Date: March 27, 2014

***4th Meeting of the Third Cycle Ad-Hoc Working Group***

***Bucharest, 20-21 February 2014***

***Venue: New Library Building of University “Politehnica” of Bucharest – 2nd floor 313 Splaiul Independentei Str., 060042, Bucharest***

**Draft minutes**

**Participants**

**Co-Chair: Italy Marzia Foroni**

**Co-Chair: Romania Horia Iovu**

**Co-Chair: Romania Cezar Haj**

**Co-Chair: Spain Gloria Molero**

Armenia Lusine Fljyan

Belgium / French Community Marc Vanholsbeeck

Denmark Signe Nielsen

Denmark Kristian Thorn

France Pascal Gosselin

Germany Eric Otto

Hungary Etelka Farkas

Romania Ligia Deca

Romania Cristina Orbeci

BFUG Secretariat Hayk Sargsyan

EC Frank Petrikowski

EI Riku Matilanen

EUA Thomas Jorgensen

Apologies were received from: Monika Sieghardt (Austria), Noël Vercruysse (Belgium / Flemish Community), Šťastná Věra (Czech Republic), Nicola Vitorio (Italy), Larisa Bugaian (Moldova), Maria Boltruszko (Poland).

**Welcome address**

**Adoption of the agenda and the minutes of the 3rd meeting of the ad-hoc WG**

Mr. Horia Iovu welcomed the WG members to the 4th meeting of the Third Cycle Ad-Hoc WG and briefed the participants on the history and current situation of University ”Politehnica” of Bucharest, the hosting institution.

The Agenda and the minutes of the 3rd meeting of the WG were adopted without any change.

**Co-Chairs introduction to the meeting**

Mr. Cezar Haj recalled the attention of the participants on the WG ToR and stressed the importance of further discussions on incomplete tasks. Moreover, the different stages of completion of each task were presented as follows:

* The first task of the ToR was completed and presented by the Italian Co-Chairs during the 2nd meeting of the WG in Bucharest;
* The presentation and further discussions on “The link between doctoral education and qualifications frameworks. The role of learning outcomes”will cover and finalize the 2nd task of the ToR;
* The 3rd task will be discussed and finalized during the last meeting of the WG;
* The ToR task on the proposal of the ESG revision was presented by the Romanian Co-Chair during the last meeting of the WG and the updated version of the proposal should be further discussed and approved;
* The ToR task 5 on the analysis of the Diploma Supplement and ECTS in Doctoral education across EHEA, should be finalized during the 4th meeting of the WG;
* The ToR tasks 6 and 7 should be further debated during the meeting;
* The last task of the ToR should be discussed and finalized during the last meeting of the WG in Rome.

For more information on the ToR of the ad-hoc WG on Third Cycle please follow the link below:



**Analysis of employability of PhD’s and policy proposals for improvement**

Mrs. Gloria Molero made a presentation on the Analysis of the results achieved in terms of employability PhD and defining of policy proposals for improvement. She mainly noted that employability is very important, but it is not the main goal of Doctoral education. Thus, some of the recommendations were reformulated. For more information on the document please follow the link below:



During the discussions it was mainly noted that there is too much focus on the needs of employers and less stating which innovative aspects of PhD could change the parameters of markets. The recommendations for transversal skills trainings should correspond to the high level of Doctoral training, rather of being coherent with those for bachelor and master’s degree, as this would be in accord with the commonly agreed perspective of the WG that the main added value of the PhD is education through research and this should be valued in the employability process. The final discussions on the document were postponed to the WG meeting in Rome and the participants were kindly asked to send their comments to the Co-Chairs until March 3, 2014.

**Quality assurance for the third cycle and the contribution of the ad-hoc WG on the third cycle to the revision of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance - ESG**

Mr. Cezar Haj recalled the attention of the participant to the discussions in Madrid on the respective document and informed that a presentation on the outcomes was made to the BFUG in November 2013. During the BFUG meeting the need for a clearer reference to the Third cycle in the ESG was underlined also by countries not presented in the Third Cycle ad-hoc WG. Moreover, the WG proposal for the revision of ESG was sent to the ESG revision steering committee. The deliberations of the WG led to the changes presented in the updated version of the paper, which are mainly linked to language, a more detailed definition of the supervisor’s role and a more clear distinction between ESG revision recommendations and general QA recommendations for the third cycle.



