

Draft agenda

XCIII BFUG meeting – Budapest, Hungary

26th – 27th of September 2024

Venue: Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Design, 9 Zugligeti St, Budapest, 1121

All hours in CEST/Hungarian time

25th of September 2024

19:00 Reception at YBL-Villa

Location: Budakeszi út 36b, 1121

26th of September 2024

08:30 – 09:00 Registration

09:00 Start of the meeting

09:00 – 10:30 1. Welcome and introduction

- 1.1 Welcome by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation of Hungary
- 1.2 Welcome by the BFUG Co-chairs (Hungary and Iceland)
- 1.3 Welcome by the BFUG Vice-chair (Romania)

2. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: Agenda of the meeting

Proposed action: Adopt the agenda

3. Information from the outgoing BFUG Co-chairs (Belgium Flemish and French Community, Holy See)

Documents: Minutes of the [BFUG Board LXXXIX meeting](#) (Vatican City), [BFUG XC meeting](#) (Brussels), [Extraordinary BFUG Board XC/II meeting](#) (online) and [BFUG XCI meeting](#) (Tirana)

Proposed action: Acknowledge the minutes of the BFUG XC meeting (Brussels) and BFUG XCI meeting (Tirana)

4. Information about the XCII BFUG Board meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland

5. BFUG Rules of Procedure (RoP-BFUG)

Documents: [Draft Rules of Procedure-BFUG](#)
[Background note – RoP BFUG](#)

Proposed action: adopt the draft Rules of Procedure-BFUG

6. Final report of the 2022-2024 Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the European Higher Education Area

Documents: [Final report of the Task Force](#)
[Annex 1 – Draft ToRs for a Task Force on the establishment of a long-term Secretariat](#)

Proposed action: Adopt the final report of the Task Force

7. Feedback on the organisation of the Ministerial Conference from the outgoing Albanian BFUG Secretariat and reporting on the 2021-2024 work period

Documents: [Presentation from the outgoing Albanian BFUG Secretariat](#)
[Evaluation report for the Tirana 2024 Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum](#)
[Report for the 2021-2024 work period](#)

Proposed action: taking note of the two reports

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 12:00 8. Information from the EHEA Secretariat

Documents: [Presentation from the EHEA Secretariat](#)
[Draft Terms of Reference for the Secretariat](#)
[Draft Guidelines for minuting and formatting of documents](#)
[Co-chairing arrangements for the BFUG 2024-2030](#)
[Outlook and requirements for the revised EHEA website](#)
[Structure of the membership profiles on EHEA website](#)
[General rules for secondments](#)

Proposed action:

- Agree on the Terms of Reference for the Secretariat, Guidelines for minuting and formatting of documents, Co-chairing arrangements, Membership profiles on EHEA website, General rules for secondments
- Advise on the Outlook and requirements for the revised EHEA website

12:00 – 13:30 9. Roundtable discussion on implementing the Tirana Communiqué

Proposed action: BFUG members are invited to share information about the present or future follow-up national actions for implementing the commitments in the Tirana Communiqué, including on the elaboration of the action plans

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 17:00 10. EHEA Work programme 2024-2027

Documents: [Draft Work Programme](#)

Presentation of the Work Programme

Presentation of the expressions of interest for co-chairing

Proposed action: adopt the Work Programme and the co-chairs for each working structure and agree on the next steps for adopting the ToRs and establishing the working structures

17:00 End of day 1

18:15 - Gala dinner at the National Museum

Location: Múzeum krt. 14-16, 1088

26th of September 2024

09:00 Start of day 2

09:00 – 09:30 Continuation on the EHEA Work Programme (if needed)

09:30 – 10:30 11. Networking session on the future working structures

Documents: [Background note on the networking session](#)

Proposed action: informal discussion on the focus and output of the working structures

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 13:00 12. Information from the European Commission on the new call for Erasmus+ project supporting the implementation of the Bologna Process

Documents: Presentation from the European Commission

13. Application from Eurodoc to become an consultative member of EHEA

Documents: [Eurodoc application](#) and [Eurodoc Statutes](#)
[Background document – Eurodoc application](#)

Proposed action: decide in relation to the application of Eurodoc, considering the advice of the BFUG Board

14. Plenary session on the European Degree (label) and the European Higher Education Area

Documents: Background document by the Hungarian Presidency
Presentation from the European Commission

Proposed action: discuss on potential synergies between the European Degree (label) and the EHEA tools and potential challenges

15. Information by the incoming co-chairs (Poland and Albania)

Documents: [Presentation from Albania for XCIV BFUG Board meeting](#)
[Presentation from Poland for the XCV BFUG meeting](#)

16. Reports from the consultative members (in writing)

- 16.1 Business Europe
- 16.2 [Council of Europe report](#) and [presentation](#)
- 16.3 Education International
- 16.4 [ENQA](#)
- 16.5 EQAR
- 16.6 ESU
- 16.7 [EUA](#)
- 16.8 [EURASHE](#)
- 16.9 [UNESCO](#)

17. Any other business (AOB)

13:00 - End of meeting

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – *Tour of the university (optional)*

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

*RoP-EHEA and its annexes as adopted at the Tirana Ministerial Conference,
on 30 May 2024 (in grey shade) &
draft RoP-BFUG, for adoption by the BFUG XCIII in Budapest*

The Rules of Procedures for the European Higher Education Area consist of two parts:

- 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. The RoP-EHEA also include the annexes 1-4. The RoP-EHEA has come into force by adoption on 30 May 2024 at the EHEA Ministerial Conference in Tirana.
- Part 2 will set out the Rules of Procedure of the Bologna Follow-up Group and its sub-structures (RoP-BFUG). 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 change in the RoP-EHEA and endorsement by Ministers. The RoP-EHEA shall prevail over the RoP-BFUG.

The part 2 (RoP-BFUG) will be on the agenda for approval by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) meeting XCIII in Budapest, following the 2024 Tirana Ministerial Conference.

PART 1	RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA -	
	RoP-EHEA.....	2
I	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	2
	I.1 A process built on European cooperation	2
	I.2 Policies and instruments.....	3
	I.3 The Bologna Follow-up Group.....	3
	I.4 Co- and Vice-Chairs	3
	I.5 Ethics.....	3
	I.6 Implementation of agreed policies	3
II	MEMBERSHIP.....	3
	II.1 Members	3
	II.2 Consultative members.....	4
	II.3 EHEA partners	4
	II.4 European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education	4
III	ACCESSION, WITHDRAWAL AND EXCLUSION	4
	III.1 Accession	4
	III.2 Suspension and exclusion	4
IV	GOVERNING BODIES	4
	IV.1 Governing bodies of the European Higher Education Area.....	4
	IV.2 The Ministerial Conference.....	5
	IV.3 The Bologna Follow-up Group	5
	IV.4 Working language	6
V	DECISION MAKING.....	6
	V.1 Consensus	6
	V.2 Voting.....	6
	V.3 Voting regime	6
VI	GLOBAL POLICY FORUM.....	7
VII	EHEA SECRETARIAT.....	7
VIII	FINAL PROVISIONS.....	7
	VIII.1 Adoption and modification of Rules of Procedure for the European	
	Higher Education Area	7

VIII.2	Safeguarding and dissemination of the Rules to members and consultative members	7
PART 2	RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP – RoP-BFUG	1
I	BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP	1
I.1	Role and responsibilities.....	1
I.2	Competences	1
I.3	Preparation of the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum.....	2
I.4	Implementation of the EHEA work programme	2
I.5	Minutes of Meetings	2
I.6	Participation in and representation at the BFUG	2
I.7	Rights and suspension of members and consultative members	2
I.8	Preparation of the BFUG meetings	3
II	THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP.....	3
II.1	Role and responsibilities.....	3
II.2	Composition	4
II.3	Working methods	4
III	THE BFUG CO-CHAIRS AND THE VICE-CHAIR	4
III.1	Roles and responsibilities.....	4
III.2	Time in office and tasks of the Co-Chairs	4
III.3	Time in office and tasks of the Vice-Chair	4
IV	DRAFTING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIQUÉ AND THE GLOBAL POLICY FORUM STATEMENT	5
V	WORKING STRUCTURES	5
V.1	Remit and terms of reference	5
V.2	Participation in BFUG working structures.....	5
V.3	Working arrangements.....	6
VI	DECISION MAKING.....	6
VII	SUPPORT TO NEW MEMBERS	7
VII.1	Assessment of applications for membership and consultative membership	7
VII.2	Roadmap.....	7
VIII	EHEA SECRETARIAT.....	7

VIII.1	Role and tasks	7
IX	HOST AND VENUE OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AND GLOBAL POLICY FORUM	9
X	EHEA COMMUNICATION	9
X.1	General tasks for BFUG and Secretariat	9
X.2	Website	10
X.3	Information sharing through the BFUG.....	10
X.4	Calendar.....	10
Annex 1	EHEA members and consultative members	1
Annex 2	EHEA Partners.....	2
Annex 3	Working structures of the BFUG.....	3
Annex 4	Procedure and criteria for membership	4

PART 1 RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA - RoP-EHEA

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 fosters and consolidates 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 apply to 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) is a voluntary intergovernmental process, built on the Bologna Process, through which its members and consultative members jointly develop policies and soft-law commitments. These are adopted by the competent public authorities of its member States and implemented within each education system, in collaboration and consultation with the representatives of the higher education community, institutions, students and staff. These Rules of Procedure are to guide the operations of the EHEA in the light of established policies, processes and practices.

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, adopts and implements 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. The order of the non-European Union Co-Chairs normally follows the names of the States in English alphabetical order. For both, the order may nevertheless be modified by the BFUG in agreement with the States members concerned.

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

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 shall 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 commit to act in good faith and as such do their utmost, within their respective education systems and contexts, to further the implementation of policies and decisions adopted by Ministers.

II MEMBERSHIP

The EHEA has members and consultative members, as listed in Part II-PART 2X.4Annex 1.

II.1 Members

States party to the European Cultural Convention are eligible for membership of the EHEA provided they demonstrate their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives and commitments of the Bologna Process in their higher education systems¹. The European Commission is equally a member of the EHEA.

¹ Cf Berlin Communiqué.

II.2 Consultative members

European level 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 EHEA partners

The BFUG may grant organisations that do not fulfil the criteria for consultative membership an association with the EHEA, as EHEA partners. They are invited to Ministerial Conferences and can be invited to the BFUG meetings as determined by the RoP-BFUG. Any decision to grant EHEA partner status shall be communicated to Ministers and shall be considered in PART 2X.4Annex 2 to these RoP-EHEA, which lists the EHEA partners.

II.4 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 to establish a register of quality assurance agencies that operate in substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG). It may participate in the BFUG and its structures, without voting rights.

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 for membership and consultative membership are to be submitted to the BFUG and will be examined in accordance with the provisions detailed in the RoP-BFUG.

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

III.2 Suspension and exclusion

Ministers or the BFUG may decide to suspend a member or consultative member, from some or all activities of the EHEA, should it pursue policies or actions that significantly contradict the commitments of the EHEA, constitute a significant violation of its values or confirm an explicit publicly expressed intention to do so. Ministers have the exclusive competence to exclude a member or a consultative member. Under the same criteria, the BFUG may suspend or exclude an EHEA partner.

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, with its Board, the two Co-Chairs, and the Vice Chair.

IV.2 The Ministerial Conference

Role and composition

The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making authority of the EHEA. It is composed of Ministers responsible for higher education of the State members of the EHEA or their representatives, 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 also include a leader of a higher education institution and a democratically elected student representative.

Process and schedule

The Ministerial Conference meets in regular session at least every three years, and as far as possible in physical presence. Extraordinary meetings are held by decision of the BFUG 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.

Competences and tasks

The Ministerial Conference sets its own agenda and takes decisions as 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 the host and venue of Ministerial Conferences and the Global Policy Fora.
- Any modification of the RoP-EHEA.

IV.3 The Bologna Follow-up Group

The BFUG oversees and directs the development of the EHEA between Ministerial Conferences, ensures the implementation of commitments adopted by Ministers, develops its work programme on this basis and prepares 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, the EHEA Secretariat and its other working structures conduct their work in accordance with the RoP-EHEA, and the RoP-BFUG, that it adopted itself.

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 BFUG Co-Chairs, the BFUG Vice-Chair, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the European University Association, the European Students' Union, and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education. One of the Co-Chairs of each of the BFUG working structures according to the work plan of the respective period is invited to participate in Board meetings, without decision-making competence.

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 are to be made by consensus.

V.2 Voting

Decisions are to be reached primarily by consensus, but in exceptional circumstances, mainly on procedural issues, the BFUG Co-Chairs may decide to take a decision by vote. Votes are limited to the members of the EHEA. Each member has two votes and indicates to the Co-Chairs who will cast the votes on its behalf. There shall be no vote in absence (by proxy). But where a delegation is made up of more than one legal 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 and online meetings, votes are cast publicly, unless at least one delegation requests a secret ballot, with due controls ensuring that only those entitled to cast a vote are able to do so. When voting in presence is not possible, voting may take place by correspondence (letter, email or another electronic means), to be organised by the Secretariat. In this case, the vote cannot be taken by secret ballot.

V.3 Voting regime

If, in exceptional circumstances and in spite of the best efforts of the BFUG Co-Chairs, no consensus can be achieved, decisions can be taken by vote. 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 EHEA.
- Adoption of standards, guidelines, instruments and goals.
- The admission, suspension and exclusion of members or consultative members.
- Modifications of the RoP-EHEA.

There shall be no voting on the adoption of the Communiqué.

The quorum shall be two thirds of the members entitled to vote. If 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, or by correspondence. No quorum will then be set.

VI GLOBAL POLICY FORUM

Throughout its work, the BFUG seeks to establish dialogue on policies and actions of common concern with partners in other regions.

A Global Policy Forum, which invites international government representatives and organisations is organised, usually in conjunction with Ministerial Conferences. The international partners should be involved in the preparation of the Forum and of the statement that it is to adopt. Invitations should be agreed by the BFUG, which shall consult the host of the Ministerial Conference.

VII EHEA SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat provides neutral, administrative and operational support to the Ministerial Conference, the BFUG and its Board, chairs and working structures. It operates under the authority of the BFUG, is fully accountable to it, and 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 members or consultative members.

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 at the Ministerial Conference of the EHEA in Tirana, taking place on 29 and 30 May 2024. They may subsequently be modified by the Ministers.

VIII.2 Safeguarding and dissemination of the Rules to members and consultative members

The Rules of Procedure for the EHEA are made public on the EHEA website. The EHEA Secretariat provides the competent authorities of all members and consultative members with a certified copy.

PART 2 RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP – RoP-BFUG

The present Rules of Procedure of the BFUG (RoP-BFUG) have been adopted by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) at its meeting **on 26th-27th of September 2024 in Budapest, Hungary.**

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

I BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP

I.1 Role and responsibilities

The BFUG oversees and directs the development and implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) between the Ministerial Conferences. It meets at least once under each Co-Chairmanship. Regular meetings are as far as possible to be held in physical presence. Extraordinary meetings of the BFUG can 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 are called with at least two weeks' notice and can consider only the issues for which they were called.

I.2 Competences

The BFUG acts and decides on all matters not reserved to 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, (see Annex 3), 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.
- Preparation of 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 to the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum, in agreement with the hosting country, as well as the status of any such participants at the conference. (see RoP-EHEA VI).
- The sequence of the BFUG Co-Chairs, including any modifications.
- The representation of the BFUG to third parties.
- Examination of and support to requests to join the EHEA, and preparation of recommendations for the decision of Ministers (Annex 4).
- The association of organisations with the EHEA, as EHEA partners, and the criteria and rules for such association (Annex 4).

- Regulations and guidelines for its own work and that of its subordinate bodies, including the Secretariat.
- Oversight and steering of the work of the Secretariat, ~~and the right to select, and dismiss the Head of Secretariat.~~
- ~~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 oversees, in cooperation with the authorities of the host country, the organisation of the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum and advises 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 by the following Ministerial Conference, 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), the terms of reference of which shall be adopted by the BFUG. All working structures report and submit their proposals to the BFUG, in line with the schedule of the work programme.

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. If there are 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

Members and consultative members of the EHEA designate their BFUG representatives. They are represented by a maximum of two representatives at BFUG meetings and shall make every effort to attend. They notify the EHEA Secretariat of any changes in their representation, in order to keep the list of representatives up-to-date.

Members and consultative members of the BFUG shall have the right to speak to and submit proposals under all items on the agenda. EHEA partners can participate in BFUG meetings or BFUG working structures as observers, upon approved prior request in writing to the Co-chairs. During the BFUG meetings, they may speak on the agenda issues for which they requested participation.

I.7 Rights and suspension of members and consultative members

The right to vote is reserved to members and is to be conducted in accordance with Article 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 temporary exclusion from the EHEA under Article III.2 of RoP-EHEA. The BFUG may also suspend or exclude EHEA Partners. Unless the BFUG decided to revoke the suspension, it would continue, until such time that Ministers, at a regular Ministerial Conference or otherwise, decided 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 are scheduled at least 6 months in advance.

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

The documents for meetings of the BFUG, the BFUG Board, and other BFUG structures are 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 Secretariat at least 5 days prior to the meeting, and any proposed amendments are then circulated to all delegations before the meeting.

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

II THE BOARD OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP

II.1 Role and responsibilities

The Board of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG Board) is an advisory committee, that 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 proposals for 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 its deliberations;
- takes up specific tasks and roles and makes decisions that are 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, by the latest within 5 working days, 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. In addition, one Co-Chair of each BFUG working structure participates in the meetings of the Board to report on progress.

If a vote is required, the past, present and incoming BFUG Co-chairs, the Vice-chair, and the European Commission are entitled to vote.

II.3 Working methods

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

Additional ordinary BFUG Board meetings may be held, in physical presence or online, as judged preferable. Extraordinary meetings of the BFUG Board can 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 on the Board and can consider only the issues for which they were called.

III THE BFUG CO-CHAIRS AND THE VICE-CHAIR

III.1 Roles and responsibilities

The BFUG 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 the BFUG meetings. They take the 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.2 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.3 Time in office and tasks of the Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair is assigned by the State member(s) hosting the forthcoming Ministerial Conference and serves for the duration of the work period concerned. The Vice-Chair in particular ensures the liaison between the BFUG and the authorities of the hosting country of the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum, as well as continuity between Co-Chairmanships. The Co-Chairs 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 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 presents the 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 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 the 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 submits a roadmap for its work to the BFUG for approval.

The Global Policy Forum adopts 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, also in consideration of the interest and participation of international partners.

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 X.4Annex 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 of the work programme and operate throughout its duration. 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 specify the purpose and goals, main tasks and ways of working and the tentative schedule, the profile of participants and the number of Co-Chairs.

The BFUG has 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 is normally expressed when the group is established. It may, however, also be expressed at a later stage, and the request for participation is then 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).

Commonly, BFUG members and consultative members participate themselves in the working structures, but can appoint a representative with a suitable profile. In any case, they have the duty to ensure regular participation, as far as possible by the same person, and that their ministry, institution or organisation is duly informed of the work of the group.

V.3 Working arrangements

Working structures are chaired by one or several chairs, normally not more than three, 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, including to:

- plan and implement its workplan and schedule, in close collaboration with the working structure's members and in line with its terms of reference;
- facilitate the working structure's collaboration, through proper preparation and follow-up of meetings and by 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, and good practice sharing. Where these exchanges and collaborations are a more regular arrangement, they should be approved by the BFUG in advance;
- ensure that collaboration on 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 in accurate and clear minutes prepared by the Secretariat, which contain conclusions and decisions and also open issues and points of disagreement within the structure;
- report progress to the BFUG and the BFUG Board and 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 the adopted policies and positions of the Bologna Process.

VI DECISION MAKING

Decisions are made, as far as possible by consensus, but, if despite the best efforts of the Co-Chairs, consensus is not possible, may be taken by vote - in full accordance with Article V of the RoP-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, based on whether they meet the goals and purpose of the Bologna Process, and its values, and in such a case, recommend Ministers to include them formally.

The BFUG shall establish a Task Force, to assist it in the preparation of recommendations to Ministers on any application of a new member. The Task Force 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 in the Task Force 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 Task Force 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 provides 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 the 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 the dissemination of information and documentation to the BFUG and its working structures. It is also the external contact point for the EHEA and may 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 adopts specific Terms of Reference related to the Secretariat applicable to the work period for which the Secretariat is established.

The Secretariat shall meet the following general requirements:

Independence and Accountability

The Secretariat shall be independent of the country or organisation within which it is located. It operates under the authority of the BFUG and is 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 approves the appointment and, if necessary, may request the dismissal of the Head of the Secretariat. It may appoint a group to oversee the work of the Secretariat.~~

Sustainability

The arrangements for the 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).

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 enable the Secretariat to define profiles and competence requirements for its staff (e.g. knowledge and understanding of European higher education policy, management and administrative competence, a high level of English, etc.) and recruit accordingly, not limited by standard post descriptions or competence requirements of the host organisation/country.

Secondments

In addition to its own staff, the Secretariat shall be able to accept secondments from members and 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 and consultative members.

Relation to the country hosting the Ministerial Conference

The Secretariat cooperates closely with the authorities of the host country regarding the organisation of the Ministerial Conference. 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.

Legal framework and location

The Secretariat is to be established within a legal framework and in a location that allows for the various requirements to be fulfilled, not only concerning the rule of law, but also the possibility of receiving external funding and the guarantee that the secretariat will be able to operate without undue external influence.

Non-profit principle

If the Secretariat is provided by or hosted within an existing organisation, this organisation must not gain a profit or surplus out of the Secretariat's operation. Any surpluses remaining from the income allocated to the Secretariat 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

A year in advance of a Ministerial Conference the BFUG shall invite expressions of interest in hosting the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum for the following period. The call includes 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 host 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 normally 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 any 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;
- providing secure spaces for sharing draft documents, internal calendars etc., either established by the Secretariat, a hosting party, or through a reliable service provider;
- providing appropriate information and information materials for the European and international higher education community and stakeholders, and for the general public;
- organising 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 members to update the information on their systems, organisations and representatives at least once a year;

- organising the handover of relevant documents and information and the transfer of the website to the incoming Secretariat, and providing assistance during the transition phase to guarantee a seamless continuation of the work of the BFUG.

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

- the availability of the appropriate physical and virtual infrastructures and means for meetings and events;
- prompt and timely information transfer, before, during and after events, including registration procedures, participants' lists etc.;
- coordination of scheduling processes to avoid clashes 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 includes all recent documents of the BFUG and its working structures, and makes them accessible to the wider public, unless the BFUG decides for compelling reasons not to do so. It ensures 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 BFUG 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.

Annexes

Annex 1 EHEA members and consultative members

The countries, institutions and organisations listed below have been accepted as members or consultative members. Membership of the EHEA is governed by Article II of the RoP-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 with similar status as consultative members
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 exclude different uses of existing, and development of new types of working structures.

Approach	Description	Example
Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually a group with more than 10 members 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established to explore or fulfil certain limited and concretely described tasks Limited in duration May be limited in participation, to ensure expertise on the issues and fast results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Task Force on Fundamental Values in the 2018-2020 work programme
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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Usually requires the creation of action plans from members in order to pursue objectives related to the implementation of the key commitments Possible involvement of experts and stakeholders next to the BFUG delegates. 	

Annex 4 Procedure and criteria for membership

I. Requirements for membership of the EHEA

Applicant countries are requested to confirm their adherence to the following principles and objectives:

- International mobility of students and staff
- Autonomous higher education institutions
- Academic freedom and integrity
- Student participation in the governance of higher education
- Public responsibility for higher education
- The social dimension of higher education

The application has to be complemented by a report, detailing the higher education policies of the country in the light of the Bologna Process and outlining how the principles and objectives of the Bologna Process have been and/or will be implemented. The Report should cover the following topics:

- General information on the higher education system and partnership with stakeholders
- Degree system
 - Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle
 - Stage of implementation of the third cycle
 - Relationship between higher education and research
 - Access and admission to the next cycle
 - Employability of graduates/cooperation with employers
 - Implementation of the national qualifications framework
- National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG)
 - Review of the QA system with respect to the ESG and national support for implementation
 - Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions
 - Stage of development of external quality assurance system
 - Level of student participation
 - Level of international participation
- Recognition of degrees and study periods
 - Stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement
 - National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention
 - Stage of implementation of the ECTS
- Lifelong learning
 - Recognition of prior learning
 - Flexible learning paths
- Joint Degrees
 - Establishment and recognition of Joint Degrees
 - Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility
 - Portability of loans and grants
- The Attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world
 - Implementation of strategy
- Future challenges

- Main challenges for higher education
- Social dimension of higher education
 - Current state of affairs
 - Progress towards a more inclusive higher education system (strategy for the future)
 - Information on the national responsibility for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategies.

The application has to be signed by the (national) Minister responsible for higher education, submitted by a given deadline, and be complemented by the required national report.

When an application is received, a confirmation of receipt is sent to the applicant country; the BFUG Chairs, assisted by the Bologna Secretariat, verify that the application satisfies the prescribed procedures.

The BFUG (with support from Co-chairs, Vice-Chair, Secretariat, Council of Europe and/or the BFUG Board) assesses the application with the accompanying national report on the basis of the criteria for admission described above and agrees on the recommendation to be given to the Ministers.

II. Requirements for consultative membership and EHEA partners

The criteria for consultative membership are defined as follows:

- Added value to the Bologna Process

Any new consultative member or EHEA partner should provide added value to the Process, meaning that their contribution should have a European scope and be relevant to the work of the BFUG. Additional criteria on added value for new consultative members: their contribution cannot be easily covered by an existing consultative member and cooperation with the BFUG cannot be better covered at another level.

- Relevance of the stakeholder group

Organisations should have higher education as a central field of interest. The stakeholder group should be relevant to the principles, action lines and goals of the Bologna Process. Organisations that may contribute to stronger links between higher education and the labour market are relevant to the Process. Organisations that may contribute to stronger links between higher education and other educational fields may also be relevant. Organisations representing special professions do not fit with the BFUG, which deals with general principles of, and structures in, higher education.

- Representativeness

A new consultative member or EHEA partner should not be a sub-organisation of a member or consultative member of the Bologna Follow-up Group. Additional criteria on representativeness for new consultative members: be the most representative organisation in its field of interest, be a European organisation or a European branch of an organisation, accept organisations from all the EHEA member States as full members, have full members from no less than 50% of the Bologna countries and have full members from EHEA member States outside the EU/EEA and EU candidate countries.

- Organisational form

Either be a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or an inter-governmental organisation. Additional criteria on organisational form for new consultative members: its mandate should reflect its relevance

to the Bologna Process and its right to give an opinion on behalf of its members on matters relating to the Bologna Process.

Organisations wishing to become consultative members or EHEA partners need to send an application to the EHEA Secretariat, documenting that they satisfy the listed criteria. The Secretariat then puts the request on the agenda of the BFUG that in turn will assess the application. The decision is taken by the Ministerial Conference for consultative members and by the BFUG for EHEA partners.

Background note

Proposal for the Rules of Procedure of the Bologna Follow-Up Group

prepared for the XCIII BFUG meeting in Budapest, 26th -27th of September 2024

The Ministerial Conference in Tirana in May 2024 adopted Part I of the Rules of Procedure, including annexes, which are the Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area (RoP-EHEA). According to Article IV.3 of the RoP-EHEA, the Bologna Follow-Up Group adopts Part II of the Rules of Procedure, which are the Rules of Procedure for the Bologna Follow-Up Group and its' sub-structures (RoP-BFUG).

The proposal for the Part II – RoP-BFUG has been elaborated by the Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the European Higher Education Area in tandem with the Part I - RoP-EHEA.

The draft Part II – RoP-BFUG has been sent to the EHEA Secretariat by the former Albanian Secretariat as part of the handover process.

As the provisions related to the establishment of a long-term Secretariat are not applicable for the 2024-2027 cycle, it is proposed that those points which were subsequent to the establishment of such a Secretariat for this working period (marked in yellow and strikethrough) are eliminated from the Part II -RoP-BFUG for the time being.

As several discussions have taken place in relation to the Rules of Procedure, the co-chairs do not intend to re-open the document for amendments.

Proposed action: adopt Part II – RoP-BFUG.

Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the European Higher Education Area (TF RR)

Report to the BFUG, proposals for further work

Contents

A. Introduction.....	1
B. Task Force’s terms of reference, and its approach	1
C. Outputs and achievements	2
D. Recommendations for further work	3
E. Task Force composition.....	4
F. Activities, meetings and reporting to the BFUG and meetings.....	4
BFUG, BFUG Board meetings	54
Task Force Meetings.....	7
Task Force meeting attendance	9
G. List of Annexes.....	10

A. Introduction

This document provides a report on the work of the Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the European Higher Education Area (“TF RR”) in the working period 2021 – 2024. It also includes proposals for further steps towards the Long-term Secretariat, in follow-up of the Tirana Ministerial Communiqué (May 2024).

The document comprises:

- The actual report on the TF’s approach, its activities and outcomes
- A list of documents that it provided to the BFUG
- Proposals and recommendations for the continuation of the work for the establishment of a Long-term Secretariat during the working period 2024–2027, including draft Terms of Reference for a dedicated Working Group

B. Task Force’s terms of reference, and its approach

The TF RR was established at the BFUG in Brno, 7-8 October 2022, to “develop a proposed set of rules and regulations for the governance of the European Higher Education Area (“EHEA”) and its bodies, in particular the BFUG, the BFUG Board and the Secretariat, working groups and similar for its final adoption by the BFUG before the Ministerial conference in 2024 including any necessary text to be reflected in the ministers’ communiqué”. The terms of Reference (ToRs) invited the TF also to “propose

recommendations on any reforms of EHEA structures in line with needs identified within the work on updated rules of procedures”. (see Annex 3 for the TOR).

Therefore, the TF, from the very beginning, saw its task in the revision of the Rules of Procedure, but also in a more general consideration of the governance and working structures of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on clear principles and values.

It organised its work in two parallel, but interrelated strands:

1. The revision of the existing Rules of Procedure that had been developed over the years, and as a consequence were not fully consistent and well-structured regarding their content and wording . The Task Force considered among others:
 - organisational structures, including the BFUG (Bologna Follow-Up group), BFUG Board and the secretariat regarding their roles, tasks and interplay;
 - membership, including application processes and support for membership, as well as its suspension and termination;
 - decision-making processes and procedures, including voting, the role, tasks and ways of working;
 - and their reflection in relevant rules and documents.
2. The exploration of a Long-term Secretariat for the EHEA

Over the past 15 years, in view of a growing and more complex workload that the BFUG and its secretariats had to face, the establishment of a more enduring secretariat has been discussed on several occasions. Beyond a discussion of its potential benefits and challenges, through the work of the TF, for the first time its feasibility and possible models have been explored in more detail, and principles and values for its establishment have been drawn up.

C. Outputs and achievements

The TF RR developed within a relatively short period (Oct 2022 – May 2024) several documents related to main areas of its focus:

1. **Rules of procedures for the EHEA**, a complex, restructured document addressing key issues for EHEA governance, membership, operations and processes within the existing structures. The TF developed the document in two parts:
 - a. **Rules of procedures for the EHEA** covering key mission, principles, membership, structures, roles and competences within the EHEA. This part was adopted by the ministers as an annex to the Tirana communique
 - b. **Rules of procedures for the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG)**, which are proposed to be adopted by the BFUG. This part should complement the above-mentioned Rules of procedures for EHEA, as it provides more detailed, operational rules, changes of which are within the mandate of the BFUG.

The document has been developed over several rounds: the BFUG discussed first the concept, and had then opportunity to comment on a first draft, and subsequently on its revised versions. Each version was supported by an explanatory note of the proposed changes. Some of the working versions included possible changes in respective formulations of the Rules of procedures resulting from a possible launch of a Long-term Secretariat and may thus serve any further work.

2. **Long-term EHEA Secretariat.** The TF prepared concepts notes and outlines to facilitate the discussion in the BFUG on the Secretariat, its role, tasks and status, its potential models, and the principles for its establishment. In total 4 various conceptual documents have been developed for the four BFUG meetings in 2023 and 2024. The earlier ones provided an overview of different models of organisation and institutional status of a Long-term Secretariat. The later ones developed more concrete proposals for its establishment:
 - a. **Revised Concept Note: Long-Term Secretariat,** a document developed for the BFUG meeting in February 2024 in Brussels. Building on the previous versions, it summarises the benefits and challenges of various solutions, overview of potential models, provides a detailed explanation and interpretation of the proposed principles' rationale and indicates – as requested by some BFUG members – indicative cost calculations.
 - b. **Long-term EHEA Secretariat. Principles and Roadmap.** The document was submitted to the BFUG in April 2024, proposed as an annex to the Tirana Communiqué. It summarises the main principles for the Long-term Secretariat and proposed concrete steps and a timeline for its establishment. The roadmap foresees among others the process of identifying a host country or organisation for the Long-Term Secretariat, and a milestone of the BFUG decision on the Long-term Secretariat by the spring 2026, and, if agreed, its launch with the Ministerial conference in 2027. This has been the basis of the commitment in the Tirana Communiqué of the ministerial conference. The BFUG accepted the principles and roadmap as a basis for further work, yet did not see it necessary to include these as a separate annex, as some of the principles have been integrated in the communiqué text.
3. A **proposal of the text for the Tirana Communiqué** related to the rules of procedures, including a mandate for the BFUG to explore the Long-term Secretariat, with the goal to launch it by 2027.

D. State of play and recommendations for further work

- a. The Rules of Procedures for the EHEA were adopted by the ministers in Tirana, the Rules of Procedures for the BFUG have been commented and adjusted accordingly, thus the first upcoming BFUG (September 2024 in Budapest) is invited to adopt this part.
- b. As regards the governing structure of the EHEA, the TF RR has focused mainly on the role and status of the secretariat, while the other governing structures (BFUG, BFUG Board) might be affected by the chosen solution. For example, the BFUG and depending on the final governance structure chosen, the Board, would have a stronger role towards the Secretariat, but this also comes with some responsibilities. Overall, governance and management should become more transparent.
- c. The TF provided possible models for the legal status of the Secretariat, and recommended a solution ensuring a high level of independence from any individual BFUG member, including the hosting country, while keeping open the option for secondment opportunities and in-kind contributions. The TF RR strongly recommended that – if the 2026 decision confirms - the Long-term Secretariat should be launched in good time to take up its role immediately after the ministerial conference in 2027. Any delay may lead to new uncertainties and additional work, as it would require the development of an interim solution, respectively yet another host, with the Long-term Secretariat postponed until 2030 – with the risk of losing momentum.
- d. The entire process of establishing the secretariat, i.e. further development of the concept, model, status, and its link to the EHEA governing structures operation, the identification and selection of

a host, and the funding model should be supported and facilitated by a dedicated BFUG working group which would build on the concepts, models and proposals developed by the TF RR. Whereas the TF RR was composed of experts, this forthcoming working group should consist of BFUG members representatives. It may nevertheless be desirable to keep its size rather small and time-bound by a launch of the future model of the Secretariat.

- e. The code of ethics for which some BFUG members called should be developed by other ways and means, e.g. by few BFUG members volunteering or a smaller TF.

E. Task Force composition

The Task Force members were appointed by the BFUG in Brno, 8 October 2022 in their personal capacity reflecting upon their long-term engagement within the EHEA structures and experience from acting within the EHEA on behalf of governmental and/or non-governmental organisations.

- Michael Gaebel, EUA, TF Co-Chair
- Michal Karpisek, Czech Republic, TF Co-Chair
- Luca Lantero, Italy, TF Co-Chair¹
- Sjur Bergan, expert, formerly Council of Europe
- Irina Geanta, Romania
- Frank Petrikowski, Germany
- Linda Pustina, Albania, BFUG Vice-chair
- Kinga Szuly, European Commission
- Colin Tueck, expert, formerly EQAR

For division of roles and engagement of the TF members see further parts including an overview of attendance. The TF meetings were attended by the BFUG Secretariat staff.

F. Activities, meetings and reporting to the BFUG and meetings

The TF took up its work immediately after its establishment in October 2022, with a first online meeting on 22 December 2022 and a first hybrid meeting on 15 January 2023. It continued to meet at least once a month, occasionally more often, and also in two subsets, focusing on the revision of the RoP, and the concept proposal for the Secretariat respectively. Meetings were held mainly online (15) and three times in person, allowing for online attendance.

Since its launch, the TF reported regularly at all four BFUG Board and five BFUG meetings (see below). The BFUG was invited to discuss and comment on documents during the BFUG meetings, and usually also in writing after the BFUG. On this basis, revised and new documents have been prepared. The TF agenda was discussed in depth at a devoted thematic session in Stockholm (May 2023) and as an agenda item of the BFUG agenda (Madrid, November 2023; Brussels, February 2024; Brussels, April 2024, Tirana, May 2024).

¹ Resigned from the Task Force on 12 February 2024.

BFUG, BFUG Board meetings

Meeting	Agenda related to the TF, comments
BFUG Brno, CZ 7.-8.11.2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of the Task Force, appointment of its members ToRs, https://ehea.info/Upload/BFUG_CZ_KZ_82_ToRs_Task_Force_Review_of_Rules_and_Procedures.pdf
BFUG Board Sarajevo, BiH 31.03.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on the concept, approach and key issues of the TF Presentation, BFUG Board SE BA 83 7 TF RR Update.pdf (ehea.info) Agreement on a thematic session at the next BFUG
BFUG Stockholm, SE 11-12.05.2023	<p>first report, comprising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a tentative working schedules with envisaged milestones and outputs, the suggestion to organize the Rules of Procedure in two parts, one for the BFUG, and one for the Ministers (“Statutes” – later RoP EHEA). The BFUG requested to have two parts integrated in one document. A concept note on a permanent (later: “long-term”) Secretariat, as non-for-profit association or foundation, potentially to be hosted by one of the BFUG members or consultative members. The BFUG requested to explore these options, and the organisational, legal and financial consequences in more detail, and also to provide a more thorough analysis of the benefits and challenges of both, the present rotating and the proposed long-term Secretariat.
BFUG Board Tbilisi, GE 2.10.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TF Presentation including issues to discuss and proposal for further steps Rules of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), version 14.9.2023 Permanent EHEA Secretariat Concept note and options for the Tbilisi Board & the Madrid BFUG (15.9.23) Agreement on a specific item within the BFUG agenda
BFUG Madrid 16.-17.11.2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TF RR Update> Presentation, RoP and Secretariat. Update & issues for discussion Cover document: report and input to the BFUG discussion A draft of Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area (revised from the previous “statutes” and for the BFUG), in one document. A reference list of changes in these rules, referring to integration and proposed adjustment of the current Rules of Procedures 2021 - 2024 (shared by the email, n/a on the EHEA website) Permanent EHEA Secretariat. Concept note for the Madrid BFUG, version 5.11.2023 (shared by the email, n/a on the EHEA website) <p>Feedback on RoP, especially voting and which issues might (not) be subject to voting. The discussion on Secretariat showed a reasonable number of members in favour of a long-term solution, yet also some who have concerns or need more information.</p>

Meeting	Agenda related to the TF, comments
	The BFUG agreed on written comments to the documents until 13 December 2023.
BFUG Board Vatican 23.01.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft. Briefing Note on the Revised Rules of Procedures and the New Arrangements for the Secretariat (for the Brussels BFUG), update on developments, changes, based on the BFUG discussion and comments, both regarding the RoP and the Secretariat. List of issues for the BFUG to agree upon. • Draft: Issues for consideration and discussion Revision of the ROP (for the Brussels BFUG) with a commented list of main issues to agree at the BFUG meeting • Permanent EHEA Secretariat, Draft Revised Concept Note for the February 2024 BFUG Meeting with more elaborated details, alternatives • TF ROP Suggestion for the Tirana Communiqué, proposal of formulations related to the relevant issues – rules of procedure, EHEA Secretariat and funding
BFUG Brussels, BE 19.-20.02.2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TF RR Presentation at the BFUG, main issues • Draft: Briefing Note* on the Revised Rules of Procedures and the New Arrangements for the Secretariat (for the Brussels BFUG), A briefing note for the BFUG delegates, helping them to explain the rationale for and changes in Rules of Procedure and the Secretariat approach at their home organisations. List of issues for the BFUG to agree upon. • A revised concept note: Long-term EHEA Secretariat with key principles, details of alternative solutions, financial estimates and a proposed roadmap • Draft Rules of Procedures of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), revised in consideration of feedback received from the BFUG members at and after the Madrid BFUG (up to 13 December) • Explanatory note: Revision of the draft Rules of Procedure after the Madrid BFUG. A note listing the proposals received from individual BFUG delegates on the RoP, and the decisions that the TF proposed to take. This was necessary, as change proposals did not always align, and a selected number of items also required discussion in and decision by the BFUG. • TF RR Suggestion for the Tirana communiqué, proposal of formulations related to the relevant issues – rules of procedure, EHEA Secretariat and support and roadmap <p>The discussion addressed concerns about some details on voting within the proposed Rules of procedure. The discussion on the secretariat has not progressed, also due to late distribution/release of the timely submitted TF documents by the BFUG Co-chairs who were concerned about their status and validity. As a new element, it was agreed to include a feasibility decision on the Long-term secretariat in spring 2026, based on evaluation of the concrete arrangements.</p> <p>Written comments requested by 27 February 2024.</p>

Meeting	Agenda related to the TF, comments
BFUG Board Vatican 12.03.2024	TF RR didn't provide any new documents as the previous versions and key issues were not thoroughly discussed in the previous BFUG, and BFUG members had been invited to provide written comments (concrete comments to the RoP, statement regarding the view on the Long-term Secretariat), to be included in the updated version for the next BFUG.
BFUG Brussels 11.-12.04. 2024	<p>The TF provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised and updated Rules of Procedures for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and for the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) with consideration of the comments received until the end of February 2024 and also a comparative version of these Rule of Procedure to show the changes that had been introduced since the previous BFUG. As regards the Rules of Procedure. It also provided a written Update on the revision of the Rules of Procedure, a summative update on the changes and the last pending issue about the voting regime for discussion and decision by the BFUG. The TF informed the BFUG that colleagues with legal background had provided comments on the text. • The TF had revised its proposal for the Communiqué with an Annex to the Communiqué. Long-term EHEA Secretariat. Principles and Roadmap comprising more guiding details for potential launch of the Long-term Secretariat with a roadmap towards such launch in 2027, should this option be agreed as feasible at the BFUG in the spring 2026. • In order to allow for a focused and effective discussion on the main issues, the TF developed a presentation and offered a List of key questions regarding the Long-term Secretariat <p>As a result, the BFUG endorsed the Rules of Procedure with some changes. It was agreed that the RoP were still to undergo language editing, and after that to be recirculated to the BFUG for information, as a document to be adopted by the Ministerial Conference as an annex (the part with RoP EHEA).</p> <p>The proposal for the Communiqué was agreed with some amendments. While the Principles and Roadmap for the Long-Term Secretariat were not to be included in the Communiqué as an annex, the BFUG agreed to use the document as a guide for the continued work during the next working period.</p>
BFUG Tirana, AL 29.05.2024	The BFUG agreed on the final version of the Rules of Procedure for the EHEA to be included as an annex to the Tirana Communiqué.

Task Force Meetings

The Task Force undertook its role with a high intensity, reflecting the short time available and a complexity of possible solutions and proposals. After agreement on the concept, tasks and roles within the group – including division of the TF into two sub-groups:

- Review of the Rules of Procedure – Michael Gaebel, Sjur Bergan, Michal Karpisek
- Concept of the Secretariat and EHEA structures – Luca Lantero, Colin Tueck, Irina Geanta, Kinga Szuly, Michal Karpisek

The TF met three times in person (one full day meeting in Brussels in Jan 2023, short coordination around the BFUG meeting in Stockholm, May 2023 and one full day for finalisation of proposals in Brussels, Jan 2024). The main coordination was done via 15 short, intensive on-line meetings. All of these were planned well in advance, the online meetings as regular ones to allow participation of all members. Almost all meetings were attended by a representative of the Secretariat, but not for every meeting precise minutes have been provided. Given the time required by the Secretariat to prepare the minutes, and the relatively high frequency of meeting in certain periods, the co-chairs took the habit to circulate main conclusions and updates immediately after the meeting.

There were other ad hoc meetings of smaller sub-groups and informal meetings of the co-chairs.

No	Date Form, location	Issues
1	16. 12. 2022 online	Preparatory meeting, expectations, first agreements, co-chairmanship
2	13.01.2023 Brussels, BE	Work plan, concept of formal arrangement of rules and procedures (structure and framework), key guiding questions, division of sub-tasks
3	10.03.2023 online	Input to the BFUG Board, discussion on EHEA Statutes, Secretariat, concept and focus of the Thematic block within the BFUG in Stockholm, further steps
4	19.04.2023 online	Reflection of the BFUG Board conclusions, review of existing drafts (EHEA Statutes, concept paper on the alternative of introducing the Permanent Secretariat) and preparation of the thematic block for the BFUG discussion and indication of future direction of work.
5	10.05.2023 online	Final preparation for the BFUG thematic session, division of roles
6	12.05.2023 Stockholm, SE	Debriefing from BFUG, agreement on further division of work among the sub-groups and TF members
7	19.07.2023 online	Review of progress, concept of Permanent secretariat and further specification of alternatives, revised draft of EHEA Rules
8	6.09.2023 online	Regular monthly meeting TF RR. Finishing documents for the BFUG Board, preparation for the BFUG Board, consultation of alternatives for the secretariat, schedule
9	9.10.2023 online	Regular monthly meeting TF RR. Reflection of the BFUG Board conclusions, review of existing drafts – review of the secretariat preparation, draft EHEA Rules, preparation for the BFUG
10	13.11.2023 online	Regular monthly meeting TF RR. Preparation for the BFUG Madrid discussions
11	11.12.2023 online	Regular monthly meeting TF RR. Reflection on the Madrid BFUG conclusions. Plan of further steps – sub-groups RoP, Secretariat. Planning the January 2024 meeting in Brussels.
12	18.12.2023 online	Review of the Long-term Secretariat concept, rethinking the status, approach, principles. Agreement on development of new version of docs for the BFUG. Brainstorming for the TF meeting in Brussels.

No	Date Form, location	Issues
13	10.1.2024 Brussels, BE	Regular monthly meeting TF RR. Review and finalisation of the documents for the BFUG. Feasible hosting organisations, reactions. Roadmap. Plan of further meetings.
14	29.1.2024 Online	Update on the BFUG Board conclusions, upcoming BFUG agenda. Finalisation of docs for the BFUG. Possible legal expertise capacity.
15	12.2.2024 online	Regular monthly meeting TF RR. TF documents on hold by the BFUG co-chairs, attempts to contact BFUG co-chairs, dissent views of two TF members (arguments?), briefing note, presentation for the BFUG
16	21.3.2024 online	Regular monthly meeting TF RR. Update from the BFUG Board meeting, preparation of the input to the BFUG – proposal for the communique, revised RoP, annex on the Secretariat (principles, roadmap)
17	8.4.2024 online	Regular monthly meeting TF RR. Preparation for the BFUG meeting, final arrangements. Possible further steps, ToR for the potential new WG. TF report.
18	10.6.2024 online	Final meeting TF RR. Debriefing from the Ministerial conference in Tirana, new WG TORs, TF report

Task Force meeting attendance

Most of the TF members were actively engaged and contributed regularly, though not everybody has been able to attend all meetings, which was also expected, given the higher frequency of meeting required in certain periods, in particular in the end of 2023 and in 2024.

Date	Form Location	M. Gaebel	M. Karpisek	L. Lantero	S. Bergan	I. Geanta	F. Petrikowski	L. Pustina	K. Szuly	C. Tueck	BFUG Secret.	Note
16.12.2022	online	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
13.01.2023	Brussels, BE	P	P	P	P	P		O	P	P	P	
10.03.2023	online	O	O		O	O	O	O		O	O	
31.03.2023	Sarajevo											BFUG Board
19.04.2023	online		O		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
08.05.2023	online	O	O		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
11.05.2023	Stockholm											BFUG
12.05.2023	Stockholm	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P	
19.07.2023	online	O	O	O	O				O	O	O	
06.09.2023	online	O	O	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	
02.10.2023	Tbilisi											BFUG Board
09.10.2023	online	O	O	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	
13.11.2023	online	O	O		O	O	O		O	O	O	

Date	Form Location	M. Gaebel	M. Karpisek	L. Lantero	S. Bergan	I. Geanta	F. Petrikowski	L. Pustina	K. Szuly	C. Tueck	BFUG Secret.	Note
16.11.2023	Madrid											BFUG
11.12.2023	online	o	o		o		o		o	o	o	
18.12.2023	online	o	o		o	o				o		
10.01.2024	Brussels	P	P		P	P			P	P	P	
23.01.2024	Vatican											BFUG Board
29.01.2023	online	o	o		o	o			o	o	o	
12.02.2024	online	o	o	Resigned from 12 Feb 2024	o	o			o	o	o	
19.02.2024	Brussels											BFUG
12.03.2024	Vatican											BFUG Board
21.03.2024	online	o	o		o		o		o	o	o	
08.04.2024	online	o	o		o	o			o			
11.04.2024	Brussels											BFUG
29.05.2024	Tirana											BFUG
10.06.2024	online	o	o		o							

Legend: o – attendance online, P – present in person, blank – absent

G. List of Annexes

- Annex 1. [Task Force Establishment of a Long-Term Secretariat of the European Higher Education Area. A draft of Term of Reference for period 2024 – 2027](#)
- Annex 2. [Revised Concept Note: Long-Term EHEA Secretariat. Document for the BFUG in Brussels, February 2024](#)
- Annex 3. [Rules of Procedures for the European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\) and for the Bologna Follow-Up Group \(BFUG\)](#)
- Annex 4. [Terms of Reference of Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the European Higher Education Area. Document for the work period 2022 – 2024](#)

Note: The part 1 of the [Rules of Procedures for the European Higher Education Area](#) (EHEA) has been adopted by the ministers and is available as an annex to the Tirana Communiqué.

Task Force Establishment of a Long-term Secretariat of the European Higher Education Area

Draft Terms of Reference for the period 2024 - 2027

Background

As a result of the discussions at its meeting in Brussels on 9-10 April 2024, the BFUG decided to further explore the establishment of a Long-term Secretariat. A proposal for the Communiqué was agreed by the BFUG and adopted by the ministers in the Tirana Communiqué. This was based on a document¹ agreed upon by the BFUG in April 2024 containing the principles of such a Secretariat, and the roadmap for its establishment. Therefore, in the working period 2024-2027, the BFUG should continue to work towards a Long-term Secretariat to be established in 2027, subject to the final decision to be taken by the BFUG in spring 2026 (see reference in the Communiqué)².

On this basis, this document puts forward terms of reference of a new working structure to follow up the issue. This includes an updated roadmap (see annex), as the schedule originally proposed at the BFUG in April 2024 is no longer feasible. However, the milestone decision on the Long-term Secretariat of spring 2026, and, if agreed, the launch of the Secretariat in 2027 have been retained. Also, the principles for the Secretariat remain as agreed at the April 2024 BFUG.

The working structure is recommended to be a Task Force (TF) consisting of BFUG members and consultative members. As the feasibility and alternative models of the Secretariat have been explored in various documents provided by the previous Task Force, the task of the incoming TF should be to consider and propose what would be a good, workable and affordable solution for the EHEA. Where needed, the TF can invite outside experts.

The TF should focus on the Secretariat issue. The code of ethics mentioned in the Rules of Procedure should be developed by other ways and means, for e.g. a few BFUG members volunteering to undertake this task, or a smaller TF.

Draft Terms of Reference

Contact persons/Co-Chairs

Based on the previous Task Force, this working group (WG) may have 2-3 chairs, two representing countries and one representing stakeholders.

¹ [Annex to the Communiqué: Long-term EHEA Secretariat. Principles and Roadmap. Document for the BFUG in Brussels, April 2024](#)

² While a large number of BFUG members supported the idea of a Long term Secretariat, a few delegations were undecided or had concerns regarding the concept or some of its potential implications. Therefore, it was decided to continue work towards its establishment, also to make the approach more concrete, but allow for a final decision in 2026.

Composition and profile of participants

The BFUG should ensure that the TF has a manageable size (approximately 12 participants, including the co-chairs) and diverse and representative participation, in terms of geography and systems.

Participants

- should be ready to contribute proactively, regularly and constructively to the work, including drafting and revising texts etc.
- should not exclude any constructively critical voices, as long as they respect the decision by Ministers in the Tirana Communiqué. The TF's task is not to decide whether a Long-term Secretariat should be established, but to prepare tangible and feasible solutions in consideration of governance, organisation and management, finance, legal forms. The ultimate decision on the Secretariat is for the BFUG respectively the Ministers.
- Parties who have an interest in hosting the Secretariat are welcome to join the TF. As the TF will operate in openness and fairness, and all decisions will be made by the BFUG, respectively the Ministers, a keen interest in the issue should not be seen as a conflict of interest, but on the contrary, would help to develop concrete and feasible ideas and approaches, and also recognise challenges at an early stage. Representatives of such parties should not co-chair the TF and would be exempted from any activity related to the evaluation and preselection of proposals for hosts.
- The party which the BFUG selects as a host for the Secretariat, if not yet part of the TF, would have to join it, in order to contribute proactively to the development of the approach.

