be cross-references made in the chapter in relation to short cycles and life-long learning (LLL).
- The existence of long integrated programmes will be covered in the text as well.

Chapter 4. Quality assurance and recognition:

- This part focuses on implementation of the revised ESG and the European approach to QA of joint programmes.
- A series of questions asks ministries whether there are requirements for students to be included in different aspects of QA. In order to be aware of the students perspective, ESU will be asked the same questions.
- An indicator on automatic recognition will be included.
- Both EQAR and Eurostudent announced that they would be able to provide data for this chapter as well.

Chapter 5: Opening higher education to a diverse population.

The questions that are typically asked have been revised and improved in order to make them clearer.

- For the financial support part, questions will be more specifically related to needs-based criteria.
- There will be crosschecking with the similar data collected for Eurydice countries to identify problems.

Data on possible access routes to higher education will be checked with Eurostudent. Chapter 6: Relevance of higher education outcomes and employability.

These are standard indicators, and the review that has taken place has led to only minor changes.

Chapter 7: Internationalisation and mobility.

Data collectors have a lot of information related to this issue, and some indicators will be reworked to make the best use of this data.

- The data from Eurostudent will try to distinguish and be more specific on the difference between students with and without financial difficulties, for mobility destinations and for short-term/ credit mobility periods.

General Comment

As there is no longer a chapter dedicated to lifelong learning, the group recommended that some explanations regarding the issue of LLL as well as the issue of the social dimension and the way they are addressed in the Report should be provided.

7. Discussion on scorecard indicators

All the scorecard indicators were reviewed and suggestions for modification have been made when necessary. Scorecard indicators always attract attention. Therefore, they need to be as robust as possible. A new indicator on automatic recognition has been introduced.

Eurydice is presently running a Mobility Scoreboard project for the EU countries and in some cases, there are topics and indicators that are similar to those in the Bologna Implementation Report. As a consequence, these similar indicators have been compared and, where possible, harmonised.

The scorecard indicators were discussed one by one and the WG agreed on several revisions to be made in the document that was prepared by the Co-Chairs for the discussion. A further working group discussion on the scoreboard indicators will take place before the autumn BFUG meeting in Tallinn.

9. Update on the timeline and roadmap to 2018

The working group agreed that, at this stage, it is premature to ask the BFUG to approve these indicator proposals. However, the working group can inform the BFUG (in Malta in May) that there will be proposals for scoreboard indicators on all the topics outlined, and that the work on finalising the indicators is proceeding well.

It was also agreed that the next meeting of the working group will be held in mid-October in Brussels and will aim to discuss the preliminary draft of the report as well as to finalise the scorecard indicators.