**Internationalisation and mobility of the third cycle – presentation of the recommendations given by the Co-Chairs**

Mrs. Marzia Foroni briefed the WG members on the topics covered by the Mobility and Internationalisation WG (M&I WG), also connected to the Third Cycle. The presentation included the following important topics: Quality of Mobility, Staff mobility, Description of study programmes and European approach for Joint Programmes. It was clarified that the WG came up with a definition of staff mobility which should include all kinds of staff (administrative, technical, academic). It was also underlined that the M&I WG decided to further develop the guidance on description of study programmes in the EHEA, including a template for a possible database structure at national level.

Moreover, the importance of the drafted recommendations to be delivered to the M&I WG was stressed. It was also underlined that HEI should include Doctoral candidate’s mobility and internationalization of Doctoral training in their institutional strategies. For more information on the presentation please follow the link below:



The discussion of the WG was mainly concentrated on the recommendations on the definition of mobility at the Third cycle level, as this is the core element for data collection. It was agreed that supervisor’s mobility is also very important issue. The WG members expressed their concerns on the duration of the degree mobility proposed (Mobility of at least three months) and the 20% mobility target, which is not applicable for many EHEA countries. The concerns of the WG over these two critical points should be reported and further discussed with M&I WG.

**Aim and expected outcomes of the FRINDOC project – presentation by EUA**

Mr. Thomas Jorgensen made a presentation on a framework for internationalisation of Doctoral education (FRINDOC project). It was clarified that the FRINDOC project is an attempt to address the particular issues of internationalisation in doctoral education. Moreover, the basis of the framework, project consortium and outcomes were presented. For more information on the presentation please follow the link below:



The WG members were additionally informed that the co – chairs will get in contact with M&I WG to extend its final recommendation to the third cycle, in all points where it will be relevant. This coordination effort is also aimed at clarifying, whether more clear mobility target is needed.

**Presentation by the Co-Chairs of the survey regarding the use of DS / ECTS and QF-LO for the third cycle**

Mrs. Ligia Deca briefed the WG members on the progress of the survey conducted by the Romanian Co-Chairs in connection to ToR specific task 5. She mainly noted that there were individual answers from BFUG members and various other sources (the 2012 BFUG implementation report/ national reports, ENIC-NARIC replies etc.) were compared. Thus, the data collection is done and clear analysis is carried out.

The research mainly shows that the situation is very diverse in EHEA countries. Many EHEA countries have not yet implemented the DS for graduates and in some states the DS has the same format for bachelor, masters and doctoral studies. Moreover, recommendations for the use of DS are drafted. For more information on the presentation please follow the link below:



During the discussion the role of DS for the labor market was emphasized, suggesting that the idea of addressing the potential employers in the future through DS should be considered more thoroughly. During the discussion it was underlined that the DS for the third cycle could also mention mobility experiences, transferable skills, publications etc. There was an agreement on the content of recommendations with a request to rephrase them according to the discussions during the meeting.

Additionally, it was noted that the WG recommendations on the use of ECTS in Third Cycle are taken into consideration by the ad-hoc WG on the Revision of the ECTS User’s guide and since there are no more comments on this issue the WG should include some of the recommendations in its final report to the Structural Reforms WG.

**The link between doctoral education and qualifications frameworks**

**The role of learning outcomes**

Mrs. Ligia Deca recalled the attention of the WG members on the WGs 3rd meeting discussions on the link between doctoral education and qualification frameworks. Therefore, a short overview paper was prepared with two main recommendations. For more information on the presentation please refer to the links below:



The Armenian representative to the WG noted during the WG debates that one of the main concerns of the QFs of the post-soviet countries is that the latter ones are not recognized by the EU member countries. Moreover, the 8th level of the Armenian NQF is compatible to the same level of the EQF and the 9th level of the Armenian NQF is compatible to post-doctoral education in Europe. Thus, the Armenian representative recommended that for these countries NQFs should be recognized by EU member states in order to improve mobility capacities and career opportunities for PhD holders.

Bearing in mind all the above mentioned the WG drafted a new recommendation as follows: Clarify the status of post-doctoral qualifications in relation to QF-EHEA and EQF (e.g. the existing third cycle qualifications in Armenia). This recommendation should be delivered to Structural Reforms WG for a more general discussion.