Purpose, tasks and envisaged outcomes

The TF builds on the results and outcomes of the Task Force on the Rules of Procedure to prepare the establishment of a Long-term Secretariat, in particular on the [Revised concept note: Long-term EHEA Secretariat](#) (BFUG Brussels 19-20 February 2024) and the document proposed as an [Annex to the Communiqué: Long-term EHEA Secretariat. Principles and Roadmap](#) (BFUG Brussels 9-10 April 2024). It supports and facilitates the process of the introduction of the Long-term Secretariat. It further develops the concept, interacts with potential hosts of the Secretariat, and provides the BFUG with relevant information for its decisions.

Specific Tasks

1. Develop further the proposals for the establishment of a long-term, independent, and internationally staffed Secretariat for the EHEA, in particular regarding governance and funding.
2. Prepare a call for proposals for hosting countries/organisations, to be endorsed by the BFUG, and disseminated by the Secretariat.
3. Organise the evaluation of applications, including the assessment of the regulations and conditions of applicant countries/organisations.
4. Provide a reasoned proposal for the arrangements and terms of reference for the Long-term Secretariat, with a proposal for the hosting country/organisation, to the BFUG.
5. Prepare discussion and decision-making process at the BFUG, for a decision on the Long-term Secretariat (tentatively spring 2026).

6. In case it is decided to establish a Long-term Secretariat, following the indications of the BFUG, propose its draft statutes by autumn 2026, for discussion and endorsement by the BFUG (tentatively autumn 2026).
7. Advise the BFUG on the further preparation of the new Secretariat, including the job description for the head of Secretariat (tentatively autumn 2026).
8. To the extent required as a consequence of the decision to establish a Long-term Secretariat, propose amendments to the Rules of Procedures for the EHEA and/or the Rules of Procedure for the BFUG (to be adopted by Ministers, respectively the BFUG).

Reporting

The TF should report to the BFUG and its Board in accordance with the schedule of their meetings. The reports should focus on the progress of and proposals for the specific tasks outlined above.

Meeting schedule

The TF should organize its work so as to meet the deadlines specified above, and in accordance with the meeting schedule of the BFUG and its Board.

The number of physical meetings may be limited to 2-3 per year, organised also in conjunction with BFUG meetings, with an additional 6-8 online meetings of shorter duration³. It may be necessary that representatives of the TF travel to countries offering to host the secretariat in order to discuss and better understand the conditions and circumstances.

Liaison with the activities of other Working Groups

The TF would liaise with the Co-Chairs of other Working Groups as required.

Reference to the Tirana Communiqué⁴

In view of the long-term character of the EHEA, we consider that firmer structural arrangements are now necessary to ensure its consistent, stable development. We, therefore:

- *adopt the “Rules of Procedure for the EHEA” and invite the BFUG to adopt revised Rules of procedure of for its own work in due course;*
- *mandate the BFUG to continue working on the possibility of establishing a long-term, independent, internationally staffed Secretariat to create effective support for the BFUG, and to evaluate the feasibility and sustainability of the related proposals, models, and terms of reference in Spring 2026, to be presented for adoption and implementation at our 2027 Ministerial Conference;*
- *agree to undertake an assessment of the chosen arrangement after two work periods.*

³ Most members of the previous TF found monthly meetings (some of them quite short) to allow an appropriate rhythm. In certain periods, the TF, in its entirety or in subsets, may face a higher frequency of meetings and written exchanges (e.g. ahead of BFUG meetings), whereas in others, no meetings may deem necessary (e.g. over the summer months).

⁴ See <https://ehea.info/Immagini/Tirana-Communique1.pdf>

⁵ Annex 2 to the Tirana Communiqué. Rules of Procedure for the European Higher Education Area as adopted by Ministers. See <https://ehea.info/Immagini/Annex-2-to-the-Tirana-Communique1.pdf>.

Long-term EHEA Secretariat: Principles and Indicative planning schedule

A. Principles for a Long-term EHEA Secretariat

In order to provide stable and ongoing professional support to the European Higher Education Area's working structures the ministers ask the BFUG to make necessary arrangements for establishing a long-term Secretariat for the EHEA, including the exploration its legal form and its location.

In the implementation of this task the BFUG will need to respect the following principles and conditions.

1. Independence and Accountability

The Secretariat should operate independently from the country and/or organisation (with)in which it is hosted. Its legal, financial and organisational arrangements should ensure its independence, minimise the risk of undue influence.

It should operate under the authority of and be fully accountable to the BFUG including its governing structure arrangements, reporting and appointment of its staffing.

2. Sustainability

The chosen arrangements, especially the funding model, must be sustainable, with a clear perspective on how the Secretariat can function for a longer term. Its main source of funding should be contributions by the EHEA members. Any potential in-kind contributions should not imply any influence on the Secretariat operations and agenda.

3. Staff

The Secretariat must be able to recruit and contract a sufficient number of staff, with suitable profiles and competences, from different EHEA countries. The employment rules of the country in which the Secretariat is based should allow for this, under flexible and fair contracts.

In addition to its own staff, the Secretariat should be able to accept secondments from EHEA members and consultative members, according to clear rules approved by the BFUG, ensuring its independence. This would also regard the secondment of a liaison officer from the host country of the following ministerial conference, who will work under the authority of the Head of the Secretariat.

4. Location

Regulations of the country where the Secretariat will be located must ensure the rule of law, allow its operation without undue influence of the national or local authorities and easy funding from different other EHEA countries.

5. Non-Profit Principle

The Secretariat would operate on a non-profit basis, with any surpluses reinvested into its budget. It may accumulate a reserve, which however should not exceed one annual budget. Otherwise, the fees for EHEA members should be reduced.

B. Roadmap

Based on the Roadmap proposed at the Brussels BFUG (9/10 April 2024), the following indicative planning is proposed, to be further developed and adjusted by the working group, in consideration also of the BFUG schedule.

Date	What	Who
Sep 2024	establish a dedicated BFUG task force for the period 2024 –2027 to oversee implementation	BFUG
spring 2025	launch a call for proposals for host of the Secretariat, incorporating the principles above	BFUG Input TF
June/July 2025	deadline for expressions of interest	
summer/autumn 2025	evaluate proposals and propose shortlist for the BFUG review proposals for location and shortlist no more than 3	TF
Oct/Nov 2025	address the BFUG's questions with the shortlisted countries /organisations, further review of proposals for the BFUG decision	TF & BFUG
Nov 2025 – Mar 2026	Specification of legal, financial, organisational details respecting the relevant regulations and circumstances including the funding model. Plan for the Head of the Secretariat recruitment	Host candidates & TF
spring 2026	Selection of the potential Secretariat host / location GO / NO GO DECISION Alternatively, a call for a “rotating secretariat” linked to the host of the next ministerial conference 2030	BFUG Input TF
Nov 2025 – autumn 2026	Drafting Statutes, review of EHEA Rules of procedure, identification of potential necessary changes. Capacity specifications, resources	Host & TF
autumn 2026	Approval of the statutes of the new legal entity and selection of the Head of Secretariat	BFUG
autumn 2026 – spring 2027	Founding the new legal entity in the chosen location / other relevant steps	BFUG, TF, Host accordingly
first half of 2027	Recruitment and training of further staff Organisational preparation	Head of the Secretariat
spring 2027	Official launch of the EHEA secretariat During the Ministerial conference	Ministerial Meeting
1 July 2027	EHEA Secretariat full operation Take over of the agenda of the previous secretariat	Secretariat



EHEA Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum

TIRANA, 29-30 MAY 2024

EVALUATION REPORT



EHEA Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum Tirana, 29-30 May
2024
Evaluation report

Table of Contents

- EHEA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AND GLOBAL POLICY FORUM: A HISTORIC GATHERING IN TIRANA 4
- EVALUATION FORM AND METHODOLOGY 5
- EVALUATION RESULTS..... 6
 - Registration Process 6
 - Logistics..... 6
 - Refreshments, Meals & Cultural Programme 7
 - Provision of Information by the BFUG Secretariat 8
 - Overall Technical Support 9
 - Conference Identity 11
 - Bilateral Facilities 11
 - EHEA Ministerial Programme and Content 12
 - The Global Policy Forum 17
- SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS 18
- ANNEX I..... 20

● EHEA Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum: A Historic Gathering in Tirana

The capital city of Albania, Tirana, proudly hosted the EHEA Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum from May 29-30, 2024, at the Palace of Congresses. This event marked a significant milestone as it was the first time such a forum was held in a Western Balkan country.

The conference brought together **70 delegations from across the globe, including representatives from 47 member countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), 9 consultative members, 4 partner organizations, and delegates from 10 non-EHEA countries and organizations.** European authorities and higher education experts engaged in intensive discussions, focusing on shaping the future of higher education and scientific research.

Key attendees included Albania's Prime Minister, Edi Rama, Minister of Education and Sports, Ogerta Manastirliu, and Federica Mogherini, President of the College of Europe and former High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, 10 EHEA Ministers, 9 Deputy Ministers, 4 State Secretary, 2 Secretary General, 9 Director General, 10 other high level officials, Presidents of the Consultative Members, 44 students representatives and partners, among others.

The conference reaffirmed essential values of education such as academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and quality assurance in higher education. Over two days, plenary sessions and three parallel panels addressed innovation, internationalization, quality, and the social dimensions of higher education. Discussions covered the implementation of Bologna Process Key Commitments, promoting international collaborations, and ensuring the quality of higher education.

Day 1: May 29, 2024

The discussions centered on:

- Good practices and challenges in implementing Bologna Process commitments.
- Promoting international collaborations and mobility within the EHEA.
- Developing digital and green skills for the European workforce, with a focus on Albania's role and the application of Artificial Intelligence in research and education.
- Implementing principles of the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA.

The evening concluded with a Cocktail at the former King's Palace, showcasing traditional

Albanian folk music, dance, and folk costumes.

Day 2: May 30, 2024

The Global Policy Forum featured:

- Discussions on the Berlin Process as a model of regional cooperation in implementing the Bologna Process.
- Challenges in recognizing academic qualifications, particularly in the context of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.
- Using mobility and internationalization to build bridges between macro-regions.
- Ensuring the quality of higher education from a global perspective.

The conference concluded with the unanimous adoption of the Tirana Communiqué, setting the stage for future developments in the EHEA. It also marked the end of Albania's four-year tenure of the BFUG Secretariat, the longest in BFUG history. Leadership and coordination for the 2027 Ministerial Conference were handed over to Moldova and Romania.

A joint press conference was held by Minister Ogerta Manastirliu, Moldova's Minister of Education and Scientific Research, Dan Perciun, and Romania's Minister of Education, Ligia Deca, highlighting the work done by the BFUG Secretariat and future priorities in higher education, internationalization, mobility, and the social dimension.

For more information on the Tirana Ministerial Events, visit the official website at [EHEA 2024 Tirana](#).

• Evaluation Form and Methodology

Following the event, the BFUG Secretariat carried out a survey meant to assess the Tirana Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum.

The evaluation form found below was circulated electronically to all the participants registered for the events in Tirana.

[Evaluation of the Tirana 2024 EHEA Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum](#)

The participants were given 14 days to complete the form. Moreover, the evaluation form was designed to assess *event sessions* and *administrative aspects* regarding the organisation of the Tirana Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum.

A standard five-level Likert scale – ranging from 1 to 5, where **1** represents “poor,” **2** is “fair,” **3** is “good,” **4** is “very good,” and **5** as “excellent” - was used to assess the satisfaction rate of various aspects regarding the two events.

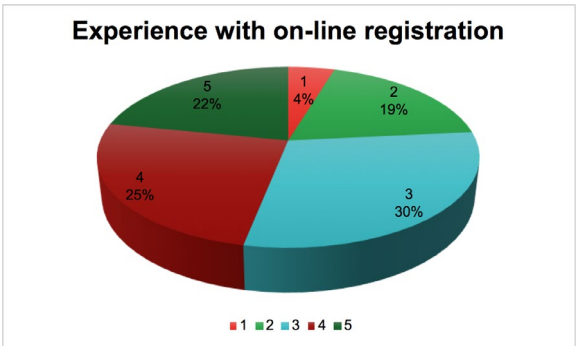
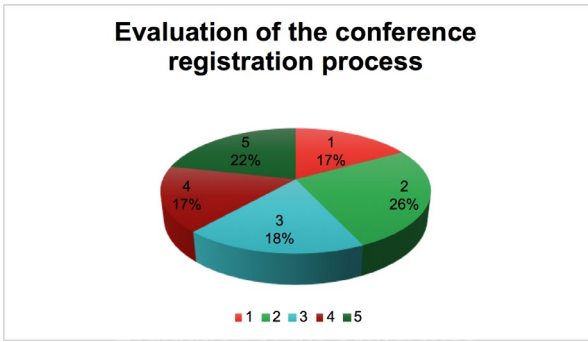
The survey also provided open-ended questions, giving the opportunity for respondents to share their views.

● **Evaluation Results**

The BFUG Secretariat received a total of **65 evaluation forms** over the 14-day period from the participants of the Tirana events. The **overall response rate was 23.2%** (65 responses out of 280 participants). Below you can find the summary of the responses.

○ **Registration Process**

The surveyed participants rated their overall satisfaction with the EHEA Ministerial **registration process** as follows: 22% found it "excellent," 17% "very good," 18% "good," 26% "fair," and 17% "poor." For their experience with the online registration form, 22% rated it "excellent," 25% "very good," 30% "good," 19% "fair," and only 4% "poor."

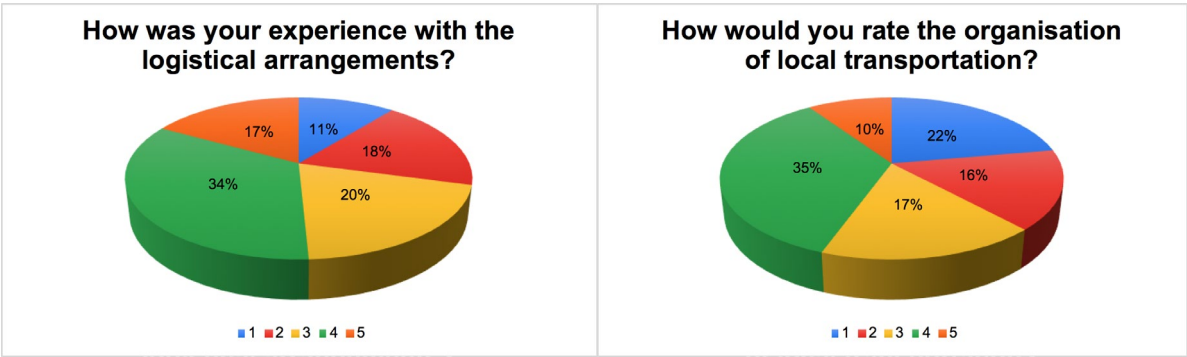


Overall, a combined 57% of participants rated their overall satisfaction with the EHEA Ministerial registration process as "good" or better. The online registration form received particularly positive feedback, with 77% of participants rating their experience as "good" or better. Only 4% of participants rated their experience with the online registration form as "poor," showcasing the effectiveness and user-friendliness of the online system.

○ **Logistics**

The surveyed participants evaluated their overall experience with the **logistical arrangements at the venues** (obtaining conference badges and passing security checks) as

follows: 17% rated it as "excellent," 34% as "very good," 20% as "good," 18% as "fair," and 11% considered the logistics "poor."



10% of surveyed participants rated their experience with the **organisation of local transportation** as “excellent”, 35% as “very good”, 17% as “good”, 16% as “fair” and 10% as “poor.”

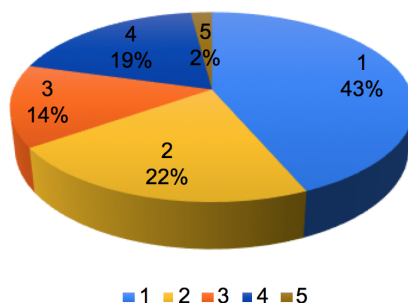
Overall, a significant majority of participants rated their overall experience with the logistical arrangements at the venues positively. Specifically, 71% of participants rated the logistics as "good" or better. The organization of local transportation received favorable feedback, with 62% of participants rating their experience as "good" or better.

○ Refreshments, Meals & Cultural Programme

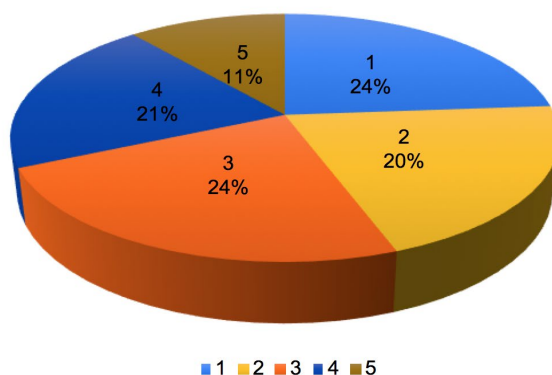
The surveyed participants rated the **quality of refreshments and meals** provided during the Conference at the Palace of Congresses as follows: 2% rated it as "excellent," 19% as "very good," 14% as "good," 22% as "fair," and 43% as "poor."

Regarding the **cultural programme**, 11% rated it as "excellent," 21% as "very good," 24% as "good," 20% as "fair," and 24% as "poor."

Quality of refreshment and meals provided



Quality of the cultural programme



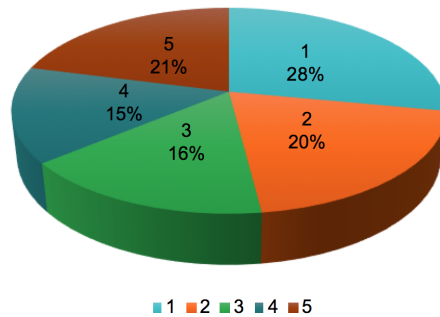
In general, despite some lower ratings, there is a noteworthy positive response to the quality of refreshments and meals provided during the conference. Specifically, 35% of participants rated the quality as "good" or better. The cultural programme received favorable ratings from a majority of participants, with 56% evaluating it as "good" or better.

○ Provision of Information by the BFUG Secretariat

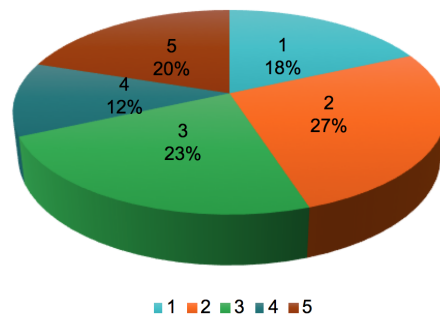
The surveyed participants rated the **provision of information on the event by the BFUG Secretariat** as follows: 21% found it "excellent," 15% "very good," 16% "good," 20% "fair," and 28% "poor."

Participants evaluated the **usefulness of the information provided on the Conference and GPF website** as follows: 20% rated it "excellent," 12% "very good," 23% "good," 27% "fair," and 18% "poor."

Provision of information on the Conference by the BFUG Secretariat



Usefulness of information provided on the Conference and GPF website



In summary, a combined 52% of participants rated the provision of information by the BFUG Secretariat as "good" or better. The usefulness of the information provided on the Conference and GPF website received positive feedback from 55% of participants.

○ Overall Technical Support

Participants evaluated the **accessibility of the conference meeting rooms** (for plenary and parallel sessions) as follows: 20% rated it as "excellent," 28% as "very good," 23% as "good," 23% as "fair," and 6% as "poor."

Participants rated **the seating arrangement** as follows: 18% considered it "excellent," 26% "very good," 28% "good," 18% "fair," and 9% "poor."

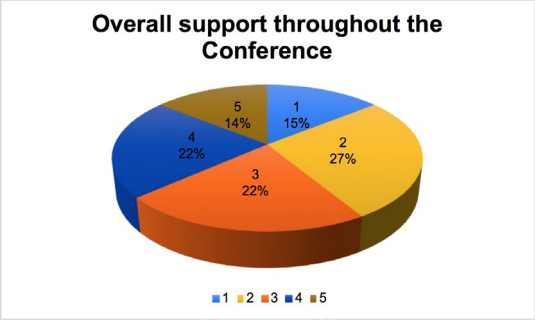
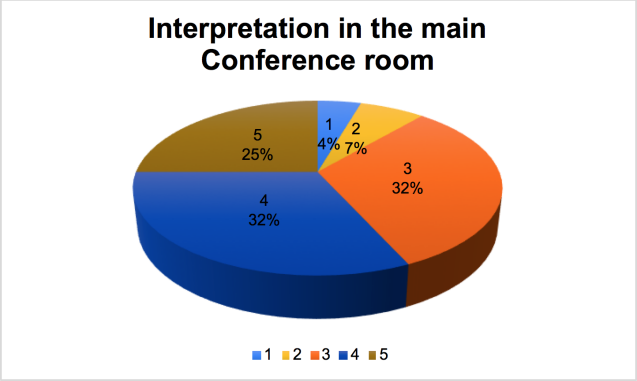
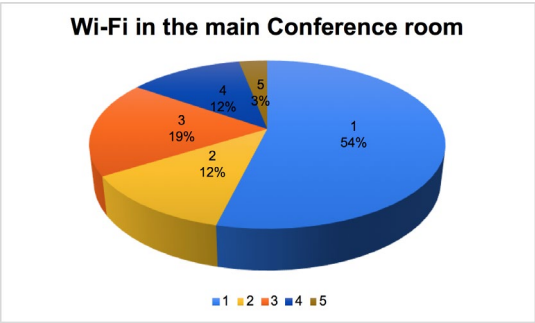
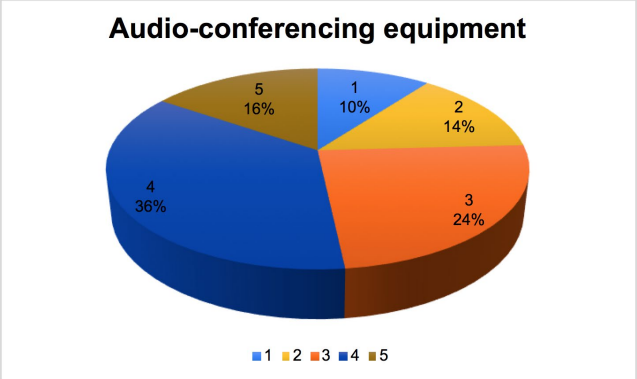
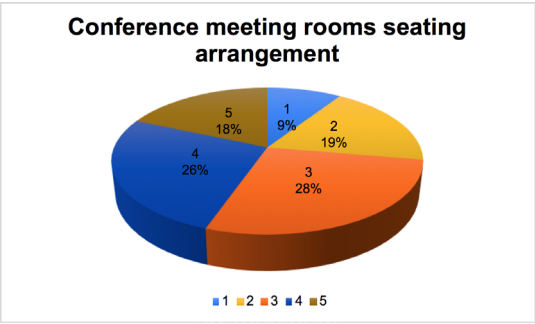
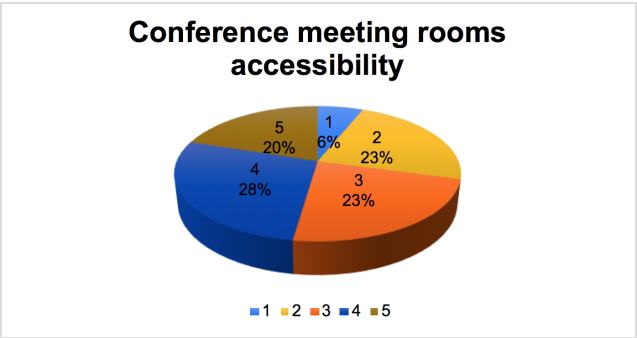
Participants assessed the **ease-of-use of the audio-conferencing equipment** in the main conference room (including headphones, microphones, and tablets) as follows: 16% found it "excellent," 36% "very good," 24% "good," 14% "fair," and 10% "poor."

Participants scored the **WiFi in the conference room** as follows: 3% rated it "excellent," 12%

"very good," 18% "good," 12% "fair," and 54% "poor."

Participants evaluated the quality of **interpretation** as follows: 25% considered it "excellent," 32% "very good," another 32% "good," 7% "fair," and 5% "poor."

Overall support throughout the Conference was rated by participants as follows: 14% rated it "excellent," 22% "very good," another 22% "good," 27% "fair," and 14% "poor."

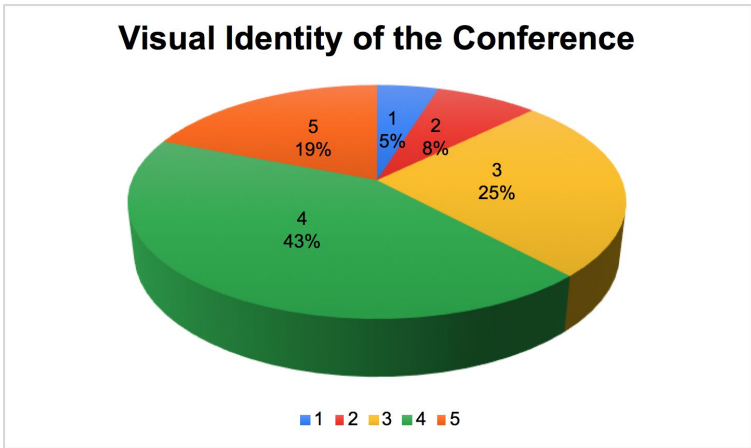


To summarize, a substantial 71% of participants rated the accessibility of the conference meeting rooms for plenary and parallel sessions as "good" or better. More than 70% of attendees appreciated the seating arrangements, with 18% rating them as "excellent," 26% as "very good," and 28% as "good. The ease-of-use of the audio-conferencing equipment was well-received, with over three-quarters of participants (76%) rating it positively. The

quality of interpretation was highly praised, with nearly 90% of participants rating it from "good" to "excellent." Although WiFi in the conference room received lower ratings, the overall support provided throughout the conference received positive feedback, with nearly 60% of participants rating it as "good" or better.

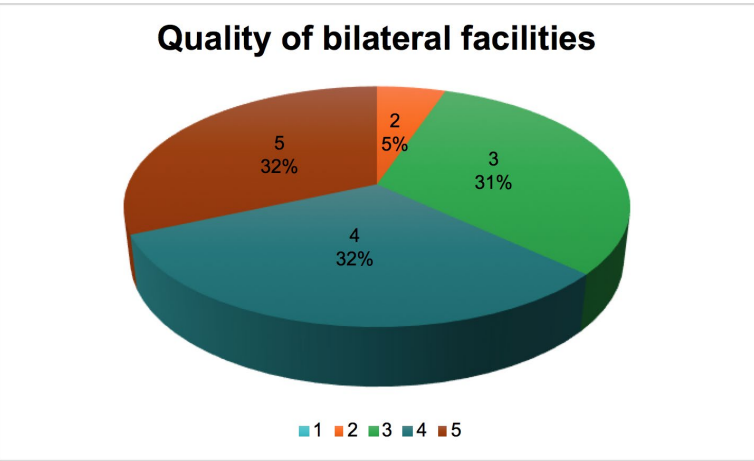
○ Conference Identity

The surveyed participants provided feedback on the **Visual Identity of the Conference**, which included elements such as the logo, posters, banners, website, video clips, and conference documents. A significant 62% of participants rated the Visual Identity of the Conference as "very good" or "excellent." Specifically, 19% rated it as "excellent" and 43% as "very good" which indicates a strong appreciation for the design and visual elements associated with the conference. Another 25% of participants rated the visual identity as "good", and a smaller portion of participants provided lower ratings, with 8% rating it as "fair" and only 5% as "poor".



○ Bilateral Facilities

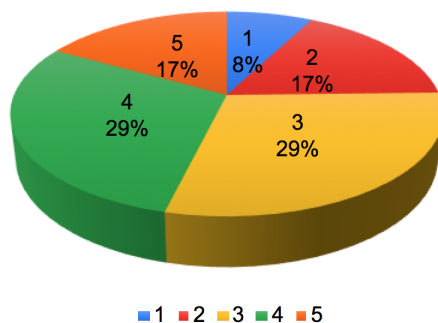
There were in total 33 bilateral meetings during the days of the 2024 Tirana Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum. The respondents were asked whether they used the **bilateral facilities** and to evaluate the **quality of the facilities**. The results show that of the 28% of participants who used the facilities, a significant 96% rated the facilities positively, with 32% rating the quality as "excellent" , 32% as "very good", and 32% as "good" which reflects a strong satisfaction with the quality of the facilities among the users. Only 5% of the users rated the facilities as "fair" and there were no ratings for "poor".



○ **EHEA Ministerial Programme and Content**

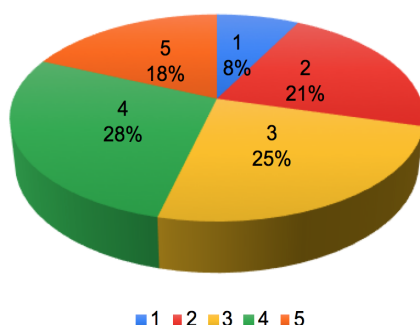
A significant 75% of participants rated the **content of the EHEA Ministerial conference programme** as "good" or better. Specifically, 17% rated it as "excellent", 29% as "very good", and 29% as "good". This indicates that the majority of participants found the programme content to have succeeded in delivering valuable and engaging material. A smaller portion of participants provided lower ratings, with 17% rating the content as "fair" and 8% as "poor".

Content of the EHEA Ministerial Conference programme



The participants provided feedback on the **plenary sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference**. 71% of participants rated the plenary sessions as "good" or better which indicates that the majority of participants found the plenary sessions to be informative and engaging. Specifically, 18% rated them as "excellent", 28% as "very good", and 25% as "good". A smaller portion of participants provided lower ratings, with 21% rating the plenary sessions as "fair" and 8% as "poor" suggesting that there are specific areas within the plenary sessions that could have better met participant expectations.

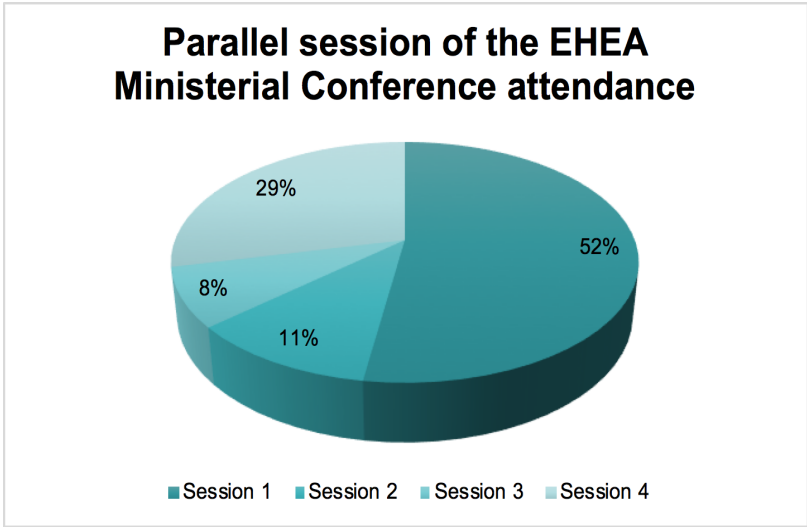
Plenary sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference



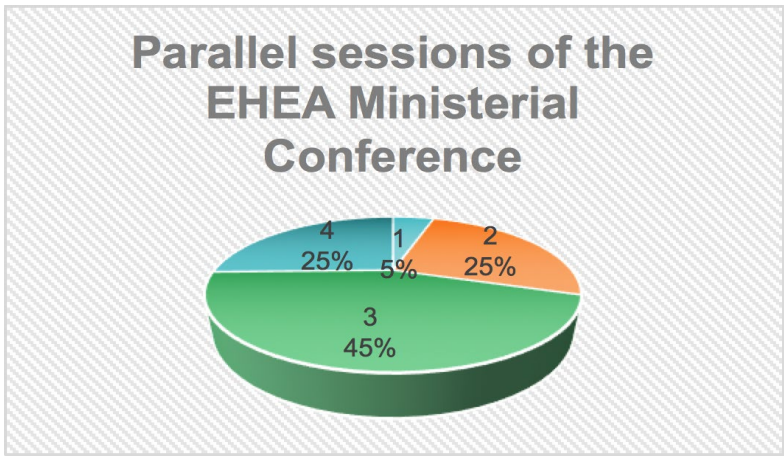
The distribution of **attendance for the parallel sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference** shows that Session 1¹ was the most popular, with 52% of participants attending. Session 4 also saw a good turnout with 29% attendance. Sessions 2 and 3 were less attended, with 11%

¹Session I: Good Practices and Challenges to Implementation of the Bologna Process Key Commitments.; Session II: Encouraging Transnational Cooperation and Tools to Foster EHEA Mobility; Session III: Digital and Green Skills for the European Workforce: The Role of HE in Preparing for Future/ New Professions, Including the Responsible Use of AI in Research and Education; Session IV: Good Practices and Challenges to Implementation of the Principles on the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA

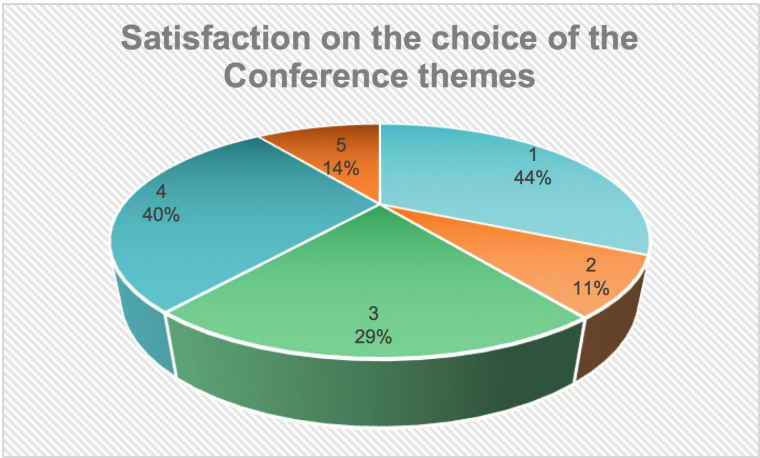
and 8% of participants respectively.



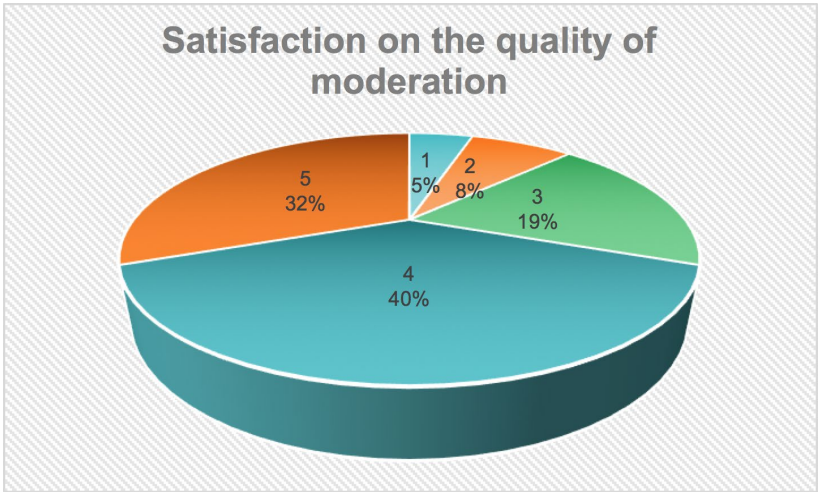
The overall reception of the parallel sessions was highly positive. Respondents **rated the parallel sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference** as follows: 25% rated them "excellent", 44% rated them "very good", 25% rated them "good", and 5% rated them "fair". No respondents rated the sessions as "poor." The high ratings, with 94% of respondents rating the parallel sessions as "good" or better, indicate strong satisfaction with the quality of these sessions.



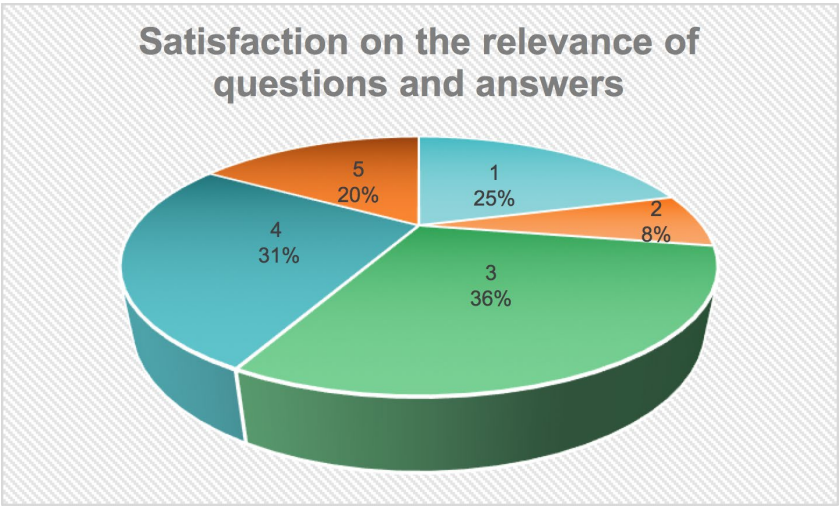
Respondents expressed their satisfaction with the choice of **themes for the parallel sessions** at the EHEA Ministerial Conference as follows: 14% rated it "excellent", 40% rated it "very good", 29% rated it "good", 11% rated it "fair" and 44% rated it "poor". Thus, while 54% of respondents rated the themes as "good" or better, a significant portion (44%) rated them as "poor," which suggests that while many participants were satisfied with the session themes, there is a notable portion that found them lacking.



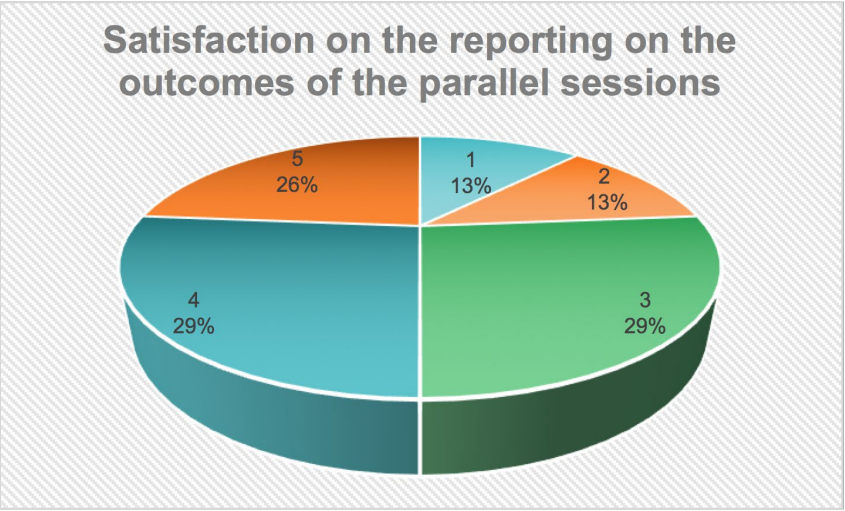
Respondents expressed their satisfaction with the **quality of moderation for the parallel sessions** of the EHEA Ministerial Conference as follows: 32% rated it "excellent", 40% rated it "very good", 19% rated it "good", 8% rated it "fair", and 5% rated it "poor". The high ratings, with 91% of respondents rating the quality of moderation as "good" or better, indicate strong satisfaction with the moderation of the sessions. Overall, the feedback reflects positively on the moderators and their ability to effectively facilitate the sessions.



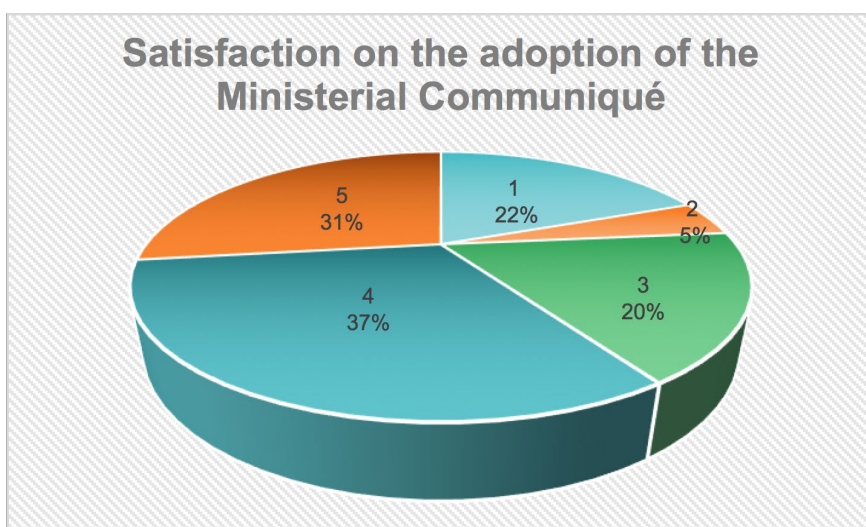
Respondents expressed their satisfaction with the **relevance of the questions and answers during the parallel sessions** of the EHEA Ministerial Conference as follows: 20% rated it "excellent", 31% rated it "very good", 36% rated it "good", 8% rated it "fair", and 25% rated it "poor". While a majority of respondents (87%) rated the relevance of the questions and answers as "good" or better, 25% rated it as "poor," which indicates that although many participants found the questions and answers relevant and helpful, a significant portion felt that there was room for improvement.



A majority of respondents (84%) rated the reporting on the outcomes of the parallel sessions as "good" or better, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the quality and clarity of the reporting. Specifically, respondents expressed their **satisfaction with the reporting on the outcomes of the parallel sessions** during the EHEA Ministerial Conference as follows: 26% rated it "excellent" , 29% rated it "very good" , 29% rated it "good" , 13% rated it "fair" , and 13% rated it "poor".



A majority of respondents (88%) rated the adoption of the Ministerial Communiqué as "good" or better, indicating a strong level of satisfaction with this aspect of the conference. Respondents expressed their satisfaction with the **adoption of the Ministerial Communiqué** during the sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference as follows: 31% rated it "excellent" , 37% rated it "very good" , 20% rated it "good" , 5% rated it "fair" , and 22% rated it "poor".

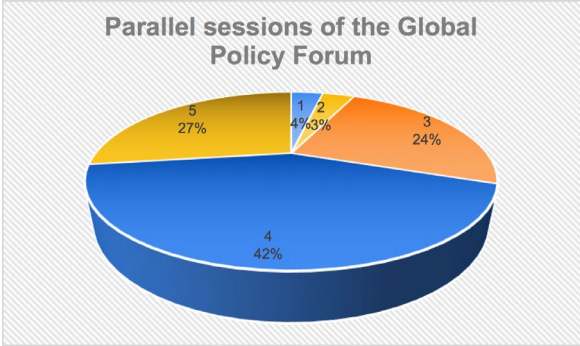
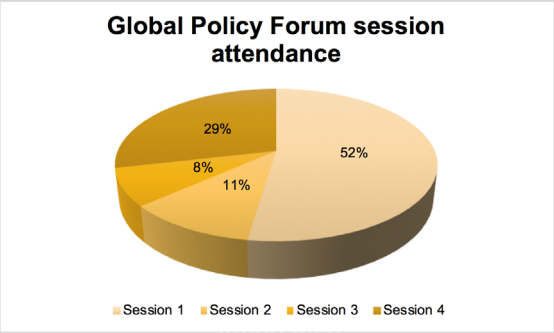


○ The Global Policy Forum

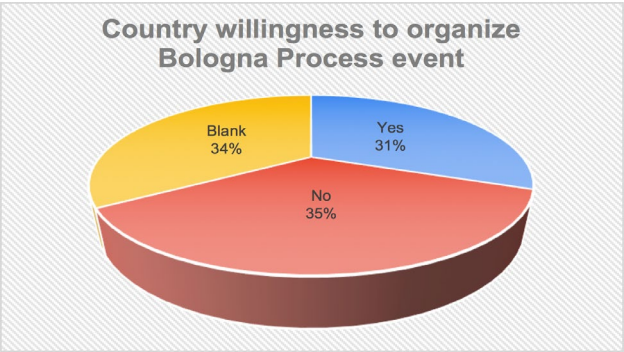
Respondents were asked which **parallel session of the Global Policy Forum** they attended, and the results indicate that Session 1² of the Global Policy Forum was the most attended, with 52% of respondents participating. Session 4 also had a significant turnout, attracting 29% of attendees. In contrast, Session 2 and Session 3 were less popular, with 11% and 8% attendance, respectively. This suggests that Session 1 was particularly relevant for the majority of participants, while Sessions 2 and 3 were less so. To achieve a more balanced distribution in future forums, it may be useful to analyze what made Session 1 so attractive and incorporate those elements into the other sessions.

The **parallel sessions of the Global Policy Forum were rated** by respondents as follows: 27% rated them "excellent", 42% as "very good", 24% as "good", 3% as "fair", and 3% as "poor". 93% of respondents rated them "good" or better, which suggests that the content and delivery of the sessions were well-received by the majority of participants.

²Session 1: The Berlin Process as One of the Good Practice Examples of Regional Cooperation in Implementing the Bologna Process; Session 2: Opportunities and Challenges for Recognition of Academic Qualifications: The Lisbon Recognition Convention in the Context of the Global Convention and Other Regional Conventions on Recognition; Session 3: Mobility and Internationalization as Instruments to Build Bridges Among Macro Regions; Session 4: Quality Assurance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives and Strategies



Based on the responses to whether their **country or organization would be willing to organize an event under the Bologna Process/Global Forum umbrella**, the results are as follows: 31% of respondents answered "Yes," 35% answered "No," and 34% left the question blank. This distribution indicates a nearly equal split between those willing and those not willing to organize such an event, with a significant portion of respondents undecided or not providing an answer. The substantial number of blank responses suggests uncertainty or a need for more information and encouragement to increase willingness among participants to take on organizational roles for future events.



The evaluation results from the Tirana events provide valuable insights into the successes and areas for improvement across various aspects of the conference.

- **Summary of Results and Conclusions**

The feedback on the Ministerial Conference in Tirana was mostly positive, highlighting several key achievements while also identifying areas for improvement.

The online registration process was a significant success, with 77% of participants rating it as "good" or better. This indicates that the system was effective and user-friendly, facilitating a smooth registration experience for attendees. Similarly, a substantial majority (71%) rated the overall logistics at the venues positively, suggesting that the processes for obtaining conference badges and passing security checks were well-organized and efficient.

Technical support aspects also received high praise, with 76% of participants rating the ease-of-use of audio-conferencing equipment positively and nearly 90% approving the quality of interpretation. This reflects well on the technical arrangements and the quality of support provided. Among the users of the bilateral facilities, a remarkable 96% rated them positively, showing high satisfaction with the quality and availability of these resources.

The content of the EHEA Ministerial conference programme was rated positively by 75% of participants, demonstrating that the material presented was valuable and engaging to most attendees. The visual identity of the conference was appreciated by 62% of participants who rated it as "very good" or "excellent," indicating strong approval of the design and branding elements. Additionally, the cultural programme was satisfactory, with 56% of participants rating it as "good" or better, highlighting its ability to satisfy a majority of the attendees.

However, there were disparities worth noting in the responses. While 52% of participants rated the provision of information by the BFUG Secretariat as "good" or better, 28% rated it as "poor." Similarly, 54% of respondents rated the themes of the parallel sessions as "good" or better, while 44% rated them as "poor." This indicates a significant disparity in perceptions regarding the provision of information and the session themes.

The most significant area for improvement identified was the quality of refreshments and meals, with 35% of participants rating them as "good" or better, while 43% rated them as "poor." Additionally, WiFi access in the conference room was an area of concern, receiving low ratings from 54% of participants. Enhancing both catering services and internet connectivity should be prioritized for future events to better meet participant expectations and improve overall satisfaction.

In conclusion, the Ministerial Conference in Tirana was well-received, with many aspects being positively highlighted by participants. The adoption of the Ministerial Communiqué was a particular success, with 88% rating it as "good" or better. By addressing the identified areas for improvement, such as catering services and Wi-Fi access, and building on the successes, future conferences can aim to provide a well-rounded experience for all participants.

● ANNEX I

Surveyed respondents were asked what they would like to see for the planning of future Ministerial Conferences. Their answers revealed several concerns regarding the organization of the Ministerial in Tirana. The questions and responses to be considered for future organization of the Ministerial Conference are listed as follows:

For the planning of future Ministerial Conferences, I/we would like to see:

- State-of -the-art organization
- Better circulation of information ahead of the Conference
- A livelier discussion between stakeholders, not so much scripted
- More student involvement and presence during the conference, better flow of information before the conference, ideally more info much sooner, and real influence over program content
- Actually, value the student representatives present, and talk about student issues more.
- More workshops sharing experiences of different countries.
- Earlier information
- More ministers attending, more BFUG ownership, better preparation
- Agenda and information available much earlier.
- Proper dialogue and interaction with the BFUG on the content of the programme, as well as proper and well-functioning logistics.
- Earlier info about the event, more attention to input
- A room with AC, a working WIFI, enough food, enough vegetarian food, break out rooms with interesting topics for the next cycle,
- Better and earlier information about the cultural programme to be able to decide whether to attend, book flights etc.
- A better organized and more efficient Ministerial Conference and a broader reaching Global Policy Forum.
- More international partner; a better provision of organization; innovative way to animate break out and report to plenary
- A better integration of students at all levels, meaning an obligation to have at least a student representative within each delegation.



BFUG SECRETARIAT

WORK REPORT

June 2024



EHEA: Transforming Education together



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Date: June 30, 2024



Albanian BFUG Secretariat
2021-2024

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	<u>5</u>
The Terms of Reference for the BFUG Secretariat	<u>6</u>
<i>BFUG Secretariat in Figures and Staff Composition</i>	<i><u>6</u></i>
BFUG Secretariat Reports and Updates	<u>9</u>
<i>Communique Content and Style Analysis</i>	<i><u>10</u></i>
<i>The EHEA Website</i>	<i><u>10</u></i>
<i>Research in Support of the Ministerial Conference</i>	<i><u>10</u></i>
Working Structures for the 2021 – 2024 Working Period	<u>15</u>
<i>The BFUG Co-Chairs for 2021 – 2024</i>	<i><u>16</u></i>
<i>Working Group Meeting Timelines</i>	<i><u>17</u></i>
<i>BFUG Work Plan 2021 – 2024</i>	<i><u>18</u></i>
<i>The BFUG, its Board and its Working Groups</i>	<i><u>19</u></i>
<i>BFUG and Board Meeting Participation</i>	<i><u>46</u></i>
Lessons Learned and Recommendations	<u>62</u>
<i>Guidelines on Drafting of the Official Documents</i>	<i><u>63</u></i>
Acknowledgments	<u>64</u>
List of Annexes	<u>65</u>
Annex III: Role of the Bologna Secretariat (ToR 2021-2024)	<u>84</u>
Annex IV: Bologna Follow Up Group Work Plan 2021-2024	<u>87</u>
Annex V: EHEA Website Transformation Report	<u>111</u>
Annex VI: Communique Content and Style Analysis	<u>127</u>
Annex VII: Report from MCN Regarding Webpage issues	<u>172</u>
Annex VIII: Staff Resume	<u>174</u>



Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure and profound gratitude that I write this introductory note to the BFUG Secretariat Work Report hosted by Albania for the 2021-2024 work period. The work of the BFUG Secretariat has been instrumental in supporting the efforts of the BFUG in fostering cooperation, dialogue, and progress within the European Higher Education Area, while facing unprecedented challenges and rapid changes in today's landscape. Over the past three and a half years, our dedicated team has strived tirelessly to support the BFUG and all of its structures to uphold the fundamental principles and values of the Bologna Process, while adapting to the evolving needs of the EHEA member countries and major stakeholders.

This report serves as a testament to the collective efforts of our work with BFUG, its Board and Working Structures in advancing the objectives of the EHEA.

I am pleased to highlight the substantial contributions made by the BFUG Secretariat to the BFUG's mission over the course of 42 months of dedicated work and commitment, spanning from January 2021 to June 2024, the longest mandate of any other Secretariat in the history of the BFUG and has efficiently overseen the highest number of working groups (15) and subgroups (21), providing comprehensive technical support, ensuring that all tasks were fulfilled with the highest standards and efficacy. Moreover, throughout its tenure, the BFUG Secretariat has operated with the highest standards of professional ethics and neutrality.

As you delve into the pages of this report, I encourage you to reflect on the progress we have made together as well as the challenges that lie ahead. Whether by fostering inclusive education, addressing digitalization, or promoting sustainability, let us maintain an unwavering commitment to realising the vision of the Bologna Declaration.

Lastly, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the team of the BFUG Secretariat for their steadfast dedication, professionalism, and commitment to support the work of the BFUG and its structures on advancing the goals of the Bologna Process. Their tireless efforts have made a profound impact on the work of the BFUG and its structures and for that I am proud and grateful to each and every member of the team. I believe I speak not only for myself but also on behalf of my team as I extend our heartfelt gratitude to our families. They have been a source of moral support, understanding and resilience, amidst tight deadlines and stressful moments, allowing us to fulfil our duties with purpose and dedication.

In closing, I hope that this report serves as inspiration for all to commend the efforts of the BFUG in its mission to shape a brighter future for education and society at large.

With warm regards,

Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi

Head - BFUG Secretariat

Executive Summary

25 years since the Bologna Declaration in 1999, which laid the ground for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), with 49¹ countries and the European Commission as members, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, European Universities Association (EUA), European Students Union (ESU), ENQA, EURASHE, EI/ETUCE, as consultative members and several partners. The Bologna Process (BP) is supported by the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG), an executive structure which supports the BP/EHEA in the working periods between Ministerial Conferences.

The BFUG was established in 1999 and the BFUG Secretariat in 2003. The BFUG Secretariat is a technical, neutral structure of the BFUG which supports the BFUG, its Board and the different BFUG Working Groups/Structures during each work period between the EHEA Ministerial Conferences.

This report offers a comprehensive overview of the operations of the BFUG Secretariat hosted by Albania from January 1st, 2021, to June 30th, 2024. It delineates the Secretariat's role in supporting the BFUG and its various Working Structures, encompassing document preparation, active meeting participation, and composition details.

Beyond mandatory tasks, the Secretariat demonstrated proactive efforts in compiling comparative, historical, technical, and analytical reports, alongside provision of information and archival data to the BFUG. This was achieved through record-keeping, expert dissemination of essential information, and close collaboration with members and co-chairs of Working Structures.

The activity of the Secretariat adheres to Rules and Procedures established at the BFUG meeting in Portugal in 2021 (ANNEX I), supplemented by a national bylaw in Albania, government decision No. 1163, date 24.12.2020, "For the establishment and maintaining of the Secretariat of "Bologna Follow Up Group" from the Republic of Albania", amended by the Decision of the Council of Ministers on September 7, 2023 and the legal framework en force in Albania (both documents in ANNEX II).

Information for the 2021-2024 period is derived from meeting minutes, notes, and attendance sheets, with narrative aspects sourced from the EHEA website.

This report has undergone review by relevant BFUG working structure Co-Chairs and received approval from the BFUG.

¹ Belarus and the Russian Federation were suspended per the decision made on the extraordinary BFUG meeting, held in Strasbourg, in February 2022, thus reducing the number of active countries to 47.

The Terms of Reference for the BFUG Secretariat

The [Terms of Reference](#) (ToRs) (ANNEX IV) for the BFUG Secretariat hosted by Albania were discussed and approved at the BFUG meeting held in Portugal (online) on 15 – 16 April 2021. As in other work periods, the BFUG Secretariat continued to function as a technical and neutral entity of the BFUG, to support the implementation of the Work Plan adopted by the BFUG. The BFUG Secretariat reviews and updates the European Higher Education Area website www.ehea.info, ensuring that up-to-date information is made available in a timely manner for both the BFUG and the public at large. To achieve this, it has implemented an ad-hoc communication system, utilising modern digital tool.

In conjunction with the BFUG Co-Chairs and Vice-Chair, as per the ToRs, the Secretariat:

- drafts agendas for the BFUG meetings
- drafts background discussion documents (liaising with relevant authors, as appropriate)
- drafts relevant papers for the BFUG and its Board, Working Groups and other structures
- drafts minutes of the BFUG/Board meetings for clearance by the Chairs
- sends these minutes for feedback and subsequent adoption by the BFUG/Board at the next meeting
- provides assistance and support for each working structures.

The BFUG Secretariat carries out the same tasks for all working groups, the BICG, the TPGs, task forces, ad hoc groups, and analogous bodies, in accordance with the respective Co-Chairs of these various working structures.

BFUG Secretariat in Figures and Staff Composition

The BFUG Secretariat's composition, first introduced during the BFUG meeting in Portugal in April of 2021, was designed to support the BFUG structures during the 2021-2024 work period. The roles within the BFUG Secretariat were designed to accommodate full-time and part-time positions, with a strategic consideration for the specific engagement of Albanian Diaspora experts, an approach also aligned with the policy of the Albanian government. The composition of the BFUG Secretariat and its positions were established through Albanian Government Bylaw No. 1163, dated 24.12. 2020¹. The foreseen BFUG Secretariat was structured as follows:

- Head of the BFUG Secretariat
- Assistant to the BFUG Secretariat
- 2 (two) full-time senior technical experts and 3 (three) part-time experts
- 3 (three) full-time junior experts and 6 (six) part-time junior experts
- 1 (one) full-time Media and Communication expert

1 The official document can be found in Annex II.

- 1 (one) part-time IT expert for maintenance of the existing website (www.ehea.info).

The BFUG Secretariat has undergone several changes in both staff composition and leadership throughout the specified work period. These adjustments were made in order to enhance support for the BFUG Structures, considering also the fact that the work plan of the BFUG and its structures has changed during the same period with additional working structures and their sub-structures being established. The re-evaluation of the BFUG Secretariat's composition facilitated improved allocation of human resources within the BFUG Secretariat, ensuring optimal support for BFUG and its affiliated structures. To better align the Secretariat's role and composition with the requirements of the European Commission (EC) grant, aimed at supporting the daily operations of the BFUG Secretariat, the Albanian government's decision No. 1163, dated 24.12.2020, was amended with the decision No. 126, dated 07.09.2023. The current composition of the BFUG Secretariat comprises the equivalency of 12 full-time positions, distributed as follows:

- Head of the Secretariat
- four Senior Experts; three full-time and one part-time
- three Junior Experts; two full-time and one part-time
- two communication experts; one senior and one junior, both part-time
- two full-time positions for the supporting staff of the Albanian Ministry of Education dealing with all legal, financial and managerial aspects of the EC Grant management.

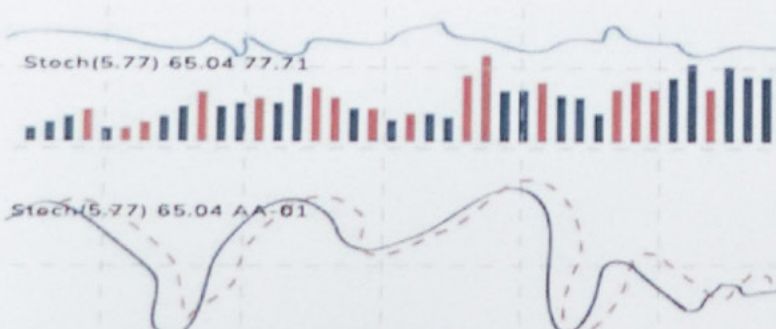
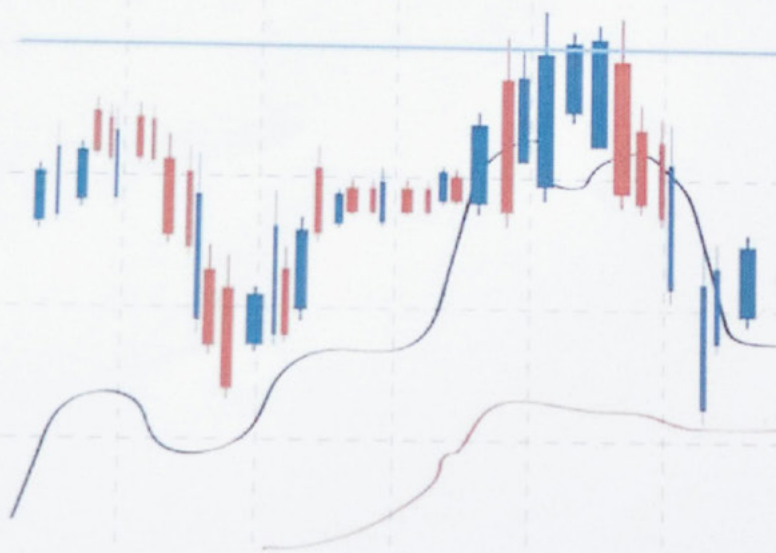
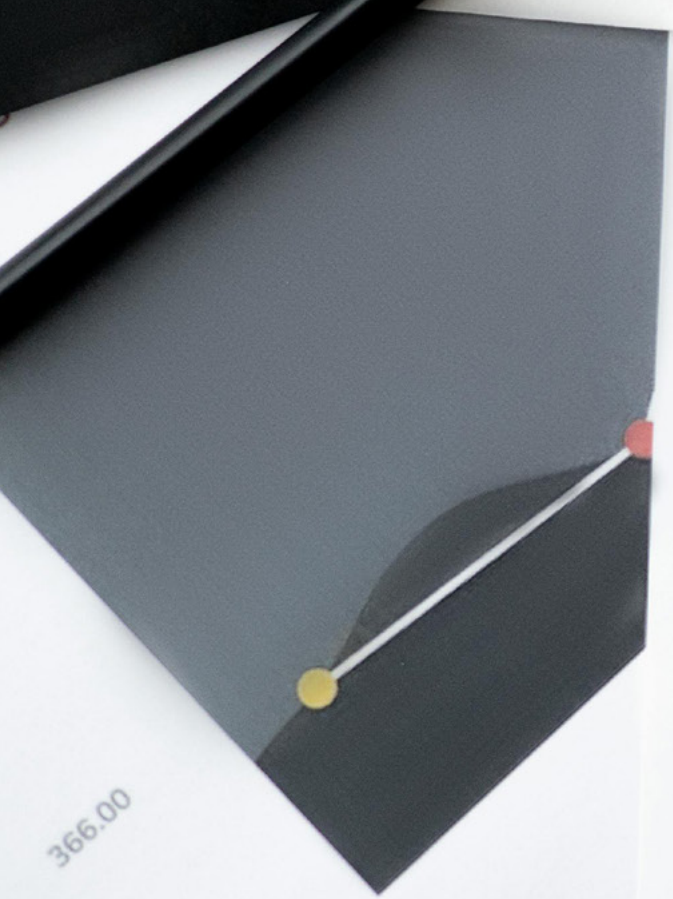
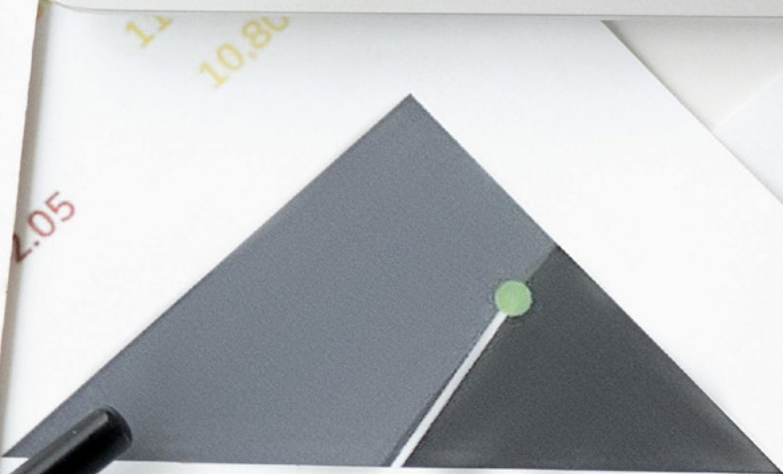
The day to day legal and financial management for the BFUG Secretariat is offered by the Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports (MES).

The BFUG Secretariat contributes skills, competences and expertise to its daily operations, in the areas of:

- Internationalisation of Higher Education
- Recognition of foreign academic qualifications
- Human capital development
- Internal Quality Assurance
- E-Learning and lifelong learning
- Project design and management
- Web, Social Media and Event Management
- Communication, Consulting, Logistics, Strategic Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation
- Programming, operating systems knowledge.

The academic backgrounds of the BFUG Secretariat staff members include a diverse range of majors and qualifications, such as Linguistics, Business Management, International Economics and Consulting, Political Science and International Relations.

The staff of the BFUG Secretariat is fluent in multiple languages, including Albanian, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, and Spanish. For detailed bios of each BFUG Secretariat staff member, please refer to Annex III of this report.



BFUG Secretariat Reports and Updates

The Secretariat supported the BFUG by assisting all working structures, as previously described. On top of that, an assigned expert of the Secretariat continuously reviewed the EHEA website and made numerous changes responding to the requests of the Working Groups (namely, ensuring a smooth transition to a new host provider, adding security certificates, updating categories to better disseminate information, added the BFUG/ Board minutes archive, all while continuously updating required materials on the website). The Secretariat has activated the buttons to the social media accounts and has increased social media engagement.

The staff of the Secretariat drafted a report, at request of the Drafting Committee, analysing stylistic elements and conducting a content review of all previous Communiques, as a supporting document in drafting the Tirana Communique. For a copy of the report, please consult Annex XX.

Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Sports requested the Secretariat to research for the Tirana Ministerial Conference, resulting in a detailed overview of working groups, host countries, representative numbers, and agendas for past Ministerial Conferences and the Global Policy Forum. A series of tables summarise essential aspects of EHEA Ministerial Conferences, including the BFUG Secretariat's working period, working groups, host country, EU membership status, and participant details for past Ministerials and Global Policy Forums, and past Ministerial agenda overviews.

The most notable initiative of the Secretariat, in close collaboration with the Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing, is launching the EHEA newsletter, bringing light to the work of the BFUG and its WG, and other entities related to Higher Education.

Communique Content and Style Analysis

The Communique Content and Style Analysis was drafted by the BFUG Secretariat, by request of the Drafting Committee (working structure responsible for drafting the communique), in July 2023. It aimed to review and analyse the content and style of previous Communiqués, and its purpose was to assist the work of the Drafting Committee, serving almost as a literature review.

The analysis includes an overview of the methodology, a closer look into the Rome Communiqué (to analyse in depth the most recent Communiqué), visual comparisons of the style and content of all Communiqués, a closer look into prominent, recurring themes (Learning and Teaching, Quality Assurance, Recognition, and Social Dimension), and key take-aways.

The EHEA Website

In support of the EHEA working structures, to facilitate their work, and to enable the easiest way to reach the information on the EHEA web page, the BFUG Secretariat team recently executed several key initiatives, one of which was the maintenance and enhancement of the EHEA website. Firstly, the categories bar has been revamped, introducing new categories, a restructuring aimed at streamlining information dissemination while preventing cluttered category tabs. Additionally, sub-categories within each category were refined, enhancing their effectiveness in filtering information and managing content efficiently. Lastly, beginning from January 2024, a Senior Expert of the Secretariat (Dr. Aida Myrto) was assigned as liaison for the IT expert, leading the administration and continuous updating of the EHEA website.

Furthermore, the Secretariat seamlessly integrated the EHEA website with social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram, as well as a channel at a later stage. This integration involved placing media shortcuts in the top right corner of the index page for effortless access to the organization's social media profiles. These enhancements collectively contribute to a more comprehensive and accessible online presence for the EHEA. Please find the EHEA Website report on Annex V.

Research in Support of the Ministerial Conference

By request of the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Secretariat conducted research to support the organisation of the Tirana Ministerial Conference. The following results provide a detailed overview of working groups, host country, number of representatives for the Ministerial and the Global Policy Forum, and an overview of the agenda for past Ministerial Conferences.

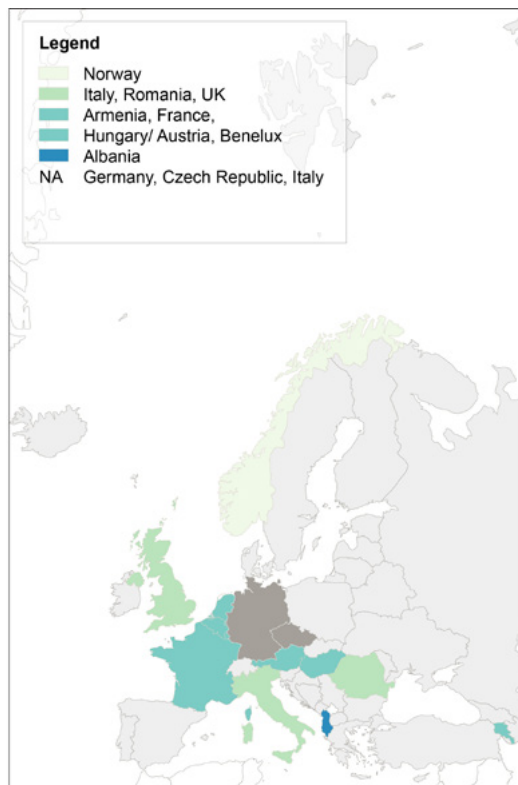
The first table offers a detailed look at the various EHEA Ministerial Conferences held over the years in different locations. It covers essential aspects like the BFUG Secretariat's working period, the number of working groups and subgroups, the host country, EU membership status, and the number of representatives and delegations. Additionally, it includes agendas and participants' lists.



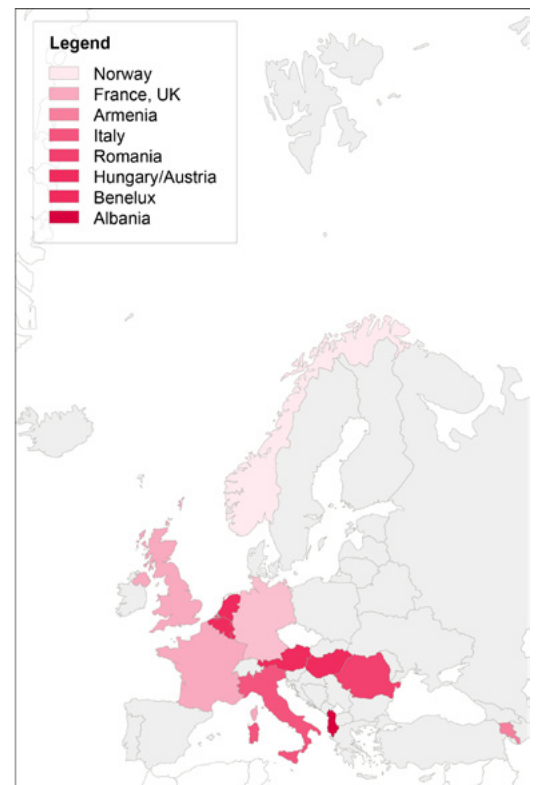
Ministerial Host Countries

Ministerial Conference	Working period of the Secretariat (in months)	Number of WG/structures	State	EU Status	No of Representatives	Delegations	Agendas	Participants list
Ministerial conference in Tirana 2024	42	15	Albania	Non EU country				
Ministerial conference in Rome 2020	23	11	Italy	EU country	20		2020 Rome Ministerial Conference Programme	Link
Ministerial conference in Paris 2018	35	7	France	EU country	511	115	2018 Paris Ministerial Conference Programme	Link
Ministerial conference in Yerevan 2015	35	9	Armenia	Non EU country			2015 Yerevan Ministerial Conference Programme	
Ministerial conference in Bucharest 2012	23	12	Romania	EU country (Non EU country at the time)				
Ministerial conference in Budapest/Vienna 2010	35	13	Hungary/Austria	EU country				
Ministerial conference in Leuven/Louvain-la Neuve 2009	35	13	BENELUX	EU country				
Ministerial conference in London 2007	23	7	United Kingdom	Non EU country (EU country at the time)	372	75	2007 London Ministerial Conference Programme	Link
Ministerial conference in Bergen 2005	18	4	Norway	Non EU country			2005 Bergen Ministerial Conference programme	
Ministerial conference in Berlin 2003		6	Germany	EU country	308	53	2003 Berlin Ministerial Conference programme	Link
Ministerial conference in Prague 2001		3	Czech Republic	EU country (Non EU country at the time)				
Ministerial conference in Bologna 1999			Italy	EU country				

Review of past Ministerial Conferences, specifically Secretariat working period, working groups, and delegation and representative details.



Duration of Work Period



Number of Working Groups

The second table highlights the key activities and benchmarks from these Ministerial Conferences. It captures opening remarks, keynote speeches, plenary sessions, parallel group discussions, the finalization and adoption of the Communiqué, closing statements, and press conferences. Some conferences also feature extra sessions or special announcements. Note that for some conferences, the information might be incomplete.

Ministerial Conference	Opening remarks and keynote speeches	Plenary session	Parallel sessions/ Group discussions	Finalization of discussions and adoption of the Communiqué	Closing statements	Press conference	Other
Paris Ministerial 2018	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Other sessions: Fundamental values and inclusiveness; Italy's project for 2018-2020
Yerevan Ministerial 2015	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	EHEA Accession: Official Announcement on the Membership of Belarus in the EHEA
Bucharest Ministerial 2012	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Budapest/Vienna Ministerial 2010	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	The European Higher Education Area: Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives
Leuven/Louvain-la Neuve Ministerial 2009	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	
London Ministerial 2007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Bergen Ministerial 2005	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Decision on the accession of new countries to the Bologna Process
Berlin Ministerial 2003	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Decision on the accession of new countries to the Bologna Process
Prague Ministerial 2001	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Bologna Ministerial 1999	No	No	No	No	No	No	

Key activities and benchmarks from Ministerial Conferences, including remarks, speeches, sessions, discussions, Communiqué adoption, and press conferences.

The final table provides insights into the Bologna Policy Forums, detailing the number of representatives and delegations, agendas, and other pertinent information. However, for a few forums, some information is missing.

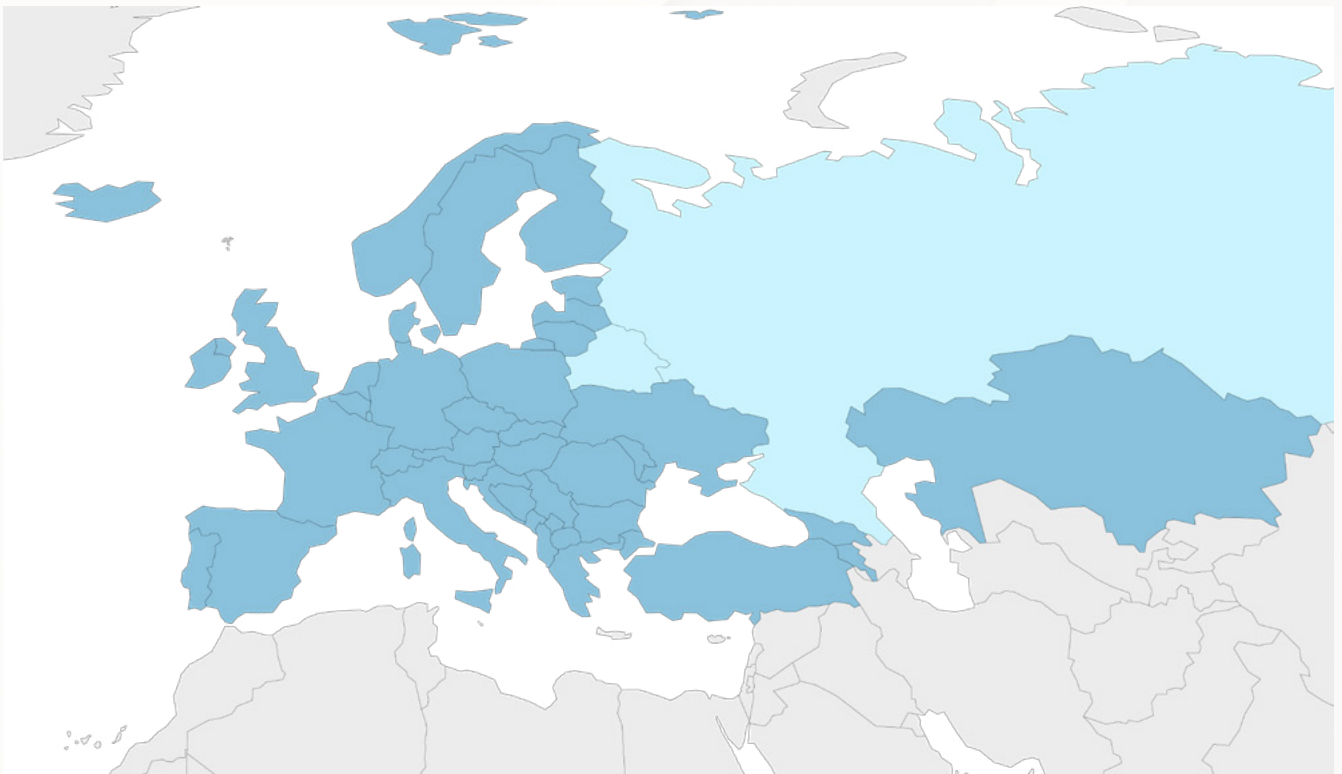
Bologna Policy Forum	No of representatives	Delegations	Agendas
Fifth Bologna Policy Forum 2018	87	40	Fifth Bologna Policy Forum Programme
Fourth Bologna Policy Forum 2015	N/A	N/A	Fourth Bologna Policy Forum Programme
Third Bologna Policy Forum 2012	N/A	N/A	Third Bologna Policy Forum Programme
Second Bologna Policy Forum 2010	71	11	Second Bologna Policy Forum Programme
First Bologna Policy Forum 2009	N/A	N/A	First Bologna Policy Forum Programme

Bologna Policy Forum analysis.



Working Structures for the 2021 – 2024 Working Period

The composition of the BFUG during 2021-2024 is illustrated below, with Russia and Belarus marked in a distinct colour, accompanied by a footnote denoting their suspension following the decision of the Strasbourg extraordinary BFUG meeting.¹

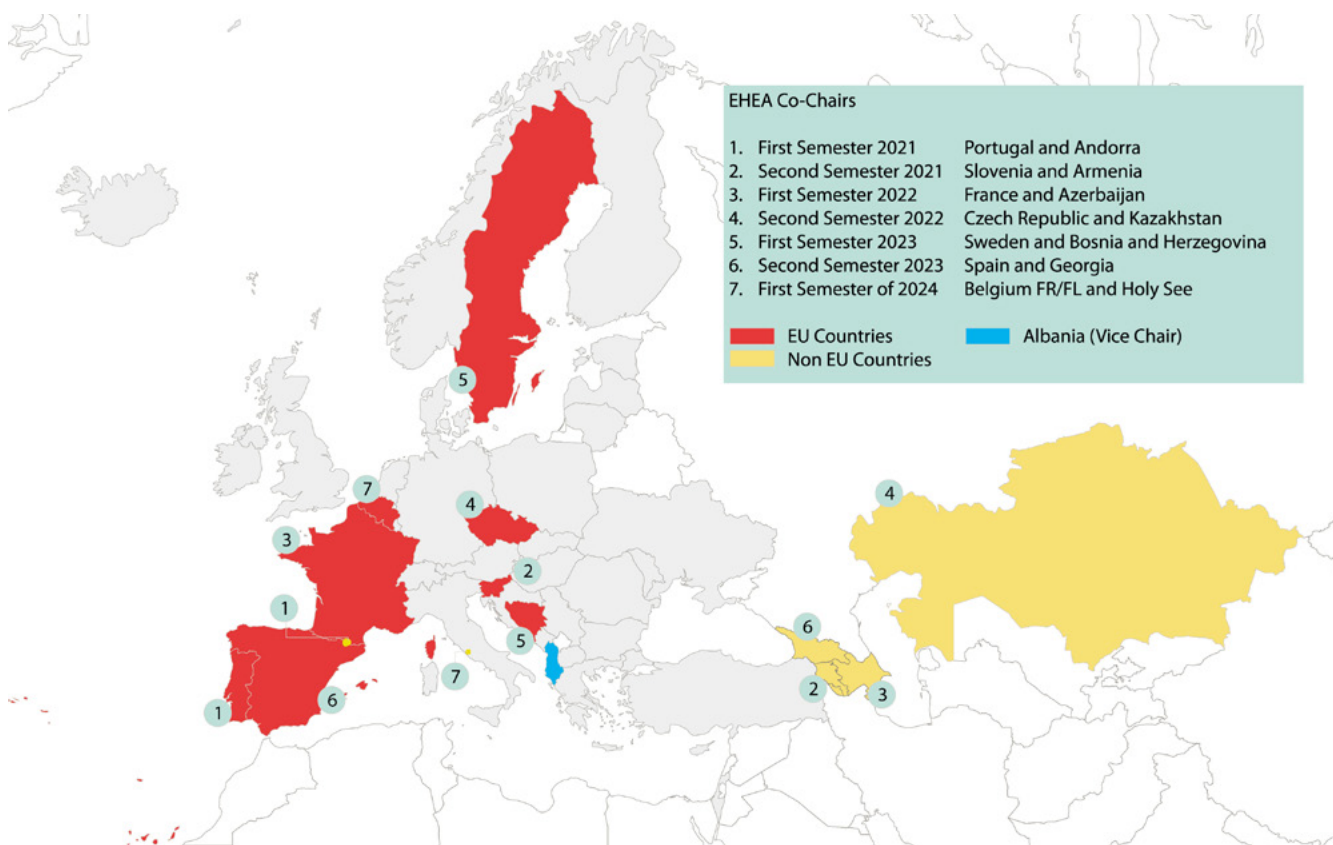


¹ Belarus and the Russian Federation were suspended per the decision made on the extraordinary BFUG meeting, held in Strasbourg, in February 2022, thus reducing the number of active countries to 47.

The BFUG Co-Chairs for 2021 – 2024

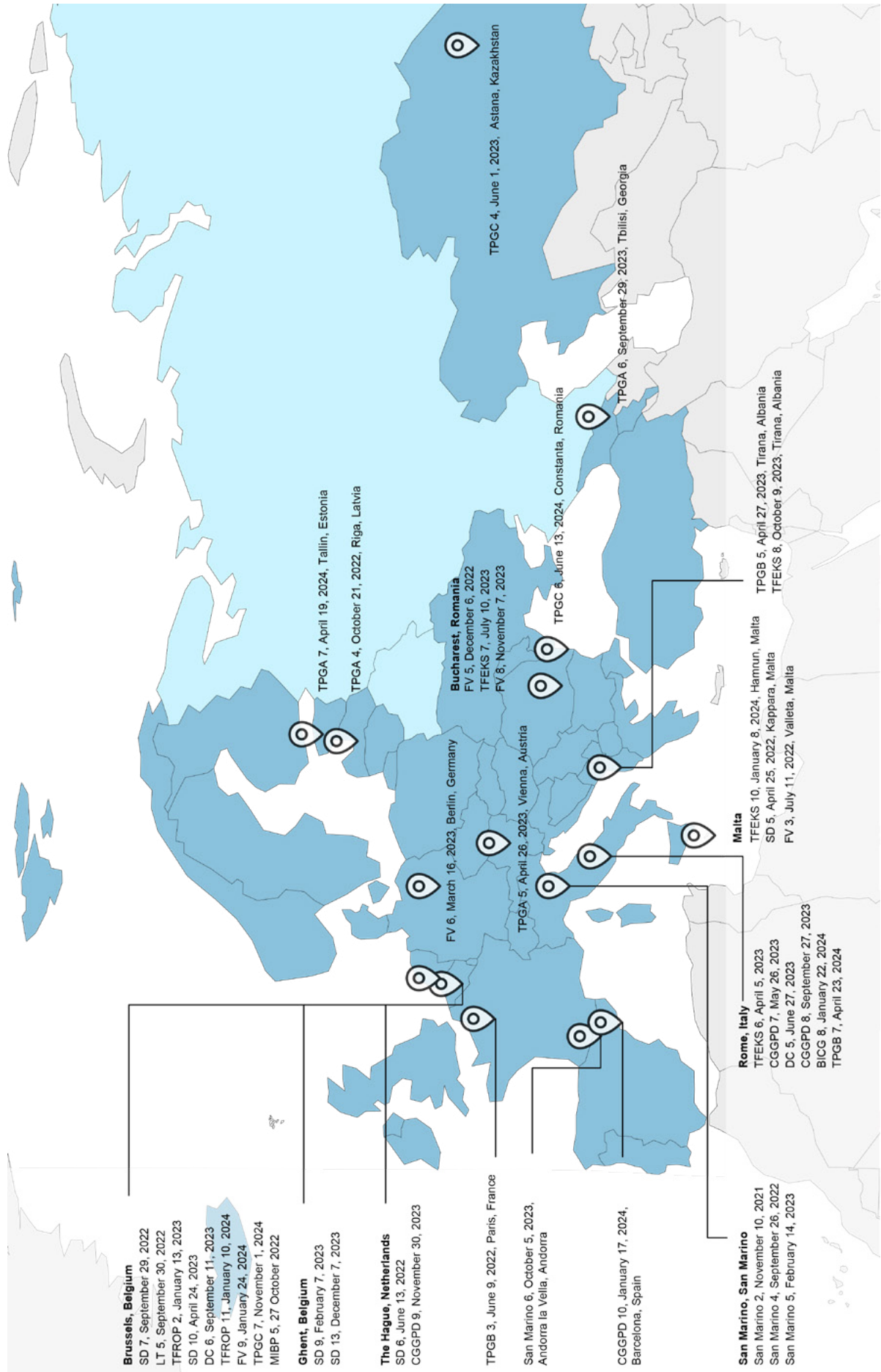
The BFUG is chaired by two Co-Chairs and one Vice Chair for each work period and functions as per Rules and Procedures approved at the 1st BFUG meeting of each Work Period. The [BFUG Rules and Procedures](#) for the Work Period 2021-2024 were approved at the BFUG meeting in Portugal in April 2021, while partially amended and approved at the BFUG meeting in the Czech Republic in November 2022. The BFUG Vice-Chair is appointed from the country hosting the Ministerial conference concluding the work period. The BFUG Co-Chairs rotate every six months and consist of a duo comprising an EU Member State, currently holding the EU Presidency, and a non-EU country, member of the Council of Europe, listed in alphabetical order. During the 2021-2024 work period, spanning seven semesters, the following Co-Chairs from EU and non-EU countries presided. The BFUG Vice-Chair was Linda Pustina.

2021		2022		2023		2024
1st semester	2nd semester	1st semester	2nd semester	1st semester	2nd semester	1st semester
EU Portugal Maria de Lurdes Correia Fernandes Ana Mateus		EU France Patrick Nédellec		EU Sweden Robin Moberg		EU Flemish Belgium Community Liesbeth Hens
EU Slovenia Duša Marjetić		EU Czech Republic Karolina Gondkova		EU Spain Margarita Lezcano-Mújica Núñez		EU French Belgium Community Caroline Hollela
Non EU Andorra Jordi Llombart		Non EU Azerbaijan Nijat Mammadli		Non EU Bosnia & Herzegovina Aida Duric		Non EU Holy See Dr. Melanie Rosenbaum
Non EU Armenia Tatevik Gharibyn		Non EU Kazakhstan Kuanysh Yergaliyev		Non EU Georgia Maia Shukhohvili		



EHEA Co-chairs for the 2021 – 2024 working period

Working Group Meeting Timelines



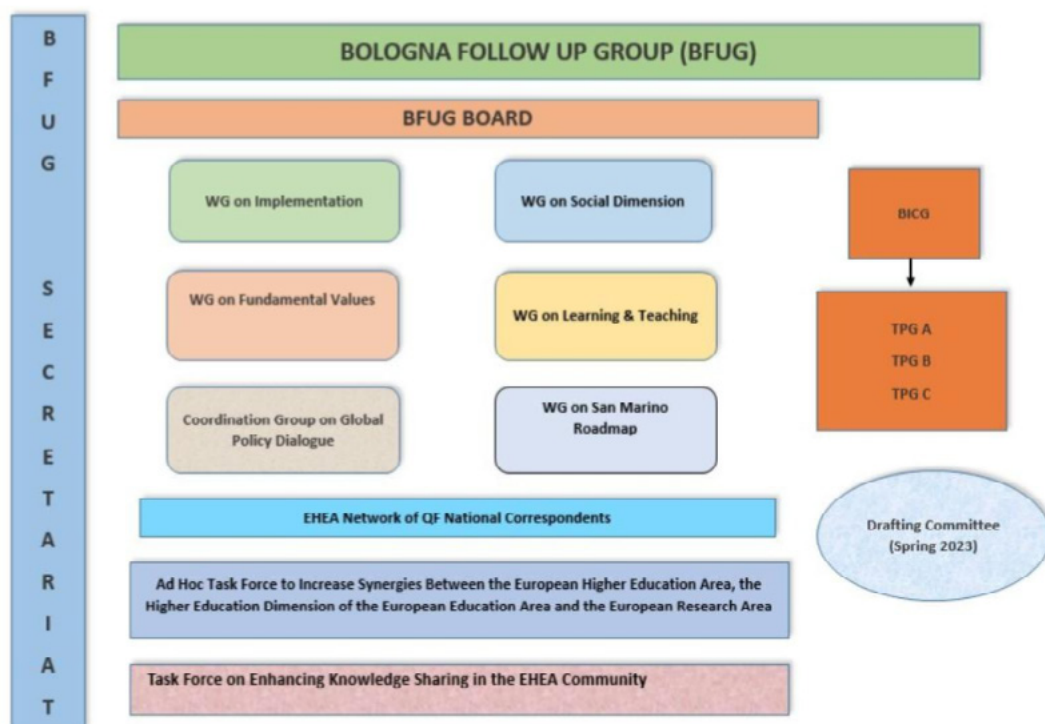
BFUG Work Plan 2021 – 2024

The BFUG work plan serves as a guiding framework for coordinating and advancing the implementation of the Bologna Process, with the overarching objective to create a more integrated and cohesive European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In the period between the two EHEA Ministerial Conferences, the BFUG operates in accordance with its approved work plan, a strategic blueprint for advancing the objectives of the Bologna Process within the designated work period. Central to this plan are several key tasks such as:

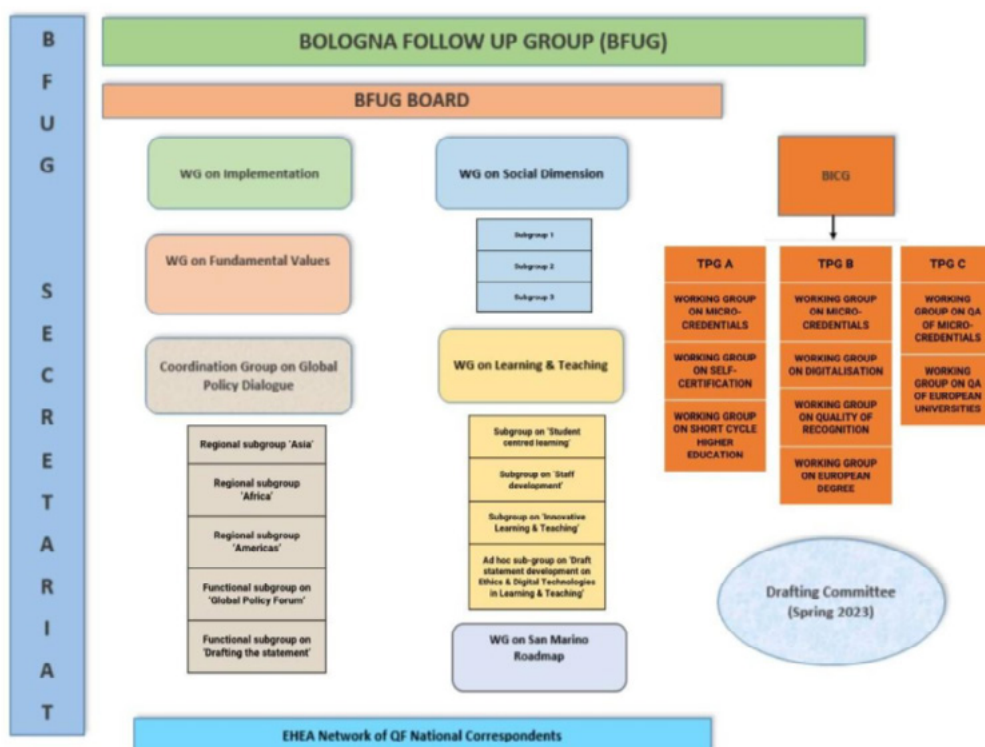
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of commitments made under the Bologna Process
- Policy development aimed at enhancing the compatibility, comparability, and quality of higher education systems across the EHEA
- Coordinating and facilitating cooperation among member countries and stakeholders
- Preparing background documents, reports, and recommendations for consideration by ministers during the Bologna Process ministerial meetings, held at the end of each BFUG work period. These documents serve as the basis for policy discussions and decision-making at the ministerial level.

The 2021-2024 BFUG Work Plan was approved during the term's inaugural BFUG meeting in Portugal, held online in April 2021. Initially, its working structures were as in the figure below, with two more work structures added in 2023; specifically, the Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA Community and the Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the European Higher Education Area.

The 2021-2024 BFUG Work Plan, both the original and the actual ones are provided hereto in Annex VI.



Foreseen and budgeted workplan activity.



Actual workplan activity.

The BFUG, its Board and its Working Groups

The BFUG serves as the executive body overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the Bologna Process within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) between Ministerial Conferences, comprising full members from 49 countries (47 currently active), European Commission and consultative members from various organizations. Its key roles include facilitating cooperation, monitoring commitments, providing a discussion platform, coordinating cooperation, and preparing documents for ministerial meetings. BFUG meetings occur at least once every six months and play a crucial role in overseeing ministerial Communiqués and shaping the Bologna Process trajectory. The BFUG Board, acting as an advisory committee, consists of the BFUG Co-Chairs Troika (the outgoing, present and incoming Co-Chairs of the BFUG), the BFUG Vice-Chair, the European Commission, four of the consultative members, and a Co-Chair representative from each BFUG working structure. These structures, established to address specific aspects of the Bologna Process, meet regularly to discuss topics outlined in the EHEA Ministerial Communiqué. Meetings of the BFUG Board usually precede BFUG meetings by at least one month, while the Terms of Reference for the working groups are determined at the beginning of each work period. The ToRs for the 2021-2024 working groups are listed in Annex VII.

Each WG is illustrated below with relevant text from their work, detailing chairing countries, members and their meetings (the last ones with links to the EHEA page). Additionally, participation graphics or each meeting, along with maps of members and meetings are provided. The names of the experts tasked with supporting the WGs are listed alongside their corresponding WGs for

each WG below, tables display the meetings held during the 2021-2024 work period, along with the participation of their members in each meeting. In the tables, grey indicates members' absence from meetings, darker shades represent multiple participants from one country/organisation, while black denotes meetings foreseen in the ToRs of each WG at the outset of the 2021-2024 work period. The information contained in each of the illustrations below has been presented to the BFUG meeting in Belgium in April 2024 and has been drafted according to the request of the BFUG.

The Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)

The Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) is a coordination group composed of nominated representatives from BFUG members and consultative members, along with Co-Chairs from Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs). A Monitoring WG representative also joins as an observer. The main role of BICG is to ensure the coordinated implementation of the Bologna Process's three key commitments by overseeing the TPGs' work, promoting experience and best practice sharing among them, and reporting progress and any need for revisions in peer support strategies or methods to the BFUG. The BICG co-chairs for the 2021-2024 term are Helga Posset (Austria), Ivana Radonova (Bulgaria) and Ann Katherine Isaacs (Italy).

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Albania																		
Austria																		
Bulgaria																		
Co-chair of TPG A																		
Co-chair of TPG B																		
Co-chair of TPG C																		
EUA																		
EURASHE																		
European Commission																		
European Commission/ EURYDICE																		
Italy																		
Romania																		

Members include: Albania, Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Bulgaria, European Commission, Italy, Romania; European University Association, EURASHE, one co-chair of Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework. one co-chair of Thematic Peer Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention, one co-chair of Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance, one co-chair of the Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process.

Expert of the BFUG Secretariat in support of the work of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) Aida Myrto. For the 2021 – 2024 work period, the BICG held 9 (March 24) meetings (eight online and one in presence) in Italy.

July 2022	
August 2022	
September 2022	
October 2022	
November 2022	
December 2022	
January 2023	
February 1, 2023	
March 2023	
April 2023	
May 2023	
June 2023	
July 2023	
August 2023	
September 2023	
October 2023	
November 2023	
December 2023	
January 2024	
February 2024	
March 2024	
April 2024	
May 2024	
June 2024	

Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF)

Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF) was established in 2018 by the BFUG, to address Key Commitment 1, a three-cycle system compatible with EHEA and ECTS frameworks. Thematic indications include self-certification of national qualification frameworks, ECTS User's Guide implementation, short cycle higher education, stakeholder use of qualifications frameworks, study programs outside Bologna three-cycle structure, and the relationship between qualifications frameworks and quality assurance.

The Co-Chairs of the Working Group are: Austria - Karin Riegler; Georgia - Khatia Tsiramua; Latvia - Baiba Ramina. Members include: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium Flemish Community, Bulgaria, Council of Europe, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, El - ETUCE,

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Albania																		
Andorra																		
Armenia*																		
Austria																		
Azerbaijan																		
Belgium Flemish Community*																		
Bulgaria																		
Council of Europe*																		
Croatia*																		
Cyprus																		
Czech Republic																		
El - ETUCE*																		
Estonia																		
ESU*																		
EURASHE*																		
European Commission*																		
Georgia*																		
Germany*																		
Greece																		
Hungary*																		
Italy*																		
Kazakhstan																		
Latvia*																		
Malta*																		
Montenegro																		
North Macedonia																		
Poland*																		
Romania*																		
San Marino*																		
Slovak Republic																		
Spain																		
The Netherlands*																		
Turkey*																		
United Kingdom (Scotland)																		

Estonia, ESU - European Students' Union, EURASHE, European Commission, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Spain, Türkiye, United Kingdom (Scotland).

Enis Fita is the expert of the BFUG Secretariat in support of the work of Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework (TPG A on QF). For the mentioned work period, the TPG A on QF held 7 meetings (3 online 4 in presence). In attendance: Fourth Meeting of the TPG A on QF, Latvia, 21 October 2022; Fifth Meeting of the TPG A on QF, Austria, 26 April 2023, Sixth Meeting of the TPG A on QF, Georgia, 29 September 2023 and Seventh Meeting of the TPG A on QF, Estonia 19 April 2024.

July 2022	
August 2022	
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March 2023	
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June 2024	

Thematic Peer Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention (TPG B on LRC)

The BFUG established Thematic Peer Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention (TPG B on LRC) in September 2018, focusing on Key Commitment 2 (national legislation and procedures compliant with the Convention). Thematic areas include legal framework implementation, automatic recognition, alternative pathways, refugee qualifications, and digital technology optimization.

The Co-Chairs of the Working Group are: Albania - Linda Pustina; France - Martin Beyer; Italy - Chiara Finocchietti.

The expert of the BFUG Secretariat in support of the work of Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process was Blerina Caslli.

For the 2021-2024 work period, the TPG B on LRC held 7 meetings (4 online 3 in presence). In attendance: 3rd meeting of TPG B, Sévres (France) 10 June 2022; 5th meeting of TPG B, Tirana (Albania), 27 April 2023; 7th meeting TPG B, Rome (Italy), 23 April 2024.

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021
Albania												
Armenia*												
Austria*												
Azerbaijan*												
Belarus												
Belgium Flemish Community*												
Bosnia and Herzegovina*												
Bulgaria*												
Council of Europe												
Croatia*												
Cyprus*												
Czech Republic*												
Denmark*												
EBSI (Guest)												
EDC												
EI - ETUCE*												
ENQA												
EQAR*												
Estonia*												
ESU*												
EUA												
EURASHE												
European Commission*												
Eurydice												
France*												
Georgia*												
Germany*												
Greece*												
Holy See												
Hungary*												
Ireland*												
Italy*												
Kazakhstan												
Latvia*												
Lithuania*												
Malta*												
Moldova*												
Montenegro												
North Macedonia												
Norway*												
Nuffic (Guest)												
Poland*												
Portugal*												
Romania*												
San Marino												
Slovak Republic*												
Spain												
Sweden*												
Switzerland*												
The Netherlands*												
Ukraine												
UNESCO												
United Kingdom												

Members include: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French Community, Bulgaria, Council of Europe, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El - ETUCE, EQAR, Estonia, ESU - European Students' Union, EUA European University Association, EURASHE, European Commission, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, UNESCO, United Kingdom. The expert of the BFUG Secretariat in support of the work of Working Group is Blerina Caslli.

BFUG Secretariat Hosted by Albania

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Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

The Working Group on Monitoring was established in Vienna in September 2018 with the goal to prepare a 2020 report on the EHEA's progress since the start of the Bologna Process. The group's objectives are to guarantee accurate country-to-country comparisons, enhance organized monitoring, evaluate progress towards the European Higher Education Area, supply dependable statistics, and ensure transparency in implementation.

The Rome Communiqué took note of the results described in the Bologna Process Implementation Report (2020) and mandated the Working Group to work on the Bologna Process Implementation Report for 2024, identify sources of reliable and comparable data, make further progress in improving structured and standardised monitoring of the EHEA, and ensuring that accurate comparisons can be made between countries.

The Co-Chairs of the working group are European Commission/Eurydice - David Crosier; Norway - Tone Flood Strøm. Members include: Albania, Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French Community, Council of Europe, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, EI - ETUCE, Estonia, ESU - European Students' Union, EUA - European University Association, European Commis-

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Agilis																		
Albania*																		
Austria																		
Azerbaijan*																		
Cyprus*																		
Czech Republic*																		
EACEA																		
EI - ETUCE																		
EQAR																		
ESU																		
EU Commission/ Eurydice																		
EUA*																		
EUROSTUDENT																		
France																		
Germany*																		
Italy																		
Kazakhstan																		
Malta*																		
Moldova																		
Norway																		
Romania*																		
Russia																		
The Netherlands*																		
United Kingdom*																		

Working Group on Fundamental Values

The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) Working Group on Fundamental Values developed the statements for the remaining fundamental values: public responsibility of higher education, public responsibility for higher education, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in higher education governance and academic integrity. These statements are the main results of the WG on fundamental values for the period 2021-2024 and aims at providing a common understanding and reference for all fundamental values by the EHEA members in order to develop a fully functional monitoring system to measure the extent to which members are upholding these values.

The co-chairs are Germany - David Akrami Flores; Malta - Rose Anne Cuschieri; Norway -Tone Flood Strøm; Romania - Mihai Cezar Hâj.

Members include: Austria, Council of Europe, Croatia, EI - ETUCE; ENQA, ESU - European Students' Union, EUA - European University Association, European Commission, European Commission/ Eurydice, Finland, France, Germany, Holy See, Iceland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mal-

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Austria																		
Council of Europe																		
Croatia																		
EI - ETUCE																		
ENQA																		
ESU																		
EUA																		
European Comission																		
Eurydice																		
Finland																		
France																		
Germany																		
Holy See																		
Iceland																		
Italy																		
Kazakhstan																		
Malta																		
North Macedonia																		
Norway																		
Poland																		
Romania																		
Sweden																		
Switzerland																		
The Netherlands																		
Turkey																		
United Kingdom																		
United Kingdom (Scotland)																		

Working Group on Social Dimension

The central focus of the Working Group on Social Dimension is to develop proposed measures and policies in line with the goals set forth in the Paris Communiqué. These efforts aim to strengthen the social aspect of higher education and to lend support to national initiatives geared towards improving access and graduation rates, especially for marginalised and vulnerable demographics.

The produced document “[Indicators and Descriptors for the Principles of the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA](#)” was endorsed by the BFUG at the BFUG Meeting LXXXVIII in Brussels, and the final report was adopted at the BFUG Meeting XC in Brussels.

The co-chairs are Croatia - Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt and European Students’ Union - Horia Onita (*ESU’s Co-Chair Martina Darmain was replaced by new Co-Chair Horia Onita at the seventh meeting held in Belgium on 29-30 September 2022.)

Members include: Albania, Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French Community, Council of Europe, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, EI- ETUCE, Estonia, ESU - European Students’

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Albania*																		
Austria*																		
Belgium Flemish Community*																		
Belgium French Community																		
Council of Europe																		
Croatia																		
Cyprus																		
Denmark*																		
EI - ETUCE*																		
Estonia																		
ESU																		
EUA*																		
European Commission*																		
EUROSTUDENT*																		
France*																		
Georgia*																		
Germany*																		
Italy*																		
Kazakhstan*																		
Lithuania																		
Malta*																		
Moldova*																		
Montenegro																		
Poland*																		
Romania*																		
Slovak Republic*																		
Slovenia*																		
Spain																		
The Netherlands*																		
Turkey*																		
United Kingdom*																		
United Kingdom (Scotland)*																		

Working Group on Learning & Teaching

In its work plan, the Working Group on Learning and Teaching set forth objectives to collaboratively develop concise principles for innovative and inclusive learning and teaching approaches. These efforts aim to provide actions and best-practice examples demonstrating how governments can assist institutions in developing, enhancing, and implementing strategies for teaching and learning in higher education. These initiatives are designed to uphold academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The final report was presented and approved by the BFUG at the BFUG Meeting XC in Brussels, Belgium in April 2024. The co-chairs include Ireland - Tim Conlon; France - Philippe Lalle; EURASHE - Jon Altuna.

Members include: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium Flemish Community, Croatia, Cyprus, EI – ETUCE, ENQA, ESU - European Students' Union, EUA - European University Association, EURASHE, European Commission, France, Georgia, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Kingdom (Scotland)

Kristina Metallari is the expert of the BFUG Secretariat in support of the work of Working Group on Learning and Teaching.

For the 2021-2024 work period, the Working Group on Learning and Teaching held 10 meetings (9 online; 1 in presence hybrid). In attendance (hybrid): Fifth Meeting of WG on Learning & Teaching, 30 September 2022, Belgium.

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021
Albania*												
Armenia*												
Austria*												
Azerbaijan												
Belgium Flemish Community												
Croatia												
Cyprus*												
EI - ETUCE*												
ENQA												
ESU*												
EUA												
EURASHE*												
European Comission*												
France*												
Georgia*												
Germany*												
Holy See*												
Hungary*												
Ireland*												
Italy												
Kazakhstan*												
Montenegro												
Norway*												
Portugal*												
Romania*												
San Marino*												
Slovenia*												
Spain*												
Switzerland*												
The Netherlands*												
Turkey*												
Ukraine												
United Kingdom*												
United Kingdom (Scotland)*												

Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

The Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue aims to foster dialogue with other regions and international organizations on common issues for higher education. CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue planned a Bologna Global Policy Forum for the 2020 Rome Ministerial Conference. Due to the virtual nature of the 2020 Rome Ministerial Conference, a panel on global cooperation in higher education was held, focusing on the global approach in the next decade of EHEA.

The final report was approved by the BFUG at the BFUG Meeting XC in Brussels, Belgium in April 2024.