The deliberations of the WG led to the updated version of the document on the link between doctoral education and qualification frameworks attached below:



**Sustainable funding for the third cycle – presentation by co-chairs**

Mr. Cezar Haj made a presentation on the contribution of the Third cycle WG to the Mapping of the funding systems for research and doctoral programmes in Europe in the EHEA context. The funding for the Third Cycle is the 8th task of the ad-hoc WG ToR and the presentation should be considered as a starting point for the discussion on the respective issue. The Mapping of the funding systems for research and doctoral programmes was based on the appropriate research of EUA.

In relation to the current status of the financing opportunities it was mentioned that for sustainable funding of doctoral education a funding scheme is needed, with a coordinated contribution from regional, national and European level (which should bring European added value and concentrate, not diminish existing resources). Moreover, potential solutions and recommendations were presented. For more information on the presentation please follow the link below:



The deliberations of this topic revealed the need to address the following important points:

* The funding of doctoral programmes should be sustainable;
* While talking on diversification of doctoral funding (e.g. third party funding) it should be assured that the university has all the conditions for independent research and decision taking procedures;
* In terms of private partnership the issues of transparency, independence and affirming of academic standards should be stated in the paper more clearly;
* The WG should also discuss and come up with a set of recommendations for the issue of funding of Doctoral candidate;
* The WG should come up with a proper formulation for finding a balance between strategic and targeted funding.

**Presentation of the challenges of funding doctoral programmes and research by Armenia**

During her presentation, Mrs. Lusine Fljyan mainly emphasized the high importance Armenia gives to the Bologna process and EHEA. She mainly noted that the question of reformshas dominated the local debate on higher and postgraduate education since the beginning of the 90s. The education policy makers realized that implementing the Bologna reforms meant fundamental administrative, infrastructure and financial changes, which would radically improve the quality of higher and postgraduate education and significantly affect the regional and international education market. Moreover, the hierarchy of postgraduate degrees in Armenia was presented. For more information on the presentation please refer to the link below:



During the discussion of the presentation it was clarified that the title of Docent is awarded to Candidate of Science after completing several requirements and the title of Professor can be awarded to Doctor of Science based on the contribution to science. While talking on doctoral schools, it was noted that the institutions should fulfill the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia to set up a doctoral programme.

**Report of the ad-hoc WG on the third cycle and inputs to the Structural Reforms WG report – proposals and outline - presented by the Co-Chairs**

Mrs. Marzia Foroni briefed the WG members on the structure of the future report of the ad-hoc WG to be delivered to the Structural Reforms WG (SR WG). The participants were also informed on the document called “Toward a report by the structural reforms working group to the BFUG” attached below.

The ad-hoc WG on Third Cycle should contribute to the final report of the SR WG by delivering recommendations on the tasks included in its ToR. The deadline for the inputs from the ad-hoc WG is 15April 2014. Thus, the ad-hoc WG should send to SR WG those recommendations that are finalized by the deadline and the final report should be circulated after being finalized at the last meeting in Rome. Hence, the participants were introduced to the structure of the future report. For more information on the structure of the report please follow the link below:





While discussing the structure of the final report of the ad-hoc WG on Third Cycle the WG members agreed on the following important points:

* The key priority is to have a clear text on the results of the work done by the WG for the Yerevan Communique. Thus, the SR WG should receive several prioritized points on the results achieved by the WG;
* A political narrative on the need to increase the number of PhD’s in Europe could be inserted in the introduction part of the report;
* The WG should have a priority list of recommendations after the meeting in Rome (to decide: 2 max 3 priorities to be included in the Communiques).

**Conclusion of the meeting**

The WG members held the first debate on the priority recommendations to be included in the Yerevan Communique. The revision of ESG, Qualification Frameworks, the use of Diploma Supplement, learning outcomes, employability, global dimension – internationalisation and the revision of ECTS user’s guide were listed as the main areas for inputs to be delivered to SR WG.

The main priority areas pointed out by the WG for the next ministerial Communique are: employability, the use of DS, international mobility and funding of doctoral programmes. Moreover, it was underlined that quality assurance is one of the most important issues. Thus, there is a need for separate quality assurance procedures for Third Cycle based on existing approaches used in research. Moreover, the collaboration between research assessment and quality assurance agencies would be a big step forward.

**The final meeting of the WG will take place in Rome on 12-13 May 2014.**