The co-chairs are Albania - Linda Pustina; Belgium Flemish Community - Magalie Soenen (from 2021 to May 2023); Liesbeth Hens (from 2023 to the end of WP); European Commission - Fiorella Perotto (from 2021 to September 2023); Italy - Ann Katherine Isaacs.

Members include: Albania, Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French Community, Cyprus, EI - ETUCE, ENQA, ESU - European Students' Union, EUA - European University As-

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Albania																		
Austria*																		
Belgium Flemish Community																		
Belgium French Community																		
Cyprus																		
EI - ETUCE*																		
ENQA																		
ESU*																		
EUA																		
European Commission*																		
France																		
Germany*																		
Holy See																		
Ireland*																		
Italy																		
Kazakhstan																		
Malta*																		
Montenegro																		
Romania																		
Spain																		
The Netherlands*																		
UNESCO																		
United Kingdom*																		

The Working Group to Support the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino’s Accession to the EHEA

The Working Group to Support the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino’s accession to the EHEA was endorsed during the BFUG meeting in Porto in April 2021. Its primary objective was to assist San Marino in executing the Roadmap and to provide guidance to the BFUG and Board regarding implementation and any additional support measures recommended. The Working Group also organised peer-learning in order to support developing specific policy areas. The Work Plan was structured based on the timelines specified in the Roadmap and the implementation plans outlined by the Sammarinese authorities. The Roadmap delineates two categories of actions. The first set involves initiating implementation measures, with a general deadline of 1 June 2021. The second set pertains to completing these actions by 1 November 2023.

The final report of the Working Group was approved by the BFUG at the BFUG Meeting LXXX in Brussels, Belgium in April 2024.

COMPOSITION (2021-2024)

Co-chairs

Andorra - Jordi Llobart

Finland - Maija Innola

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Andorra																		
Council of Europe*																		
EUA*																		
Finland																		
Holy See																		
Italy																		
Liechtenstein																		
San Marino																		

Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community

The Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community aims to promote inclusion, communication, cooperation, and solidarity crucial for the future excellence of the EHEA. It has developed an Action Plan comprising various implemented activities and recommendations to effectively disseminate information on the Bologna Process to multiple stakeholders.

The activities of the Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community are partly supported by the IN-GLOBAL project, which is co-financed by the European Union within the Erasmus+ Programme, and also supports the work of the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue to strengthen synergies between these BFUG substructures.

For further information visit the project's website at www.in-global.eu.

Co-chairs(Composition 2021 - 2024)

Albania - Linda Pustina (October 2021 - December 2022); Bizena Bijo (February 2023 - 2024)

Italy** - Luca Lantero (October 2021 - December 2022)*

Romania - Daniela Cristina Ghitulică

* Albania's Co-Chair Linda Pustina was replaced by new Co-Chair Bizena Bijo on the Fifth Meeting on 16 February 2023 (online)

**Luca Lantero stepped down as Co-Chair of the TF on EKS on the Fourth Meeting on 7 De-

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Albania																		
Belgium Flemish Community																		
ENQA																		
ENQA																		
ESU																		
ETUCE																		
EUA																		
EURASHE																		
European Commission																		
Experts																		
Finland																		
Germany																		
In-Global Project																		
Italy																		
Malta																		
Montenegro																		
Romania																		
The Netherlands																		
United Kingdom																		

Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the European Higher Education Area

The Task Force was established in 2022 and its terms of reference were approved in the BFUG meeting in Brno, Czech Republic in November 2022. The Task Force was established as a structure with its members representing ad personam and not as a representative of any BFUG member. The TF was established to develop a proposed set of rules and regulations for the governance of the European Higher Education Area (“EHEA”) and its bodies, in particular the BFUG, the BFUG Board and the Secretariat, working groups and similar for its final adoption by the BFUG before the Ministerial conference in 2024 including any necessary text to be reflected in the ministers’ communique.

Co-chairs

Michal Karpisek - Czech Republic

Luca Lantero - Italy

Michael Gaebel - EUA

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Linda Pustina (Albania)																		
Colin Tück (BFUG Expert)																		
Sjur Bergan (BFUG Expert)																		
Michal Karpíšek (Czech Republic)																		
Michael Gaebel (EUA)																		
Kinga Szuly (European Comission)																		
Frank Petrikowski (Germany)																		
Luca Lantero (Italy)																		
Irina Geanta (Romania)																		

The Drafting Committee

The Drafting Committee is a task force of the BFUG, entrusted with the task to prepare the draft communique for the upcoming ministerial conference. Drafting Committee is composed by the Co- Chairs of the last three semesters before the Ministerial Conference (Sweden, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Spain, Georgia, Belgium and Holy See) of the actual BFUG Work Plan (2021-2024), the BFUG Vice- Chair (Albania) and one representative of the BFUG consultative members (ESU). The consultative member is suggested by the consultative members and approved by the BFUG. The Drafting Committee agrees on the chairing arrangements during its first meeting. The current Drafting Committee started its work in the first semester of 2023, as the year that precedes the Tirana 2024 Ministerial Conference.

COMPOSITION (2023 - 2024)

Co-Chairs

Albania BFUG Vice-Chair - Linda Pustina

Holy See - Melanie Rosenbaum

ESU Consultative Members representative - Horia Onita

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Albania																		
Belgium Flemish Community																		
Belgium French Community																		
Bosnia and Herzegovina																		
ESU																		
Georgia																		
Holy See																		
Spain																		
Sweden																		

BFUG and Board Meeting Participation

A comprehensive analysis of country participation in the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) Working Structures for the 2021-2024 period has been conducted with the aim of providing an overview of participation metrics for each Working Structure on a country-by-country basis.

The primary objective of this analysis is to ensure transparency in BFUG’s operations and decision-making processes by offering clear and accessible data. This detailed reporting is intended to promote accountability and informed oversight among all stakeholders.

Furthermore, the insights derived from this data are deemed essential for future planning purposes. They can inform the development of subsequent work plans and aid in scheduling future activities of Working Structures. By considering the demonstrated levels of engagement and interests of participating countries, this forward-looking approach aims to optimize the effectiveness of BFUG’s initiatives and foster enhanced collaborative efforts.

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022
Agilis																		
Albania																		
Andorra																		
Armenia																		
Austria																		
Azerbaijan																		
Belarus																		
Belgium Flemish Community																		
Belgium French Community																		

July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023	February 1, 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Working Structure	Total number of meetings	Participation rate	
																									MIBP	8	25%
																									CGGPD	95	58%
																									Drafting Committee		
																									EHEA NNQFC		
																									L&T		
																									MIBP		
																									Social Dimension		
																									TF EKS		
																									TPG A QF		
																									TPG B LRC		
																									TPG C QA		
																									EHEA NNQFC	15	100%
																									San Marino	32	84%
																									TPG A QF		
																									EHEA NNQFC		
																									L&T	86	77%
																									TPG A QF		
																									TPG B LRC		
																									TPG C QA		
																									CGGPD	40	43%
																									EHEA NNQFC		
																									L&T		
																									MIBP		
																									TPG A QF		
																									TPG B LRC		
																									TPG C QA		
																									TPG B LRC	7	14%
																									CGGPD	82	76%
																									Drafting Committee		
																									EHEA NNQFC		
																									L&T		
																									Social Dimension		
																									TF EKS		
																									TF ISB		
																									TPG A QF		
																									TPG B LRC		
																									TPG C QA		
																									CGGPD	47	79%
																									TF ISB		
																									TPG C QA		
																									Drafting Committee		
																									EHEA NNQFC		
																									Social Dimension		

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023
Bosnia and Herzegovina																									
Bulgaria																									
Co-chair of TPG A																									
Co-chair of TPG B																									
Co-chair of TPG C																									
Colin Tück (BFUG Expert)																									
Council of Europe																									
Croatia																									
Cyprus																									
Czech Republic																									
Denmark																									
EACEA																									
EBSI (Guest)																									
EDC																									
EI - ETUCE																									

February 1, 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Working Structure	Total number of meetings	Participation rate
																	Drafting Committee	26	42%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	TPG A QF	29	66%
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																		10	100%
																		9	100%
																		10	100%
																	TFROP	9	89%
																	EHEA NNQFC	49	63%
																	Fundamental Values		
																	San Marino		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	EHEA NNQFC	57	79%
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	65	65%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	L&T		
																	MIBP		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA	29	45%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	MIBP		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC	25	80%
																	TPG C QA		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Social Dimension	8	75%
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	MIBP	7	14%
																	TPG B LRC	7	14%
																	CGGPD	78	64%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	MIBP		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF ISB		

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023
ENQA																									
EQAR																									
Estonia																									
ESU																									
ETUCE																									
EU Commission/ Eurydice																									
EUA																									
EURASHE																									

[illegible]

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023
European Commission																									
EUROSTUDENT																									
Eurydice																									
Experts																									
Finland																									
France																									
Frank Petrowski (Germany)																									
Georgia																									
Germany																									
Greece																									

February 1, 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Working Structure	Total number of meetings	Participation rate
																	EHEA NNQFC	100	80%
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF EKS		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	23	83%
																	TF ISB		
																	MIBP	23	57%
																	Social Dimension		
																	Fundamental Values	12	58%
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA	38	68%
																	TF EKS		
																	TF ISB	71	85%
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	15	47%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values	59	71%
																	L&T		
																	MIBP	88	78%
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF EKS	23	70%
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023
Holy See																									
Hungary																									
Iceland																									
IMINQA project expert In-Global Project																									
Ireland																									
Irina Geanta (Romania)																									
Italy																									
Kazakhstan																									
Kinga Szuly (European Comission)																									
Latvia																									
Liechtenstein																									
Linda Pustina (Albania)																									

February 1, 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Working Structure	Total number of meetings	Participation rate
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	65	72%
																	Drafting Committee		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	San Marino		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA	31	58%
																	L&T		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA	17	71%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	TPG C QA	6	17%
																	TPG C QA	12	92%
																	CGGPD	35	94%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	L&T		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	TFROP	15	73%
																	CGGPD	104	63%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	MIBP		
																	San Marino		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF EKS		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	74	23%
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	MIBP		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	TFROP	15	87%
																	EHEA NNQFC	21	95%
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA	14	50%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	San Marino		
																	TPG C QA	15	33%
																	TFROP		

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023
Lithuania																									
Luca Lantero (Italy)																									
Luxembourg																									
Malta																									
Michael Gaebel (EUA)																									
Michal Karpišek (Czech Republic)																									
Micro-credentials WG Member																									
Moldova																									
Montenegro																									
North Macedonia																									
Norway																									
Nuffic (Guest)																									
Poland																									

February 1, 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Working Structure	Total number of meetings	Participation rate
																	EHEA NNQFC	29	48%
																	Social Dimension		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	TFROP	15	47%
																	EHEA NNQFC	9	56%
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	78	81%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	MIBP		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF EKS		
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	TFROP	15	87%
																	TFROP	15	93%
																	TPG C QA	6	0%
																	EHEA NNQFC	37	24%
																	MIBP		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	69	22%
																	L&T		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF EKS		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	TF ISB	33	21%
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values	45	80%
																	L&T		
																	MIBP		
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	TPG B LRC	7	14%
																	EHEA NNQFC	46	78%
																	Fundamental Values		
																	Social Dimension		

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023
Poland																									
Portugal																									
Romania																									
Russia																									
San Marino																									
Sjur Bergan (BFUG Expert)																									
Slovak Republic																									
Slovenia																									
Spain																									
Sweden																									

February 1, 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Working Structure	Total number of meetings	Participation rate
																	TPG A QF	40	70%
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	EHEA NNQFC	19	11%
																	L&T		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	CGGPD		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	MIBP		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF EKS		
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	MIBP	14	21%
																	TPG C QA		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	L&T		
																	San Marino	39	67%
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	TFROP	14	93%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TPG A QF	36	36%
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	L&T		
																	Social Dimension	35	66%
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD		
																	Drafting Committee		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	L&T		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	Drafting Committee		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values	36	97%
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		

Country	January 2021	February 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	October 2022	November 2022	December 2022	January 2023
Switzerland																									
The Netherlands																									
Turkey																									
Ukraine																									
UNESCO																									
United Kingdom																									
United Kingdom (Scotland)																									
VLUHR-KZ																									

February 1, 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Working Structure	Total number of meetings	Participation rate
																	L&T	37	68%
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	88	64%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	MIBP		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF EKS		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TPG A QF	43	51%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	L&T	25	32%
																	TPG B LRC		
																	TPG C QA		
																	CGGPD	19	84%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	CGGPD	77	48%
																	EHEA NNQFC		
																	Fundamental Values		
																	L&T		
																	MIBP		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TF EKS		
																	TF ISB		
																	TPG B LRC		
																	Fundamental Values	49	14%
																	L&T		
																	Social Dimension		
																	TPG A QF		
																	TPG C QA	6	17%
																	TPG C QA		

Lessons Learned and Recommendations for the Future BFUG Secretariat

Over the course of its 42-month tenure, the Albanian BFUG Secretariat has taken every opportunity to learn and enhance its work processes, efficiency and effectiveness, made possible through the unwavering dedication of its staff and the valuable feedback received from the BFUG and its structures. In light of these experiences, we believe it would be beneficial to offer some recommendations to the incoming BFUG Secretariat for their consideration in their daily operations.

In addition to the recommendations listed below, we are committed to facilitating a seamless transfer of all the archives, information, and documents from the Albanian BFUG Secretariat and are confident that our colleagues will find these resources valuable and utilise them effectively.

The EHEA web site, the gate to all information related to EHEA, BFUG and its work.

- Implement a new EHEA website, as the existing one is outdated and the servers no longer support it. See Annex VIII for a detailed technical report regarding the inadequacy of the current website.
- The domain of the EHEA website is paid for until July 2024 by the current Secretariat. Subsequently, ensure that the new BFUG secretariat allocates funds to cover the domain expenses for the entire 2024-2027 work period.
- Feasibility of working structures and Human Resources at the Secretariat. At the start of each semester, the Secretariat should circulate a message among BFUG members, requesting updates on BFUG representatives and representatives in each BFUG Structure.

Develop a template for the final report of the BFUG Structures, to be approved by the BFUG, which will ensure uniformity in the information provided in the reports, facilitating processes at the end of the work period.

- Allocate a dedicated expert from the Secretariat to each BFUG Working Structure to oversee its progress from inception, ensuring consistency and institutional knowledge retention. This encompasses tasks such as managing correspondence, generating required documents for the working structure, drafting meeting minutes, and keeping the relevant EHEA webpage up-to-date. The appointed experts of the Working Structures should coordinate with one another to identify any instances of meeting schedule conflicts among different structures and promptly notify their respective Co-Chairs. This is particularly crucial when members of Working Structures are involved in overlapping meetings to prevent any inadvertent absences.
- Draft a comprehensive Work Plan at the onset of the working period. This plan must outline responsibilities and tasks while establishing a timeline of activities. Special attention should be given to periods where workloads may intensify, such as during the semester of the Ministerial Conference, and to unexpected developments like the establishment of new working structures or substructures within existing ones. In such cases, the Secretariat, in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the relevant working structures, should determine responsibilities in advance. Additionally, the Work Plan should accommodate any increase in meeting frequency beyond what was initially stipulated in the Terms of Reference of the working structures. This principle applies equally when new tasks are delegated to the Secretariat during the work period by working structures, such as assisting in the creation of newsletters and managing social media platforms.
- Given the ongoing necessity for frequent and timely website updates, it is imperative that a full-time IT expert be employed as an internal Secretariat staff member rather than being contracted externally.

Guidelines on Drafting of the Official Documents

The Secretariat finds it beneficial to provide colleagues with the prescribed format required by the BFUG Co-Chairs for drafting official documents intended for the BFUG, its Board and WGs. Adhering to the outlined format listed below will help ensure consistency and unanimity in document drafting.

- For all meeting documents, particularly draft reports, authors are requested to submit a version in the original format with the pdf conversion handled by the BFUG Secretariat,
- All BFUG/Board documents must have the following, before being converted to pdf: (with the exception of the BPIR, PowerPoint presentations, the draft Communiqué and the GPF statement, and any general information provided by the consultative members, which all maintain their original layout)
 - the BFUG/EHEA, Presidency and Co-Chairing logos added in the header/upper banner;
 - Date, added on the top right (“last modified: ____”);
 - Document name (see below, under 3) added in the footnote on the left;
 - if necessary, page numbers added in the format X/Y pages (x of y pages) in the footnote, on the right.
- Meeting document names are, without exception, to have the customary format of, e.g. Board_BE_VA_87_2b_Draft_annotated_agenda_15_01_2024.pdf, which includes Meeting specification/name, co-chairing indication, item number, abbreviated document reference and date of the document).
- It is highly recommended to refrain from uploading documents on the website that do not conform to these specifications; if in doubt, consult with the BFUG Co-Chairs.

Acknowledgments

The BFUG Secretariat extends its heartfelt thanks, first and foremost, to the BFUG for granting Albania this historic opportunity. Our team is deeply grateful for the privilege of hosting the BFUG Secretariat, a momentous occasion for our country. We are honored to have played a role in this significant function and witnessed and reported on the vital discussions shaping higher education policy within the EHEA. Moreover, we are privileged to have been entrusted with hosting the Ministerial in Tirana in May 2024, further enriching our experience and commitment to education policy development.

Thank you to all BFUG and consultative members, as well as the Co-Chairs of Working Groups and other working structures, for their cooperation, and invaluable feedback. We are truly thankful for the trust you placed in us and deeply appreciate your high evaluation of our work.

Likewise, we would like to express our gratitude to the European Commission for their invaluable trust and financial support, as well as their cooperation throughout this significant endeavor. Their steadfast support has been instrumental in our journey toward realising the profound impact of this project.

We wish to convey our great appreciation to the Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports for its consistent administrative, financial, and operational support.

A special thank you goes to the EHEA page hosting company, MCN, and its expert Marti Belegu, for their continuous support and expertise.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the two former Heads of the Secretariat, Ms. Enida Bezhani, for her significant contributions in establishing the BFUG Secretariat and Oltion Rrumbullaku, for his efforts in sustaining the ongoing process before the appointment of the current and permanent Head, Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi, whose leadership has seen the BFUG Secretariat flourish and advance.

Last but not least, we would like to highlight our gratitude to one another. Throughout our collaboration as members of the BFUG Secretariat, we have maintained a harmonious, balanced, and professional atmosphere, navigating challenges with grace and efficiency. Our teamwork has been characterised by seamless coordination and mutual respect, devoid of conflicts or disagreements. We are proud of our collective dedication to upholding the highest standards of professionalism.

Our best wishes for great success to the incoming BFUG Secretariat in Romania and Moldova. It is with confidence that we pass the baton to them, trusting in their ability to fulfil the duties required to advance the objectives of the BFUG and the higher education sector in the EHEA.

List of Annexes

ANNEX I - BFUG Rules and Procedures 2021-2024, approved at the BFUG meeting in Portugal in 2021

ANNEX II - Bylaws for the Establishment of the BFUG Secretariat 2021-2024 hosted by Albania

ANNEX III – The Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the BFUG Secretariat hosted by Albania

ANNEX IV – The Terms of Reference for the 2021-2024 BFUG working structures

ANNEX V - EHEA Website Report prepared by the BFUG Secretariat

ANNEX VI – Communique Content Review Report prepared by the BFUG Secretariat

ANNEX VII - Report from MCN - the EHEA webpage hosting company regarding the problematics of the webpage

ANNEX VIII - Detailed bios of the BFUG Secretariat staff members



RULES OF PROCEDURE 2021-2024¹

BOLOGNA FOLLOW UP GROUP (BFUG)

Document drafted 24.10.2022

This document outlines how the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) will operate for the 2021-2024 period, in terms of governance, structure, meeting management and communication. The provisions set out in this document are to be considered as guidelines for the BFUG Rules of Procedure and its sub-structures (the Board, Working Groups, Coordination Group, Task Forces, other *ad hoc* groups and BFUG Secretariat).

With regard to prior periods, Annexes to this document provide a historical overview of the BFUG proceedings, since its establishment, for reference, as well as information purpose.

Contents

I. The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG).....	2
a. Role.....	2
b. BFUG Membership: the current three categories.....	3
c. Chairmanship: BFUG Co-chairs and BFUG Vice-chair	4
d. BFUG Board	6
Role and composition	6
Functioning of the BFUG Board meetings	6
e. BFUG Secretariat	6
f. Functioning of the BFUG meetings.....	7
II. Ministerial Conferences	8
a. Drafting Committee.....	9
b. Selection of the next BFUG Secretariat and the Ministerial Conference host country	9
III. EHEA Communication: EHEA Website and Backoffice.....	9
IV. COVID-19	10

¹ BFUG Working period was decided at the LXXI BFUG meeting in [Split](#) on 25 June 2020 (online)



I. The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG)

a. Role

The BFUG is the executive structure overseeing the Bologna Process. It has been in place since autumn 1999. The BFUG is entrusted with preparing the Ministerial Conferences, policy forums and with overseeing the Bologna Process between these, including taking forward matters that do not need to be decided by the Ministers or that have been delegated by the Ministers. The BFUG meetings play an important role in overseeing the implementation of the Ministerial Communiqués, as well as in developing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The BFUG has the possibility to set up various types of groups, related to the decisions taken by the EHEA Ministers, normally through the Ministerial Communiqués, in order to deal with specific topics in more detail. It may also decide to establish task forces, ad-hoc groups or other sub-structures to fulfil its tasks and reach the goals set out in the Ministerial Communiqués.

The BFUG members are invited to express their interest in participating in one or more BFUG groups or any other sub-structures, by submitting an Expression of Interest. A Call for Expression of Interest is opened by the BFUG Secretariat. All BFUG groups foresee the participation of the BFUG members and consultative members. The groups can invite international experts on specific topics, if necessary. The groups should be organized in compliance with their Terms of Reference (ToR) adopted by the BFUG and related to the decisions taken by the EHEA Ministers in the Ministerial Conference preceding the mentioned BFUG working period. They should be of a reasonable size and reflect the diversity of EHEA, both in the co-chairing positions and membership.

The 2021-2024 BFUG Work Plan is structured on the basis of the 2020 Rome Communiqué (for more details, see Annex I). The BFUG decides on the ToR of the different BFUG sub-structures, and it decides which of their recommendations are to be proposed to the EHEA Ministers for the 2024 Ministerial Conference. The BFUG provides an opportunity for all members and consultative members to express their views on the recommendations and reports.

According to the mandate by the EHEA Ministers in Paris in 2018, the BFUG has set up the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) in order to implement, coordinate and monitor the three Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs), possibly organized in sub-groups, focused on the three key commitments of the EHEA (for more details, see Annex I (i)). As mentioned on the 2020 Rome Communiqué the work of the BICG and the TPGs should continue also in the 2021-2024 work period.



EHEA Bologna Process cannot be seen as an isolated process, with no effect as well as cooperation with other parts of the world. In 2018 Paris Communiqué, the EHEA Ministers delegated to the Coordination Group (CG1) the task of working towards the Global Policy Forum, which has until now been organized back-to-back with the Ministerial Conference and which is intended to be a connecting bridge and ensure cooperation of EHEA in a global context. This mandate was strengthened in the 2020 Rome Communiqué, and the work of CG1 should continue also for the 2021-2024 period. As previously, one of the Co-chairs of the CG1 on Global Policy Dialogue (GPD) in principle should be the country hosting the Ministerial Conference, currently Albania, for the 2021-2024 BFUG Work Period.

b. BFUG Membership: the current three categories

BFUG membership is based on the membership of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The EHEA currently has three categories:

- **EHEA/BFUG Members** are the 49 countries and the European Commission (listed in Annex III). To become a member of the EHEA, countries have to be party to the European Cultural Convention and to declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Annex IV details the updated procedures to become an EHEA member. Only country members and the European Commission have the right to vote within the BFUG and to approve and adopt the final documents.
- **Consultative Members** are relevant stakeholder organizations and other institutions that have a European scope to their work in higher education policy and are instrumental in the development and implementation of the Bologna Process. The current eight EHEA consultative members are: Council of Europe (CoE), UNESCO, European University Association (EUA), European Association of Institutions of Higher Education (EURASHE), European Students' Union (ESU), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Education International (EI) and BUSINESS EUROPE. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) was founded in 2008 from an initiative of the Bologna Process. EQAR has a similar status to the consultative members (non-voting member of BFUG).
- **Partners** are organizations that wish to be associated with the Bologna Process/ the BFUG but are not included in the Consultative member category. At present, the following five organizations are partners: the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de



Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), the European Association for International Education (EAIE), the Council of European professional and managerial staff (Eurocadres), Eurodoc, the European Association for Promotion of Science and Technology (Euroscience). They can, upon approval of prior request in writing to the BFUG Co-chairs, attend BFUG meetings and events and may be invited, upon approval of a written request, by a BFUG group to send an expert in the status of observer, who will participate in some part of the work. During BFUG meetings where they are invited, they can express their comments only relating to identified topics and after other Members and Consultative Members have spoken².

Further technical experts, such as Eurostat, Eurostudent or Eurydice, may be associated to the BFUG and invited to events upon specific request.

For any new application from countries wishing to join the EHEA, an ad hoc BFUG group should be established, to guide the country in the entire admission process, as well as recommend its findings to the BFUG. The group should be composed by the BFUG troika of the specific BFUG work period in which the application is received, the Vice chair, as well as other members including BFUG Secretariat, CoE and two other BFUG members. Since 2015, new countries³ have been admitted with a roadmap, followed up in the first period after their admission to the EHEA by a Roadmap group for the country in question.

c. Chairmanship: BFUG Co-chairs and BFUG Vice-chair

The current chairing arrangements foresee that the Bologna Process will be co-chaired by the country holding the EU presidency and a non-EU member country (see the document in Annex V) designated by the English alphabetical order⁴ and the Vice-chair from the host country of the next Ministerial Conference (referred as Chairs in the document). The following chairing arrangement is due to be applied in the period 2021-2025:

² As discussed at the LXVII BFUG meeting in [Helsinki](#) on 12-13 November 2019.

³ So far, Belarus (2015) and San Marino (2020).

⁴ It was, however, agreed by the BFUG at its Berlin meeting in September 2020 that since Albania will be Vice Chair in the 2021 – 24 work program, it would only take its place as Co-Chair in the following work program.



Semester	Co-chair from EU-Presidency	Co-chair from non-EU country	Vice-chair
1 January – 30 June 2021	Portugal	Andorra	Albania
1 July – 31 December 2021	Slovenia	Armenia	
1 January – 30 June 2022	France	Azerbaijan	
1 July – 31 December 2022	Czech Republic	Kazakhstan ⁵	
1 January – 30 June 2023	Sweden	Bosnia & Herzegovina	
1 July – 31 December 2023	Spain	Georgia	
1 January – 30 June 2024	Belgium	Holy See	Country hosting the next Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat
1 July – 31 December 2024	Hungary	Iceland	
1 January – 30 June 2025	Poland	Albania	

Each co-chairing country is responsible for appointing one person who will be in charge of fulfilling the tasks of the chairmanship for the mentioned semester. The Co-chairs, in close cooperation with the Vice-chair and supported by the BFUG Secretariat, chair the BFUG and the BFUG Board. In the decision-making process, the Chairs assume the responsibility for leading the way towards compromise in order to move the Bologna Process forward. The Vice-chair, in close cooperation with the BFUG Secretariat, ensures continuity between the rotating chairmanships. Both the Co-chairs and the Vice-chair can speak representing their country, but in that case need to announce explicitly that their intervention reflects their country's position and that they are not speaking as chair at that specific moment. The Co-chairs and the Vice-chair, although they can also represent their country, must exercise their chairing tasks with the necessary neutrality. The Vice-chair is responsible in particular for the host country's preparations for the Ministerial Conference and the Global Policy Forum.

⁵ This was resolved by decision of the BFUG at its meeting on December 1 – 2, 2021.



d. BFUG Board

Role and composition

The BFUG Board is an advisory committee established in order to support the BFUG in its activities and to provide efficiency in the management of the EHEA, at the same time assuring its continuity. As such, the responsibilities of the Board consist of coordinating and monitoring the effective implementation of the work programme. The responsibilities of the Board were defined by the BFUG during its meeting in Rome in 2003 and they remain exactly the same (see Annex VII).

The members of the Board are:

- the BFUG Co-chairs double Troika (the outgoing, present and incoming Co-chairs of the BFUG)
- the BFUG Vice-chair;
- the European Commission;
- Council of Europe, EUA, ESU, EURASHE;
- one of the Co-chairs of each of the BFUG -groups of the respective period (Working Groups, Coordination Group, Task Forces, BICG)

Functioning of the BFUG Board meetings

The Board usually meets at least one month (preferably six weeks) before each BFUG meeting. The host of the Board is normally one of the EHEA Co-chairs. The minutes of the Board meetings are taken by the BFUG Secretariat.

Before each Board meeting, the Chairs and the Secretariat will hold a preparatory meeting in order to finalize organizational aspects, to check all the documents, to divide competences and tasks, and to check the agenda of the upcoming Board meeting.

e. BFUG Secretariat

The Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat (BFUG Secretariat) provides neutral, administrative and operational support to the BFUG, the BFUG Board, Chairs, BFUG groups and other established sub-structures (task forces, *ad hoc* groups, etc.). It acts as an external and internal contact point for the EHEA, and also presents the BFUG in a variety of settings in agreement with the Chairs; it supports the preparation of the EHEA Ministerial Conference and the Bologna Global Policy Forum and maintains the EHEA website (<http://www.ehea.info>) with regular updates.



The Terms of Reference related to the Albanian BFUG Secretariat (Annex II) outline more specifically the tasks of the BFUG Secretariat for the 2021-2024 period.

The tasks of the BFUG Secretariat were first defined by the BFUG during its meeting in Rome in November 2003 (see Annex VII).

f. Functioning of the BFUG meetings

BFUG meetings are in principle hosted by one of the EHEA Co-chairs and are usually convened at least once every six months. The working language of the BFUG is English (see Annex VI for more details).

All BFUG members should attend each BFUG meeting. Each EHEA member or consultative member has the authority to designate its BFUG representatives. Each EHEA member or consultative member usually sends a maximum of 2 representatives to the BFUG meetings. In the cases when members and consultative members have more than one representative designated in the BFUG, they communicate to the BFUG Secretariat which is the Head of Delegation (the countries with a federal system may have maximum 2 Heads of Delegation). On every agenda point, each BFUG delegation is invited to express the position of its country, institution or organization with respect to the matter in question. The BFUG Co-Chairs, in consultation with the Board, have the authority to invite experts/individuals to contribute to BFUG meetings under specific points for which they have the required expertise. BFUG representatives have the duty to notify the BFUG Secretariat about any changes on the respective BFUG representation and update the country's contact details and information as required.

The BFUG Co-chairs, supported by the BFUG Secretariat, lead the discussions on all points of the agenda, as well as declare the meeting open or closed. The decision-making procedure within the BFUG is based on a consensual understanding that the Co-chairs of the BFUG summarize the discussions and decisions at the end of each agenda point. When Co-Chairs speak and act in their capacity as BFUG delegates, they must make clear that their intervention reflects their country's position.

While the BFUG seeks primarily to reach decisions by consensus, in exceptional circumstances, procedural issues, the BFUG chairs may decide to take a decision through vote. Its voting rules foresee two votes per BFUG Member delegation only, to take account of the fact that some countries have a federal system. The BFUG representative responsible to cast the vote/votes is the Head of Delegation or another member of delegation appointed by the Head of Delegation. Voting procedures and arrangements are coordinated by the BFUG Secretariat, according to its neutral role.

A quorum for vote is minimum of half of the members being present. The proposal is adopted two-thirds of



members present vote in its favor. Voting may be in person, online or via an electronic procedure. Normally the voting is an open ballot, but a secret ballot shall be organized if at least one delegation requests it.

As a general rule, the BFUG meeting documents should be circulated by the BFUG Secretariat **15 days** prior to the meeting, after being discussed in the BFUG Board once prepared by the Chairs of the BFUG and by the BFUG Working Groups or other sub-structures. During the discussions in the BFUG, a delegation/organization can propose changes, however, delegations wishing to propose major changes to a document should be encouraged to submit those at least **5 days** prior to the meeting.

The BFUG Secretariat is in charge of drafting the minutes of the meetings of the BFUG/WG/BICG/TPGs/CG/Board. All the BFUG/WG/BICG/TPGs/CG/Board meetings should be recorded for future reference. The draft minutes are agreed with the respective Chairs and are then circulated to the members (BFUG/WG/Board) within **15 days** after the meeting for feedback. The members have the possibility within **15 days** to send amendments to the minutes, which will be taken into consideration by the BFUG Secretariat in the process of finalizing the minutes. Minutes of the meetings of the BFUG and its established sub-structures (BFUG/AG/WG/BICG/TPGs/CG/Task Forces/ad-hoc groups/Board) should generally be adopted by electronic consultation after each meeting: only if there should be too many diverging comments, the adoption will be postponed until the next meeting of the BFUG. The same procedure is applied also for other documents produced that need to be approved by the BFUG in case there are too many diverging comments.

The BFUG can make decisions by electronic consultation, that ought to be presented and recorded in the next BFUG meeting accordingly.

Before each BFUG meeting, the Chairs and the Secretariat will hold a preparatory meeting in order to finalize organizational aspects, to check all the documents, to divide competences and tasks, and to check the agenda of the upcoming BFUG meeting. An additional meeting should be held after the BFUG meeting to summarize the decisions taken and plan future tasks.

II. Ministerial Conferences

The country hosting the upcoming Ministerial Conference acts as Vice-chair of the Bologna Process/European Higher Education Area. As agreed by the Ministers in the [Berlin Communiqué \(2003\)](#), the country organizing the upcoming Ministerial Conference also hosts the BFUG Secretariat between two consecutive ministerial meetings. This applies to the governing period 2021-2024 in which Albania hosts the BFUG Secretariat. Within the governing period 2021-2024, the Ministerial Conference, hosted by Albania, will take place at the end of the first semester 2024.



In connection with the Ministerial Conference, since 2009, a Bologna Policy Forum (BPF) has been organized⁶, including countries and regional higher education organizations from around the world. Ministers decide at Ministerial Conferences about the central aspects of the EHEA, including its further developments and commitments by its member countries. The Ministerial Conference also decides on new applications for membership to the EHEA as well as any other main changes to the process. A Communiqué is adopted at each Ministerial Conference that outlines decisions taken by the Ministers. The Ministerial Conferences are prepared by the BFUG.

a. Drafting Committee

Drafting committee is a task force of the BFUG, entrusted with the task to prepare the draft communique for the upcoming ministerial conference. Drafting Committee is composed by the Co-Chairs of the last three semesters before the Ministerial Conference (Sweden, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Spain, Georgia, Belgium and Holy See) of the actual BFUG Work Plan, the Vice Chair and one consultative member. The consultative member is suggested by the consultative members and approved by the BFUG. The drafting committee agrees on the chairing arrangements during its first meeting. The current Drafting Committee is foreseen to start its work on first semester of 2023, as the year that precedes the Ministerial Conference. Drafting Committee meets every time after the Board and BFUG meeting, as well as in other times of necessity, as accordingly decided beforehand. Drafting Committee prepares a roadmap of its work, which is forwarded to the BFUG for its approval.

b. Selection of the next BFUG Secretariat and the Ministerial Conference host country

During the year 2023, the host for the next BFUG Secretariat and the Ministerial Conference will be selected. The BFUG will advise Ministers on the selection of the next Ministerial conference. The procedure for the Selection of the next BFUG Secretariat and the Ministerial Conference host can be found in Annex VIII. Each member country of the EHEA can apply to host the Ministerial Conference and is expected to provide the necessary logistical and financial support to ensure the successful organization of such an event.

III. EHEA Communication: EHEA Website and Backoffice

As part of the EHEA communication efforts, with the launch of the European Higher Education Area, a EHEA website www.ehea.info was established. The website will be further developed and updated

⁶ From 2009 to 2018 it was called Bologna Policy Forum. On the Rome Communiqué 2020 it was stated that the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to hold the Global Policy Forum and Albania will host the next Global Policy Forum in 2024.



by the BFUG Secretariat with support from the BFUG and its sub-structures.

As a general rule, all relevant documents that are not explicitly excluded will be published on the website. Documents distributed for BFUG meetings will be published on the website at least 10 days in advance of the meetings unless the Co-Chairs have decided otherwise.

The country pages of each BFUG member will be edited by the BFUG Secretariat under the responsibility of the member. The pages concerning BFUG Working Groups and other sub-structures will be edited by the BFUG Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Co-chairs of the sub-structures concerned.

For the internal use of the BFUG members or that of WGs/AGs and other sub-structures, the Secretariat had created a password for a protected website area, generically called “the Backoffice”. This area allowed for document storage and exchange, registration for events, setting up the calendar. In September 2016, a new website was launched which offers public access to the full archive with exception of those documents which it has been decided to keep confidential. The Albanian BFUG Secretariat, will continue its work using the web site used by the Italian BFUG Secretariat and its platforms.

The EHEA website contains an open calendar of events, organized by the BFUG Working structures, and any other sub-structures as well as by the EHEA member countries and organizations. The EHEA website should be passed from one Secretariat to another with all the technical backgrounds in order to guarantee the transition between two Secretariats. For an external event to be published on the official EHEA website, it must be strictly related to the Bologna Process and should be organized and supported by one of the countries or organizations participating in the Bologna Process. Moreover, the event should in principle be open to participants from all Bologna countries and should be in line with the priorities of the BFUG work plan. Relevant invitations, presentations, reports and conclusions from BFUG members and consultative members can be published on the website and forwarded to the BFUG. In principle, this service could also consider similar requests from other parties.

For an event to be published on the EHEA website, the organizers have to fill in a template provided by the BFUG Secretariat (Annex IX). The final decision on whether or not an event is considered a part of the BFUG events is taken by the Co-chairs in consultation with the BFUG Secretariat.

IV. COVID-19



The global pandemic situation of COVID-19 and its aftermath has affected deeply the normal meeting method of BFUG and its working groups, which, until the pandemics breakout, were all carried out in presence.

The need to maintain normality as much as possible, foresaw a swift move to online meetings, which were carried out with the help of different online meeting platforms. However, it should be emphasized that online meetings should absolutely not replace the meetings in presence. All BFUG and Board meetings should be organized as in presence meetings, and where not possible, due to force majeure (i.e. COVID-19), the organizers should prepare the online or hybrid meeting, using the relevant platform, in concordance with the BFUG Secretariat. BFUG Members attend the meeting with maximum two members for each delegation.



BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP (BFUG) RULES OF PROCEDURE 2021-2024 - ANNEXES

List of Annexes:

ANNEX I: BFUG Work Plan 2021-2024

- (i) BICG – Bologna Implementation Coordination Group
- (ii) Working Groups on:
 - (ii.a) WG 1: On Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process
 - (ii.c) WG 2: On Fundamental Values
 - (ii.d) WG 3: On Social Dimension
 - (ii.e) WG 4: On Learning and Teaching
- (iii) Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue (GPD)
- (iv) EHEA Network of National QF correspondents
- (v) Working Group to Support the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's Accession to the EHEA ("San Marino Roadmap WG")
- (vi) Task Forces
 - (vi.a) Ad Hoc Task Force to Increase Synergies Between the European Higher Education Area, the Higher Education Dimension of the European Education Area and the European Research Area
 - (vi.b) Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community

ANNEX II: Role of the Bologna Secretariat: Terms of Reference 2021-2024

ANNEX III: List of BFUG members, consultative members and partners as of 1 January 2021

ANNEX IV: Requirements and Procedures for Joining the European Higher Education Area

ANNEX V: BFUG Co-chairing and Vice-chairing arrangements

ANNEX VI: Language Regime for EHEA Ministerial Conferences

ANNEX VII: Responsibilities of the Board – Tasks of the Secretariat

ANNEX VIII: Procedure for the Selection of post 2020 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat Host

ANNEX IX: Template for events to be published on the EHEA

ANNEX X: Historical Overview - Information on the former BFUG Proceedings



ALBANIAN SECRETARIAT OF THE BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP
FREE TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH

DECISION
No. 1163, date 24.12.2020

FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE
ACTIVITY OF MAINTAINING THE SECRETARIAT OF "BOLOGNA FOLLOW UP GROUP"
FROM THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

In support of Article 100 of the Constitution and Law no. 90/2012, "On the organization and functioning of the state administration", with the proposal of the Minister of Education, Sports and Youth, the Council of Ministers

DECIDED:

1. The establishment of the secretariat within the activity of maintaining the secretariat of the "Bologna Follow Up Group" from the Republic of Albania (hereinafter, the Secretariat), depending on the minister responsible for education.
2. The Secretariat will function for the period from 1.1.2021 to 31.12.2024.
3. The Ministry responsible for education provides the necessary facilities and equipment for the exercise of activity for the functioning of the Secretariat.
4. The primary purpose of the activity of the Secretariat is to provide neutral support for the further consolidation of the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter, EHEA) under the authority of the "Bologna Follow Up Group" (hereinafter, BFUG) and to coordinate the actions undertaken at an international level with the work plan of the BFUG and the activity of the support work group of the BFUG Secretariat during the period of the Secretariat being held by the Republic of Albania.
5. The objectives of the Secretariat are as follows:
 - a) provide administrative and operational support for the BFUG and its board, including planning meetings and keeping relevant minutes;
 - b) provide assistance to the BFUG and its board in the follow-up work for the period 1.1.2021 to 31.12.2024, including the planning of activities and implementation of the decisions of the BFUG;
 - c) provide support to all working groups, advisory groups and other structures and, upon request, prepare project reports;
 - d) perform special tasks related to the implementation of the work program of EHEA;
 - e) review and update the website of EHEA www.ehea.info and its archives;
 - f) function as an external and internal point of contact for EHEA;
 - g) distribution of important announcements to BFUG members and stakeholders;
 - h) ensure representation in external meetings at the request of the organizers;

f) provide support to the BFUG board to establish cooperation with the European Research Area (hereafter, ERA);

g) preparation of the Ministerial Conference in Albania 2024 and the Bologna Policy Forum under the supervision of the BFUG;

h) perform any other necessary activity, ascribed by the BFUG.

6. The Secretariat is managed by the chairman, who organizes and directs all the activities of the Secretariat. The chairman is assisted in his work by an assistant.

7. The Secretariat will consist of full-time staff, experts, and part-time staff, experts, who are very well versed in the field of higher education, as follows:

- a) 1 (one) full-time expert and 3 (three) part-time external experts, in the field of project management and implementation, who engage in the development of various activities and meetings of the BFUG, the BFUG board, BFUG working groups and advisory groups, as well as in the organization of the EHEA Ministerial Conference in 2024;
- b) 1 (one) full-time expert in the field of media and communication, who will support the implementation of the strategy and social media instruments, and 1 (one) part-time external expert in the field of maintenance of the existing website www.ehea.info and its updating by the support working group of the BFUG Secretariat;
- c) 2 (two) full-time high-level technical experts and 3 (three) part-time external experts for making strategic decisions and instructions to implement all activities of the Secretariat;
- d) 2 (two) full-time experts and 3 (three) part-time external experts, who will help in drafting and preparing supporting documents for the BFUG, managing technical and institutional processes, analyzing data and providing recommendations and assistance in working group meetings.

8. External experts, local or foreign, will be contracted according to the relevant field, to give their contribution, whenever it is considered necessitous, in order to coordinate the work.

9. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the co-chairs and vice-chair of the BFUG, performs the following tasks:

- a) drafts the agendas of BFUG meetings;
- b) drafts the content of documents for discussion;
- c) drafts relevant documents for BFUG and its board, working groups and board committee meetings;
- d) draws up the minutes of the meetings of the BFUG and the board, to clarify the speech of the co-chairs;
- e) sends the minutes for comments and approval to the subsequent meetings of the BFUG and the board;
- f) helps working groups and advisory groups to fulfill their tasks;
- g) supports the implementation of the work program approved by the BFUG;
- h) participates in seminars that take place within the Bologna process and other meetings, when necessary;

- i) reviews and updates the EHEA website, ensuring that information is made available at all times to the BFUG and the public;
- j) guarantees an ad hoc communication system, using updated technological tools and proposes a new website page, in order to offer a more efficient service;
- k) performs other specific tasks, as agreed by the mentioned substructures in the BFUG.

10. The rules of procedure on the organization and internal functioning of the Secretariat are approved by the Minister responsible for education, with the proposition of the Head of the Secretariat.

11. The Head and staff of the Secretariat are appointed and discharged by the Minister responsible for education, in accordance with the provisions of the Labor Code, through calls for expressions of interest.

12. The salary scale of the Head and the staff of the Secretariat should be in accordance with the salaries of the staff in public institutions of higher education, determined by decision no. 748, dated 11.6.2009, from the Council of Ministers, "On the salary and salary supplements of academic personnel in public institutions of higher education", amended as follows:

- a) The Head of the Secretariat, the salary equivalent of the academic personnel with the title of "Rector";
- b) Senior-level and/or foreign experts, employed full-time and/or part-time, the salary equivalent of academic personnel of the "Professor" category;
- c) Experts employed full-time, the salary equivalent of academic personnel who hold the scientific title of "Doctor";
- d) Experts employed part-time, the salary equivalent of academic personnel with the title of "Lecturer/researcher".

The salary scale of the Assistant to the Head of the Secretariat is the equivalent of the salary of the Secretary of the Rector, as determined in decision no. 717, dated 23.6.2009, of the Council of Ministers, "On the salaries of aide employees in budgetary institutions", amended.

13. The financial effects resulting from the implementation of this verdict are covered by the grant from the European Commission, the budget of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and other income from similar funding.

14. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth is in charge of the implementation of this decision.

This decision comes into effect after its publication in the Official Registry.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Erion Braçe

DECISION
No. 526, dated 7.9.2023

**FOR SOME ADDITIONS AND CHANGES IN DECISION NO. 1163, DATE 24.12.2020, OF
 THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, "FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SECRETARIAT IN
 THE FRAMEWORK OF HOLDING OF SECRETARIAT OF “BOLOGNA FOLLOW UP
 GROUP” FROM THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA"**

In support of Article 100 of the Constitution and of law no. 90/2012, "On the organization and the functioning of the public administration", with the proposal of the Minister of Education and Sports, Council of Ministers

DECIDED:

1. In decision no. 1163, dated 24.12.2020, of the Council of Ministers, the additions and changes are made:

a) Point 4 is amended as follows:

"4. The primary purpose of the “*Bologna Follow Up Group*” Vice-Chair and the “*Bologna Follow Up Group*” Secretariat (hereinafter "BFUG") is the performance of all functions and obligations that arise in application of the Rules and Procedures of the BFUG.

Their duties are exercised according to the duration, as per below follows:

1. The BFUG Vice-Chair, the Head and the deputy Head of the BFUG Secretariat until the fulfillment of the obligations regarding the transfer of the office of the Vice-Chair and the future BFUG Secretariat and representation in subsequent meetings as outgoing BFUG Vice-Chair and Head/deputy Head of the outgoing BFUG secretariat, until 31 December 2024;
2. Employees of the BFUG Secretariat until July 31, 2024, with the fulfillment of obligations for the transfer of duties to the future BFUG secretariat.

The BFUG Vice-Chair is assisted by the work group, established by order of the Prime Minister, for support of his/her activities and for coordination of activities to be organized until the end of the retention period of this position from the Republic of Albania, as well as coordination of work for the organization of Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Dialogue in May 2024. Composition and the tasks of the working group are defined in the order of the Prime Minister, according to the request of the BFUG Vice-Chair and based on the proposal forwarded by the minister responsible for education."

b) Point 5 is repealed.

c) Point 7 is amended as follows:

"7. The secretariat is headed by its Head and consists of personnel employed on a full time and part time basis, as follows:

- a) A high-level expert in the position of to the Head of the BFUG Secretariat, engaged full-time or part-time, who organizes and directs all the activities of the Secretariat;
- b) A high-level expert in the position of the Deputy Head of the BFUG Secretariat, engaged full-time or part-time, who assists the Head of the Secretariat in carrying out his duties;
- c) High-level experts, engaged in full time or part time positions of the BFUG secretariat, for a total monthly commitment of all experts who are employed, up to 968 (nine hundred sixty eight) working hours/month;
- ç) Experts engaged full-time or part-time in the position of the member of the BFUG secretariat for a monthly commitment in total of all experts who are hired, up to 1144 (one thousand one hundred and forty four) working hours/month.

Secretariat staff must have excellent knowledge in the field of higher education and the Bologna Process.

The structure of the Secretariat, full or part time positions, as well as contractual obligations for the staff of the Secretariat are approved by the minister responsible for education on the basis of the proposal of the Head of the BFUG Secretariat. Secretariat staff is appointed and dismissed by the minister responsible for education or by any delegated person by him for this purpose, in accordance with the provisions of the Labor Code, through calls for expression of interest."

ç) Point 12 is amended as follows:

"12. The level of remuneration for the work performed from the BFUG Vice-Chair, the staff of BFUG secretariat, ministry of education personnel or other governmental institutions, which provide over-time support from the normal working hours and for the members of the work group, determined according to this decision, is, as below follows:

a) For the BFUG Vice-Chair and employees of the BFUG secretariat, remuneration is referred to the level of staff salaries in public higher education institutions, determined by decision no. 748, dated 11.6.2009, of the Council of Ministers, "For treatment with salary and salary allowances of academic personnel employees of public higher education institutions ", amended as follows:

1. The BFUG Vice -chair, the Head and the Deputy Head of the Secretariat at the salary of the academic staff "Rector";
2. High-level experts and/or foreigners/from the Albanian diaspora, employed full or part time, referred to the salary of academic personnel of the "Professor" category;
3. Experts employed full-time or part-time, referred to the salary of academic staff holding the "Doctor" scientific degree.

b) The staff of the ministry responsible for education or other state institutions, which offers support, outside normal working hours, in the fulfillment of the obligations of the Albanian BFUG Secretariat as far as financial and legal issues are concerned or the management of the EU grant for BFUG secretariat, practices related to missions for the secretariat, in the framework of the fulfillment of their respective obligations, website maintenance www.ehea.info or other services that will be carried out in function of the activity of the secretariat, according to the requests that will be forwarded by the Head/Deputy Head, will be considered as part-time expert, within the total of hours defined in the letters "c" and "ç", of point 7 of this decision;

1. members of the working group, defined in point 4 of this decision, are rewarded in the amount of 25,000 (twenty-five thousand) ALL per month."

d) After point 12, point 12/1 is added, with this content:

"12/1. The BFUG Vice -Chair, the secretariat, the working group that assists it and the ministry responsible for education are charged to take all necessary measures to ensure the organization of the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Dialogue in May 2024 and all the activities that will be foreseen until this event, as well as to cooperate for the organization of cultural and promotional programs within these activities with the ministries responsible for tourism and culture."

2. The Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Tourism and Environment and Ministry of Culture are in charge for the implementation of this decision.

This decision enters into force after its publication in the Official Journal.

Prime Minister



Role of the Bologna Secretariat: Terms of Reference (ToR) 2021-2024

Last modified: 20.04.2021

1. BACKGROUND

When the BFUG Secretariat was first established following the Berlin meeting of Ministers responsible for higher education, the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) agreed, after discussion, upon its role and functions. These proposals for a BFUG Secretariat were accepted by the [BFUG Meeting in Rome in November 2003](#) (for further information see Annex VII).

2. PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

For the period 1st of January 2021 until 30th of June 2024 the role and functions of the BFUG Secretariat will continue along the same lines, as agreed previously at the BFUG meetings: The BFUG Secretariat will provide neutral support to further the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area under the authority of the BFUG.

More specifically, the functions include:

- providing administrative and operational support for the BFUG and its Board - including planning meetings and taking minutes;
- assisting the BFUG and its Board in the follow-up work for the period January 2021 to June 2024 – including planning of activities and following up on the BFUG decisions;
- supporting all BFUG Groups (AG, WG, CG, BICG, TPGs) and other structures, and in agreement with the Co-Chairs, taking minutes and preparing the draft reports;
- carrying out any special tasks concerning the implementation of the work programme of the European Higher Education Area;
- reviewing and updating the European Higher Education Area website and archives;
- acting as an external and internal contact point for the European Higher Education Area;
- sharing important messages with members and stakeholders;
- providing representation at external events upon request of the organisers;
- supporting the BFUG Board to establish interaction with the European Research Area (ERA);



- preparing the Ministerial Conference in Albania (Spring Semester 2024) and the Bologna Policy Forum under the supervision of the BFUG and close cooperation with BFUG Vice-chair.

3. METHOD OF OPERATION

In conjunction with the Co-chairs and vice-chair, the Secretariat:

- drafts agendas for the BFUG meetings;
- drafts background discussion documents (liaising with relevant authors as appropriate);
- drafts relevant papers for the BFUG and its Board, Working Groups and other structures;
- drafts minutes of the BFUG/Board meetings for clearance by the Chairs;
- sends these minutes for comments and subsequent adoption by the BFUG/Board at the next meeting;
- provides assistance and support for each Working Group and any other structure

The BFUG Secretariat carries out these tasks also in respect of Working Groups, the BICG, the TPGs, task forces, ad hoc groups, and similar bodies, in agreement with the respective Co-chairs.

The BFUG Secretariat supports the implementation of the Work Plan adopted by the BFUG. To this end, the Secretariat should attend Bologna seminars and other events, where and as appropriate.

The BFUG Secretariat reviews and updates the European Higher Education Area website ensuring that up- to-date information is made available at all times for the BFUG and the public at large. It will develop an ad-hoc communication system, using up-to-date digital tools.

The BFUG Secretariat organises the Ministerial Conference and Bologna Policy Forum in Albania in 2024.



4. Contact details:

Sekretariati i BFUG / BFUG Secretariat

Head of the BFUG Secretariat:

Enida Bezhani

secretariat@eha.info

Rruga: Naim Frashëri, Nr. 37,

Tiranë, Shqipëri,

1000





Last modified: 20.04.2021

ANNEX I: Bologna Follow Up Group Work Plan 2021-2024

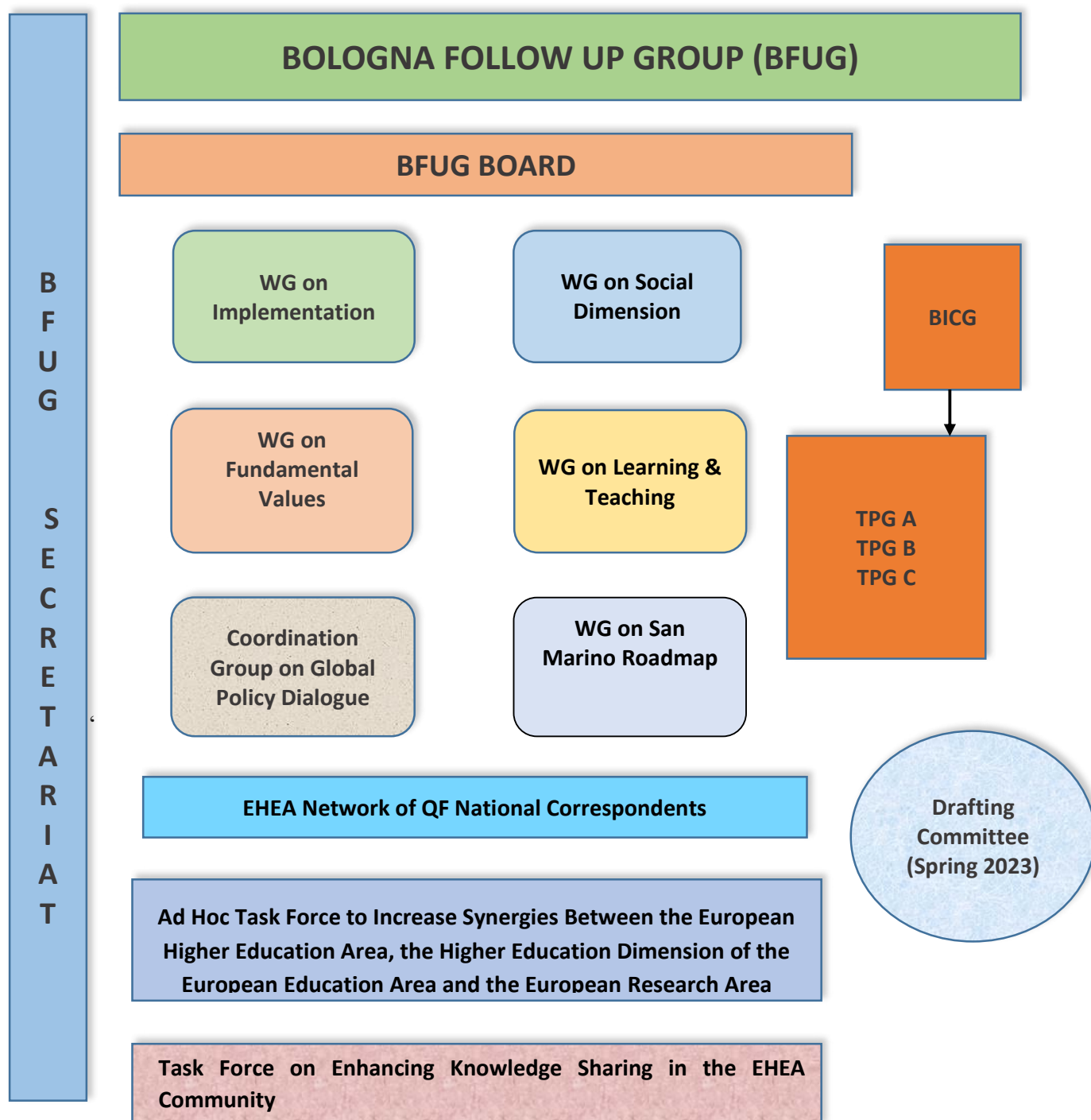
BFUG Work Plan 2021-2024

- (i) BICG – Bologna Implementation Coordination Group
- (ii) Working Groups on:
 - (ii.a) WG 1: On Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process
 - (ii.b) WG 2: On Fundamental Values
 - (ii.c) WG 3: On Social Dimension
 - (ii.d) WG 4: On Learning and Teaching
- (iii) Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue (GPD)
- (iv) EHEA Network of National QF correspondents
- (v) Working Group to Support the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's Accession to the EHEA ("San Marino Roadmap WG")
- (vi) Task Forces
 - (vi.a) Ad Hoc Task Force to Increase Synergies Between the European Higher Education Area, the Higher Education Dimension of the European Education Area and the European Research Area
 - (vi.b) Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community





Structure





(i). BICG – Bologna Implementation Coordination Group

3 Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs):

- TPG A - QF-EHEA
- TPG B - LRC
- TPG C – QA

Name of the Working Group
<i>Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)</i>
Contact persons/Co-Chairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austria • Bulgaria • Italy
Composition
<p>Albania; Austria; Belgium Flemish Community; Bulgaria; European Commission; Georgia; Italy; Romania; EUA - European University Association; EURASHE; one Co-chair of Thematic Peer Group A on Qualifications Framework; one Co-chair of Thematic Peer Group B on the Lisbon Recognition Convention; one Co-chair of Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance; one Co-chair of Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process.</p> <p>In principle, the BICG Co-chairs should not be chairs of a Thematic Peer Group.</p> <p>The BICG should represent the geographical diversity of the EHEA and ensure a balance of expertise across all key commitments. To ensure continuity and diversity, the turnover from one work period to another should not be more than two thirds the BICG members.</p>
Purpose and/or outcome
<p>The purpose of the BICG is to facilitate a coordinated implementation of the three Key Commitments. To achieve that, the BICG coordinates the work of the TPGs, facilitates an exchange of experience and best practice between the TPGs' co- chairs. The BICG follows the peer support activities and reports to the BFUG on the overall progress and necessary review of the approach or methodology of peer support.</p> <p>The activities should build upon the work of the BICG in the period 2018-2020 and the outcomes and recommendations of the work of the TPGs presented in the BICG Report.</p>



Reference to the Rome Communiqué

*"We take note of the results described in the **Bologna Process Implementation Report** on the progress made over the past two decades. The achievements are impressive. Nevertheless more work is required to ensure that the EHEA is built on strong foundations, capable of supporting interconnected, innovative and inclusive higher education in the coming decade.*

*In the 2018 Paris Ministerial Conference we decided to devote special effort to completing implementation of three "**Key Commitments**" essential for the functioning of the EHEA: the Qualifications Frameworks and ECTS, the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Diploma Supplement, and Quality Assurance according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).*

*We reconfirm our determination to see the Key Commitments fully implemented. We ask the BFUG to continue to employ the **peer support method** to achieve this. We commit to the continued participation in and contribution to this effort."*

"We will strengthen the implementation of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention and apply its principles to qualifications and periods of study outside the EHEA, using common assessment criteria and reports, in collaboration with the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC and NARIC Networks.

We will ensure automatic recognition of academic qualifications and periods of study within the EHEA so that students, staff and graduates are able to move freely to study, teach and do research. We will make the necessary legislative changes to guarantee automatic recognition at system level for qualifications delivered in EHEA countries where quality assurance operates in compliance with the ESG and where a fully operational national qualifications framework has been established. We also encourage the application of agreed and secure systems of digital certification and communication such as blockchain, as well as the further development of the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) to facilitate automatic recognition.

We commit to reviewing our own legislation, regulations, and practice to ensure fair recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in refugee-like situations, even when they cannot be fully documented, in accordance with Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. We welcome the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees and will support further broadening its use in our systems.



Specific tasks

- Coordinate the work of the TPGs;
- Follow-up peer support activities by keeping an overview of the composition and activities of the different groups;
- Seek to improve the Peer Support Approach for the implementation of the Key Commitments, including possible adjustments;
- Identify synergies in the work of the Thematic Peer Groups;
- Give the BFUG regular updates and an overview on the progress and effectiveness of the Peer Support Approach for the implementation of the Key Commitments, based on the activities of the TPGs;
- Prepare analytical reports to the BFUG on the activities of the different TPGs and the support for the implementation of Key Commitments as a whole, including operation (what works, what does not work), impact and usefulness;
- Prepare recommendations for further action to improve implementation for consideration by the BFUG;
- Provide an assessment of thematic peer groups as a working method, including whether they should be extended to other policy areas within the competence of the BFUG.

Reporting

Minimum of yearly reporting to the BFUG.

Meeting schedule

To be decided

Liaison with other WGs' activities

- WG on Monitoring and any other relevant BFUG structures





Additional remarks on the Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs)

The objective of the TPGs is to provide a forum to support countries in working together to implement the Key Commitments. The TPGs should continue using the Peer Support Approach and build on the work accomplished during the previous work period.

The TPGs should follow up and update their action plans to reflect countries' progress and developments.

The countries and organisations should nominate representatives of authorities and stakeholders with relevant expertise in the topic for the duration of the entire work period.

The co-chairs of the TPGs should be appointed by the BFUG and be responsible for planning, coordinating and reporting on the activities of the TPGs.

There should be no more than three co-chairs per TPG respecting also a principle that one country should co-chair no more than one TPG or BICG.

The TPGs' Co-chairs:

- TPG A: Austria; Georgia; Latvia
- TPG B: Albania; France; Italy
- TPG C: Belgium Flemish Community; Kazakhstan; Romania

(ii) Working Groups

(i.a) Working Group 1 on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Name of the Working Group

Working Group on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Contact persons/Co-Chairs

- European Commission/Eurydice
- Norway

Composition

Albania; Austria; Belarus; Cyprus; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Italy; Kazakhstan; Malta; Moldova; The Netherlands; Norway; Romania; Russia; United Kingdom; EI - ETUCE; EQAR; ESU - European Students' Union; EUA - European University Association; European Commission/Eurydice.





Purpose and/or outcome

- To guide the preparation of the Bologna Process Implementation Report for 2024;
- To identify sources of reliable, comparable data relevant for the EHEA;
- To make further progress in improving structured and standardised monitoring of the EHEA;
- To ensure that accurate comparisons can be made between countries and that implementation and other changes are transparent within as well as between countries.

Reference to the Rome Communiqué

We ask the BFUG to develop a framework for the enhancement of the fundamental values of the EHEA that will foster self-reflection, constructive dialogue and peer-learning across national authorities, higher education institutions and organisations, while also making it possible to assess the degree to which these are honoured and implemented in our systems.

Specific tasks

- To develop a proposal for the scope of the 2024 Bologna Process Implementation Report;
- To develop and agree the indicators to measure progress, and the data required for the 2024 report with the agreement of the BFUG;
- To develop suitable data collection material;
- To ensure that information is collected from all Bologna countries;
- To guide the drafting of the overall report for approval by the BFUG in advance of the 2024 Ministerial Conference.

Reporting

Minutes of working group meetings will be made available by the Bologna Secretariat.

BFUG should also receive regular reports and updates.

To allow for good communication with BFUG as a whole and for the necessary consultations, progress reports should be made at each BFUG meeting. More specifically, the set of key indicators measuring progress on Bologna actions shall be agreed with the BFUG. In between BFUG meetings, updates can be circulated by the Bologna Secretariat via e-mail.

The draft of the Bologna Process Implementation Report for 2024 will be presented and discussed at the BFUG meeting at the end of 2023.

Meeting schedule

TBD

Past experience suggests that around 2 meetings per year would be required.





Liaison with other WGs' activities

- A Co chair will take part in BICG meetings;
- Involvement in the Working Group on fundamental values is foreseen;
- Involvement in other Working Groups, is likely to be beneficial and proposals will be made by the Group members.

(i.b) Working Group 2 on Fundamental Values

Name of the Working Group

Working Group on Fundamental Values

Contact persons/Co-chairs

- Germany
- Malta
- Norway
- Romania

Composition

Austria; Croatia; European Commission; Finland; France; Germany; Holy See; Iceland; Italy; Kazakhstan; Malta; The Netherlands; North Macedonia; Norway; Poland; Romania; Russia; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; United Kingdom; United Kingdom (Scotland); Council of Europe; EI – ETUCE; ENQA; ESU - European Students' Union; EUA - European University Association; European Commission/ Eurydice.

A representative of the working group on Monitoring should be a member of the working group, preferably one of the co-chairs of WG1, to establish a link between the work done in the two groups.

Purpose and/or outcome

- To develop a comprehensive framework to further the monitoring and implementation of the fundamental values of the EHEA in the higher education systems of its members. The system should foster self-reflection, constructive dialogue and peer-learning, while also making it possible to assess the degree to which these fundamental values are honoured and implemented in the EHEA.

Reference to the Rome Communiqué

*“We reaffirm our commitment to promoting and protecting **our shared fundamental values in the entire EHEA through intensified political dialogue and cooperation** as the necessary basis for quality learning, teaching and research as well as for democratic societies. We commit to*





upholding institutional autonomy, academic freedom and integrity, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, and public responsibility for and of higher education.

*We ask the BFUG to develop a **framework** for the enhancement of the fundamental values of the EHEA that will foster self-reflection, constructive dialogue and peer-learning across national authorities, higher education institutions and organisations, while also making it possible to assess the degree to which these are honoured and implemented in our systems. We adopt the **definition of academic freedom** as freedom of academic staff and students to engage in research, teaching, learning and communication in and with society without interference nor fear of reprisal”*

Specific tasks

- To develop indicators on *de jure* and *de facto* implementation of academic freedom and integrity based on the definition of academic freedom adopted by the ministers in the Rome Communiqué;
- On the basis of consultation with academic experts and relevant stakeholder organisations, to consider how the additional fundamental values defined in the Paris and Rome Communiqués - institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, and public responsibility for and of higher education - can be defined, understood and implemented in the EHEA;
- To continue to develop and trial a comprehensive, effective and evidence-based monitoring framework for future reporting on the implementation of the fundamental values in the EHEA through the Bologna Process Implementation Report, a system that takes into account both the *de jure* and the *de facto* aspects of the fundamental values of the EHEA;
- To liaise with the working group on Monitoring to ensure that the collection of data related to *de jure* monitoring of the fundamental values takes place, and that this data is reported in time for the 2024 Bologna Process Implementation Report;
- To develop options for the *de facto* monitoring of fundamental values, including different options for types of data to be explored and methods for collecting and combining data;
- To recommend indicators of fundamental values, as well as the evidence required to fill them, and the source for such evidence;
- In cooperation with the BFUG, take the initiative to a policy dialogue and peer learning activities in the areas concerned, with all relevant higher education policy makers, institutions and stakeholders.

Reporting

Regular progress report will be given to the BFUG. A final report with recommendations will be presented to the BFUG and to the ministerial meeting in 2024.

Minutes of working group meetings will be made available by the Bologna Secretariat.

Meeting schedule

Dates will be decided upon by the working group at a later stage.





Liaison with other WGs' activities

- WG on Monitoring

(i.c) Working Group 3 on Social Dimension

Name of the Working Group

Working Group on Social Dimension

Contact persons/Co-Chairs

- Croatia
- ESU – European Students' Union

Composition

Albania; Austria; Belgium Flemish Community; Belgium French Community; Croatia; Cyprus; Denmark; Estonia; European Commission; France; Georgia; Germany; Italy; Kazakhstan; Lithuania; Malta; Moldova; The Netherlands; Poland; Romania; Russia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Turkey; United Kingdom; United Kingdom (Scotland); Council of Europe; EI - ETUCE; ESU - European Students' Union; EUA - European University Association.

Purpose and/or outcome

- To support the EHEA members in developing social dimension policies that will create inclusive environment in higher education that fosters equity, diversity, and is responsive to the needs of local communities. The Working Group will follow up and will further develop the main outcomes of the work of the AG1 on Social Dimension 2018-2020: “*Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA*”, which is annexed to the Rome Communiqué.

Reference to the Rome Communiqué

We adopt the “Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA” (Annex II) based on a broadened understanding of the social dimension, and commit to implementing them in our systems. We will engage in wide-ranging policy dialogue on how to implement the principles and guidelines fully at national level. We will support our higher education institutions in integrating them into their institutional culture and core missions: learning and teaching, research and innovation, knowledge circulation and outreach, institutional governance and management. We ask the BFUG to report back to us in 2024 on the steps taken and the related monitoring measures to assure evidence-based follow-up.





Specific Tasks

- Developing a system of monitoring the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA. It will enable measuring the impact of the broadened definition of the social dimension in the Principles and Guidelines on the work of different higher education institutions;
- Defining indicators and benchmarks for the principles included in the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA;
- Organising peer support activities for social dimension to support the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines among the EHEA members. The Working Group should consider establishing partnerships for implementing Thematic Country Reviews for Social Dimension to systematically collect country needs for peer support;
- Organising a seminar on the social dimension at the end of the cycle in 2024 to discuss the progress made in developing social dimension policies in the EHEA members.

Reporting

Minutes of working group meetings and key documents developed by the Working group will be made available on the EHEA website www.ehea.info. The Bologna Secretariat will provide administrative support for the work of the Working Group. The BFUG should also receive regular reports and updates from the group. To ensure good communication and consultations with the BFUG as a whole, progress reports should be submitted at least two weeks before each BFUG meeting.

Draft meeting schedule

The content and timeline of the meetings will be discussed amongst the co-chairs and the members of this Working Group; however, the following can be seen as a draft schedule:

Year 2021 – 1st quarter:

- Defining the Workplan for the mandate of the WG with the methods of work

Year 2021 – 2024:

- Organising peer support activities for social dimension

Year 2021 – 2022 (1st quarter)

- Defining indicators and benchmarks for the principles included in the *Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA*.

Year 2022 (1st quarter) – 2024 (1st quarter)

- Defining a system of monitoring the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines





Year 2024 (in the framework of the ministerial conference)

- Organising a seminar on the social dimension

Liaison with other WGs' activities

TBC

(i.d) Working Group 4 on Learning and Teaching

Name of the Working Group
<i>Working Group on Learning and Teaching</i>
Contact persons/Co-chairs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ireland • France • EURASHE
Composition
Albania; Armenia; Austria; Belarus; Belgium Flemish Community; Cyprus; European Commission; France; Georgia; Germany; Holy See; Ireland; Italy; Kazakhstan; The Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Romania; Russia; San Marino; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine; United Kingdom; United Kingdom (Scotland); EI – ETUCE; ENQA; ESU - European Students' Union; EUA - European University Association; EURASHE.
Purpose and/or outcome
<p>➤ To support the members of the EHEA in developing successful ways to improve strategies for the enhancement of learning and teaching. The working group will base its work on the recommendations that were endorsed by Ministers in the 2020 Conference of Ministers [as result of the 2018-2020 BFUG Work Programme], in particular Annex III of the Communiqué, thus, translating these into an operational action framework and – where possible – into measurable, qualitative indicators. The group will include the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making student-centred learning a reality across the entire EHEA; • Supporting staff development; • Fostering innovative learning and teaching. These should ensure inter-disciplinary, inter-sectoral and experiential learning as outcomes. Innovations in learning and teaching should





also contribute to opening up higher education to lifelong and non-traditional learners, for example through micro-credentials;

- Discussing assessment in higher education to encompass a wider set of learning outcomes, in addition to disciplinary knowledge, such as inter-disciplinarity and transversal, green and digital competences;
- Strengthening the capacity of higher education institutions and systems, to support the continuous improvement of learning, teaching and assessment;
- Developing international learning environments for the students, such as the inclusion of a mobility experience or access to internationalisation at home).

In view of its establishment during the COVID-19 pandemic, this group aims also to strengthen the resilience of higher education system, with a focus on future skills, high quality learning, teaching, and assessment methods and strong links with research and innovation.

Reference to the Rome Communiqué

*“We adopt the **“Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA” (Annex III)** and commit to follow them, supporting higher education institutions in further implementing student-centred learning and teaching. The recommendations comprise increased support for all learners, and for teaching and non-teaching staff. Academic staff, including junior academics, require stable employment and career opportunities, parity of esteem for teaching and research, attractive working conditions, access to up-to-date staff development, and recognition of their achievements. In all these respects we will foster dialogue and collaboration on learning and teaching in our national systems and at EHEA level.”*

*“**Flexible and open learning paths**, part of the original inspiration for the Bologna Process, are important aspects of **student-centred learning** and are in increasing demand in our societies. In addition to full degree programmes, many higher education institutions offer or plan to offer **smaller units of learning**, which enable learners to develop or update their cultural, professional, and transversal skills and competences at various stages in their lives. We ask the BFUG to explore how and to what extent these **smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials**, can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by our institutions using EHEA tools.*

*“We commit to **supporting our higher education institutions in using digital technologies** for learning, teaching and assessment, as well as for academic communication and research, and to investing in the development of digital skills and competences for all.”*

Specific Tasks

- Further develop the recommendations in Annex III of the Rome Communiqué by





translating them into concrete actions at European/EHEA level and developing measurable qualitative indicators, which can serve as a basis for monitoring the progress on learning and teaching in EHEA;¹

- Support member countries in the development of concrete national actions and strategies to implement the above recommendations. This could entail, but does not need to be limited to, organising forums and/or seminars for policy makers and HEI;
- Organise a survey based on the recommendations to map challenges and actions within the EHEA and inform further work in this period. Repeat this survey at the end of the working period;
- 'In preparation of the 2024 ministerial conference, recommend concrete policy actions to the BFUG and ministers on the implementation of micro-credentials in the EHEA, in line with the developments in the European Education Area;
- Make concrete recommendations on strengthening innovative learning, teaching and assessment, including student-centred, trans-disciplinary, challenge-based and STEAM approaches;
- Identify lessons learnt during the COVID-19 crisis for learning, teaching and assessment in higher education in the EHEA. Translate these into recommendations and actions for policymaking at the level of public authorities. Emphasis might be put on the digital transformation of higher education institutions and systems and on future skills development for teachers and learners.

Reporting

Minutes of the working group meetings and the results of the surveys shall be made available to the BFUG.

BFUG shall receive regular reports and updates and be consulted, if needed. Progress reports will be submitted by the working group at each BFUG meeting.

More specifically, the set of indicators measuring progress shall be agreed with the BFUG. In between the BFUG meetings, updates shall be circulated by the BFUG Secretariat via email.

The draft of the 2024 working group report will be presented and discussed at the BFUG meeting at the end of 2023.

Meeting schedule

TBC

¹ This objective in particular raises the question of funding; to do this properly funding would be necessary to define and implement a systematic project approach. An EC funded umbrella project is suggested here, such as in the peer support groups of the current working period





Liaison with other WGs' activities

TBD

(iii) Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Name of the Coordination Group <i>Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue</i>
Contact persons/Co-chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albania • Belgium Flemish Community • European Commission • Italy
Composition Albania; Austria; Belgium Flemish Community; European Commission; France; Germany; Holy See; Ireland; Italy; Kazakhstan; Malta; The Netherlands; Romania; Spain; United Kingdom; EI - ETUCE; ENQA; ESU - European Students' Union; EUA - European University Association; UNESCO. <i>Note: Given its contribution to date, IAU will also be invited to contribute to this group.</i>
Purpose and/or outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To foster dialogue and build trust between the EHEA and other countries and macro-regions through exchange of knowledge and cooperation, with the aim of addressing overarching issues more effectively, such as achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. <p>The coordination group is also tasked with the organisation of the 2024 Global Policy Forum and Statement, and where possible other appropriate events during the work period.</p>
General objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reinforce ongoing dialogue at global level; ➤ Achieve greater awareness of the various vital roles of HE in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and find paths for global collaboration to do so effectively; ➤ Propose how to enhance the EHEA's ability to foster, participate in and benefit from





this dialogue.

Thematic objectives in the context of global cooperation

- Intensify focus on the societal role of higher education to foster effective inclusion of learners not only at the time of access to HE, but also with respect to retention, success and employability;
- Promote inclusive mobility as one of the most important keys to global understanding and to excellence in higher education;
- Promote further development and use in practice of the transparency and quality tools necessary for advancing mobility and facilitating recognition;
- Create contacts and support reciprocal referencing of the several overarching Qualifications Frameworks and Qualifications Reference frameworks now functioning or being prepared in the EHEA and in other macro-regions;
- Promote student-centred learning and understanding of credit systems or credit reference systems based on Learning Outcomes and student time;
- Develop dialogue about the challenges and opportunities offered by the shift towards digital learning environments, in part triggered by the pandemic;
- Ensure connection with the other BFUG Advisory, Working or Coordination Groups that address the above issues in the EHEA context.

Specific Tasks

- Suggest plans to the BFUG for the organisation of the Global Policy Forum to be held along with the Ministerial Conference to be hosted by Albania in 2024;
- Organise and implement events, meetings or other initiatives (including virtual events) to build awareness and dialogue with respect to the CG's overarching aims, the general or/and thematic objectives;
- Explore ways of initiating or consolidating contacts with other countries, macro-regions and organisations in order to develop and strengthen dialogue.

Reference to the Rome Communiqué

“While the COVID-19 pandemic has made it impossible to hold the Global Policy Forum as intended, we are pleased that our Conference includes a global session. We recommit to international dialogue on higher education values, policies, and reforms, drawing on the experiences of the EHEA as well as those of other areas of the world, and ask the BFUG to further develop and strengthen Global Dialogue in the coming work period.”

Reporting

Minutes of coordination group meetings and updates on activities will be made available online to the BFUG by the BFUG Secretariat. The BFUG Secretariat, at the request of the CG Chairs, may circulate relevant updates to the CG members.





<p>The BFUG shall also receive regular reports and updates from the group.</p> <p>To ensure good communication with the BFUG as a whole and for the necessary consultations, progress reports shall be submitted two weeks before each BFUG meeting.</p>
<p>Meeting schedule</p> <p>Meetings can be electronic or in presence, according to what will be possible and appropriate in the post COVID era. Smaller ad hoc groups or task forces may be delegated for specific tasks.</p> <p>The exact programming will be discussed by the Co-chairs and the members of the Coordination Group.</p>
<p>Liaison with other WGs' activities</p> <p>TBD</p>

(iv) EHEA Network of National QF correspondents

<p>Name of the Network</p> <p><i>EHEA Network of National Qualifications Frameworks Correspondents</i></p>
<p>Contact Person/Coordinator</p> <p>Council of Europe</p>
<p>Composition</p> <p>Albania; Andorra; Austria; Belarus; Belgium Flemish Community; Belgium French Community; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; European Commission; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Holy See; Iceland; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Moldova; The Netherlands; North Macedonia; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russia; San Marino; Slovakia; Spain; Switzerland; Ukraine; Council of Europe; EI – ETUCE; EUA - European University Association; EURASHE; UNESCO.</p>
<p>Purpose and/or outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To exchange experience and offer advice in the development, implementation, and review of national qualifications frameworks; ➤ Further coherence between national QFs and the Overarching Frameworks of Qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA); ➤ Further coherence between the QF-EHEA and the European Qualifications





Framework for lifelong learning (EQF);

- Advice EHEA members and the BFUG on issues related to the QF-EHEA and national qualifications frameworks.

Reference to the Rome Communiqué

*We commit to completing and further developing the **National Qualifications Frameworks** compatible with the **Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)** and ask the BFUG to update the criteria for self-certification to include a stronger element of peer review of national reports. We mandate the **Network of QF correspondents** to continue its work, contributing to the further development of the QF-EHEA and the self-certification of national qualifications frameworks against it.*

***Flexible and open learning paths**, part of the original inspiration for the Bologna Process, are important aspects of student-centred learning and are in increasing demand in our societies. In addition to full degree programmes, many higher education institutions are offering or may offer **smaller units of learning**, which enable learners to develop or update their cultural, professional, and transversal competences at various stages in their lives. We ask the BFUG to explore how and to what extent these **smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials**, can be defined, developed and implemented by our institutions using EHEA tools.*

Specific tasks

The Network shall act as a forum for debate and advice on issues related to the QF-EHEA and national frameworks, in particular with a view to:

- ensuring coherence between national frameworks and the QF-EHEA;
- ensuring coherence between the QF-EHEA and the EQF;
- advising on the development and implementation of ECTS-based short cycle qualifications as stand-alone higher education qualifications within the QF-EHEA in countries that wish to develop and implement which short cycle qualifications; advising on how and to what extent smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials, can be defined, developed and implemented within the QF-EHEA and national qualification frameworks;
- encouraging periodic reviews of the implementation of national qualifications frameworks for higher education;
- encouraging and providing advice on renewed self-certification of national frameworks for which developments make this necessary or desirable;
- developing proposals for arrangements to strengthen the peer review of national self-certification reports and processes;
- encouraging reflection on how national qualifications frameworks can best help education systems fulfill all major purposes of higher education.





Working method

Annual meetings of the Network are organised with the participation, as far as possible, of representatives of all EHEA members and consultative members. The meetings will normally be held in September/October. Specific issues may also be addressed by electronic communication or online meetings.

Whenever relevant, joint activities with the EQF Advisory Group, Thematic Peer Groups, or national contact points may be organised.

The Network is coordinated by the Council of Europe, which brings the outcome of its work to the attention of the BFUG as well as the EQF Advisory Group.

Reporting

Reports will be submitted to the BFUG and Board in writing.

Meeting schedule

TBC

Liaison with other WGs' activities

TBD

(v) Working Group to Support the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's Accession to the EHEA

Name of the Ad Hoc Group

Working Group to Support the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's Accession to the EHEA ("San Marino Roadmap WG")

Contact persons/Co-Chairs

- Andorra
- Finland

Composition

Andorra; Finland; Holy See; Italy; Liechtenstein; San Marino; Council of Europe; ENQA.





Purpose and/or outcome

- To support San Marino in its implementation of the Roadmap and advise the BFUG and Board on the implementation and any further support measures recommended.

Reference to the Rome Communiqué

We are pleased to welcome San Marino as a new Member of the EHEA. San Marino will be supported in the implementation of its commitments with an agreed roadmap. Roadmap (appended)

Specific tasks

- To follow up the San Marino roadmap together with the Sammarinese authorities;
- To develop a timetable for implementing the higher education reforms, building on the milestones set out in the San Marino Roadmap;
- To assist the Sammarinese authorities in implementing the roadmap and in developing specific policy areas;
- To assist in peer-learning activities and to facilitate cooperation;
- To report to the BFUG on the state of implementation of the roadmap by the beginning of 2024.

Reporting

Minutes of working group meetings will be made available to the BFUG Board and to the BFUG on the protected part of the website.

The Working Group will present regular updates to the Board and to the BFUG.

Progress reports should be submitted at least three weeks before each Board or BFUG meeting. The reports should be analytical and describe the state of implementation of the Roadmap as well as further measures envisaged by the Sammarinese authorities. In between meetings, updates should be circulated by the Bologna Secretariat via e-mail.

The final progress report will be presented and discussed at the latest during the first BFUG meeting in spring 2024.

Meeting schedule

[Dates are just tentative, will be decided by the working group at a later stage]

- First meeting: shortly after the BFUG meeting in April 2021 to establish a timetable for the implementation of the San Marino roadmap.





- Further meetings to be held as indicated in the timetable to be established at the first meeting, generally at least one meeting per semester. Meetings may be held online or face to face as required; at least one meeting should be held in San Marino to allow broader contacts with Sammarinese stakeholders.

Liaison with other WGs (or similar)

Liaison with other Working Groups:

- WG on Monitoring
- WG on fundamental values
- Bologna Implementation Coordination Group and/or relevant peer groups

Additional remarks

These terms of reference may be reviewed in the light of progress of the work, in agreement with the BFUG.

(vi) Task Forces

(vi.a) Ad Hoc Task Force to Increase Synergies Between the European Higher Education Area, the Higher Education Dimension of the European Education Area and the European Research Area

Name of the Working Group <i>Ad Hoc Task Force to Increase Synergies Between the European Higher Education Area, the Higher Education Dimension of the European Education Area and the European Research Area (for the period May – December 2021)</i>
Contact persons/Co-Chairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slovenia • European Commission
Composition <p>Austria; Belgium Flemish Community; Belgium French Community; Denmark; Estonia; European Commission; Finland; France; Greece; Luxembourg; Malta; North Macedonia;</p>



Norway; Portugal; Romania; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; United Kingdom; Council of Europe; EI – ETUCE; EUA - European University Association; EURASHE.

Purpose and/or outcome

A proposal allowing for concrete synergies between the European Higher Education Area (Bologna context), the higher education dimension of the European Education Area (EU context) and the European Research Area (EU context), building on the respective cooperation structures.

Reference to Rome Communiqué

We commit to strengthening cooperation with the European Research Area. We call for the BFUG to work closely with the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) to enhance synergies and alignment between education and research and innovation policies. Focus will be inter alia on developing research-based learning, guaranteeing academic and scientific freedom, and contributing to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Specific tasks

Building on the Rome Communiqué, **develop a proposal allowing for a streamlined and strengthened cooperation between the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the higher education dimension of the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Research Area (ERA).** The proposal should describe how the cooperation can be done in a fit-for-purpose and flexible manner, for example in the form of joint meetings or working groups.

Elaborate a proposal for a way forward on how to concretely work on a strengthened cooperation on the specific topics identified by the Ministers in the Rome Communiqué, i.e. research-based learning, guaranteeing academic and scientific freedom, and contributing to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Reporting

Minutes of Task Force meetings will be made available by the Bologna Secretariat.

The BFUG should receive a proposal for synergies and cooperation by its meeting in December 2021.

Meeting schedule:

Online meetings, about three meetings, to be decided by the Task Force

Liaison with other EHEA WGs' activities

Working Group on Social Dimension

Working Group on Learning and Teaching

Working Group on Fundamental Values

Additional remarks



(vi.b). Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community (as of June 4, 2021, the ToRs are being finalized)

<p>Name of the Working Group</p> <p><i>Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community</i></p>
<p>Contact persons/Co-chairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albania • Italy • Romania
<p>Composition</p> <p>Albania; Belgium Flemish Community; European Commission; Germany; Italy; Malta; The Netherlands; Romania; United Kingdom; EQAR; ESU - European Students' Union; EUA - European University Association; EURASHE.</p> <p>The Task Force can invite, as appropriate, relevant experts to collaborate in its work.</p>
<p>Purpose and/or outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Devise ways to enhance knowledge sharing within the EHEA, involving academic communities, stakeholder organizations, national authorities and the BFUG itself, in order to enable better understanding and closer collaboration in developing and implementing the EHEA policies.
<p>Reference to the Rome Communiqué</p> <p><i>“We commit to building a more closely connected and sustainable higher education community, which fosters inclusion, communication, cooperation, and solidarity, essential for the relevance and excellence of the future EHEA. To accomplish this, we commit to keeping our national higher education sectors informed about and involved in EHEA developments, and to working closely with student and higher education associations and networks on the development and implementation of national reforms. We recognize the importance of the broad consultations carried out to identify priorities for the future of the EHEA and ask the BFUG to organize EHEA</i></p>





events such as **transnational seminars, workshops and hearings** involving the wider higher education community (students, academic staff and external stakeholders), to discuss present and future goals and explore collaborative ways to address them.”

Specific tasks

- Map and explore national approaches to communication and implementation of Bologna policy goals: how are they perceived; what the existing practices of exchange and collaboration with the different actors, including stakeholders and the Ministries themselves are;
- Devise and promote ways to make the Bologna Process and its reform goals better understood and more transparent at institutional and national level, for the academic community, as well as for the broader public, also encouraging and taking into account input from them;
- Identify measures to enhance collaboration between individual countries and groups of countries that enable them to learn from and support each other in sharing knowledge more effectively within the EHEA community;
- Organize events aiming at spreading information and creating dialogue about the Bologna process and/or support members in organizing such events at national or transnational level;
- Devise methods for better communication about the Bologna process, employing innovative ways of communication, attractive and accessible for all.

Working method

Working meetings will be held in presence or virtual, as appropriate and possible; online and email consultation will be ongoing within the Task Force (details and roadmap to be agreed within the Task Force).

Reporting

Regular progress reports will be presented to the BFUG, and a final report with recommendations will be prepared.

Minutes of Task Force meetings will be made available by the Bologna Secretariat.



EHEA WEBSITE TRANSFORMATION REPORT

**BFUG Secretariat
June 2024**

Authors: Aida Myrto, Ana Zhibaj, Oltion Rrumbullaku, Patrik Bardhi

Edited by: Jora Vaso, Manjola Hasa

Approved by: Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi

Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat

Rr. Naim Frashëri, Nr. 37

Tirana, Albania

June 23, 2024



Albanian BFUG Secretariat
2021-2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
RATIONALE & BACKGROUND	4
DESCRIPTION OF WORK	6
GENERAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE WEBSITE	7
GOOGLE ANALYTICS FINDINGS	8
PAGE PATHS AND VIEWS	8
USER ACQUISITION	9
DEMOGRAPHIC USER DATA	10
BFUG AND BOARD MINUTES ARCHIVE	11
EHEA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE	11
EHEA NEWSLETTER AS A TOOL FOR OUTREACH	12
SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT	14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In support of the EHEA working structures, the BFUG Secretariat team recently executed several key initiatives, one of which was the maintenance and enhancement of the EHEA website. Firstly, the categories bar has been revamped, introducing new categories, a restructuring aimed at streamlining information dissemination while preventing cluttered category tabs. Additionally, sub-categories within each category were refined, enhancing their effectiveness in filtering information and managing content efficiently. These tasks were coordinated by Senior Expert, Aida Myrto.

Furthermore, the Secretariat social seamlessly integrated the EHEA website with social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. This integration involved placing media shortcuts in the top right corner

of the index page for effortless access to the organization's social media profiles. These enhancements collectively contribute to a more comprehensive and accessible online presence for the EHEA.

The EHEA website's homepage has been visually revamped, along with a more optimized information structure, aimed at enriching the visitor's experience.

The archive of previous BFUG and Board meeting minutes has been compiled, the result of rigorous research aimed at fulfilling the request of many Co-Chairs who sought access to these archival records.

RATIONALE & BACKGROUND

The BFUG Secretariat activity, is regulated by the Rules and Procedures, approved at the BFUG meeting in Portugal in 2021 as well as by a special national bylaw; government decision No. 1163, date 24.12.2020, "For the establishment and maintaining of the Secretariat of "Bologna Follow Up Group" from the Republic of Albania", amended by the Decision Nr. 526 of the Council of Ministers on September 7, 2023 and the legal framework in force in Albania.

This report encompasses the time frame from January 31st, 2023 to August 31st 2023 and provides an account of the work processes that led to the comprehensive improvements of the website.

The website plays a crucial role in the EHEA and BFUG structures by serving as a platform for disseminating information related to higher education. It offers a means for working groups, member countries, and the broader general public to stay informed on issues regarding higher education.



Figure 1. The index page of the EHEA website.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

The Secretariat staff supported the working structures by enhancing and periodically updating the EHEA website. The duties included, but were not limited to:

- Ensuring accurate and up-to-date information on the Terms of Reference (ToR), membership, meeting minutes and all relevant documents for each meeting held on the web pages of all BFUG working structures, reflecting the ongoing progress of the Working Structures.
- Uploading all required materials, progress reports and presentations pertinent to the BFUG Board and BFUG meetings.
- Undertaking a comprehensive restructuring of the website, which entailed the addition of two main information categories: the BFUG and Board Meeting Minutes Archive.

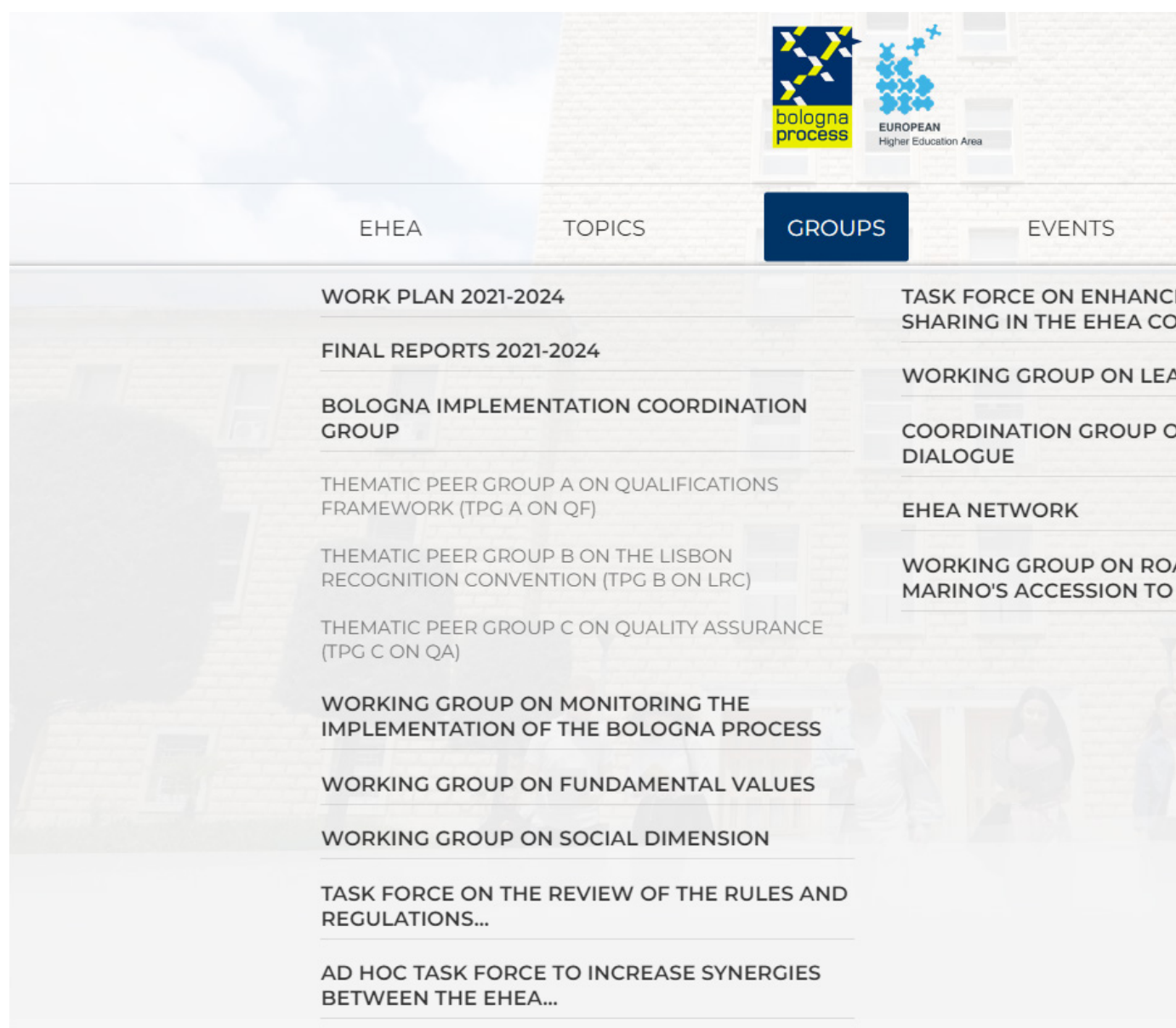


Figure 2. *Anatomy of a website transformation: new categories, and added social media buttons.*

GENERAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE WEBSITE

April 2023 marked the transfer of the hosting and maintenance for the EHEA web page to a new company, which enabled the procurement of a security certificate for the website.

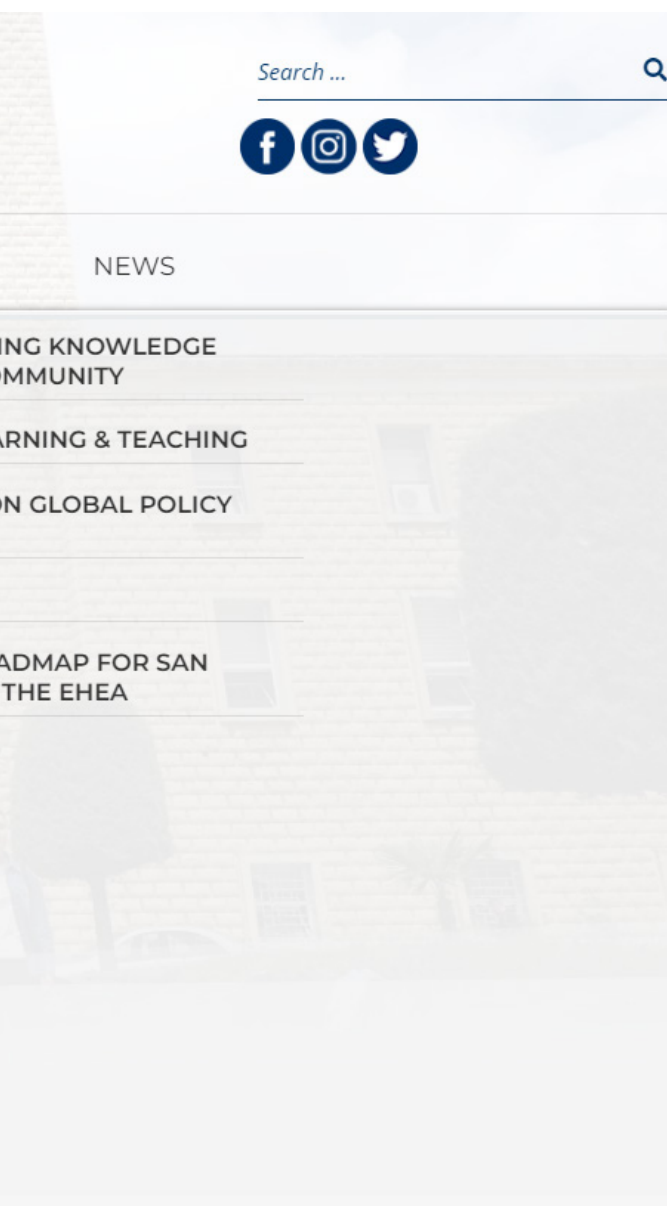
The new contract also foresaw Microsoft licenses, enabling the Secretariat to facilitate meetings of the Working Structures by providing Teams links.

Of particular concern in the main columns of information in the EHEA homepage is the TOPICS category, which seems outdated and in need of attention. To address this, there are two potential courses of action to consider. It may be advisable to archive the existing content in TOPICS, as it appears to have lost its relevance. Alternatively, a recommendation could be made to the upcoming BFUG Secretariat to undertake a thorough update of the topics within this category, aligning them with the current priorities of the BFUG Working Groups.

However, it's worth noting that adding new topics for the current period might pose challenges, given that we are nearing the end of this period, and requesting Working Groups to produce content on specific topics may not be feasible. Hence, one of our potential recommendations to the incoming BFUG Secretariat could be to prioritize this update for the next working period.

Additionally,, the CATEGORIES bar has been restructured and updated with two new categories, GROUPS and EHEA MINISTERIAL 2024, to improve information dissemination and decrease information clutter in the category tabs. The sub-categories area for each category has also been refined, enhancing their effectiveness in filtering information and managing content efficiently.

Finally, links to the social media accounts Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram have been established and integrated within the EHEA website. The social media shortcuts have been added on the top right corner of the index page, for easier access to the EHEA social media profiles.



GOOGLE ANALYTICS FINDINGS

Google Analytics is a free tool that helps website administrators understand how their website is doing, who is visiting it, and how many people have visited it for different periods of time. It is useful for indicating how well the website is performing and how strong is its online presence.

We have extracted Google Analytics data for the period of one month, from June 11th to July 10th, 2023 to gain insights about the website’s user activity.

Page Paths & Views

There are a total of 21,000 website views from more than 8,000 users in one month. The most visited page in the EHEA website is the homepage, followed by the Full Members page.

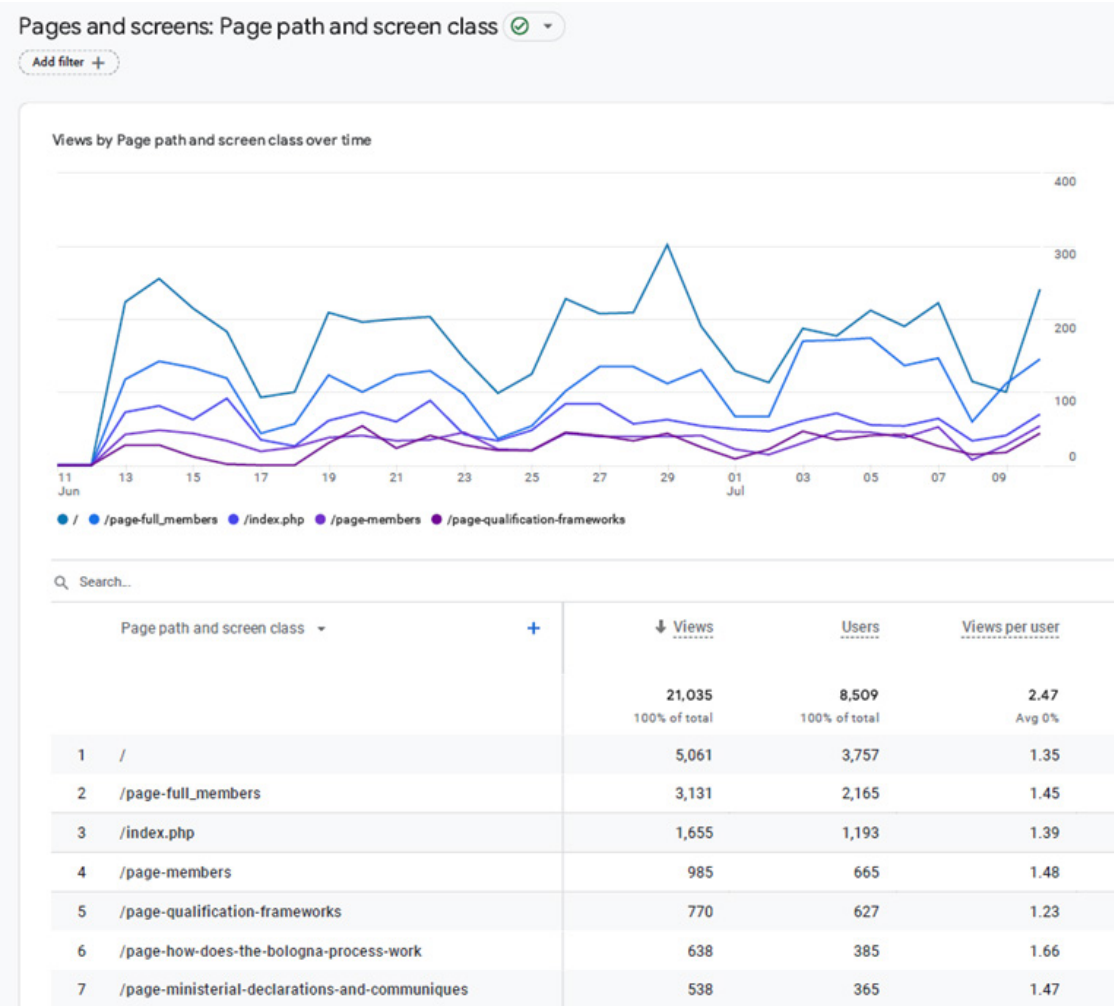


Figure 3. Page paths and views.

User Acquisition

In the span of one month, the EHEA website has attracted a total of 8,500 users. The breakdown of user acquisition reveals that the majority (6,000 users) have accessed the page directly, indicating strong name recognition and direct traffic.

Additionally, 1,800 users have discovered the website through organic search, reflecting the effectiveness of our content in search engine results. The remaining users found their way to the EHEA website through referrals, highlighting the role of external sources in driving traffic and engagement.

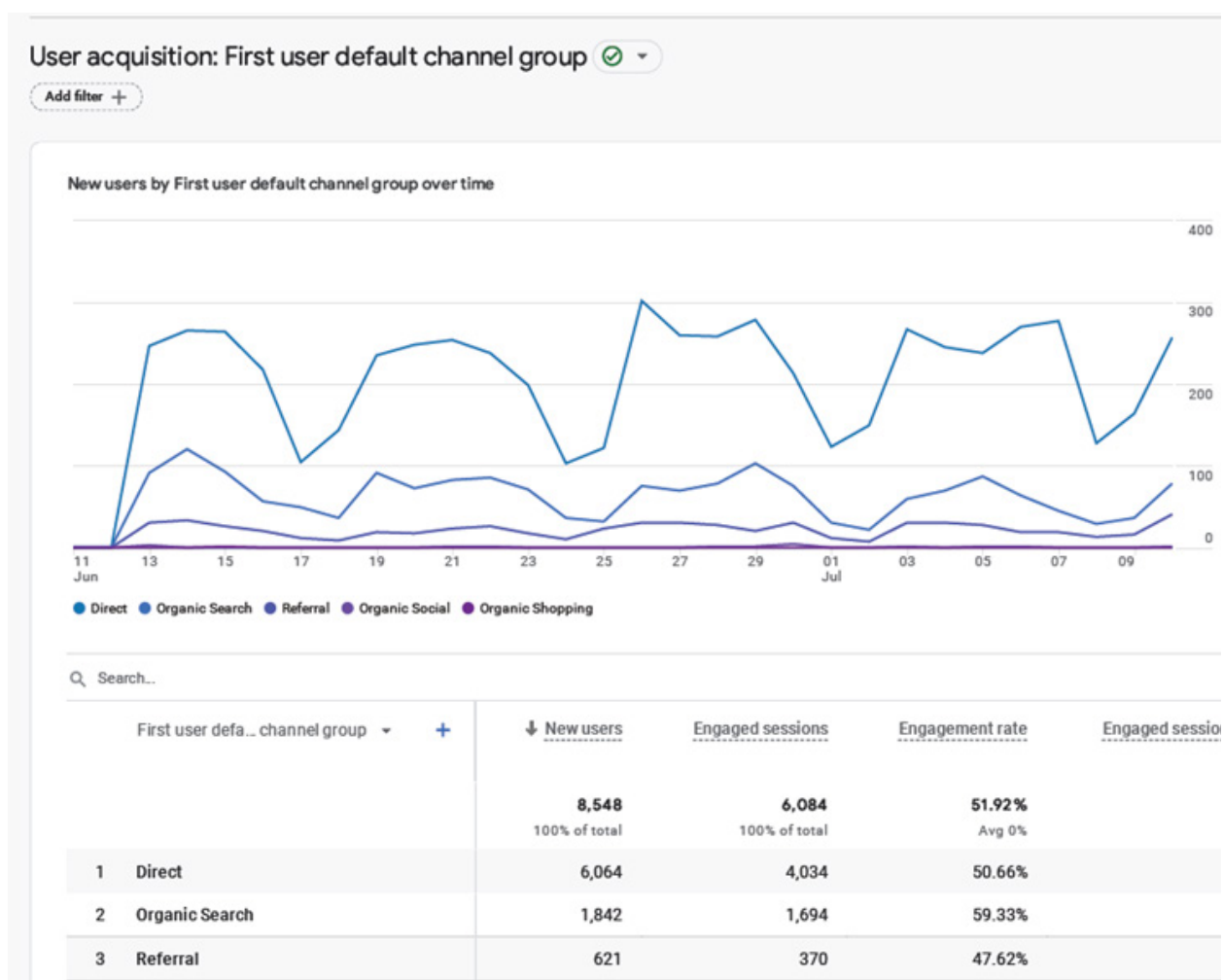


Figure 4. User acquisition in the webpage.

Demographic User Data

In one month, the website insights show the diverse geographic reach of our platform. Among the users, approximately 700 hailed from Spain and Italy, indicating a strong presence in Southern Europe. Germany accounted for nearly 600 users, while the USA contributed around 400 users, showcasing international engagement. France and the UK also revealed substantial participation, with both countries contributing over 300 users each.

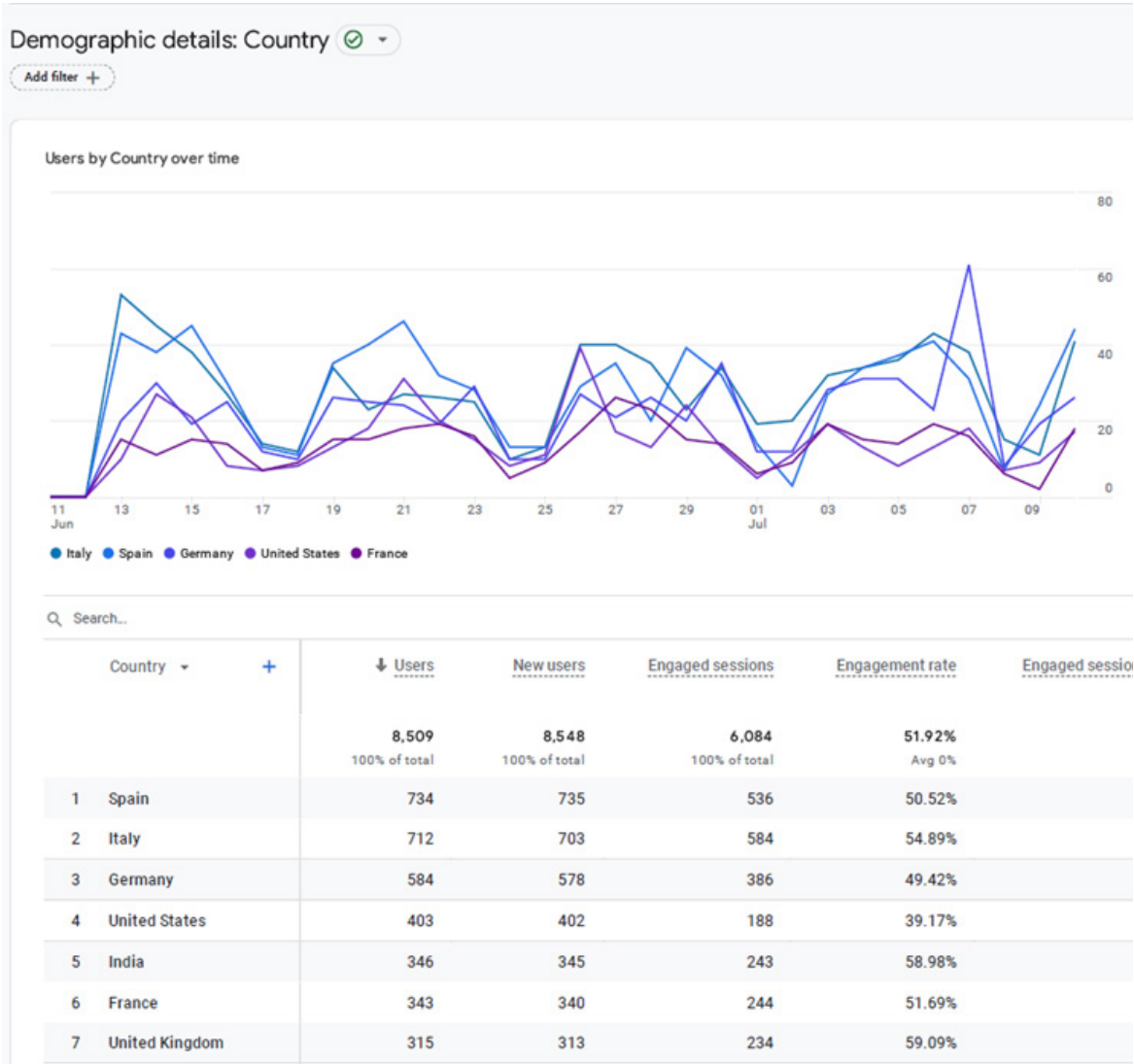


Figure 5. Demographic participation in user data.

BFUG AND BOARD MINUTES ARCHIVE

The Secretariat worked to add the ‘BFUG/ Board minutes archive since 1999’ to the EHEA tab in the homepage, to render it more accessible to page visitors and shorten the time spent

on the webpage searching for the minutes. Now, all this information has been made accessible in one page.



Figure 6. The new category, the archive of all BFUG and Board meetings, 1999 – 2024

EHEA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

A dedicated section has been added to the EHEA tab in the homepage, providing comprehensive information about the EHEA Ministerial Conference held in Tirana 2024.

This includes details about the conference, con-

tact information, a gallery, and the final Tirana Communiqué. At the request of several Working Groups, a section containing specific information on the BFUG Secretariat, has been added within this same EHEA tab.

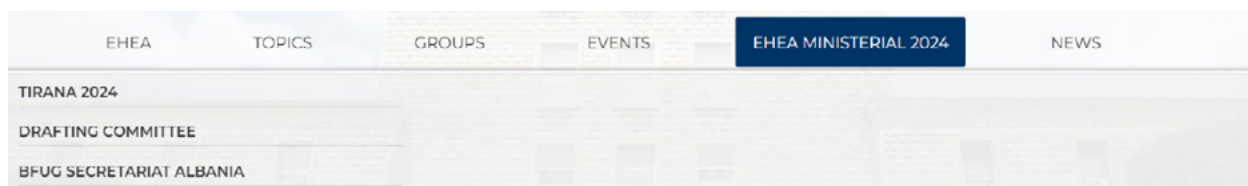


Figure 7. The new category, the EHEA Ministerial.

EHEA NEWSLETTER AS A TOOL FOR OUTREACH

The BFUG Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community, has completed and disseminated two issues of the first EHEA newsletter. The newsletter focuses on showcasing the work of BFUG and its Work-

ing Groups, as well as highlighting contributions from other entities related to Higher Education. Now, the subscription option has been included in the website, as a pop-up box on EHEA's landing page.

16 October 2023

Issue #01



Figure 8. Mission statement of the EHEA newsletter, and screenshots from the introductory editorial.



EHEA Newsletter

Sign up to receive our latest newsletters.

Email

SUBSCRIBE

IDEAS TO IGNITE YOUR JOURNEY

EHEA

EHEA
ER

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA NEWSLETTER!

As we embark on this exciting journey together, our goal is to provide you with valuable insights, fresh ideas, and resources that will enrich your educational experience and career path.

In each edition, we'll explore ideas meant to spark your imagination, share success stories, and highlight educational trends and opportunities that are shaping the future.

We believe that education should be international, so we are sharing with you opportunities that can help you achieve that.

Join us as we embark on this adventure, and together, we'll uncover the possibilities that come with EHEA.

Thank you for being a part of our community!

LET'S BEGIN THE JOURNEY OF LEARNING TOGETHER!

ONE THING YOU SHOULD KNOW: THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Everyone heard about it, some even benefited from it, but what exactly is the Bologna Process? How does it work? And why is it important for you? In this edition's article, we're giving you a brief read about how the Bologna Process was born, where it stands now and why it is still very relevant to you.

Well, simply put, the Bologna Process is the heart of European higher education transformation. This initiative aims to create a unified European Higher Education Area (EHEA), fostering mobility, inclusivity, and competitiveness.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), composed of 49 countries and the European Commission, drives the Bologna Process. To join the EHEA, nations commit to aligning their higher education systems with Bologna's objectives.

WHAT'S THE BOLOGNA PROCESS?

Its mission is harmonize higher education across Europe. The EHEA promotes three-cycle education, mutual recognition of qualifications, and quality assurance, fostering collaboration among universities.

WHY IT MATTERS?

It is a platform for trust in terms of mobility and recognition, and fostering academic cooperation. But even more than that, it offers many opportunities for your career development.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

The BFUG Secretariat has activated the website buttons linked to the EHEA social media accounts and has recently increased social media engagement.
The most viewed post on X (Twitter), with more than 1200 views, was:

“Meeting with member countries of the European Higher Education Area to discuss the role in society of higher education and implications for internal and external quality assurance”
Astana, Kazakhstan (June 1, 2023)



The post with the highest engagement on Facebook was:

“Vienna, Austria exploring learning outcomes in European higher education! We are happy to share the review of the recent peer learning activity held in Vienna, focused on “how are learning outcomes perceived, transmitted, and implemented in daily practice of higher education institutions?”
Vienna, Austria (August 29, 2023)

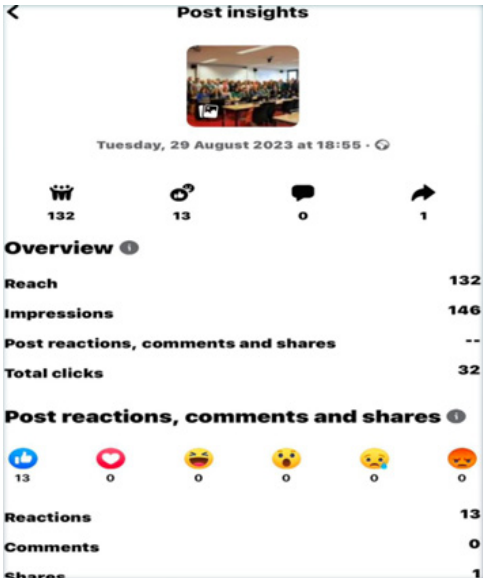


Figure 9. Social media content with the highest outreach.



Figure 9. Social media analysis conducted for the period January – September 2023.



Albanian **BFUG** Secretariat
2021-2024

Communique Content & Style Analysis

Draft: July 17, 2023

2009 Leuven Louvain-La- Neuve

2012 Bucharest Communique

2015 Yerevan Communique

2018 Paris Communique

2020 Rome Communique

Authors: Aida Myrto, Oltion Rrumbullaku, Ana Zhibaj

Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat
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Tirana, Albania

Draft Date: July 17, 2023

Draft prepared by request of the Drafting Committee



Albanian BFUG Secretariat
2021-2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
METHODOLOGY/ PROCESS.....	4
STRUCTURE OF ROME COMMUNIQUÉ.....	6
ROME 2020.....	6
ROME COMMUNIQUÉ STYLE GUIDANCE.....	6
OVERVIEW OF ALL COMMUNIQUÉS: STYLE.....	7
OVERVIEW OF ALL COMMUNIQUÉS: RECURRING THEMES AND TOPICS.....	10
AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT RECURRING THEMES.....	20
LEARNING AND TEACHING.....	20
QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	23
RECOGNITION.....	28
SOCIAL DIMENSION.....	33
QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK.....	38
CONCLUSIONS AND TAKE-AWAYS ON STYLE AND CONTENT.....	44

INTRODUCTION

This review was drafted by Aida Myrto, Oltion Rrumbullaku and Ana Zhibaj of the BFUG Secretariat, by request of the Drafting Committee. The purpose of this document is to review and analyse the content and style of previous Communiqués.

The following sections include an overview of the methodology, a closer look into the Rome Communiqué (to analyse in depth the most recent Communiqué), visual comparisons of the style and content of all Communiqués, a closer look into prominent, recurring themes (Learning and Teaching, Quality Assurance, Recognition, and Social Dimension), and key take-aways.

METHODOLOGY/ PROCESS

This review included Communiqués from the Bologna Declaration until the Rome Communiqué, excluding the Budapest Vienna Declaration.

We used “[The European Higher Education Area in 2018: Bologna Process Implementation Report](#)” (found in the following page) as a reference, elaborated the themes, and expanded the review to include a stylistic analysis as well.

The stylistic analysis was focused on tone (aspirational, narrative, narrative and prescriptive), point of view (first person plural, third person plural), other features (bullet points, paragraph numbering, presence of bibliography and indexes) and overall organization, which was generally composed of the following elements:

- Introduction (description of the contexts and stating current priorities)
- Reporting Progress (taking stock of what has happened since the previous declaration)
- Future Priorities
- Future Commitments (pledges for the future and setting up monitoring).

The content analysis was initially guided by the topics identified in the EHEA website. In the process, we expanded to include the most recurring topics as well, and landed on the following list of themes: Learning and Teaching, Social Dimension, Recognition (the Diploma Supplement and the Three-Cycle System were often included in this category), Quality Assurance, Quality Framework (depending on the context, the the Three-Cycle System was included in this category), Mobility, Employability, Policy Dialogue, ECTS, Lifelong Learning, Research/ ERA, Values, Resources/ Funding, Research and Innovation (spotlight on doctoral students — from the Bologna Declaration until the London Communiqué, considerations for doctoral students were included in the Qualification Frameworks). Note that we excluded non-recurring, one-off themes from the scope of our review (e.g.: microcredentials/ short cycle, and public responsibility, which were only mentioned in the Rome Communiqué. Additionally, it could be worthy to explore the relationship between the major topics that are included in each Communiqué and the prior working structures (working groups, advisory groups, and task forces) in later stages of this document.

The Bologna Process: from Sorbonne to Yerevan, 1998-2015

Mobility of students and teachers	Mobility also for researchers and administrative staff	Social dimension of mobility	Portability of loans and grants	Attention to visa and work permits	Attention also to pension systems and recognition	Benchmark of 20 % by 2020 for student mobility	Explore path to automatic recognition of academic qualifications	Implementation of key commitments
A common two-cycle degree system	Easily readable and comparable degrees	Fair recognition Development of joint degrees	Inclusion of doctoral level as third cycle	QF-EHEA adopted National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) launched	NQFs by 2010	NQFs by 2012	Roadmaps for countries without NQF	Implementation of key commitments
		Social dimension	Equal access	Reinforcement of the social dimension	Commitment to national action plans	National targets for the social dimension to be measured by 2020	Widening access and completion rates	Social inclusion
		Lifelong learning (LLL)	Alignment of national LLL policies Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Flexible learning paths	Partnerships to improve employability	LLL as a public responsibility Focus on employability	Enhance employability, LLL and entrepreneurial skills through cooperation with employers	Employability
Use of credits	A system of credits (ECTS)	ECTS and Diploma Supplement (DS)	ECTS for credit accumulation		Coherent use of tools and recognition practices	Implementation of Bologna tools	Ensure that Bologna tools are based on learning outcomes	Adoption of ECTS Users Guide
	European cooperation in quality assurance (QA)	Cooperation between QA and recognition professionals	QA at institutional, national and European level	European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance (ESG) adopted	Creation of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)	Quality as an overarching focus for EHEA	Allow EQAR registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA	Adoption of revised ESG and European Approach to QA of joint programmes
Europe of Knowledge	European dimensions in higher education	Attractiveness of the EHEA	Links between higher education and research areas	International cooperation on the basis of values and sustainable development	Strategy to improve the global dimension of the Bologna Process adopted	Enhance global policy dialogue through Bologna Policy Fora	Evaluate implementation of 2007 global dimension strategy	
								Learning and Teaching: Relevance and quality
1998 Sorbonne Declaration	1999 Bologna Declaration	2001 Prague Communiqué	2003 Berlin Communiqué	2005 Bergen Communiqué	2007 London Communiqué	2009 Leuven/ Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué	2012 Bucharest Communiqué	2015 Yerevan Communiqué

STRUCTURE OF ROME COMMUNIQUÉ

Rome 2020

Keywords: online; covid-19; times of crisis; determination to provide inclusive quality education;

Key commitment/priorities: fully inclusive EHEA; meeting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030; prepare learners to become active, critical and responsible citizens; academic and scientific integrity; wide-ranging policy dialogue; develop and support safeguarding student rights through legislation; smaller units of learning; exchange of data; openly licensed materials;

Other formatting features/stylistic: the smallest font of all; bold used a lot; ends with conclusion and annexes, but they are not part of the same document;

Narrative-report

Formal language. Long sentences. Complex structure. Hopeful; reassuring; promising; supportive;

Rome Communiqué Style Guidance

The following is a [draft style guidance](#) prepared for the Rome Communiqué (the document was last drafted on May 23, 2018).



Draft structure of the Ministerial Communiqués

An EHEA Ministerial Communiqué is a short document of 3-5 pages. It is divided into paragraphs of introduction with general information about the context, the elaborated topics during the process and the future objectives. If applicable, the Ministers welcome new members.

1. Introduction – half a page
 - Place and date of the meeting
 - Bologna Process/EHEA general context
 - Values of the EHEA
 - Socio-economic situation affecting the EHEA > improvements needed > EHEA's role to progress
2. Progress in implementing agreed reforms / Goals achieved¹ – two pages
 - Topics elaborated within the work plan of the current BFUG period, such as
 - Social Dimension
 - Learning & Teaching
 - Quality Assurance
 - Qualification Frameworks and SCHE Recognition and Digitalisation Implementation etc.
3. Priorities of the EHEA beyond 2020² – one page
 - Internal
 - External - Space for CG13
4. Conclusions – a few lines
 - Governance of the EHEA post 2020
 - Announcement of the place and date of the next Ministerial Conference
5. Appendices

1 The Paris Communiqué asked the BFUG to develop a Bologna Process Implementation Report assessing the main developments in the EHEA since the beginning of the Bologna Process.

2 The next decade of the EHEA should focus, inter-alia, on cross-disciplinary and cross-border cooperation; inclusive and innovative approaches to learning and teaching; transnational cooperation in higher education, research and innovation, through synergies between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA); securing a sustainable future through meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); promoting mutual learning and joint initiatives, such as social inclusion and the wider role of education; strengthening the social dimension of higher education.

(http://www.ehea.info/Upload/BFUG_meeting_Bucharest/BFUG_RO_MK_65_9_7_Roadmap.pdf).

3 The Paris Communiqué asked the BFUG to submit proposals for the main priorities for the next decade, in close cooperation with higher education institutions, staff and students, and for the governance of the EHEA. Ministers asked the Bologna Follow Up Group to enter into a global policy dialogue to improve regular cooperation with other regions and international organisations, to supporting this ongoing, successful inter regional dialogue on issues of common concern amongst policy makers, stakeholder organisations, students, staff and higher education institutions. ”

OVERVIEW OF ALL COMMUNIQUÉS: STYLE

The analysis of style delved into several aspects: tone (aspirational, narrative, narrative combined with prescriptive), point of view (first person plural, third person plural), and additional characteristics such as bullet points, paragraph numbering, inclusion of bibliography and indexes. Furthermore, the overall structure typically comprised the following components:

- Introduction: This section provided an overview of the contexts and priorities.
- Progress Reporting: An assessment made regarding the developments since the previous declaration.
- Future Priorities: The focus towards forthcoming objectives and areas of emphasis.
- Future Commitments: Pledges for the future.

OVERVIEW OF ALL COMMUNIQUÉS: STYLE

	1999 Bologna Declaration	2001 Prague Communiqué	2003 Berlin Communiqué	2005 Bergen Communiqué
TONE	Aspirational	Narrative		
POINT OF VIEW	Third Person			
OTHER FEATURES		Bullet points		Roman Numerals
ORGANIZATION	INTRODUCTION CURRENT PRIORITIES	Reaffirming commitments Progress so far	Preamble Previous Meetings Current Thematic Priorities	New Members Commitment to Establish EHEA Mid-review for goals and priorities
	REPORTING PROGRESS	Follow up 6 objectives of Bologna Process	Progress	Progress Further Challenges and Priorities
	FUTURE PRIORITIES	Future Commitments	Additional Actions	Taking Stock on Progress for 2007
	FUTURE COMMITMENTS	Pledge for the Future	Further Follow-Up	Preparing for 2010
	BIBLIOGRAPHY			
	APPENDIXES			

2007 London Communique	2009 Leuven Louvain-La-Neuve	2012 Bucharest Communique	2015 Yerevan Communique	2018 Paris Communique	2020 Rome communique
---------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------

Narrative and Prescriptive			Aspirational	Narrative	
First Person Plural					
Paragraph Numbering	Paragraph Numbering		Bullet points		
We the Ministers, New Members	We the Ministers, Current Thematic Priorities Issue and Path Forward	We the Ministers, Current Thematic Priorities Historical Overview and Aspirations	We the Ministers, Thematic Priorities of EHEA Current Challenges	We the Ministers, Progress Thematic Priorities of EHEA	We the Minister, Context (Current Challenges) Vision
Progress towards EHEA	Achievements and Consolidation	Providing Quality Higher Education for All	A renewed vision: Our priorities Taking Note of the Work of the WG Next Ministerial New Members	Progress in Implementing Agreed Reforms	Implementation
Priorities for 2009	Learning for the Future	Enhancing Employability to Serve Europe's Needs Improvement of Data Collection and Transparency		Unlocking the full potential of the EHEA: Taking Implementation Forward Innovation in Learning and Teaching	
Looking forward to 2010 and Beyond	The Organizational Structure and Follow-Up	Setting out Priorities for 2012 - 2015		Beyond 2020: a more ambitious EHEA Preparing the 2020 EHEA Ministerial conference	The EHEA in a Global Setting Conclusions
		Yes	Yes		

OVERVIEW OF ALL COMMUNIQUÉS: RECURRING THEMES AND TOPICS

	1999 Bologna Declaration	2001 Prague Communiqué	2003 Berlin Communiqué	2005 Bergen Communiqué	2007 London Communiqué
LEARNING AND TEACHING					
SOCIAL DIMENSION		Social dimension to be explored, requested by student organizations	Equal access. Strengthening social cohesion and reducing inequalities	Reinforcement of the social dimension. Need for comparable data	Student body should reflect diversity of population
RECOGNITION		Promoting recognition of qualifications	Importance of ratification of LRC. Appeal for use of Diploma Supplement	Call to develop national action plans to improve Recognition. Looking for progress on joint-degrees and recognition of prior learning	Mentioning of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning
QA	European co-operation in QA;	Encourage cooperation in QA	QA at institutional, national and European level, with a set of specific elements included	ESG adopted, proposal for a register	Creation of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)
QF	Easily readable and comparable degrees	Comparability of European degrees enhanced by a common framework of qualifications	Inclusion of doctoral level as third cycle. Explore how short cycle are linked to first cycle	QF-EHEA adopted National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) launched	Commitment to implement NQFs by 2010
MOBILITY	Promotion of mobility	Mobility (students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff)			
BFUG Secretariat					

2009 Leuven Louvain-La-Neuve	2012 Bucharest Communique	2015 Yerevan Communique	2018 Paris Communique	2020 Rome Communique	
Student-centered learning and teaching mission	Commitment to promote student-centered learning	Recognize and support quality teaching and opportunities for enhancing teaching	Encourages the development of new approaches for continuous enhancement of learning and teaching	Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching	LEARNING AND TEACHING
National targets for the social dimension to be measured by 2020	Widening access and completion rates	Social inclusion and widening	Further effort is required, request for next Ministerial enhancing intercultural understanding	Socially inclusive HE. Principles and Guidelines for the Social Dimension	SOCIAL DIMENSION
Mentioning flexible study paths for recognition,	Review the national legislation to fully comply with LRC and promote the use of European Area of Recognition	Removing obstacles on recognition of prior learning. Establish a group of volunteering countries to facilitate professional recognition.	Revised Diploma Supplement	Focus on automatic recognition of academic qualifications. Encouragement of the use of digital certifications.	RECOGNITION
Quality as an overarching focus for EHEA. EQAR to be evaluated externally	Allow EQAR registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA. Request for a revision of ESG	Adoption of revised ESG and European Approach to QA of joint programmes	Ensure compliance with ESG 2015. Promote European Approach for QA of joint programmes	Cross-border cooperation of EQAR agencies. Enhancement-oriented use of ESG	QA
Commitment to implement NQFs by 2012. Requested coordination with European Framework for Lifelong Learning	Roadmaps for countries without NQF. School leaving qualification will be considered EQF level 4. Emphasize the link to learning outcomes	Inclusion of short cycles in QF-EHEA. Review NQFs to ensure learning paths for the recognition of prior learning	ECTS based short cycle as a stand-alone qualification level. Revised Diploma Supplement	Commitment to complete the development of NQFs compatible with QF-EHEA	QF
Mobility is important for personal development and employability,	To strengthen mobility as a means for better learning.		Use of Erasmus+ for increasing cooperation beyond mobility/enabling learners to access and complete higher education at any stage of their lives.		MOBILITY

	1999 Bologna Declaration	2001 Prague Communiqué	2003 Berlin Communiqué	2005 Bergen Communiqué	2007 London Communiqué
EMPLOYABILITY		developing study programmes combining academic quality with relevance to lasting employability	to take advantage of the improved transparency and flexibility of the higher education degree systems, for fostering employability	to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including in appropriate posts within the public service.	the importance of improving graduate employability, whilst noting that data gathering on this issue needs to be developed further
POLICY DIALOGUE					2.20 We adopt the strategy "The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting" and will take forward work in the core policy areas: ...intensifying policy dialogue; and improving recognition.
ECTS	Establishment of a system of credits	Supported by a credit system such as the ECTS or one that is ECTS-compatible, providing both transferability and accumulation functions, is necessary	Encourage further progress with the goal that the ECTS becomes not only a transfer but also an accumulation system, to be applied consistently as it develops within the emerging EHEA		Efforts should concentrate in future on removing barriers to access and progression between cycles and on proper implementation of ECTS based on learning outcomes and student workload.

2009 Leuven Louvain-La- Neuve	2012 Bucharest Communique	2015 Yerevan Communique	2018 Paris Communique	2020 Rome Communique	
Employability empowers the individual to fully seize the opportunities in changing labour markets	to provide quality higher education for all, to enhance graduates' employability	Fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives in rapidly changing labour markets - characterized by technological developments, the emergence of new job profiles, and increasing opportunities for employment and self-employment - is a major goal of the EHEA.	developing study programmes combining academic quality with relevance to lasting employability and called for a continued proactive role of HEI		EMPLOYABILITY
Competition on a global scale will be complemented by enhanced policy dialogue and cooperation based on partnership with other regions of the world, in particular through the organisation of Bologna Policy Fora, involving a variety of stakeholders.	The Bologna Policy Forum will continue as an opportunity for dialogue and its format will be further developed with our global partners.	Through policy dialogue and exchange of good practice, we will provide targeted support to member countries experiencing difficulties in implementing the agreed goals and enable those who wish to go further to do so.	As a follow-up to the Bologna Policy Forum, we mandate the BFUG to enter into a global policy dialogue to improve regular cooperation with other regions and international organisations.	We will engage in wide-ranging policy dialogue on how to implement the principles and guidelines fully at national level.	POLICY DIALOGUE
	We welcome the clear reference to ECTS, to the European Qualifications Framework and to learning outcomes in the European Commission's proposal for a revision of the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications.	Revised ECTS Users' Guide, as an official EHEA document	ECTS-based short cycle qualifications play an increasingly important role in preparing students for employment and further studies as well in improving social cohesion by facilitating access for many who would otherwise not have considered higher education.	"Key Commitments" essential for the functioning of the EHEA: ECTS, etc.	ECTS

	1999 Bologna Declaration	2001 Prague Communiqué	2003 Berlin Communiqué	2005 Bergen Communiqué	2007 London Communiqué
LIFELONG LEARNING		Recognized the need for a lifelong learning perspective on education	Making lifelong learning a reality	Proposed broader framework for qualifications for lifelong learning	To work towards a common understanding of the role of higher education in lifelong learning
RESEARCH/ ERA			Conscious of the need to promote closer links between the EHEA and the ERA in a Europe of Knowledge, and of the importance of research as an integral part of higher education across Europe, Ministers consider it necessary to go beyond the present focus on two main cycles of higher education to include the doctoral level as the third cycle	Recognise the need to improve the synergy between the higher education sector and other research sectors throughout our respective countries and between the EHEA and the ERA	Closer alignment of the EHEA with the ERA remains an important objective.
VALUES			Ministers declare that transnational exchanges in higher education should be governed on the basis of academic quality and academic values, and agree to work in all appropriate fora to that end.	We reiterate that in international academic cooperation, academic values should prevail.	We recognise the important influence higher education institutions (HEIs) exert on developing our societies, based on their traditions as centres of learning, research, creativity and knowledge transfer as well as their key role in defining and transmitting the values on which our societies are built.

2009 Leuven Louvain-La- Neuve	2012 Bucharest Communique	2015 Yerevan Communique	2018 Paris Communique	2020 Rome Communique	
The implementation of lifelong learning policies requires strong partnerships between public authorities, higher education institutions, students, employers and employees.	Lifelong learning is one of the important factors in meeting the needs of a changing labour market, and HEI	To widen participation in higher education and support institutions that provide relevant learning activities in appropriate contexts for different types of learners, including lifelong learning	Open education in the context of lifelong learning/Lifelong learning is increasingly important to our societies and economies as well as to our citizens' wellbeing	Must be offered up-skilling and reskilling opportunities in a lifelong learning perspective, and enabled to develop and apply new technologies and approaches.	LIFELONG LEARNING
	Explore how to promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, as the education and training of doctoral candidates has a particular role in bridging the EHEA and the ERA.	We will also strengthen the links between the EHEA and the ERA	We call on the BFUG to establish interaction with the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) by 2020 in order to develop synergies between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA)	We call for the BFUG to work closely with the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) to enhance synergies and alignment between education and research and innovation policies.	RESEARCH/ ERA
The necessary ongoing reform of higher education systems and policies will continue to be firmly embedded in the European values of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and social equity and will require full participation of students and staff.	We commit to supporting the engagement of students and staff in governance structures at all levels and reiterate our commitment to autonomous and accountable higher education institutions that embrace academic freedom.	Academic freedom Autonomous higher Education institutions Religious tolerance Gender equality Democratic and civic values	Academic freedom and integrity, institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, and public responsibility for and of higher education form the backbone of the EHEA. Having seen these fundamental values challenged in recent years in some of our countries, we strongly commit to promoting and protecting them in the entire EHEA through intensified political dialogue and cooperation.	We reaffirm our commitment to promoting and protecting our shared fundamental values in the entire EHEA through intensified political dialogue and cooperation as the necessary basis for quality learning, teaching and research as well as for democratic societies.	VALUES

	1999 Bologna Declaration	2001 Prague Communiqué	2003 Berlin Communiqué	2005 Bergen Communiqué	2007 London Communiqué
RESOURCES FUNDING			With a view to promoting student mobility, Ministers will take the necessary steps to enable the portability of national loans and grants.	We reconfirm our commitment to facilitate the portability of grants and loans where appropriate through joint action, with a view to making mobility within the EHEA a reality. We undertake to ensure that HEI enjoy the necessary autonomy to implement the agreed reforms, and we recognise the need for sustainable funding of institutions.	Ensure that the HEIs have the necessary resources to continue to fulfil their full ranges of purpose. We therefore underline the importance of strong institutions, which are diverse, adequately funded, autonomous and accountable.
RESEARCH & INNOVATION			The efforts to introduce structural change and improve the quality of teaching should not detract from the effort to strengthen research and innovation.	The efforts to introduce structural change and improve the quality of teaching should not detract from the effort to strengthen research and innovation.	Stimulating research and innovation
MONITORING & DATA COLLECTION			Ministers stress the need for more comparable data on the social and economic situation of students.	We also charge the Follow-up Group with presenting comparable data on the mobility of staff and students as well as on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries as a basis for future stocktaking and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference.	We underline the importance of improving graduate employability, whilst noting that data gathering on this issue needs to be developed further. 3.4 We recognise the need to improve the availability of data on both mobility and the social dimension across all the countries participating in the Bologna Process.

2009 Leuven Louvain-La- Neuve	2012 Bucharest Communiqué	2015 Yerevan Communiqué	2018 Paris Communiqué	2020 Rome Communiqué	
Within a framework of public responsibility we confirm that public funding remains the main priority to guarantee equitable access and further sustainable development of autonomous higher education institutions. Greater attention should be paid to seeking new and diversified funding sources and methods.	We reiterate our commitment to full portability of national grants and loans across the EHEA and call on the EU to underpin this endeavour through its policies. We commit to securing the highest possible level of public funding for higher education and drawing on other appropriate sources, as an investment in our future.	To promote the portability of grants and loans taking into account the guidelines from the Working group on mobility and internationalization;		We commit to supporting our higher education institutions in bringing their educational, research and innovation capacities to bear on these fundamental global objectives and to deploying resources to ensure that our higher education systems contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.	RESOURCES FUNDING
Higher education should be based at all levels on state of the art research and development thus fostering innovation and creativity in society. We recognise the potential of higher education programmes, including those based on applied science, to foster innovation.	Research		Students should encounter research or activities linked to research and innovation at all levels of higher education to develop the critical and creative mind-sets which will enable them to find novel solutions to emerging challenges.	Core missions: learning and teaching, research and innovation; etc.	RESEARCH & INNOVATION
21. Improved and enhanced data collection will help monitor progress made in the attainment of the objectives set out in the social dimension, employability and mobility agendas, as well as in other policy areas, and will serve as a basis for both stocktaking and benchmarking.	Improvement of data collection and transparency to underpin political goals We welcome the improved quality of data and information on higher education. We ask for more targeted data collection and referencing against common indicators, particularly on employability, the social dimension, lifelong learning, internationalisation, portability of grants/loans, and student and staff mobility.	We need more precise measurement of performance as a basis for reporting from member countries.			MONITORING & DATA COLLECTION

1999 Bologna
Declaration

2001 Prague
Communique

2003 Berlin
Communique

2005 Bergen
Communique

2007 London
Communique

DIGITALISATION

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

2009 Leuven Louvain-La- Neuve	2012 Bucharest Communique	2015 Yerevan Communique	2018 Paris Communique	2020 Rome Communique	
			<p>To further promote student and graduate mobility, we welcome and support initiatives such as the digitalisation of the Diploma Supplement, and commit to support higher education institutions to pursue further student data exchange in a secure, machine-readable and interoperable format, in line with data protection legislation.</p>	<p>Digitalisation has allowed most of our systems to continue to function during the COVID-19 pandemic, although the intensified use of digital means has brought to light certain limits. With its consolidated experience of transnational and international cooperation and research, higher education must take a leading role in exploring and advising on how to address and overcome these limitations.</p>	DIGITALISATION
			<p>We commit to developing the role of higher education in securing a sustainable future for our planet and our societies and to finding ways in which we, as EHEA Ministers, can contribute to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at global, European and national levels.</p>	<p>Higher education will be a key actor in meeting the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.</p>	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT RECURRING THEMES

Learning and Teaching

Leuven Communiqué 2009

The Leuven Communiqué (2009) acknowledges the challenges and opportunities of globalisation and technological advancements in European higher education. It sets the foundation for student-centered learning and the teaching mission of higher education.

“ *European higher education also faces the major challenge and the ensuing opportunities of globalisation and accelerated technological developments with new providers, new learners and new types of learning. Student-centred learning and mobility will help students develop the competences they need in a changing labour market and will empower them to become active and responsible citizens. Student-centred learning and the teaching mission of higher education*
We reassert the importance of the teaching mission of higher education institutions and the necessity for ongoing curricular reform geared toward the development of learning outcomes. Student-centred learning requires empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner in all three cycles. Curricular reform will thus be an ongoing process leading to high quality, flexible and more individually tailored education paths. We ask the higher education institutions to pay particular attention to improving the teaching quality of their study programmes at all levels. This should be a priority in the further implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance. ”

Budapest Vienna Declaration 2010

Building on the previous Communiqué, the Budapest Vienna Declaration (2010) calls for fostering student-centered learning and cooperation among teachers and researchers. It emphasizes the cooperation of teachers and researchers in international networks to facilitate inspiring working and learning environments.

“ *We call upon all actors involved to facilitate an inspiring working and learning environment and to foster student-centred learning as a way of empowering the learner in all forms of education, providing the best solution for sustainable and flexible learning paths. This also requires the cooperation of teachers and researchers in international networks.* ”

Bucharest Communiqué 2012

The Bucharest Communiqué (2012) reiterates the commitment to student-centered learning, innovative teaching methods, and creating a supportive environment.

“ *We reiterate our commitment to promote student-centred learning in higher education, characterised by innovative methods of teaching that involve students as active participants in their own learning.* ”

Together with institutions, students and staff, we will facilitate a supportive and inspiring working and learning environment.

At the national level, together with the relevant stakeholders, and especially with higher education institutions, we will:

Establish conditions that foster student-centred learning, innovative teaching methods and a supportive and inspiring working and learning environment, while continuing to involve students and staff in governance structures at all levels.

”

Yerevan Communiqué 2015

The Yerevan Communiqué (2015) focuses on enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching in higher education. It emphasizes pedagogical innovation, the integration of digital technologies, and the promotion of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It highlights the importance of transparent learning outcomes, flexible learning paths, and involving students and stakeholders in curriculum design and quality assurance processes.

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Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching is the main mission of the EHEA. We will encourage and support higher education institutions and staff in promoting pedagogical innovation in student-centred learning environments and in fully exploiting the potential benefits of digital technologies for learning and teaching. We will promote a stronger link between teaching, learning and research at all study levels, and provide incentives for institutions, teachers and students to intensify activities that develop creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Study programmes should enable students to develop the competences that can best satisfy personal aspirations and societal needs, through effective learning activities. These should be supported by transparent descriptions of learning outcomes and workload, flexible learning paths and appropriate teaching and assessment methods. It is essential to recognize and support quality teaching, and to provide opportunities for enhancing academics' teaching competences. Moreover, we will actively involve students, as full members of the academic community, as well as other stakeholders, in curriculum design and in quality assurance.

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Paris Communiqué 2018

The Paris Communiqué (2018) highlights the core mission of the Bologna Process, which is to ensure and enhance the quality and relevance of learning and teaching. It emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning and calls for cooperation in innovative learning and teaching practices. It encourages the development of new approaches for continuous enhancement of learning and teaching, fostering social mobility, and combining academic and work-based learning. It also stresses the need to link teaching, learning, and research.

“

Innovation in Learning and Teaching

For the past 20 years, the core mission of the Bologna Process and the main objective of structural reforms have been to ensure and enhance the quality and relevance of learning and teaching. Lifelong learning is increasingly important to our societies and economies as well as to our citizens' wellbeing. Now it is time to add cooperation in innovative learning and teaching practices as another hallmark of the EHEA. We therefore commit to developing new and inclusive approaches for continuous enhancement of learning and teaching across the EHEA, and can succeed only if we do so in close collaboration with the European higher education community, in full respect of academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The success of the European Learning and Teaching Forum launched by the European University Association last year demonstrates the value and potential of collaboration in learning and teaching, with tangible benefits for higher education institutions, staff and students.

Therefore, in addition to measures at national level, we will develop joint European initiatives to support and stimulate a wide range of innovative learning and teaching practices, building on existing good practice in our countries and beyond.

This will encompass the further development and full implementation of student-centred learning and open education in the context of lifelong learning. Study programmes that provide diverse learning methods and flexible learning can foster social mobility and continuous professional development whilst enabling learners to access and complete higher education at any stage of their lives. We will support higher education institutions to develop and enhance their strategies for learning and teaching. We also encourage them to provide inter-disciplinary programmes as well as to combine academic and work-based learning. Students should encounter research or activities linked to research and innovation at all levels of higher education to develop the critical and creative mindsets which will enable them to find novel solutions to emerging challenges. In this regard, we commit to improving synergies between education, research and innovation.

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Rome Communiqué 2020

The Rome Communiqué (2020) adopts recommendations for the enhancement of higher education learning and teaching. It emphasizes the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching, the support of digital technologies for learning and assessment, and the development of digital skills for all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of stable employment and career opportunities for academic staff, as well as the promotion of open science and education.

“

We adopt the “Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA” (Annex III) and commit to follow them, supporting higher education institutions in further implementing student-centred learning and teaching. The recommendations comprise increased support for all learners, and for teaching and non-teaching staff. Academic staff, including junior academics, require stable employment and career opportunities, parity of esteem for teaching and research, attractive working conditions, access to up-to-date staff development, and recognition of their achievements. In all these respects we will foster dialogue and collaboration on learning and teaching in our national systems and at EHEA level.

We commit to supporting our higher education institutions in using digital technologies for learning, teaching and assessment, as well as for academic communication and research, and to investing in the development of digital skills and competences for all. We commit to the development of open science and education to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and openly licensed materials that can be easily shared among higher education stakeholders, who can adapt and repurpose them for their needs.”

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Quality Assurance

Prague Communiqué 2001

Ministers recognized the importance of quality assurance systems in ensuring high standards and comparability of qualifications. They encouraged cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks and the dissemination of best practices. The focus was on mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation mechanisms.

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Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance

Ministers recognized the vital role that quality assurance systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe. They also encouraged closer cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks. They emphasized the necessity of close European cooperation and mutual trust in and acceptance of national quality assurance systems. Further they encouraged universities and other higher education institutions to disseminate examples of best practice and to design scenarios for mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation/certification mechanisms. Ministers called upon the universities and other higher education institutions, national agencies and the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), in cooperation with corresponding bodies from countries which are not members of ENQA, to collaborate in establishing a common framework of reference and to disseminate best practice.

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Berlin Communiqué 2003

Ministers committed to supporting the further development of quality assurance at institutional, national, and European levels. They stressed the need for shared criteria and methodologies and emphasize institutional responsibility for quality assurance. The introduction of a set of elements for the national quality assurance systems was highlighted, along with definition of the responsibilities of the bodies involved, a system of accreditation or comparable procedures, etc.

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The quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area. Ministers commit themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level. They stress the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance.

They also stress that consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.

Therefore, they agree that by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include:

- *A definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.*
- *Evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results.*
- *A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.*
- *International participation, co-operation and networking.*

At the European level, Ministers call upon ENQA through its members, in co-operation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESIB, to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the Follow-up Group to Ministers in 2005. Due account will be taken of the expertise of other quality assurance associations and networks.

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Bergen Communiqué 2005

Progress was made in quality assurance systems, while there was a need of further progress on student involvement and international cooperation. Higher education institutions were urged to enhance the quality of their activities through internal mechanisms linked to external quality assurance. The adoption of European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA is introduced, along with the proposal for a peer review system and a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies.

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Almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking.

However, there is still progress to be made, in particular as regards student involvement and international cooperation. Furthermore, we urge higher education institutions to continue their efforts to enhance the quality of their activities through the systematic introduction of internal mechanisms and their direct correlation to external quality assurance.

We adopt the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area as proposed by ENQA. We commit ourselves to introducing the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies on a national basis, while respecting the commonly accepted guidelines and criteria. We welcome the principle of a European register of quality assurance agencies based on national review. We ask that the practicalities of implementation be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB with a report back to us through the Follow-up Group. We underline the importance of cooperation between nationally recognised agencies with a view to enhancing the mutual recognition of accreditation or quality assurance decisions.

Quality Assurance and a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA adopted in Bergen (ESG) have been a powerful driver of change in relation to quality assurance. All countries have started to implement them and some have made substantial progress. External quality assurance in particular is much better developed than before. The extent of student involvement at all levels has increased since 2005, although improvement is still necessary. Since the main responsibility for quality lies with HEIs, they should continue to develop their systems of quality assurance. We acknowledge the progress made with regard to mutual recognition of accreditation and quality assurance decisions, and encourage continued international cooperation amongst quality assurance agencies.

The first European Quality Assurance Forum, jointly organised by EUA, ENQA, EURASHE and ESIB (the E4 Group) in 2006 provided an opportunity to discuss European developments in quality assurance. We encourage the four organisations to continue to organise European Quality Assurance Fora on an annual basis, to facilitate the sharing of good practice and ensure that quality in the EHEA continues to improve.

We thank the E4 Group for responding to our request to further develop the practicalities of setting up a Register of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies. The purpose of the register is to allow all stakeholders and the general public open access to objective information about trustworthy quality assurance agencies that are working in line with the ESG. It will therefore enhance confidence in higher education in the EHEA and beyond, and facilitate the mutual recognition of quality assurance and accreditation decisions. We welcome the establishment of a register by the E4 group, working in partnership, based on their proposed operational model. The register will be voluntary, self-financing, independent and transparent. Applications for inclusion on the register should be evaluated on the basis of substantial compliance with the ESG, evidenced through an independent review process endorsed by national authorities, where this endorsement is required by those authorities. We ask the E4 group to report progress to us regularly through BFUG, and to ensure that after two years of operation, the register is evaluated externally, taking account of the views of all stakeholders.

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Leuven Communiqué 2009

The adoption of the three-cycle structure and the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance was mentioned. The focus was on the European Quality Assurance Register and the need for external evaluation.

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The Bologna Process is leading to greater compatibility and comparability of the systems of higher education and is making it easier for learners to be mobile and for institutions to attract students and scholars from other continents. Higher education is being modernized with the adoption of a three-cycle structure including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications linked to the first cycle and with the adoption of the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance. We have also seen the creation of a European register for quality assurance agencies and the establishment of national qualifications frameworks linked to the overarching European Higher Education Area framework, based on learning outcomes and workload.

We ask the E4 group (ENQA-EUA-EURASHE-ESU) to continue its cooperation in further developing the European dimension of quality assurance and in particular to ensure that the European Quality Assurance Register is evaluated externally, taking into account the views of the stakeholders. ”

Bucharest Communiqué 2012

The importance of quality assurance for building trust and reinforcing attractiveness is emphasized. The need for the revision of the European Standards and Guidelines is introduced, along with the external evaluation of the European Quality Assurance Register. The priority is given to allowing EQAR registered quality assurance agencies to perform activities across the EHEA.

“ *Quality assurance is essential for building trust and to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA's offerings, including in the provision of cross-border education. We commit to both maintaining the public responsibility for quality assurance and to actively involve a wide range of stakeholders in this development. We acknowledge the ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE (the E4 group) report on the implementation and application of the “European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance” (ESG). We will revise the ESG to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness, including their scope. The revision will be based upon an initial proposal to be prepared by the E4 in cooperation with Education International, BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), which will be submitted to the Bologna Follow-Up Group.*

We welcome the external evaluation of EQAR and we encourage quality assurance agencies to apply for registration. We will allow EQAR-registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements. In particular, we will aim to recognise quality assurance decisions of EQAR-registered agencies on joint and double degree programmes. Setting out priorities for 2012-2015

Having outlined the main EHEA goals in the coming years, we set out the following priorities for action by 2015.

At the national level, together with the relevant stakeholders, and especially with higher education institutions, we will:

Allow EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements; ”

Yerevan Communiqué 2015

The revised Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance and the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes are mentioned as policy measures adopted.

“ *Policy measures adopted*
The revised Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes ”

Paris Communiqué 2018

The progress in implementing the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance is recognized, and the promotion of joint programs and the respective use of the European Approach for Quality Assurance are highlighted. The development of the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) is mentioned. It introduces the concept of key commitments to reinforce and support of the quality assurance through a thematic peer group.

“ *Quality assurance is key in developing mutual trust as well as increasing mobility and fair recognition of qualifications and study periods throughout the EHEA. We therefore recognize the progress made in implementing the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) into national and institutional practice in most countries, and we commit to removing the remaining obstacles to their implementation in national legislations and regulations. In order to encourage the development of more joint programmes and joint degrees, we will also enable and promote the use of the “European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes” in our higher education systems. We welcome and will promote the development of the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR). In 2018-2020, thematic peer groups will focus on three key commitments crucial to reinforcing and supporting quality and cooperation inside the EHEA: and quality assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.* ”

Rome Communiqué 2020

The affirmation of the determination to seeing the key commitments carried out in full, including Quality Assurance according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, is emphasised. Automatic recognition at the system level for qualifications meeting quality assurance criteria is introduced, along with the encouragement of digital certification systems and the enhancement-oriented use of the European Standards and Guidelines.

“ *In the 2018 Paris Ministerial Conference we decided to devote special effort to completing implementation of three “Key Commitments” essential for the functioning of the EHEA: the Qualifications Frameworks and ECTS, the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Diploma Supplement, and Quality Assurance according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). We reconfirm our determination to see the Key Commitments fully implemented. We ask the BFUG to continue to employ the peer support method to achieve this. We commit to the continued participation in and contribution to this effort. We will make the necessary legislative changes to guarantee automatic recognition at system level for qualifications delivered in EHEA countries where quality assurance operates in compliance with the ESG and where a fully operational national qualifications framework has been established. We also encourage the application of agreed and secure systems of digital certification and com-*

munication such as blockchain, as well as the further development of the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) to facilitate automatic recognition.

We acknowledge the progress made in the development of quality assurance systems aligned with the ESG, and we commit to removing the remaining obstacles, including those related to the cross-border operation of EQAR registered agencies and the application of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. We commit to ensuring that our external quality assurance arrangements cover transnational higher education in the EHEA with equal standards as for domestic provision. In view of the need for increased flexibility and openness of learning paths, smaller units of learning and greater synergies among higher education institutions, we encourage an enhancement-oriented use of the ESG to support innovation in higher education and its quality assurance.

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Recognition

Prague Communiqué 2001

The Prague Communiqué highlighted the importance of promoting academic and professional recognition of qualifications within the European Higher Education Area. It emphasised the need for universities and institutions to utilize existing national legislation and European tools to facilitate recognition. The aim was to ensure that citizens can effectively use their qualifications and skills throughout Europe. The Communiqué called for closer cooperation among organizations and networks like NARIC and ENIC to promote simple, efficient, and fair recognition that reflects the diversity of qualifications.

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Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
Ministers strongly encouraged universities and other higher education institutions to take full advantage of existing national legislation and European tools aimed at facilitating academic and professional recognition of course units, degrees and other awards, so that citizens can effectively use their qualifications, competencies and skills throughout the European Higher Education Area. Ministers called upon existing organisations and networks such as NARIC and ENIC to promote, at institutional, national and European level, simple, efficient and fair recognition reflecting the underlying diversity of qualifications.

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Berlin Communiqué 2003

The implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the use of Diploma Supplements, and the importance of widely spoken European languages for better transparency and flexibility were highlighted.

“

First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second

cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.

Recognition of degrees: Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees

Ministers underline the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process, and call on the ENIC and NARIC networks along with the competent National Authorities to further the implementation of the Convention.

They set the objective that every student graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge. It should be issued in a widely spoken European language.

They appeal to institutions and employers to make full use of the Diploma Supplement, so as to take advantage of the improved transparency and flexibility of the higher education degree systems, for fostering employability and facilitating academic recognition for further studies.

”

Bergen Communiqué 2005

The Bergen Communiqué acknowledged the progress made in ratifying the Lisbon Recognition Convention. It emphasised the need for full implementation of the convention's principles and the incorporation of these principles into national legislation. The Communiqué called on participating countries to address recognition problems identified by the ENIC/NARIC networks and develop national action plans to improve recognition processes. It also emphasised the importance of joint degrees and the recognition of prior learning for lifelong learning in higher education.

“

Recognition of degrees and study periods

We note that 36 of the 45 participating countries have now ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention. We urge those that have not already done so to ratify the Convention without delay. We commit ourselves to ensuring the full implementation of its principles, and to incorporating them in national legislation as appropriate. We call on all participating countries to address recognition problems identified by the ENIC/NARIC networks. We will draw up national action plans to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications. These plans will form part of each country's national report for the next Ministerial Conference. We express support for the subsidiary texts to the Lisbon Recognition

Convention and call upon all national authorities and other stakeholders to recognise joint degrees awarded in two or more countries in the EHEA.

We see the development of national and European frameworks for qualifications as an opportunity to further embed lifelong learning in higher education. We will work with higher education institutions and others to improve recognition of prior learning including, where possible, non-formal and informal learning for access to, and as elements in, higher education programmes.

We charge the Follow-up Group with continuing and widening the stocktaking process and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. We expect stocktaking to be based on the appropriate methodology and to continue in the fields of the degree system, quality assurance and recognition of degrees and study periods, and by 2007 we will have largely completed the implementation of these three intermediate priorities.

In particular, we shall look for progress in:

- *the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level;*
- *creating opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, including procedures for the recognition of prior learning.*

”

London Communiqué 2007

It underscored the importance of fair recognition of higher education qualifications, study periods, and prior learning within the EHEA, including non-formal and informal learning. The Communiqué encouraged the remaining members to ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention and called for more coherent recognition practices. It also highlighted the role of the ENIC/NARIC networks in analyzing national action plans and spreading good practices.

“

Recognition

2.5 Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components of the EHEA, both internally and in a global context. Easily readable and comparable degrees and accessible information on educational systems and qualifications frameworks are prerequisites for citizens' mobility and ensuring the continuing attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. While we are pleased that 38 members of the Bologna Process, including Montenegro, have now ratified the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European region (Lisbon Recognition Convention), we urge the remaining members to do so as a matter of priority.

2.6 There has been progress in the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), ECTS and diploma supplements, but the range of national and institutional approaches to recognition needs to be more coherent. To improve recognition practices, we therefore ask the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) to arrange for the ENIC/NARIC networks to analyse our national action plans and spread good practice.

”

Leuven Communiqué 2009

It emphasised the need for flexible study paths, recognition of prior learning, and support services to ensure equitable access for all.

“

Missing specific policies for the recognition.

Successful policies for lifelong learning will include basic principles and procedures for recognition of prior learning on the basis of learning outcomes regardless of whether the knowledge, skills and competences were acquired through formal, non-formal, or informal learning paths. Lifelong learning will be supported by adequate organizational structures and funding. Lifelong learning

encouraged by national policies should inform the practice of higher education institutions. Flexible study paths and active information policies, full recognition of study achievements, study support and the full portability of grants and loans are necessary requirements.

”

Bucharest Communiqué 2012

It emphasised the importance of fair academic and professional recognition within the EHEA. It aimed to remove obstacles hindering effective recognition and work towards the automatic recognition of comparable academic degrees as a long-term goal. The Communiqué called for the review of national legislation to comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and encouraged the use of the European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual. It emphasised the role of higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in assessing recognition procedures and advancing recognition practices.

“

We welcome the clear reference to ECTS, to the European Qualifications Framework and to learning outcomes in the European Commission's proposal for a revision of the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications. We underline the importance of taking appropriate account of these elements in recognition decisions.

Fair academic and professional recognition, including recognition of non-formal and informal learning, is at the core of the EHEA. It is a direct benefit for students' academic mobility, it improves graduates' chances of professional mobility and it represents an accurate measure of the degree of convergence and trust attained. We are determined to remove outstanding obstacles hindering effective and proper recognition and are willing to work together towards the automatic recognition of comparable academic degrees, building on the tools of the Bologna framework, as a long-term goal of the EHEA. We therefore commit to reviewing our national legislation to comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. We welcome the European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual and recommend its use as a set of guidelines for recognition of foreign qualifications and a compendium of good practices, as well as encourage higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies to assess institutional recognition procedures in internal and external quality assurance.

At the national level, together with the relevant stakeholders, and especially with higher education institutions, we will:

Review national legislation to fully comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and promote the use of the EAR-manual to advance recognition practices;

”

Yerevan Communiqué 2015

It highlighted the commitment to review national legislations for full compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. It emphasised the importance of removing obstacles to the recognition

of prior learning, improving recognition of qualifications held by refugees, and reviewing national qualifications frameworks. The Communiqué also established a group for facilitating professional recognition and emphasised the role of lifelong learning in providing relevant learning activities for different types of learners.

“

Commitments

- *to review national legislations with a view to fully complying with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, reporting to the Bologna Secretariat by the end of 2016, and asking the Convention Committee, in cooperation with the ENIC and NARIC Networks, to prepare an analysis of the reports by the end of 2017, taking due account of the monitoring of the Convention carried out by the Convention Committee;*
- *to remove obstacles to the recognition of prior learning for the purposes of providing access to higher education programmes and facilitating the award of qualifications on the basis of prior learning, as well as encouraging higher education institutions to improve their capacity to recognize prior learning;*
- *to review national qualifications frameworks, with a view to ensuring that learning paths within the framework provide adequately for the recognition of prior learning;*
- *to establish a group of volunteering countries and organizations with a view to facilitating professional recognition;*

”

Paris Communiqué 2018

It emphasised the automatic recognition of higher education qualifications obtained in one EHEA country in others, ensuring full implementation of ECTS, and the adoption of transparent recognition procedures. The Communiqué encouraged the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, particularly for the recognition of qualifications held by refugees. It highlighted the revised Diploma Supplement and the need for interoperable digital solutions.

“

In order to further develop mobility and recognition across the EHEA, we will work to ensure that comparable higher education qualifications obtained in one EHEA country are automatically recognised on the same basis in the others, for the purpose of accessing further studies and the labour market. To this end we renew our commitment to ensure full implementation of ECTS, following the guidelines laid down in the 2015 ECTS Users' guide.

We will work to implement the Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention and its Recommendations, in particular on the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. We also urge the adoption of transparent procedures for the recognition of qualifications, prior learning and study periods, supported by interoperable digital solutions.

We approve the proposed revised Diploma Supplement and commit to working for its adoption in identical versions within the respective frameworks of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Europass.

”

Rome Communiqué 2020

The Rome Communiqué highlighted the reinforcement of the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the application of its principles to qualifications and study periods outside the EHEA. It emphasised the automatic recognition of academic qualifications and study periods within the EHEA to enable the free movement of students, staff, and graduates. The Communiqué called for necessary legislative changes to guarantee automatic recognition for qualifications delivered in EHEA countries with compliant quality assurance systems and operational national qualifications frameworks. It also emphasised fair recognition of qualifications held by refugees and supports the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees.

“ We will strengthen the implementation of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention and apply its principles to qualifications and periods of study outside the EHEA, using common assessment criteria and reports, in collaboration with the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC and NARIC Networks.
We will ensure automatic recognition of academic qualifications and periods of study within the EHEA so that students, staff and graduates are able to move freely to study, teach and do research. We will make the necessary legislative changes to guarantee automatic recognition at system level for qualifications delivered in EHEA countries where quality assurance operates in compliance with the ESG and where a fully operational national qualifications framework has been established. We also encourage the application of agreed and secure systems of digital certification and communication such as blockchain, as well as the further development of the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) to facilitate automatic recognition.
We commit to reviewing our own legislation, regulations, and practice to ensure fair recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in refugee-like situations, even when they cannot be fully documented, in accordance with Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. We welcome the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees and will support further broadening its use in our systems.”

Social Dimension

Prague Communiqué 2001

The Communiqué reaffirmed the importance of considering the social aspect of the Bologna process, as emphasized by students. Social Dimension was suggested as one of the areas to be explored.

“ Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process.
Ministers encouraged the follow-up group to arrange seminars to explore the following areas..., the social dimension, with specific attention to obstacles to mobility, and the enlargement of the Bologna process, lifelong learning, and student involvement.”

Berlin Communiqué 2003

The Berlin Communiqué (2003) emphasized the importance of the social dimension in higher education, aiming to strengthen social cohesion and reduce inequalities. It highlights the need for appropriate studying and living conditions for students and the availability of comparable data on students' social and economic situation.

“ *Ministers reaffirm the importance of the social dimension of the Bologna Process. The need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level. In that context, Ministers reaffirm their position that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility. They emphasise that in international academic cooperation and exchanges, academic values should prevail.*

Ministers stress the need for appropriate studying and living conditions for the students, so that they can successfully complete their studies within an appropriate period of time without obstacles related to their social and economic background. They also stress the need for more comparable data on the social and economic situation of students.

Ministers stress their commitment to making higher education equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means.

”

Bergen Communiqué 2005

The Bergen Communiqué (2005) focus remains on making quality higher education accessible to all and providing appropriate conditions for students. Governments are encouraged to take measures to support socially disadvantaged students, both financially and through guidance services. It also mentions the need for comparable data on mobility and students' social and economic situation.

“ *The social dimension of the Bologna Process is a constituent part of the EHEA and a necessary condition for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. We therefore renew our commitment to making quality higher education equally accessible to all, and stress the need for appropriate conditions for students so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. The social dimension includes measures taken by governments to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects and to provide them with guidance and counselling services with a view to widening access. We also charge the Follow-up Group with presenting comparable data on the mobility of staff and students as well as on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries as a basis for future stocktaking and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. The future stocktaking will have to take into account the social dimension as defined above.*

Social Dimension

Similarly, we will report on our national strategies and policies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to evaluate their effectiveness. We will invite all stakeholders to partic-

ipate in, and support this work, at the national level.

Data collection

We recognise the need to improve the availability of data on both mobility and the social dimension across all the countries participating in the Bologna Process.

”

London Communiqué 2007

The emphasis was on higher education's role in fostering social cohesion, reducing inequalities, and maximizing individuals' potential. It stressed the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their background. Efforts were directed towards providing adequate student services, flexible learning pathways, and widening participation based on equal opportunity.

“

Higher education should play a strong role in fostering social cohesion, reducing inequalities and raising the level of knowledge, skills and competences in society. Policy should therefore aim to maximise the potential of individuals in terms of their personal development and their contribution to a sustainable and democratic knowledge-based society. We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations. We reaffirm the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. We therefore continue our efforts to provide adequate student services, create more flexible learning pathways into and within higher education, and to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.

”

Leuven Communiqué 2009

The focus was on equitable access to higher education and providing equal opportunities for quality education. Efforts were directed towards widening participation and improving the learning environment. The goal was to reflect the diversity of populations and provide equal opportunities. Measurable targets for widening participation and increasing the participation of underrepresented groups are set.

“

Social dimension: equitable access and completion

The student body within higher education should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations. We therefore emphasize the social characteristics of higher education and aim to provide equal opportunities to quality education. Access into higher education should be widened by fostering the potential of students from underrepresented groups and by providing adequate conditions for the completion of their studies. This involves improving the learning environment, removing all barriers to study, and creating the appropriate economic conditions for students to be able to benefit from the study opportunities at all levels. Each participating country will set measurable targets for widening

overall participation and increasing participation of underrepresented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the next decade. Efforts to achieve equity in higher education should be complemented by actions in other parts of the educational system.

”

Bucharest Communiqué 2012

The importance of widening access and raising completion rates in higher education was reiterated. Efforts were made to develop the social dimension by reducing inequalities, providing student support services, counselling, and flexible learning paths. The need for data improvement on mobility and the social dimension was recognized.

“

Widening access to higher education is a precondition for societal progress and economic development. We agree to adopt national measures for widening overall access to quality higher education. We will work to raise completion rates and ensure timely progression in higher education in all EHEA countries.

The student body entering and graduating from higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations. We will step up our efforts towards underrepresented groups to develop the social dimension of higher education, reduce inequalities and provide adequate student support services, counselling and guidance, flexible learning paths and alternative access routes, including recognition of prior learning. We encourage the use of peer learning on the social dimension and aim to monitor progress in this area.

”

Yerevan Communiqué 2015

The goal was to make higher education systems more inclusive, reflecting population diversity. Efforts were directed towards widening participation, enhancing the social dimension, improving gender balance, and providing opportunities for access and completion for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

“

Making our systems more inclusive is an essential aim for the EHEA as our populations become more and more diversified, also due to immigration and demographic changes. We undertake to widen participation in higher education and support institutions that provide relevant learning activities in appropriate contexts for different types of learners, including lifelong learning. We will improve permeability and articulation between different education sectors. We will enhance the social dimension of higher education, improve gender balance and widen opportunities for access and completion, including international mobility, for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We will provide mobility opportunities for students and staff from conflict areas, while working to make it possible for them to return

home once conditions allow. We also wish to promote the mobility of teacher education students in view of the important role they will play in educating future generations of Europeans.

”

Paris Communiqué 2018

The focus was on strengthening the social dimension of higher education, improving access and completion for underrepresented and vulnerable groups. The BFUG was mandated to address this issue in the next Ministerial conference.

“We recognise that further effort is required to strengthen the social dimension of higher education. In order to meet our commitment that the student body entering and graduating from European higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe’s populations, we will improve access and completion by under-represented and vulnerable groups. Therefore, we mandate the BFUG to take this issue forward by the next EHEA Ministerial conference.”

”

Rome Communiqué 2020

The Rome Communiqué (2020) reaffirmed the commitment to socially inclusive higher education and emphasised the importance of providing opportunities and support for equitable inclusion of individuals from all parts of society. It highlights the need to reinforce social inclusion and enhance the quality of education while utilizing the new opportunities provided by digitalization. The document adopted principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension, encompassing a broadened understanding of social inclusion. It called for policy dialogue and support for higher education institutions in integrating these principles and guidelines into their core missions. The Communiqué also recognized the significance of safeguarding student rights through legislation and committed to developing dedicated measures and structures at the national level.

“

An inclusive EHEA

Socially inclusive higher education will remain at the core of the EHEA and will require providing opportunities and support for equitable inclusion of individuals from all parts of society. Learners with diverse socio-economic, professional, cultural and educational backgrounds must have the possibility and the tools to seek out and avail themselves, at any time of life, of the educational options most useful for them.

We commit to reinforcing social inclusion and enhancing quality education, using fully the new opportunities provided by digitalisation. While our societies increasingly rely on innovative technologies, including artificial intelligence, we must ensure that these observe ethical standards and human rights and foster inclusion. We recognize that digitalisation does not offer ‘one size fits all’ solutions, and ask the BFUG to propose ways in which all learners can benefit from the new technologies.

We adopt the “Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA”

(Annex II) based on a broadened understanding of the social dimension, and commit to implementing them in our systems. We will engage in wide-ranging policy dialogue on how to implement the principles and guidelines fully at national level. We will support our higher education institutions in integrating them into their institutional culture and core missions: learning and teaching, research and innovation, knowledge circulation and outreach, institutional governance and management. We ask the BFUG to report back to us in 2024 on the steps taken and the related monitoring measures to assure evidence-based follow-up.

We recognize the importance of safeguarding student rights through legislation; we commit to developing and supporting them in our national systems through dedicated measures and structures, such as student ombudspersons or similar solutions that already exist in many EHEA countries. ”

Qualifications Framework

Prague Communiqué 2001

Ministers recognized the importance of enhancing the readability and comparability of European higher education through the development of a common framework of qualifications, etc.

“ *The readability and comparability of European higher education degrees world-wide should be enhanced by the development of a common framework of qualifications, as well as by coherent quality assurance and accreditation/certification mechanisms and by increased information efforts.* ”

Berlin Communiqué 2003

Communiqué encouraged member states to establish a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems. It was emphasized the need for different outcomes and orientations for first and second cycle degrees, as well as the importance of linking shorter higher education programs to the qualifications framework.

“ Ministers encourage the member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. Within such frameworks, degrees should have different defined outcomes. First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs. First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.

Ministers invite the Follow-up Group to explore whether and how shorter higher education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area. Ministers furthermore call those working on qualifications frameworks for the European Higher Education Area to encompass the wide range of flexible learning paths, opportunities and techniques and to make appropriate use of the ECTS credits.

”

Bergen Communiqué 2005

The Communiqué adopted the overarching framework for qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) consisting of three cycles. It was committed to elaborating national qualifications frameworks compatible with the overarching framework and ensuring complementarity with the broader framework for lifelong learning.

“ *The degree system*

We note with satisfaction that the two-cycle degree system is being implemented on a large scale, with more than half of the students being enrolled in it in most countries. However, there are still some obstacles to access between cycles. Furthermore, there is a need for greater dialogue, involving Governments, institutions and social partners, to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including in appropriate posts within the public service.

We adopt the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. We commit ourselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007. We ask the Follow-up Group to report on the implementation and further development of the overarching framework.

We underline the importance of ensuring complementarity between the overarching framework for the EHEA and the proposed broader framework for qualifications for lifelong learning encompassing general education as well as vocational education and training as now being developed within the European Union as well as among participating countries. We ask the European Commission fully to consult all parties to the Bologna Process as work progresses.

To achieve these objectives, doctoral level qualifications need to be fully aligned with the EHEA overarching framework for qualifications using the outcomes-based approach. The core component

of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research. Considering the need for structured doctoral programmes and the need for transparent supervision and assessment, we note that the normal workload of the third cycle in most countries would correspond to 3-4 years full time.

”

London Communiqué 2007

It was acknowledged the importance of qualifications frameworks in achieving comparability and transparency within the EHEA. It was committed to fully implementing national qualifications frameworks certified against the overarching framework by 2010.

“

Qualifications Frameworks

2.7 Qualifications frameworks are important instruments in achieving comparability and transparency within the EHEA and facilitating the movement of learners within, as well as between, higher education systems. They should also help HEIs to develop modules and study programmes based on learning outcomes and credits, and improve the recognition of qualifications as well as all forms of prior learning.

2.8 We note that some initial progress has been made towards the implementation of national qualifications frameworks, but that much more effort is required. We commit ourselves to fully implementing such national qualifications frameworks, certified against the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA, by 2010. Recognising that this is a challenging task, we ask the Council of Europe to support the sharing of experience in the elaboration of national qualifications frameworks. We emphasise that qualification frameworks should be designed so as to encourage greater mobility of students and teachers and improve employability.

2.9 We are satisfied that national qualifications frameworks compatible with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA will also be compatible with the proposal from the European Commission on a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning.

2.10 We see the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA, which we agreed in Bergen, as a central element of the promotion of European higher education in a global context.

”

Leuven Communiqué 2009

It was aimed to have national frameworks implemented and prepared for self-certification against the overarching framework by 2012.

“

We have also seen the creation of a European register for quality assurance agencies and the establishment of national qualifications frameworks linked to the overarching European Higher Education Area framework, based on learning outcomes and workload.

12. The development of national qualifications frameworks is an important step towards the implementation of lifelong learning. We aim at having them implemented and prepared for self-

tification against the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area by 2012. This will require continued coordination at the level of the EHEA and with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Within national contexts, intermediate qualifications within the first cycle can be a means of widening access to higher education. ”

Bucharest Communiqué 2012

The Communiqué highlighted the progress in developing qualifications frameworks and emphasized the need for their everyday implementation. School leaving qualifications to give access to higher education was considered of being EQF level 4, or equivalents in other systems. It was suggested to explore ways to take account of short cycles.

“ We welcome the progress in developing qualifications frameworks; they improve transparency and will enable higher education systems to be more open and flexible. We acknowledge that realising the full benefits of qualifications frameworks can in practice be more challenging than developing the structures. The development of qualifications frameworks must continue so that they become an everyday reality for students, staff and employers. Meanwhile, some countries face challenges in finalising national frameworks and in self-certifying compatibility with the framework of qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA) by the end of 2012. These countries need to redouble their efforts and to take advantage of the support and experience of others in order to achieve this goal. A common understanding of the levels of our qualifications frameworks is essential to recognition for both academic and professional purposes. School leaving qualifications giving access to higher education will be considered as being of European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 4, or equivalent levels for countries not bound by the EQF, where they are included in National Qualifications Frameworks. We further commit to referencing first, second and third cycle qualifications against EQF levels 6, 7 and 8 respectively, or against equivalent levels for countries not bound by the EQF. We will explore how the QF-EHEA could take account of short cycle qualifications (EQF level 5) and encourage countries to use the QF-EHEA for referencing these qualifications in national contexts where they exist. We ask the Council of Europe and the European Commission to continue to coordinate efforts to make the respective qualifications frameworks work well in practice.

We welcome the clear reference to ECTS, to the European Qualifications Framework and to learning outcomes in the European Commission's proposal for a revision of the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications. We underline the importance of taking appropriate account of these elements in recognition decisions.

Setting out priorities for 2012-2015

Having outlined the main EHEA goals in the coming years, we set out the following priorities for action by 2015.

At the national level, together with the relevant stakeholders, and especially with higher education institutions, we will:

- *Ensure that qualifications frameworks, ECTS and Diploma Supplement implementation is based on learning outcomes;*

- *Invite countries that cannot finalise the implementation of national qualifications frameworks compatible with QF-EHEA by the end of 2012 to redouble their efforts and submit a revised roadmap for this task;*

At the European level, in preparation of the Ministerial Conference in 2015 and together with relevant stakeholders, we will:

- *Coordinate the work of ensuring that qualifications frameworks work in practice, emphasising their link to learning outcomes and explore how the QF-EHEA could take account of short cycle qualifications in national contexts;*

”

Yerevan Communiqué 2015

It was committed to include short cycle qualifications in the overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA, reviewing national qualifications frameworks to recognize prior learning adequately.

“

Commitments

- *to include short cycle qualifications in the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), based on the Dublin descriptors for short cycle qualifications and quality assured according to the ESG, so as to make provision for the recognition of short cycle qualifications in their own systems, also where these do not comprise such qualifications;*
- *to review national qualifications frameworks, with a view to ensuring that learning paths within the framework provide adequately for the recognition of prior learning;*

”

Paris Communiqué 2018

It was acknowledged the increasing role of ECTS-based short cycle qualifications and included them as a stand-alone qualification within the overarching qualifications framework of the EHEA. It was suggested to focus on reinforcing and supporting quality and cooperation, and the integration of short cycle qualifications within national frameworks.

“

In many of our systems, ECTS-based short cycle qualifications play an increasingly important role in preparing students for employment and further studies as well in improving social cohesion by facilitating access for many who would otherwise not have considered higher education. We are therefore including short-cycle qualifications as a stand-alone qualification within the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA). Each country can decide whether and how to integrate short cycle qualifications within its own national framework.

In 2018-2020, thematic peer groups will focus on three key commitments crucial to reinforcing and supporting quality and cooperation inside the EHEA:

a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS

Measures adopted:

Short cycle qualifications as a stand-alone qualification level within the overarching Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).

”

Rome Communiqué 2020

It was committed to complete and further develop national qualifications frameworks compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA.

“

We commit to completing and further developing the National Qualifications Frameworks compatible with the Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and ask the BFUG to update the criteria for self-certification to include a stronger element of peer review of national reports.

We mandate the Network of QF correspondents to continue its work, contributing to the further development of the QF-EHEA and the self-certification of national qualifications frameworks against it.

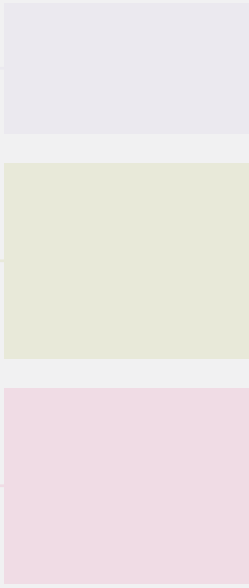
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CONCLUSIONS & TAKE-AWAYS ON STYLE AND CONTENT

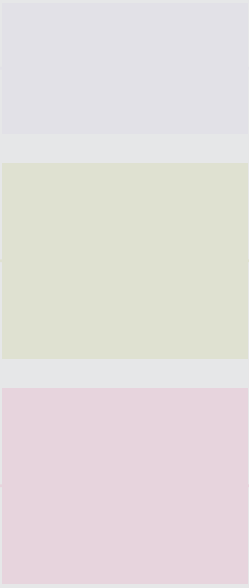
- The stylistic analysis was focused on tone (aspirational, narrative, narrative and prescriptive), point of view (first person plural, third person plural), other features (bullet points, paragraph numbering, presence of bibliography and indexes) and overall organization, which was generally composed of the following elements: introduction, reporting progress, future priorities, and future commitments.
 - Most Communiqués were either narrative, or a combination of narrative and prescriptive. Only two Communiqués (Bologna Declaration and Yerevan Communiqué) were aspirational.
 - The Communiqués were written in a third person point-of-view until the Berlin Communiqué; from the Bergen Communiqué, the first person plural was employed.
 - Most Communiqués tended to abide by the organization described above, with the exception of the Bologna Declaration (where all elements were combined in one Joint Declaration), the Yerevan Communiqué (where the introduction was defined, but reporting progress, future priorities and future commitments were merged in one category), and the Rome Communiqué (where reporting progress and future priorities were integrated seamlessly).
 - The Communiqués began including appendices starting from the Yerevan Communiqué.
 - Only the Bucharest Communiqué had a bibliography.
- The content format of the Rome Communiqué is explicit: vision, implementation, conclusions, and annexes.
- There are gaps between each subsequent Communiqué. Some subjects lack continuity or have no specific steps taken to carry out the commitments. For instance: Bucharest Communiqué mentions many details on Qualification Framework, while the Yerevan Communiqué uses only two commitments without any other explanation in the text.
- The Spring 2018 BFUGs were the first to propose a structure for the Communiqué (last updated document: 24 May 2018).
- In the same meetings, towards Paris2018, it was suggested that the Communiqué should be “more political and more ambitious, providing a vision for the years to come, including concrete commitments and ways to achieve them.”
- Since spring 2018 (towards Paris 2018), it has been proposed **to employ the verbs: “we commit to”** (first used in the Bergen Communiqué up to Paris one, 1-2 times, and multiply time at the Rome one), **“we ensure”** (used almost in every Communiqué, more in the Rome one but not as “we ensure” but it ensure/they should ensure) **instead of “we promote”** (used in all of the Communiqués without the “we”, not used at all in Rome) and **“we believe”** (only used in the Leuven one).
- The Yerevan Communiqué advocated a “renewed vision,” although this term was not employed in subsequent Communiqués.
- The term “vision” was used as a term and as a pledge in the Rome Communiqué, along with the words “inclusive,” “innovative,” and “interconnected,” with the target of 2030. Only in the last three Communiqués has the term “inclusive” been used. “Innovative,” along with “learning” and “teaching,” has been used in several Communiqués, but only in the Rome one as “innovative EHEA.” “Interconnected” has been used only in the Rome Communiqué in its vision and implementation goals.
- The term “sustainable” has been used in almost all the communiqués as an adjective to the “economy” , “society” ”and “development”. In Paris and Rome Communiqués the focus was to meet the **United Nations Sustainable Developments Goals**.



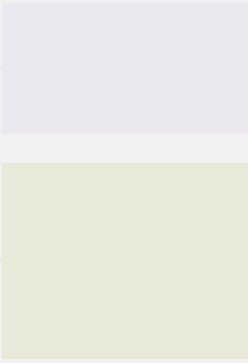
1999 Bologna Declaration



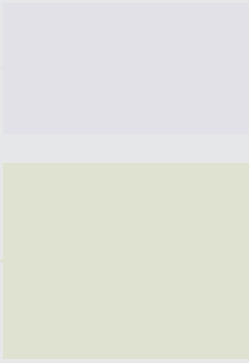
2001 Prague Communiqué



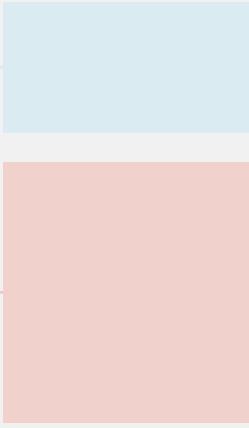
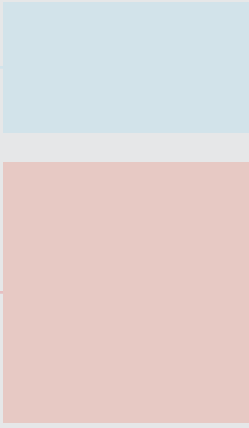
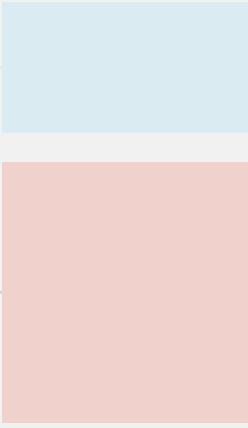
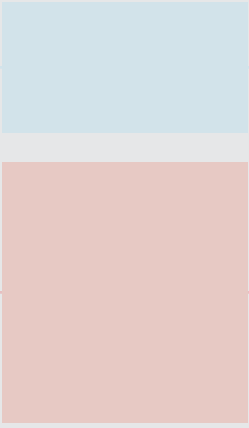
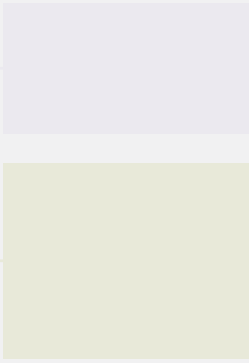
2003 Berlin Communiqué



2005 Bergen Communiqué



2007 London Communiqué





Kr. Pjeter Bogdani,
Pallati 8/1
Tirane
045 35 0000
<http://www.mcn.al>
NIPT K722230070

Tiranë: 11.04.2024

Report of potential problems for the EHEA.info website:

1. **Security Vulnerabilities:** Older PHP versions (5.6) may have known security vulnerabilities that can be exploited by attackers to compromise the website's security, leading to data breaches, malware infections, and other security incidents.
2. **Lack of Support:** Older PHP versions may no longer be supported by the PHP development team, which means that critical security patches and updates are not provided. This leaves the website vulnerable to security threats and makes it difficult to maintain and update.
3. **Compatibility Issues:** Websites built with very old PHP versions may encounter compatibility issues with newer software components, libraries, frameworks, and server configurations. This can lead to functionality problems, errors, and failures.
4. **Performance Limitations:** Older PHP versions may lack performance optimizations and improvements found in newer versions. This can result in slower website performance, longer response times, and decreased user experience.
5. **Deprecated Features:** PHP evolves over time, and older features may become deprecated or removed in newer versions. Websites built with deprecated features may experience compatibility issues and may require extensive refactoring to work with newer PHP versions, which can take a long time to address.
6. **Dependency Issues:** Websites built with very old PHP versions may rely on outdated third-party libraries, plugins, and extensions that are no longer maintained or supported. This can create dependency issues and make it difficult to update or replace these components. This was the case with the file upload library used in the website which is not working and a temporary replacement has been made which sometimes introduces bugs to files uploaded with the previous library. Issue can be fixed manually but takes time.
7. **Decreased Stability:** Older PHP versions may be less stable and reliable compared to newer versions. This can result in increased downtime, crashes, and errors, negatively impacting the website's availability and reliability.
8. **Difficulty Upgrading:** Upgrading from a very old PHP version to a newer version may require significant effort and resources, especially if the website relies on deprecated features or custom code that needs to be rewritten or refactored. This can result in downtime, disruption, and potential data loss during the upgrade process.
9. **Incompatibility with Hosting Providers:** Some hosting providers may not support very old PHP versions or may have restrictions on their usage. This can limit the choice of hosting providers and increase hosting costs for websites built with outdated PHP versions.

Endri Dafa

MC Networking



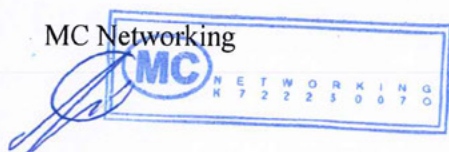
Tiranë: 11.04.2024

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Endri Dafa

MC Networking



Annex VIII: Staff Resume

Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi

Head of the Albanian BFUG Secretariat

Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi was born in 1972 in Kruja, Albania. Adi lived in Jerusalem, Israel from 1997 until 2019, when she moved to Rome, Italy. She is a graduate of two Master's degrees, in German language from the University of Tirana in Albania and Political Science, Public Administration and Local Governance from Bar Ilan University in Israel.

Her work experiences span 32 years, with 25 years specifically in the internationalisation of higher education, recognition of academic qualification and human capital development. Adi is fluent in several languages: Albanian as native language, highly proficient (C2) in English, Hebrew and Italian; proficient in German (C1), and fluent in Spanish (A2), French and Portuguese (A1). She is mother to Alon, her 19 years old son.

Adi worked at the Department for Evaluation of Foreign Academic Degrees (ENIC Israel), Division for External Relations and UNESCO at the Ministry of Education, in Jerusalem, holding several responsibilities (as Desk Manager, Senior Credential Evaluator, Expert on EU funded Programmes and Program Manager for the Contracting Authority on Decentralised Implementation of EU funded Euromed Youth Programme IV, to mention a few). From November 2018 to December 2020, she worked as a Senior Expert on Higher Education in the Italian BFUG Secretariat in Rome, Italy. Between March 2021 to September 2023, she worked as a Senior Expert on Higher Education for the Western Balkans, in the framework of AdReN Secretariat, implementing automatic recognition in the Adriatic Region. Adi has been a member of several panels and international conferences on the topics of her professional expertise and the know-how and has trained hundreds of Israeli stakeholders on higher education topics as well as EU funded project management. She has used her knowledge and expertise on EU funded programmes to design many activities, from single events to large scale projects, which were very successfully implemented to a wide Israeli audience, spanning from national authorities to the Israeli third sector stakeholders. She is actively involved in volunteering work with several associations on social matters close to her heart.

Adi joined the Albanian BFUG Secretariat in January 2023 in the position of Deputy Head and was appointed as Head of the Secretariat in March 2023

[LinkedIn profile](#)

Dr. Aida Myrto

Senior Expert

Dr. Aida Myrto is a Linguistics professor and a qualified e-Learning Expert, with a wealth of expertise in curriculum development, due to her long experience as a professor at Tirana University, a curricula co-author, as well as her involvement in a myriad of programs and degrees.

She has a Bachelor and Master's Degree in French Philology from Tirana University in 2005, an MBA from Montesquieu Bordeaux IV University and Tirana Polytechnic University in 2007, a Master's degree in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language from Pablo de Olavide University in Spain 2011, and a Ph.D. in Modern Language, Didactic, and Translation from the same university in 2016. She is also a certified international DELE examiner at all levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages from the Cervantes Institutions in Rome, Italy. She holds e-Learning and b-Learning certifications from UNED University, Nebrija University in Madrid, and Salamanca University in Salamanca, Spain, and she is highly fluent in Spanish, English, French, Italian, and fluent in Portuguese.

Aida's expertise was crucial in successfully adapting the national teaching curriculum into a distance and e-Learning format during the Covid-19 lockdown. She played an important role in completing the report on the internal accreditation process for her faculty department at the University of Tirana in 2022, focusing on learning and teaching standards, evaluation, and competencies. Aida has also made significant contributions to a range of areas of expertise, including conducting comparative and analytical research for the BPIR report and the National Strategy for Higher Education issued by the Ministry of Education in 2021.

As a member of the Secretariat, Aida has demonstrated excellent managerial and knowledge-based skills. She is responsible for ensuring that various content on the EHEA website is clearly and accurately published, and has carried out research for the first draft of the 2027 Ministerial Roadmap, which was sent to the Co-chairs in August 2022. Aida has also drafted the first proposal agendas for BFUG and Board Meetings from early 2021 to the present. With her extensive academic and professional background, Aida Myrto is a highly respected and valued expert in her field, and her contributions to curriculum development and e-Learning are widely recognized.

Dr. Enis Fita

Project Manager Expert

Dr. Enis FITA, was born in Tirana on 18.06.1975. He achieved outstanding results (106/110) in both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Political Science and International Relations from the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Siena in Italy from 1999 to 2004. In 2002 – 2003, as part of the Erasmus/Socrates exchange program, Enis completed an academic year at the Faculty of Law at the University of Nantes in France. He is fluent in several foreign languages, including English, Italian, and French.

Enis completed his Master's degree in European Studies in EU Politics and Governance at the University of Tirana from 2010 to 2012. He holds the degree "Doctor of Science" in Management (2017) rated "excellent", completed at the Faculty of Economics and Agribusiness at the Agricultural University of Tirana. Currently, he is a candidate for the title of Associate Professor.

Enis started his career as a lecturer in 2006, in several universities such as the University of Tirana, the Agricultural University of Tirana, University "Aleksandër Moisiu" Durrës, University College of Business, etc. Over the years, he has also been a leader with administrative leadership functions (Head of the Security and Internal Quality Unit; Departmental Responsibility; Deputy Dean for Science and Learning) in the activities of higher education institutions. He is working as an external expert for Licensure of Programmes and Higher Education Institutions at the Ministry of Educa-

tion and Sports, and as an external evaluation expert for Programme and Higher Education Institution Accreditation at the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. He is the author of several journalistic and scientific articles published both at home and abroad. Author of two university texts: “Communication and Effective Writing” and “Basics of Sociology and Psychology”.

Currently, he works as a Project Management Expert in the Secretariat of BFUG (Bologna Follow Up Group).

Manjola Hasa

Senior Communication Expert

Manjola Hasa graduated from the Faculty of History-Philology at the University of Tirana with a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and a Master's degree in Public Relations. She has a well-established experience as a journalist in the visual media and in writing in the most popular media outlets in the country, in the role of reporter and show host for almost two decades.

Manjola has also conducted trainings in Journalism, Communication, and Public Relations both locally and internationally. She is an accomplished designer of communication strategies for public institutions and non-governmental organisations and has received several professional awards for her objective reporting and attention to marginalised communities or victims of human trafficking.

In addition to her work in journalism and communication, Manjola has contributed to the academic field as a lecturer at the Faculty of Law at the University of Durrës, where she teaches Academic Writing. She is also involved in various academic initiatives and collaborations, including training and mentoring young journalists.

Currently, Manjola serves as the Director of Media Information at the Media and Information Agency, Council of Ministers. Since March 2022, she has also been engaged as an external communication expert in the Bologna Follow Up Group Secretariat in Tirana.

Kristina Metallari

Senior Expert

Kristina Metallari has a proven track record as a successful professional, providing strategic guidance and developing effective communication strategies for project implementation. She has worked with prestigious organisations such as the British Embassy, OSCE Presence in Albania, Yunus Social Business, and Erasmus Student Network UK.

In addition, she has extensive experience as an educational consultant, advising and consulting on BFUG Secretariat Hosted by Albania

educational practices by matching students with appropriate learning environments and education programs tailored to their preferences. She has also guided students through the college selection and application processes, offering consulting sessions regarding university help.

She holds a First-Class Honours Bachelor of Science in Management from Cass Business School, City University London, and has successfully completed a Bachelor of Business Administration Exchange Year at WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business) as well as a Business Studies Foundation Program at CATS Cambridge.

Ms. Metallari is a dedicated volunteer who has contributed to the Red Cross Youth in Albania, where she provided valuable administrative support. Additionally, she has served as a Study Abroad Advisor for Cass Business School. She is fluent in Albanian, English, Greek, and Turkish.

Ms. Metallari is recognized for her excellent communication skills, organisational abilities, and co-ordination prowess. She is deeply committed to education and firmly believes in its transformative power to effect positive change in individuals and communities alike.

Dr. Jora Vaso

Senior Expert

Jora Vaso is an accomplished professional with extensive experience in academia and international organisations. She joined the Albanian BFUG Secretariat in April 2022 as a Senior Expert, where she brings her expertise and personal experience in academia and higher education initiatives to her role.

Jora's academic background is multidisciplinary. She completed her PhD in Comparative Literature, specialising in English Philology, from the Pomeranian University in Slupsk, Poland in 2021. She also holds two Bachelor's degrees, one in Comparative Literature and the other in Advertising, from the University of Georgia in Athens, GA, USA. Additionally, she earned a Master's degree in International Business from Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA, USA.

With a strong foundation in academia, Jora is a lecturer, published scholar, writer, translator, and editor. Her expertise in Comparative Literature and her fluency in English, Albanian, Italian, and French enable her to communicate and engage with diverse audiences. Most recently, she taught English and Comparative Literature at higher education institutions in Poland, including the University of Slupsk and the Gdansk Banking College.

Jora has also made significant contributions to her home country. In 2015, as the Director of Projects at the NGO Global Opportunities Albania, she organised the very first international summer school of entrepreneurship (BIESS), which has been held successfully every summer since then. Her passion for promoting educational opportunities and entrepreneurship reflects her commitment to making a positive impact in her community.

Currently based in Tirana, Albania, Jora continues to actively engage in research, writing, and guest lecturing on literary studies in various universities.

Ana Zhibaj

Senior Expert

Ana Zhibaj comes from a background in urban planning and architecture, with a strong focus on public policies and international development. She graduated with a Master of Science in Architecture (with High Honors) and a Master in Urban Planning (with Distinction) from Harvard Graduate School of Design.

She has three years of experience in urban planning and development, where she facilitated the coordination of multi-level, multi-disciplinary actors, which equipped her with a good understanding of institutional and legal frameworks, as well as local and national public policies. Her previous work experiences include organising municipal staff trainings on street design practices that promote public health and early childhood development, coordinating stakeholders (namely, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Albanian Peace Corps) in organising post-trauma recovery trainings with teachers at primary schools in Albania, and drafting a strategy to promote gender mainstreaming in transportation policies, specifically walking and cycling.

Her interest in education policies began during her time at Harvard, when Ana worked closely with the head of the Department of Urban Planning, Ann Forsyth, as a research assistant for the curriculum committee, a structure consisting of students, alums, and staff, tasked with identifying and analysing the needs of students and alums, through bi-weekly meetings, qualitative and quantitative analysis. At Harvard, she also served as Senior Editor of the Harvard Real Estate Review and was elected President of the Harvard Urban Planning Organization.

Ana joined the Bologna Follow-up Group in February 2023, as an external junior expert, to move later as senior expert within the BFUG Secretariat.

Blerina Caslli

Expert

Blerina Caslli is an accomplished project management expert with a background in Economy and European Studies. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Economy and Finance from the University of Tirana and has worked for many years in the field of finance, project management, and communication industry.

Additionally, she has also pursued a Master of European Studies program from the University of Parma in Italy, which was providing advanced academic training in the field of European Union law, economics, and policies. Following this experience, she ran various employment training programs besides EU institutions and agencies like EUIPO and the European Commission.

Her professional background includes working for international corporations and the private sector in financial and project management roles, as well as engaging in implementing communication projects for the EU or UNICEF Albania and providing expertise in the Media Monitoring field.

She has been actively engaged in different non-profit organisations in the community such as the Initiative Group Alpbach Albania promoting European integration and the European Forum Alpbach.

Enkelejda Mexini

Expert

Enkelejda is a mathematician specialised in accounting and protocol standards. An interpreter and event coordinator, engaged in public and private projects, she has working experiences in Albania, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

From 2019-2023, she had work experiences and internships in the Veneto Region, Italy as well as in Albania, namely in an accounting studio and recently in the National Coastal Agency, Ministry of Tourism of Albania as a finance specialist. With her recent work experience at the Digital Cadastre Center, State Cadastre Agency, she has held the responsibilities of protocol and official correspondence in accordance with the relevant legal and normative provisions in force in the public information field, personal data, and archives.

Enkelejda had worked as an associate and translator at the court of Vicenza, Italy, where she contributed to the translation of materials written in English and Albanian, but also, she has cooperated with several practitioners. Her experience as a translator and event coordinator was enhanced with her commitment to the Sustainable Rural Development Project, implanted by GIZ with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment. Some of her vital responsibilities were the arrangement of meetings and workshops, as well as the translation of documents for the international project team (from Albanian to English and vice versa).

Enkelejda has lived for nearly 20 years in London, United Kingdom and has been engaged in a series of companies in the capacity of agent/manager/sales consultant, mainly for the KODAK EXPRESS company, consultant/sales assistant at the Children Book Center company, as a consultant and sales assistant at the Wholefoods company.

Enkelejda graduated in Mathematics at the University of Tirana, Faculty of Natural Science in 1995 and has attended several accounting courses in Italy and the United Kingdom. Enkelejda is fluent in English, Italian and Albanian.

Xhulia Balla

Communication Expert

With over five years of dedicated experience in the field of communications, Xhulia Balla has established herself as a proficient expert, particularly renowned for her strategic approach to media relations and communication planning. Her career began in earnest in 2018 when she took on a pivotal role within the Press Office of the Prime Minister of Albania, laying the foundation for her expertise as a media specialist.

Xhulia holds a Bachelor's degree in English Language from the University of Elbasan, evidencing her strong foundation in effective communication and critical analysis. She is currently furthering her specialisation through a Master's degree in Communication Science at the University of Tirana,

underscoring her commitment to continuous professional development.

Her tenure at the Press Office of the Prime Minister was marked by a series of successful communication initiatives, showcasing her ability to manage high-stakes information dissemination and public relations efforts. This role capitalised on her capacity to work under pressure and her dedication to impactful communication strategies.

Presently, Xhulia serves as a Media Specialist at the Media and Information Agency, Council of Ministers. Here, her responsibilities have broadened to include the oversight of comprehensive communication campaigns and the representation of the institution at major events. Her contributions in this capacity have not only demonstrated her exceptional performance but also her ability to significantly impact the institution's public engagement efforts.

In September 2023, Xhulia joined the Secretariat as a Junior Communication Expert. This role has allowed her to expand her purview, contributing to broader communication strategies and further honing her skills in media liaison and public information dissemination.

Xhulia's professional journey is characterised by her relentless work ethic, initially demonstrated through her tenure with an energy company during her undergraduate studies, and her substantial contributions to the Prime Minister's press office. Her expertise in crafting and executing comprehensive communication strategies stands out as a testament to her role as a distinguished communication expert.

Patrik Bardhi

Project Management & Logistics Expert

Patrik Bardhi is an accomplished project management and logistics expert, with a track record of delivering successful projects across a diverse range of industries. With a passion for technology and a deep understanding of international economics and finance, Patrik brings a unique blend of skills to his work, enabling him to develop and implement effective strategies that drive results.

Patrik's educational background includes a BA in International Economics and Finance from Bocconi University in Milan, combined with an exchange semester in the University of Virginia and a Masters in Business Administration from UMT in Tirana. This strong foundation in economics and business has provided him with the tools and knowledge necessary to succeed in project management and logistics, where he has gained extensive experience over the past four years.

Throughout his career, Patrik has demonstrated a broad range of skills in need assessment, planning, implementation, coordination, communication, capacity building, reporting, and evaluation procedures in the project implementation area. He has a proven ability to navigate complex project requirements and meet specific milestones, while maintaining a high level of stakeholder satisfaction.

Patrik's proficiency in English and Italian has enabled him to work effectively with government counterparts and international institutions, including the EU, UNICEF, Gartner, and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). He is a highly trained professional who is adept at managing projects from start to finish, with a focus on delivering results that meet the needs of his clients.

Patrik's passion for technology is evident in his work, where he has leveraged the latest tools and platforms to streamline project management and logistics processes. He is skilled in the use of

project management software, supply chain management tools, and logistics management platforms, enabling him to optimise operations and drive efficiencies.

Overall, Patrik Bardhi is a highly skilled project management and logistics expert with a broad range of skills and experience. His ability to deliver successful projects on time and within budget, combined with his passion for technology and economics, make him a valuable asset to any organisation.

[LinkedIn profile](#)

Draft Terms of Reference

The European Higher Education Area Secretariat 2024-2027

The European Higher Education Area Secretariat ('EHEA Secretariat') is jointly hosted by Romania and the Republic of Moldova from the 1st of July 2024 to the 30th of June 2027. The main headquarters of the Secretariat are located in Bucharest, Romania, with an office established in Chişinău, Republic of Moldova.

The primary function of the EHEA Secretariat is to provide neutral support to the work of the EHEA and its further consolidation. It carries out its activity in close communication with the BFUG and under its authority.

The Secretariat supports the BFUG, its Board and working structures, and the organisation of the Ministerial Conference. It acts independently of the countries hosting it, acting exclusively under the mandate given by the BFUG.

I. Functions

The main functions of the EHEA Secretariat are:

- to provide administrative and operational support for the BFUG, its Board and working structures, including planning meetings, preparing background papers and minute-taking;
- to assist the BFUG, its Board, and working structures in implementing the 2024-2027 Work Programme and in the follow-up work, including planning activities and following up on the BFUG decisions;
- to revise and maintain the European Higher Education Area website and to maintain archives up-to-date and accessible;
- to administer the European Higher Education Area social media accounts and its newsletter, in coordination with the Co-chairs and the Vice-chair;
- to act as an external and internal contact point for the European Higher Education Area;
- to ensure the internal communication within the BFUG and its working structures;
- to support the organisation of the Ministerial Conference and Bologna Policy Forum in Iaşi and Chişinău in 2027 by ensuring logistical preparations and supporting the preparation of the background documents, under the supervision of the BFUG and in close cooperation with the Vice-chair;
- to provide representation at external events, upon request of the organisers and in consultation with the BFUG Co-chairs;
- to support the interaction and liaison with the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) and promote the Work Programme of EHEA to organisations and third parties;
- to prepare and provide appropriate information and dissemination materials about the EHEA for the European and international higher education community and stakeholders, and for the general public;
- to carry out any special tasks concerning the implementation of the Work Programme of the European Higher Education Area as mandated by the BFUG or the BFUG Co-chairs, within the scope of these ToRs;
- to carry out other specific tasks as agreed by the working structures, subject to approval

of the Head of the Secretariat.

II. Activities

The Secretariat implements the following activities:

- coordinates or supports the drafting of the official documents within the Bologna Process and provides background discussion documents, liaising with relevant authors, as appropriate;
- coordinates the scheduling of meetings to ensure there is no avoidable overlap between meetings;
- provides first draft agendas for BFUG and BFUG Board meetings. It circulates the invitation, agenda, registration form and relevant papers for meetings of the BFUG and its working structures and drafts the minutes of the meetings, based on the approach agreed by the BFUG;
- provides participants with information on practical arrangements for meetings in consultation with the Co-chairs, supports the practical arrangements during meetings, in cooperation with the hosts, if necessary and requested;
- ensures the virtual infrastructure for organising online meetings and sharing documents with and by the members of the BFUG and its working structures in the backoffice;
- supports the Co-chairs in monitoring the work of the working structures in relation to the Work Programme and the Terms of Reference, through ongoing liaison with the appropriate parties responsible;
- shares information with European and international stakeholders, as requested by the Co-chairs or Vice-chair of the BFUG and its working structures;
- attends external events related to the mandate of the working structures. Where appropriate, the Secretariat may also represent the BFUG in settings and on occasions to be agreed with the Co-chairs;
- updates the EHEA calendar on the website, based on the information provided by EHEA members, consultative members and partners;
- develops dissemination tools and organises activities related to enhancing knowledge sharing about the Bologna Process, including supporting BFUG members upon availability, and supports the engagement of experts in the Bologna Process and their liaison with the BFUG;
- provides specific support, including legal support, for the work of the Task Force on establishing a long-term Secretariat;
- oversees the appointment of secondments to the EHEA Secretariat;
- provides a certified copy of the EHEA Rules of Procedure to all members and consultative members.

III. Contact details

The general e-mail address of the Secretariat is secretariat@ehea.info. Sending an email to this address ensures that all Secretariat members are informed.

For practical purposes, each member of the Secretariat has an individual e-mail address, following the rule name.surname@ehea.info

The Secretariat is established at the premises of UEFISCDI, the Romanian Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding.

The address is 30 Frumoasă Street, District 1, Bucharest, Romania.

The Head of Moldovan-Romanian Secretariat is Horia Onița:

- E-mail: horia.onita@ehea.info
- Phone: (+40) 748 880 910

When contacting the Secretariat for sending messages to BFUG or its working structures, it is advised that the Co-chairs or other members of the working structures prepare the specific text to be forwarded to the working structure and clearly indicate the documents to be attached and their format.

Guidelines for minuting and format of documents developed by the BFUG and its working structures Moldovan-Romanian Secretariat

To ensure consistency in the format of documents produced within the EHEA working structures and the minutes of meetings of the BFUG, its Board, and working structures, the Moldovan-Romanian Secretariat elaborated the present Guidelines, to be agreed by the BFUG at its XCIII meeting in Budapest, Hungary. The document operationalises the provisions of the EHEA and BFUG Rules of Procedure in relation to minuting.

For the purpose of this document,

- 'Working structure' includes the BFUG, the Board and all the structures created in the framework of the EHEA (working groups, task forces, advisory groups, thematic peer groups, ad hoc groups, etc).
- 'days' are interpreted as calendar days (including legal holidays/weekends). If the last day of the deadline falls during the weekend, the deadline is considered as ending the following Monday.

I. Minutes of meetings

1. Structure of the minutes

The meetings of all working structures in EHEA will follow the same structure:

- Name of the structure, number of the meeting, date and place of the meeting.
- List of participants:
 - The list of participants will include the name, delegation (country/organisation) represented and, if the case, the position(s) under which they attended the meeting (e.g. co-chair). If a delegate has multiple responsibilities within the BFUG working structures, only those which are relevant for the meeting will be mentioned.
 - The list of participants will include, in a separate section, the guests to the meeting (excluding technical staff that supports the practicalities for organising the meeting), clearly marking that they are not members of the working structure/meeting by adding 'Guest' in brackets after the name of the country/organisation represented.
- List of members of the working structure which have not attended the meeting (differentiated between excused/absent). If during the meeting a member arrives later or leaves earlier, this is inserted in *italics* in the minutes at the moment it occurred – e.g. '*The representative of X entered the meeting*'. As long as they attended at least one agenda point, they will be included in the table with the list of participants.
- Each item of the adopted agenda, in the order in which they were discussed.
- Links to presentations or documents discussed under each agenda point, if available.

- AOB, which will include subpoints for each of the information points raised during AOB.

2. Rules for minuting items on the agenda

The minuting of an agenda item starts with referencing (with hyperlink) the documents which were included in the agenda and, if the case, the proposed action to be taken for the agenda item.

This is followed by the presentation of the agenda item by the presenter (co-chair, guest, etc.). If a support presentation is available (such as a PowerPoint presentation, Word document, etc.), the minutes only include an outline of the presentation, with reference to the hyperlinked presentation.

The minutes of the subsequent discussion will abide the following rules:

- The minutes record the delegation, not the name of the individual speaking on behalf of the delegation. The rule also applies when multiple members of a delegation attend a meeting, unless the delegate/the delegation requests to be named individually.
- When speaking in the name of a position, the position is mentioned (e.g. 'the co-chair from country X'). Unless mentioned otherwise, a co-chair is presumed to speak on behalf of that role. If speaking on behalf of the delegation, the minutes clarify this accordingly (e.g. 'the co-chair speaking on behalf of country/organisation X').
- The summary of all interventions will be recorded. The aim is to ensure that minutes are concise, to the point and clearly indicate the formal positions of members and the conclusion of the discussion. The summary ensures that the position recorded in the minutes is understood clearly and unambiguously and that all the key elements of the interventions are included. If a member expressly requests that their intervention be recorded *ad litteram*, this will be highlighted in the minutes by using italic in double quotation marks ("*italic*").
- If other delegations agree with a previous speaker without adding new information in the discussion, the minutes will record only the list of delegations having agreed (e.g. 'supported by delegation X, Y, Z').
- Open issues and points of disagreement will be indicated.
- To ensure accuracy and reliability, when in doubt about summarising the discussion or the points of agreement/disagreement, the approach taken is to choose longer/more detailed minutes accurately depicting the interventions on the floor.

The last part for each agenda item is the conclusion offered by the co-chair(s), including the key takeaways from the discussion, if the case.

If decisions are taken, as announced by the co-chairs, they are underlined in the minutes (e.g. 'The BFUG decided to adopt the document')

3. Minuting style

The minutes are written using only one type of English spelling.

The minuting voice follows the rules of reported/indirect speech, as recommended in the [Editorial Manual of the United Nations](#).

The Editorial Manual will also be used as guidelines for footnotes, reference, abbreviations, capitalisation, punctuation and others.

4. Adoption of the minutes

After the meeting, the following steps are taken:

- The EHEA Secretariat prepares the minutes of the meeting and submits them to the relevant co-chairs within 10 days from the meeting.
- The co-chairs give feedback and agree on the draft minutes within 10 days from the receipt.
- The EHEA Secretariat sends the minutes to the members of the working structure, giving a 10-day deadline for sending comments. The feedback requested from the participants refers to the way the Secretariat summarised the discussions and noted the conclusions (or lack thereof) of the meeting. As such, the feedback cannot bring new content in consideration, which was not raised in the meeting.
- When the EHEA Secretariat receives feedback from a member, it checks the recording of the meeting and,
 - if the recording matches the feedback received, the Secretariat integrates the comments and informs the member who gave the feedback;
 - if the recording does not match the feedback received, the Secretariat contacts the member who gave the feedback, and they attempt to find an agreement on the minuting.
 - If no agreement is reached, the Secretariat informs the co-chairs, which can decide to put the minutes on the agenda of the next meeting of the working structure.
- If agreement is reached for all feedback received, the EHEA Secretariat sends the new draft of minutes to the co-chairs, with changes from version sent to the members in 'track changes', asking to endorse the final version of the minutes.
- Once the co-chairs endorse the final version of the minutes, the EHEA Secretariat uploads them on the ehea.info website and informs the members via e-mail.

5. Recording of the meetings

All the working structure meetings are audio recorded. The meeting organisers should ensure that microphones are available so that the recording can be smooth. The EHEA Secretariat member attending the meeting makes sure the participants give their consent to the recording before the meeting commences.

The recording is meant to support the minuting process and serve as evidence if the recollection of the meeting is different. They are for the sole use of the EHEA Secretariat and are deleted from the internal archive of the Secretariat 12 months after the meeting.

II. Format of documents

The documents produced within EHEA by the working structures within a work cycle (excluding the documents for the Ministerial Conference) will have the same format, which includes:

- Header: Logo of the European Higher Education Area and logo of the Bologna Process, logo of the EU country co-chair and logo of the non-EU country co-chair, in this order.

- Name of the document,
- Name of the document as linked on the website on the lower left corner of the first page, as per EHEA practice: *Working Structure_number of the meeting_co-chair EU_co-chair non-EU_agenda point_name of the document_last revised* (e.g. BFUG_93_HU_IS_2_Agenda_10.09.2024) This also applies for the naming of files.
- Footer provided by the Moldovan-Romanian Secretariat. For 2024, this includes 25 years anniversary logo of EHEA (left), page number/number of total pages (x/xx, center), EHEA Secretariat logo (right).
- Font: Constantia.
- Font size: 14 for title, 12 for headings, 11 for sub-headings and content.
- Alignment: Justify.
- Paragraph spacing.
- Line spacing: 1.

All internal documents are sent to the EHEA Secretariat in editable format (Word, PowerPoint). The Secretariat is responsible for ensuring the adequate naming of the documents and transforming them into PDF format before uploading them on the website. Draft documents will be circulated among members of working structure in editable format.

List of BFUG Countries for Semester Chairmanship until 2030

Semester	EU country	Non-EU country	
January-June 2024	Belgium	Holy See	Albanian Secretariat
July-December 2024	Hungary	Iceland	Moldovan and Romanian Secretariat
January-June 2025	Poland	Albania*	
July-December 2025	Denmark	Liechtenstein	
January-June 2026	Cyprus	Norway**	
July-December 2026	Ireland	Montenegro	
January-June 2027	Lithuania	North Macedonia	
July-December 2027	Greece	Moldova***	To be determined
January-June 2028	Italy	San Marino	
July-December 2028	Latvia	Serbia	
January-June 2029	Luxembourg	Switzerland	
July-December 2029	Netherlands	Türkiye	
January-June 2030	Slovakia	Ukraine	
July-December 2030	Malta	United Kingdom	

* Albania moved due to its BFUG Vice Chairmanship and EHEA Secretariat 2021-2024.

** Norway replaces Moldova as the co-chair for the January-June 2026 period. Moldova and Norway agreed to this arrangement, despite Moldova not being able to take the incoming co-chair role for January-June 2027, considering that de facto the vice-chairmanship is held by Romania.

*** Moldova replaces Norway, while Norway had initially taken the place of the Russian Federation, suspended from the EHEA.

Outlook and requirements - creating a new EHEA website

The EHEA website is critical for sharing knowledge about the Bologna Process. Apart from offering up-to-date information about the objectives, activities and added value of the Bologna Process to a wide range of stakeholders within and outside higher education, it contains the institutional memory of EHEA through the archives and ensures that members of the EHEA working structures, including the BFUG, are well informed of the various activities within EHEA. Any unresolved dysfunctionality of the website can hamper the prestige of the EHEA and affect its credibility.

Each EHEA Secretariat worked on improving the website while also adding new features to an outdated infrastructure, which in the end can determine vulnerabilities. Such vulnerabilities have also been evidenced in an independent report commissioned by the Albanian Secretariat.

Recently, the IT team that supports the Moldovan-Romanian Secretariat updated the standard protocols of the website, which nevertheless represents only a transitional, short-time solution to limit the vulnerabilities of the website.

In order to counteract the identified vulnerabilities, as well as to provide upgraded functionalities and appearance, the Moldovan-Romanian Secretariat aims to create a new website. Below are outlined the objectives, target audience, design rules, the outline of the front page and the site-map for the new website.

I. Objectives in the process of creating a new EHEA website

- Ensuring the compatibility with the EHEA visual identity (colours, style)
- Ensuring smooth adaptability for all types of devices (desktop/laptop, mobile phone, tablet)
- Constructing the new website with the most recent standard protocols, updating its' cybersecurity capability
- Promoting a more responsive and estetical design, which allows for better accesibility of the website for the users and organisation of information
- Transferring the management of the interface in WordPress, underpinned by modern web programming languages (HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript) so the operation can be easily handled by various Secretariats;
- Maintaining and ensuring the continuity of the archive, including migrating the archive ('EHEA website archive') in the same interface as the rest of the webpage
- Improving Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) techniques to increase the visibility of the website and ensure the content of documents is searchable
- Looking into the feasibility of implementing a live chat facility;
- Implementing a two-step authentication system for administrators to improve security and protection of the site.

II. Target audience

The EHEA website should consider the needs of a various range of stakeholders which determine its target audience:

- BFUG members and members of the BFUG working structures
- Students seeking information about higher education in Europe and Bologna Process reforms
- Higher education institutions, academics and researchers implementing the Bologna Process reforms, searching for examples of good practice or researching the Bologna Process
- Interested public authorities
- General public from within or outside the EHEA
- Mass-media

III. Design rules

The new design of the EHEA website should be intuitive and take into account the following elements:

- *Hierarchy* which causes site visitors to look at each element of the site in order of priority, starting with the most significant element;
- *Contrast* which highlights the differences between the parts of the design (contrasting elements stand out more) and can be achieved through texture, brightness (mixing light and dark areas) and color;
- *Balance* achieved through even or uneven, symmetrical or asymmetrical distribution of information.

IV. Front page structure

Main/Side:

- Menu & search button
- Short introduction about EHEA, including links to the members description
- Upcoming events in two formats: list and calendar, including meetings of the BFUG working structures and other events added by members according to the RoP (link to their dedicated pages)
- Working structures 2024-2027 (link to their dedicated pages)
- News (link to their dedicated pages, including newsletter)
- Pictogram for Tirana Ministerial Conference, Work Programme 2024-2027 and EHEA Tools (link to their dedicated pages)
- **Link to previous ministerial conferences**

Adjacent:

- Social media thumbnails (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)
- Subscribe to the newsletter

- Accessibility thumbnail: changing text size, greyscale, contrast, light background, links underline, readable font

Footer:

- Legal notice & GDPR policy (link to their dedicated pages)
- Contact (link to their dedicated pages)
- Cookie policy (link to their dedicated pages)
- Sitemap branchtree (link to their dedicated pages)

V. Menu (sitemap)

First level	Second level	Third level	Fourth level
About EHEA	How EHEA works (narrative and also including the RoP-EHEA and RoP-BFUG here) Video	List of co-chairmanship	
	Historical overview	20 Years Bologna Declaration Celebration	
	Members	General page about EHEA membership, including criteria	
		Member states	Individual country profiles
		Consultative members	Individual consultative member profiles
		Partners	
Governance	Ministerial Conferences (general remarks and list of communiques)	Individual page for each Ministerial Conference with all the documents	
	BFUG	BFUG meetings 2024-2027	Individual pages for each BFUG meeting
		Archive of BFUG meeting minutes	Individual pages for each former BFUG meeting
	BFUG Board	BFUG Board meetings 2024-2027	Individual pages for each BFUG Board meeting
		Archive of the BFUG Board meetings	Individual pages for each former BFUG Board meetings
	EHEA Secretariat (general about the Secretariat and the	Former EHEA Secretariats	

	current Moldovan-Romanian Secretariat)		
Bologna Reforms* (common page where users can choose the topic instead of a long menu list)	Three-degree cycle		
	Quality Assurance		
	Recognition	Diploma Supplement	
	Qualification Frameworks		
	ECTS		
	Social Dimension		
	Internationalisation and mobility		
	Fundamental Values		
	Learning and teaching	Student-centred learning	
	Implementation and Monitoring	Monitoring the Bologna Process	Bologna Process Implementation Report
			Bologna with Student Eyes
			EUA Trends
			Research on the Bologna Process
		Implementing the Bologna Process	Outreach and dissemination (including national plans)
			Bologna expert groups
	Global dialogue and outreach	Bologna (Global) Policy Forums	
	Other policy areas	Employability	
		Lifelong learning	
		Microcredentials	
		Research & Innovation	
		Consultations on future goals	
Working Structures 2024-2027	Work Programme 2024-2027		
	BICG	BICG meetings	
		TPG A	TPG A meetings
	
	WG on Monitoring	WG on Monitoring meetings	

Previous work programmes	Working period archive 1999 to 2024 divided per work cycle	Working structures in each work cycle (including their final reports taken from Ministerial Conference pages)	
News	Newsletter archive		
Contact	Contact box linked with the email of the Secretariat		

*(introduce under each topic projects that supported Bologna Process implementation across the years)

Structure of the membership profiles on EHEA webpage

I. For members (countries)

a) Basic information:

- **Date of entry** (source: EHEA own information)
- **National education system** (source: hyperlink to Eurydice webpage, where applicable)
- **National QF system and self-certification** (source: hyperlink to national country profile – ENIC-NARIC webpage)
- Membership in the BFUG working structures for the current Work Programme

b) Relevant entities – links to national webpages (source: BFUG survey for updating the webpage)

- Ministry responsible for higher education
- List of recognised HEIs
- National QA agency
- ENIC-NARIC
- QF body
- Erasmus+ national agency
- Recognised national union(s) of students (mark if ESU member or not – ask ESU)
- Recognised teacher unions (mark if ETUCE member or not – ask ETUCE)
- Associations of universities/national rectors councils (mark if EUA/EURASHE member or not – ask EUA)
- Employers representatives (mark if BusinessEurope member or not – ask BusinessEurope)
- Other relevant agencies or bodies, if the case (open question in BFUG survey)

c) Information for international students

- Link to country page in Study in Europe portal, if applicable
- National page for international students and teachers (source: BFUG survey)

d) Contact points (source: BFUG survey)

- BFUG representatives and their email addresses
- Agency/structure responsible for implementing/promoting the Bologna Process, if the case
- Other contact points for matters related to the Bologna Process, if not the BFUG representatives (open question)
- Generic composition of National Bologna Committee or similar structure, if exists, and an explanation of how the structure works

e) Country strategies and reports

- i) National Bologna reports (*source: EHEA own archive and open question for BFUG survey*)
- ii) (for EU countries) latest Education and Training Monitor – country page (*source: hyperlink to EEA portal*)
- iii) Top-level strategies, major plans or reports (e.g. on mobility, on social dimension, on learning and teaching etc.), which the country wants to share (*source: grid of topics included in the BFUG survey and the BPIR 2024 if the country indicates so*)
- iv) National plan for implementing key commitments (*source: BFUG survey*)
- v) National plan for the enhancement of knowledge sharing (if combined with v) or other plans, put only one entry marking all) (*source: BFUG survey*)
- vi) Activities from the action plans of the thematic peer groups within BICG, if they exist

Note: There will be a separate page for the European Commission following a different structure and outlining their activities.

II. For consultative members

Flexible presentation page, with the guidelines of including the following:

- 1. Description of the organisation (*source: provided by the organisation via BFUG survey*)
- 2. Website (*hyperlink*)
- 3. Contact points (*source: provided by the organisation via BFUG survey: email address or link to contact page on the website*)
- 4. List of members (*hyperlink webpage*)
- 5. List of policies/programmes/reports/publications/positions related to the Bologna Process, divided by topics if necessary (*source: content prepared by the organisation via BFUG survey or link to website*)

General rules regarding secondments at the EHEA Secretariat

I. Introduction

According to Section VIII.1 – Roles and Tasks (of the EHEA Secretariat) from the Rules of Procedure of the Bologna Follow-Up Group, *‘In addition to its own staff, the Secretariat shall be able to accept secondments from members and consultative members. **Secondments should follow rules approved by the BFUG, ensuring geographic balance as well as securing the independence of the Secretariat from the seconding members and consultative members.**’*

Members and consultative members of the EHEA are thus invited to consider sending secondments to the Moldovan-Romanian Secretariat. These would lead to increasing work capacity, while showcasing the unique collaboration model that is underpinning the success of European cooperation in the framework of the Bologna Process.

The Moldovan-Romanian hosts of the EHEA Secretariat are eager to support a multinational EHEA Secretariat for the current Work Programme.

II. Independence from the sending institution

While still employed by the sending institution, the seconding members of the EHEA Secretariat may neither receive nor seek instructions in connection with the performance of their duties within EHEA Secretariat from any government, authority, organisation or person outside the Secretariat, including their own.

If the seconded member oversees or implements duties in the sending organisation that are linked to the work of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and its substructures, a clear limitation should be ensured to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

III. Working conditions, location and duration

For the full duration of the secondment, the seconding member enjoys all the rights prescribed by the national law applicable to their employment contract in the sending institution. The sending institution remains responsible for covering the salary and other associated benefits for the seconding member.

The EHEA Secretariat will cover the travel costs incurred by the exercise of functions within the EHEA Secretariat.

The secondment has a duration of at least 12 months and cannot exceed the 1st of July 2027. In receiving and accepting secondments, the EHEA Secretariat will prioritise proposals for secondments with a longer duration to decrease handover/training costs.

While the possibility of detachment to the Secretariat's headquarters would be considered an advantage, the EHEA Secretariat can accept a seconding member who teleworks (without changing their physical location).

IV. Application process

In October 2024, the EHEA Secretariat will open a call for secondments until January 2025. If needed, the call can be extended or re-opened at a later stage.

The call will include the calendar, the number of available places, expected qualifications, the desired areas of contribution and the selection criteria. The selection would take into account supporting the geographical balance of the Secretariat, pursuant to the RoP.

Proposal for the Work Programme 2024-2027

I. Introduction

It is expected that the BFUG will adopt the 2024-2027 Work Programme in the XCIII BFUG meeting in Budapest, as the first BFUG meeting after the Tirana Ministerial Conference.

In some cases, in the past, the BFUG had already discussed a draft Work Plan and the working structures to be created in meetings before the Ministerial Conference. For the current working period, the EHEA priorities were discussed in the XC BFUG meeting in Brussels in April 2024 without going further into discussing a draft Work Programme.

When establishing the timeline for adopting the Work Programme, the need to start as soon as possible the implementation of the Tirana Communiqué commitments should be considered. Moreover, the upcoming Erasmus+ call for supporting Bologna reforms is expected to be launched in September. Consequently, to give the opportunity to BFUG working structures to apply for Erasmus+ projects that would support their work, the BFUG would need to agree on the working structures and their co-chairs in September. The timeline is proposed below.

The XCII BFUG Board meeting in Reykjavik discussed the proposal for the Work Programme 2024-2027 and the timeline for its adoption, based on a proposal by the BFUG co-chairs, the Vice-chair and the EHEA Secretariat. The current draft includes the discussions in the BFUG Board.

The proposal for the Work Programme 2024-2027 is based on the commitments included in the Tirana Communiqué. The call from BFUG members to have a leaner structure of the BFUG working structures was also considered.

The working structures are required to operationalise the commitments from the Tirana Communiqué in their Terms of Reference, in order to ensure an outcome-based approach and make it possible to assess the activity of each working structure.

In the 2021-2024 cycle, the BFUG had in total 13 working structures, excluding the Drafting Committee. This implies 2.5 working structures more than the average for the last 6 cycles of the EHEA, which is 11.5 working structures. The cycle with the most working structures has been the 2007-2009 cycle, with 15 working structures.

The proposal for the Work Programme 2024-2027 includes 10 working structures, excluding the Drafting Committee and the two dedicated processes of revising the ECTS Users' Guide and the ESG.

II. Timeline

The proposed timeline should ensure that by the 22nd of November the working structures for the next Work Programme are able to initiate their work.

1. BFUG Board meeting in Reykjavik (3rd of September 2024) and post-Board meeting

The Board agreed on a draft Work Programme to be submitted to the BFUG. Concurrently with sending the draft Work Programme to the BFUG, the Secretariat sends the call for interest in co-chairing the working structures proposed in the draft Work Programme.

BFUG members are invited to fill in the survey and send major comments on the proposal for the Work Programme in writing by September 22nd so that the EHEA Secretariat can compile their contributions and share them before the meeting with all BFUG members.

2. BFUG meeting in Budapest (26th-27th of September 2024)

The BFUG agrees on the Work Programme, including the working structures, co-chairing arrangements, the reference to the Tirana Communique in the remit of the proposed working structures and the main expected outcomes.

As opposed to a decision not to establish a working structure proposed in the draft Work Programme, particular challenges can arise if the BFUG members agree on new working structures than those proposed in the draft Work Programme which was circulated ahead the meeting. In this case, it is expected that the BFUG would have to decide whether the co-chairing arrangements are determined on the spot, if possible, or allow for a subsequent online procedure.

3. Call for interest – membership of the working structures: two weeks after the BFUG meeting in Budapest (by 13th of October 2024)

Based on the agreed Work Programme, the EHEA Secretariat launches a call for interest for the membership in the working structures, to be open for two weeks. As has been the case in the past, usually members can join working structures anytime during their operation.

4. Draft ToRs written by the co-chairs - three weeks after the BFUG meeting in Budapest (by the 20th of October 2024)

The co-chairs draft the Terms of Reference for the respective working structures in three weeks after the BFUG meeting in Budapest, by 20th of October, based on a template provided by the Secretariat. The basis of the ToRs are the specific commitments in the Tirana Communique in the remit of the respective working structure and the main expected outcomes already agreed by the BFUG.

5. Consultation of the members of the working structure – two weeks after the finalisation of the draft ToRs (by the 3rd of November 2024)

The co-chairs of the working structures will have two weeks to consult the group members on the draft terms of reference by November 3rd. They can either hold an online meeting or conduct the consultation in writing.

An in-person or, if not possible, hybrid meeting of the co-chairs of the new working structures is proposed to be organised after the 3rd of November. Such a meeting was organised in the 2015-2018 working period when the working groups were also not agreed upon before the 2015 Ministerial Conference. In the meeting could be discussed common approaches of co-chairing, fine-tuning ToRs, dissemination plans and points of collaboration and convergence.

6. Adoption of the Terms of Reference, including the membership of the working structures

After the 3rd of November (and the meeting of the co-chairs of working structures, if the case), the BFUG members receive the draft Terms of Reference, including membership in the working structures.

Ten days of online consultation are given, followed by the co-chairs of working structures adapting the Terms of Reference, if necessary.

Once a consensus is reached, the Terms of Reference are sent for adoption by the BFUG via electronic procedure. If consensus cannot be reached, an online BFUG meeting could be considered to discuss the respective matters.

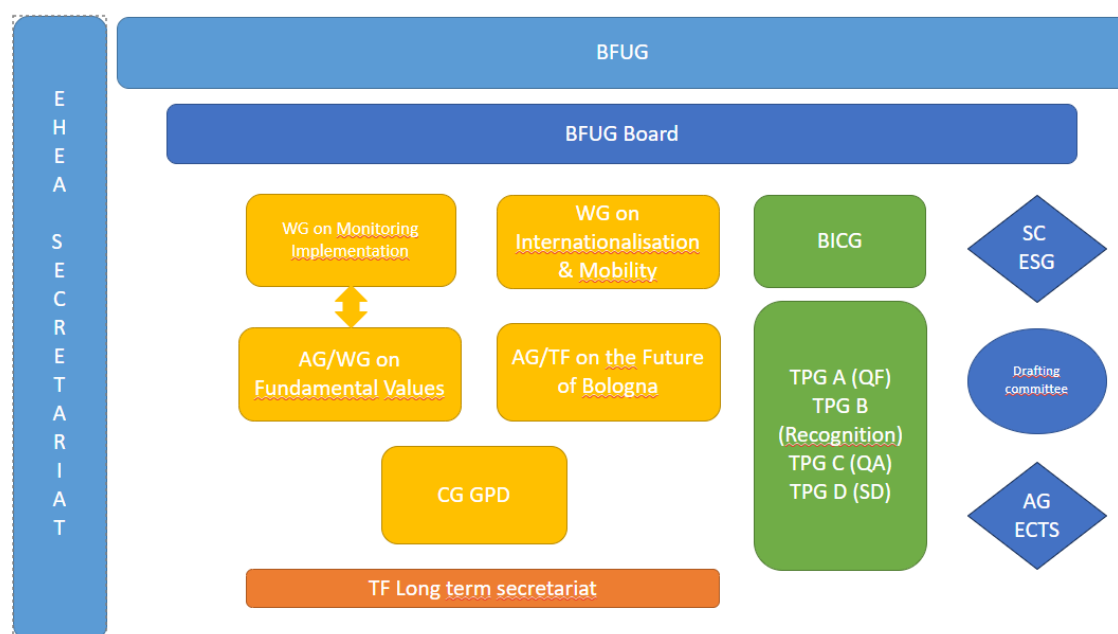
The proposed timeline is summarised in the table below:

Nr.	Activity	Responsibility	Deadline
1.	Agreeing on a draft work programme in the BFUG Board	BFUG Board	3 rd of September 2024
2.	Sending the draft work programme to the BFUG and the call for co-chairs	BFUG co-chairs, Secretariat	6 th of September 2024
3.	Sending written input for the draft work plan and expressing the intention to co-chair a working structure	BFUG members	22 nd of September 2024
4.	EHEA Secretariat collecting the input and sending the consolidated version of the Work Programme (with comments) and the interested co-chairs to the BFUG	EHEA Secretariat	23 rd of September 2024
5.	BFUG adopts the Work Programme and the working structures' co-chairs	BFUG	26 th -27 th of September 2024
5bis	Agreeing on the co-chairs of new working structures at a later stage, if needed	BFUG	TBD
6.	Launching the call for interest – membership in working structures and	EHEA Secretariat	30 th of September 2024

	sending the format for ToRs to co-chairs		
7.	Filling in the call for interest for membership in working structures	BFUG members	13 th of October 2024
8.	Preparing draft ToRs	Co-chairs of the working structures	20 th of October 2024
9.	Discussing the draft ToRs with the working structures	Co-chairs of the working structures, members of the working structures	3 rd of November 2024
10.	Meeting with the co-chairs of the working structures	BFUG co-chairs, co-chairs of the working structures, EHEA Secretariat	After 3 rd of November
10.	Sending the draft ToRs to the BFUG	EHEA Secretariat	After the meeting with the co-chairs
11.	Agreeing on the draft ToRs in the BFUG, after a 10-day consultation period	BFUG	By 22 nd of November 2024

III. Proposed working structures

The proposed working structures are presented below:



For each working structure, a working proposal tabled for the BFUG with general expectations related to the commitments they would tackle and expected outcomes are included in the table below:

Nr.	Working Structure	Tirana Communiqué	Outcomes/Comments
1.	Working Group on Monitoring (implementation)	<i>'We mandate the BFUG to ensure that policy commitments aiming at creating by 2030 an inclusive, innovative, and interconnected EHEA, mindful of the fundamental values, are properly monitored, including through a Bologna Process Implementation Report that assesses key developments.'</i> and <i>'We commit to measuring progress in the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA and ask the BFUG to report back on this in 2027.'</i>	The WG would produce the 2027 BPIR Monitoring report. A decision regarding the monitoring approach should be made based on the discussion initiated in the previous semester.
2.	Task Force/Advisory Group on Future of Bologna	<i>'We also ask the BFUG to submit to us in 2027 proposals for the main priorities for the next decade, in close cooperation with higher education institutions, staff and students.'</i>	The Task Force/advisory group would also ensure outreach towards stakeholders as established by the Communiqué. The group should prepare working methods to organise debates in the BFUG on themes relevant to the future of the Bologna Process, in order to ensure BFUG ownership and bringing back more content discussions within the BFUG. The TF/AG could also work on fulfilling the commitment related to the future-proof development,

			dissemination and possible expansion of key commitments.
3.	Working Group/Advisory Group on Fundamental Values	<i>'We welcome the work on creating a technical monitoring framework, and we ask the BFUG to report back to us at our 2027 Ministerial Conference.'</i>	Finalisation of the technical monitoring framework, through developing indicators to cover the dimensions included in the fundamental values statements, and finalising the first monitoring of based on the framework. Raising awareness, dissemination and support activities in what it concerns upholding the fundamental values at the national level would also be organised. The group should be linked with the WG on Monitoring.
4.	Working Group on Internationalisation and Mobility	<i>'We mandate the BFUG to prepare an action plan to stimulate mobility and internationalisation of higher education and to support measures for achieving a greener, more inclusive, and more balanced mobility'</i> and <i>'We will support higher education institutions in their exploration of practices and benefits of blended mobility and virtual exchanges, and in fostering the internationalisation of the curricula. We commit to supporting transnational cooperation, including for joint programmes and joint degrees, through better implementation of the key commitments and by removing undue administrative and legal barriers'</i>	A WG on Mobility was included in the 2007-2015 Action Plan, which developed an Action plan on mobility in 2012. The headline would be how to attain the mobility targets across EHEA and support internationalisation of higher education in general. The WG should have links with all working structures, collecting information on various elements that can impact access to mobility. All working structures should have as one of the aims to outline how their work can foster mobility.
5.	CG GPD	<i>We ask the BFUG and its working structures to</i>	The CG GPD would continue the engagement

		<p><i>continue to develop and strengthen dialogue and collaboration with macro regions on various levels and with appropriate interlocutors.</i></p> <p><i>and from the Statement ‘We invite all participants in the EHEA Global Policy Forum to continue to engage in global policy dialogue and to identify the themes where synergies can be found between regions, and with global organizations such as UNESCO and OECD, be it at the intergovernmental level, or in transnational exchange and collaboration between higher education institutions and organisations.’</i></p>	<p>with other parts of the world and prepare the statement for the Iași & Chișinău Bologna Policy Forum.</p>
6.	BICG and TPGs	<p><i>‘(acknowledging) the important contribution of the Thematic Peer Groups under the guidance of the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group in improving the situation. Therefore, we commit to ensuring that we have, or will devise, and will publish appropriate action plans to address any remaining implementation gaps (...). As the Bologna Process tools have developed throughout the last decade, we mandate the BFUG to work on their future-proof development, dissemination and possible expansion’</i></p> <p>On Social Dimension: <i>‘We, together with stakeholders and communities, commit to tackling the socio-economic challenges, such as the rising cost of living and difficulty to access student housing, that have impacted access to higher education and student life as a</i></p>	<p>The continuation of BICG and the three TPGs on QF (A), Recognition (B) and QA (C), plus an additional TPG on Social Dimension. The new TPG would work on promoting the Principles and Guidelines on Strengthening the Social Dimension of EHEA, also covering aspects related to student-centred learning.</p>

		<i>whole. We will intensify our efforts to ensure the recognition of qualifications held by refugees and to remove barriers to their enrolment in higher education.'</i>	
7.	TF on long-term secretariat	<i>We mandate the BFUG to continue working on the possibility of establishing a long-term, independent, internationally staffed Secretariat to create effective support for the BFUG, and to evaluate the feasibility and sustainability of the related proposals, models, and terms of reference in Spring 2026, to be presented for adoption and implementation at our 2027 Ministerial Conference</i>	<p>Working based on the Roadmap developed by the Task Force on Rules and Regulations, with the possible support of the Secretariat in relation to assessing regulations and conditions, drafting procedures and providing legal advice.</p> <p>The TF should be relatively small in terms of members for a more effective and concise process.</p> <p>The co-chairs of the TF should not include any countries/organisations interested in hosting the Secretariat.</p>
8.	Drafting Committee of the Iași – Chișinău Communiqué		To be set up in January 2026.
Additional structures			
9.	Advisory Group ECTS	<i>To support the implementation of the ECTS, including learning outcomes, we invite the BFUG to review the ECTS Users' Guide 2015 by 2027, to strengthen its key features and adapt it to current developments, including micro credentials.</i>	Based on the previous practice (see former Ad-hoc group page), it is a smaller-scale technical group, chaired by the European Commission.
10.	Dedicated structures for the revision of the ESG	<i>We invite the authors of the ESG to propose a revised version by 2026 to the BFUG, to be adopted by us at our 2027 Ministerial conference, as well as an adjustment, where required, of the European Approach for Quality</i>	Process coordinated by the authors of the ESG (E4). The revised version should be finalised by 2026.

		Assurance of Joint Programmes.	
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In addition, a small group of members from the BFUG should be mandated to create the ‘Code of Ethics’ mentioned in the EHEA Rules of Procedure adopted by ministers.

Other commitments from the Tirana Communiqué can be tackled either transversally or can be best addressed at the national level. Examples are provided below:

- ✓ Commitments that could be addressed transversally:
 - *We ask the BFUG to consider in its work the wider and longer-term impact of the digital transition on higher education in the EHEA, including AI, and in particular with regard to the key commitments and the use of Bologna Process tools.*
 - *Reciprocal referencing of qualifications frameworks and credit systems, ratification and implementation of the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, as well as the second generation regional recognition conventions, and alignment and mutual understanding of quality assurance principles.*
- ✓ Commitments that could be tackled at the national level:
 - *We will intensify our efforts to ensure the recognition of qualifications held by refugees and to remove barriers to their enrolment in higher education.*
 - *We will support higher education institutions in strengthening their contribution to society and their local communities, responding to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the green transition in the area of higher education, to the ongoing digitalisation and the combination of physical and online learning and teaching.*
 - *We will also promote more robust and transparent quality assurance of transnational education delivered worldwide, in line with the ESG, to protect the interests of students.*
 - *We are committed to countering diploma and accreditation mills, fraudulent qualifications and academic cheating services, made more accessible through developments in the digital field.*

The BFUG should consider and decide upon the way to best follow on the commitment related to ‘we commit to ensuring that we have, or will devise, and will publish appropriate action plans to address any remaining implementation gaps, and to promoting knowledge-sharing activities related to the EHEA’.

IV. General Guidelines for ToRs

The template for the ToRs will be provided by the Secretariat.

The ToRs should include:

- Name of the working structure
- Period of work (for the whole cycle or other timings)
- Co-chairs
- Members of the working structure
- Reference to the Communiqué

- Purpose and goals/outcomes
- Specific tasks
- Number of meetings and meeting schedule
- Liaison with other working structures or external structures, if the case
- Number and scope of sub-groups, if the case

Working structures should usually foresee one meeting per semester unless the work format calls for other arrangements (e.g., in short-term taskforces). In case more meetings are needed, the BFUG should endorse the change.

Sub-groups created by BFUG working structures are not entitled to secretarial support from the EHEA Secretariat.

Revision of the ESG: briefing note on process and structures

September 2024

Mandate for the ESG revision

The Tirana Ministerial Communiqué¹ of May 2024 includes a mandate for the authors of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) to revise the document. The Communiqué states:

The application of the ESG promotes trust and transparency within and between higher education systems and facilitates accountability and enhancement. To keep them in line with ongoing developments, challenges and expectations, we invite the authors of the ESG to propose a revised version by 2026 to the BFUG, to be adopted by us at our 2027 Ministerial conference, as well as an adjustment, where required, of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

The primary authors of the ESG are ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE (the E4 Group), in cooperation with Business Europe, EI and EQAR.

Structures for the ESG revision

The structures for the ESG revision continue the approach used for the 2012-15 revision process, which was largely considered fit-for-purpose.

Meetings are hosted in Brussels by the E4 organisations on a rotating basis. Costs of hosting and participating are self-funded by each organisation individually. Arrangements for online/hybrid meetings will be made as needed.

Steering Committee

The revision is coordinated by a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is composed of one representative from each of the seven primary and cooperating authors. Members of the Steering Committee are authorised to act in the name of their nominating organisation and have appropriate experience of quality assurance in the EHEA.

The Committee may appoint a permanent chair, or decide that meetings will be chaired on a rotating basis. The ENQA Director will serve as Secretary to the Committee, with responsibility for organising meetings, taking minutes and coordinating follow-up as needed.

Organisation	Name	Position
ENQA	Cristina Ghitulica	ENQA Vice-President / ARACIS Director
EUA	Amanda Crowfoot	EUA Secretary General
EURASHE	John Edwards	EURASHE Secretary General
ESU	Lana Par	ESU Vice-President
EQAR	Aleksandar Šušnjar	EQAR Director
Business Europe	Inga Lapina	Professor, Riga Technical University, Latvia
Education International	Petri Mantysaari	Professor, Hanken School of Economics, Vaasa, Finland

The role of the Steering Committee is to:

- Coordinate the overall revision process, including determining timelines;

¹ Available at <https://ehea2024tirane.al/2024-tirana-communique/>

- Discuss and agree on the key issues for the revision, including scope, structure and topics for the standards;
- Agree on and ensure arrangements (timing, modalities, topics/versions) for consultation on drafts of the revised ESG with all necessary stakeholders, including the BFUG;
- Discuss the feedback received and how to address it in subsequent drafts;
- Liaise (through a nominated member of the Committee) with the BFUG;
- Validate the final version to be tabled for approval by the BFUG.

The Committee will meet every 2-3 months, in line with a roadmap agreed in the first meeting.

Drafting Group

The actual writing of the new ESG is done by a smaller Drafting Group. The Drafting Group is composed of one expert nominated by each of the E4 organisations, and the Group answers directly to the Steering Committee. ENQA will provide secretarial support to the Drafting Group. The Group may appoint a Chair from among the members.

Organisation	Name	Position
ENQA	Doris Herrmann	ENQA Vice-President / AQAS Director
EUA	Maria Kelo	EUA Director of Institutional Development Unit
EURASHE	Jakub Grodecki	EURASHE Policy and Project Manager
ESU	Irina Duma	Former ESU QA Pool Steering Committee member

The role of the Drafting Group is to:

- Prepare each draft of the ESG, following the directions given by the Steering Committee and addressing feedback received during consultations, including from the BFUG;
- Propose points for further discussion by the Steering Committee.

The Drafting Group will meet at least once between each Steering Committee meeting and more often if required. Members of the Drafting Group will attend meetings of the Steering Committee in order to ensure two-way communication and accurate follow-up.

Timeline

A first meeting of the Steering Committee will take place at the end of September 2024, at which a concrete roadmap for the process will be agreed and a preliminary list of issues to be addressed will be discussed (drawing in part on outcomes of the QA-FIT project). The BFUG will be kept informed of progress throughout the revision process.

It is expected that the final text of the ESG should be approved by the BFUG in 2026 (spring or autumn meeting, to be determined), with no further changes to be made before adoption by EHEA Ministers at the Ministerial Conference in Romania/Moldova in spring 2027.

European Approach to the QA of Joint Programmes

As stated in the Tirana Communiqué, the European Approach should be revised in parallel to the ESG. This is intended to be a limited adjustment to ensure that the two documents are aligned, as the European Approach is based explicitly on the ESG.

The revision of the European Approach will be conducted by the same structures as for the revision of the ESG and will similarly involve consultation with appropriate stakeholders and experts. The revision should start in the second half of the period for drafting the new ESG, so that the main lines of the ESG revision are already clear and can be reflected in the European Approach.

Networking session on the future working structures

Background document

I. Objectives

The networking session is scheduled immediately after the discussion on the 2024-2027 Work Programme, with the objective of incentivising BFUG members to have a more in-depth discussion in break-out groups on the expectations regarding the activities of the 2024-2027 BFUG working structures.

After closing the call for expressions of interest in co-chairing the proposed working structures (22nd of September 2024 EOD), the BFUG members representing countries or consultative members having volunteered to co-chair the proposed working structures will be invited to moderate the break-out sessions (nevertheless, the BFUG might decide not to establish all proposed working structures or to approve all proposals for interest in co-chairing).

The discussions in the break-out session will be used to collect input from the BFUG members, supporting the co-chairs of the working structures, once they are agreed by the BFUG, to draw up the first draft of the Terms of Reference for their group.

While the focus of the session is to discuss the activity of the groups, the participants can also reflect on the partnerships and activities of potential projects that could support their work. A similar activity took place at the BFUG 63 in Vienna (see [here](#)), to discuss projects, however in that case the Work Programme had already been agreed upon before the Ministerial Conference in Paris.

II. Format

The session is scheduled to last one hour and uses the World Cafe format. Six groups will be created in different parts of the meeting room for the following working structures proposed in the [Draft Work Programme](#): WG on Monitoring (implementation), WG/AG on Fundamental Values, CG on Global Policy Dialogue, WG on Internationalisation & Mobility, AG/TF on the Future of Bologna, Bologna Coordination Implementation Group (including the four proposed TPGs). Due to their specific nature, no groups will be organised for the TF on long-term Secretariat or the Advisory Group on ECTS.




Each breakout group is moderated by the proposed co-chairs of the respective working structures. The breakout groups will use flipcharts and post-it notes to brainstorm their ideas.

At the beginning of the session, the participants will be invited to choose their breakout group. The session is divided into three intervals of 20 minutes each, and as such, each participant can join three groups, should they so wish. After each set of 20 minutes, the moderators will announce the expiry of the dedicated time. However, participants can choose to remain in the current breakout group if they want to.

For delegations with 2 representatives, we advise that they split in different groups to ensure a better coverage.

III. Guiding questions

BFUG participants are invited to discuss on the following three guiding questions:

-  Considering the Tirana Communiqué commitments, which should be the main objectives of the working structure?
-  What should be the main outcome(s) of the working structure?
-  What activities can be deployed to address the focus and achieve the outcome(s) (potentially including via Erasmus+ funded projects)?

Eurodoc application to the Bologna Follow-Up Group as consultative member

BFUG Secretariat

Head of the BFUG Secretariat
Mrs. Edlira Adi Kahani Subashi
Rr. Naim Frashëri, Nr. 37
Tirana, Albania

Brussels, April 9th 2024

Dear Sir, Dear Madam

With this letter the *European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers* (Eurodoc) wishes to apply for the status of consultative member in the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG). Please allow us to in the following to outline the stakeholder group we are representing, its relevance for the BFUG, and the added value that we would bring to the BFUG.

Representativeness

Eurodoc represents doctoral candidates¹, postdocs and other early career researchers across Europe. This means that Eurodoc represents specifically the individuals enrolled in third cycle education (doctoral candidates) as well as the individuals for whom third cycle education has been most relevant for their immediate career paths, namely postdocs and other early career researchers. Doctoral candidates, postdocs and other early career researchers make up a considerable proportion of researchers in academia and contribute to the core tasks of higher education, namely teaching, research, and outreach.

Organisational form

Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, is a federation of national associations representing doctoral candidates, postdocs, and early career researchers from countries across the EHEA. Eurodoc was founded in 2002 and then established in 2005 as a non-profit, international volunteer organisation based in Brussels.

Eurodoc is an organisation run by volunteers: The administration of Eurodoc, that is the board and the secretariat, is made up of doctoral candidates, postdocs, and early career researchers, who are elected by the national associations to represent them on the European level. Eurodoc's daily activity is based on participative democracy and our

¹ By doctoral candidate we understand any individual enrolled in third cycle education.

Eurodoc application to the Bologna Follow-Up Group as consultative member

decision making aims to constructively build consensus and knowledge exchange among doctoral candidates, postdocs, and early career researchers across Europe.

Relevance of the stakeholder group

With the increase in the number of doctoral candidates in Europe in the past decade² and the professionalisation of doctoral education, third cycle education has become an important arena where the higher education institutions' mission is shaped.

The Salzburg Principles define doctoral education as research education (European University Association 2005).³ Thus, the doctorate in Europe – with some exceptions such as professional doctorates – centres on an individual research project with an original contribution to knowledge. This means that doctoral candidates' education differs significantly from Bachelor's and Master's education, while their conditions as researchers differ equally significantly from those of researchers with tenure or permanent positions, for example through their high dependence on one or more supervisors and their non-permanent academic employment or lack of employment. The specific situation of doctoral candidates can, therefore, neither be subsumed simply under the group of students nor under the group of senior researchers.

Furthermore, the structure of doctoral education – including admissions requirements, duration, or quality assurance – is not only still less standardised than for Bachelor's or Master's programmes, it is also often regulated separately from the first or second cycle. It not only varies greatly across Europe, but the regulation of doctoral education is also located at different levels – national, institutional (university, faculty, or departmental), or doctoral school.

For the stakeholder group that Eurodoc represents, doctoral education is one of the key focal points: either because as doctoral candidates they are enrolled in third cycle education, or third cycle education is directly relevant for their immediate next career steps either outside of academia, or within academia as postdocs and early career researchers. For this latter group, in turn, a recent report of the European University Association equally stressed the importance of ensuring the representation of postdoctoral researchers rather than simply subsuming them under faculty. Otherwise their specific conditions will remain invisible and risks that “their specific perspective is not sufficiently taken into account”.⁴

Doctoral education lays the groundwork for the future generations of senior researchers and teachers – doctoral candidates, postdocs, and other early career researchers will shape the higher education and research sector in the decades to come.

² Eurostat 2024, OECD 2020:24.

³ While Bachelor's and Master's students may contribute to the research at higher education institutions, they are not expected to contribute to the production of scientific knowledge with individual original research.

⁴ Engels, T., Hasgall, A., and Peneoasu, A-M. (2024): *Postdoctoral Researchers at European Universities: Profiles, Roles and Institutional Support Structures*, European University Association.

Eurodoc application to the Bologna Follow-Up Group as consultative member

Added value to the Bologna Process

Admitting Eurodoc as a consultative member in BFUG would serve to ensure the inclusion of a stakeholder who focuses specifically on third cycle education and who represents the distinct conditions of doctoral candidates, postdocs, and other early career researchers. Eurodoc's work focuses on policies for education and research at the European level to promote positive change in the higher education policies, culture, and environment that affect the quality of the education and conditions of doctoral candidates and early career researchers. In our work, we are committed to the goals outlined by the Bologna process and the fundamental values of the EHEA.

We thank you for taking the time to assess our application and remain at your disposal at all times to answer any questions or provide further information.

Sincerely,

Digitalno podpisal Sebastian Dahle
Datum: 2024.04.09 20:49:03 +02'00'

Sebastian Dahle, President

In the name of the administrative board on behalf of Eurodoc

Sebastian Dahle, President
Pil Maria Saugmann, Vice-president
Hannah Schoch, Secretary
Devris Isler, Treasure
Aleksandra Lewandowska, General Board Member
Sara Pilia, General Board Member



Contact: Eurodoc President: president@eurodoc.net

Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, is a grassroots federation of 24 national associations of early career researchers (ECRs) from 22 countries across Europe. Eurodoc was established in 2002 and is based in Brussels. As a representative of doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level, Eurodoc engages with all major stakeholders in research, higher education, and innovation in Europe.



Background note on Eurodoc's application for consultative membership

Prepared by the EHEA Secretariat for the XCIII BFUG meeting in Budapest, 26th-27th of September 2024

I. Information about the application

On the 9th of April 2024, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (hereinafter referred to as 'Eurodoc') sent an email to the EHEA Secretariat with the request to change their membership status from EHEA partner to consultative member. The request has included as attachments two documents: a formal application letter (**'Eurodoc application to the Bologna Follow-Up Group as consultative members'**), which relates to the way EURODOC argues the fulfilment of the consultative membership criteria, and **the Eurodoc Statutes** in English.

The co-chairs at the time of the receipt of the application, Belgium and Holy See, have informed Eurodoc that the request would be dealt with by the (then) future co-chairs, Hungary and Iceland. This has been justified on the proximity of the Ministerial Conference in Tirana and that no (regular) BFUG Board meeting would be organised between their application and the Ministerial Conference, thus limiting the possibility to thoroughly analyse the application.

II. Criteria for consultative membership

According to the [Rules of Procedure of the European Higher Education Area](#) ('RoP-EHEA'), as adopted by the ministers of higher education as Annex II of the Tirana Communiqué, *'European level 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.'* (Article II.2)

The exclusive competence for **accepting** new members and consultative members lies with the Ministerial Conference, based on the proposal from the BFUG, which will examine the application in accordance with its own Rules of Procedure (Article III.1 of RoP-EHEA). *Per a contrario*, a decision of the BFUG to reject the application closes the procedure, without the requirement to raise the issue at the Ministerial Conference.

The admission of consultative members is part of the exceptional voting regime where, *'in exceptional circumstances and in spite of the best efforts of the BFUG Co-Chairs, no consensus can be achieved, decisions can be taken by vote'*, in this case with a two thirds majority (Article V.3 of RoP-EHEA). If required, this majority applies for both BFUG and, if the case, Ministerial Conference.

The **four cumulative criteria** for consultative membership are stipulated in Annex 4 of the RoP-EHEA: **added value to the Bologna Process, Relevance of the stakeholder group, Representativeness and Organisational Form**. The Annex details how each of the criteria should be interpreted to assess compliance.

III. Information regarding previous requests of EURODOC to obtain consultative membership

At the [62nd BFUG Board meeting in Zürich](#), on the 3rd of July 2018, the French Secretariat informed the BFUG Board about the application of EURODOC to change its' membership status from EHEA partner to consultative member. The Board decided to ask EURODOC further information about their application, especially *'better explaining its motivation'*.

At the [63rd BFUG meeting in Vienna](#), on the 27th-28th of September 2028, the BFUG decided to *'ask for more concrete information about the relevance of their contribution to the work of the BFUG and the real added value of their change in membership status'*.

At the [64th BFUG Board meeting in Skopje](#), on the 12th of February 2019, the BFUG Board was informed about a discussion between ESU and EURODOC on the issue of double representation: *'In case consultative membership for EURODOC is accorded, ESU will represent and discuss issues considering students between level 4 to 8 of the EQF, while EURODOC will represent PhD students from the professional side, as well as young researchers and teaching PhD students'*.

As the matter had been pending, on 30th of March 2020, Eurodoc sent [a letter](#) to the BFUG Secretariat, to the attention of the BFUG, with the intention of *'reviving the request to the members of the BFUG to change the current status of Eurodoc from partner to consultative member'*.

At the [70th BFUG Board meeting](#) (online) hosted by Ukraine, on the 2nd of April 2020, the BFUG Board decided that *'the clear recommendation from the Board to the BFUG would be to not admit Eurodoc as Consultative member'*. This has been justified through the following: *'The Board members commented that Eurodoc can be invited to BFUG meetings as experts on specific topics, and that they are already represented either by ETUCE or ESU. The BFUG needs to be selective as the core of the EHEA are the members and the Consultative members should not become too many'*.

The BFUG Board decided that *'The BFUG Co-chairs will send this recommendation to the BFUG via electronic consultation'*, which finished the procedure with Eurodoc retaining their status as EHEA Partners.

IV. Discussions in the XCII BFUG Board meeting

The BFUG Board appreciated that the conditions and arguments justifying the decision taken in 2020 not to admit Eurodoc as a consultative member persist.

Background document on the synergies and potential challenges between the European Degree (label) and the EHEA tools

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have always evolved and adapted the knowledge they provide to the needs of society, to equip students with a valuable, useful and career-ready education. As HEIs have recognized the added value in cooperating with other institutions to discover novel or different ways of teaching and learning they have initiated collaborations, improved their curricula, adapted their provision and in that way increased the value of their degrees and student experiences.

It is important that the HEIs have the autonomy to form the nature of their cooperation, to initiate or terminate them as best fits their needs, and thus safeguard the Fundamental Values of their institution and education system. In that way the collaboration provides maximum benefit to all collaborating partners.

International collaboration, recognition of international education, and the protection, development and promotion of our Fundamental Values form a valuable part of the foundation of the Bologna Process, as adopted by the ministers responsible for higher education in all its member countries.

Meanwhile, European university alliances have taken the initiative towards a new pilot model for European cooperation in higher education. On the basis of this initiative, the Commission has started preparatory work and published its Communication¹ on 27 March 2024 on the Blueprint for a European Degree.

The Communication underlines that the blueprint seeks to establish a new and universally recognized qualification, a key element of the European Education Area. As a concept, the European Degree symbolizes a vision that unifies educational standards across Europe, promotes mobility and aims to create a European space for learning and opportunities.

The European Degree (and the related concept of the European label) builds on the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), further integrating higher education systems of EEA Member States with the intention to make them more compatible and comparable. It aims to enhance the attractiveness of European higher education on a global scale, thereby fostering a stronger EHEA. The adoption of a higher education system based on a common degree structure is one of the key commitments agreed within the Bologna Process.

The great diversity of higher education systems in the EHEA constitutes an exceptionally rich cultural asset which also needs to be preserved, enabling students to fully benefit from its rich cultural, historical and religious heritage while also facilitating access to seamless degree mobility.

¹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/4559af49-43e2-11ef-865a-01aa75ed71a1>

This wish for a seamless degree mobility is grounded in several key documents and agreements that have shaped the European cooperation and integration in higher education:

- **Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997)**²: This convention, formally known as the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, establishes the legal framework for the recognition of qualifications across Europe, promoting academic mobility and mutual recognition of degrees.
- **Rome Communiqué (2020)**³: This communiqué reaffirmed the commitment of EHEA ministers to further enhance the Bologna Process, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and innovative education systems.
- **Tirana Communiqué (2024)**⁴: The most recent communiqué, which outlines current priorities and actions for the EHEA, including the development of transparency, autonomy, and equity in higher education to foster greater mobility and cooperation among higher education institutions.

The European degree (label) aims to improve employability and lifelong learning. How do we best ensure that it can adapt to a changing Europe in the future? Are we properly preparing our students for the realities of the modern world of work? In this era of rapid technological change, when skills can become outdated almost overnight, how can we ensure that the European qualifications remain relevant and valuable?

There is an ongoing dialogue whether and if so, how to establish a new European Degree or European Degree Label, and how it will relate to developments in the much larger European Higher Education Area. In this sense, it is vital to think critically, to challenge assumptions, and to explore new ideas. This plenary session on the European Degree (label) and the European Higher Education Area should serve as a platform for constructive dialogue between all EHEA countries, for sharing best practices, forging stronger partnerships, and debating the potential and possible challenges posed by the European Degree in the context of the EHEA.

There are a few questions to discuss:

- What added value can the potential European degree (label) bring to support the development and implementation of the EHEA Tools?
- Are there difficulties for non-EU members of the EHEA in adopting a potential European degree (label)? What is the relationship between linguistic diversity among EHEA countries and the linguistic criteria set by the EU higher education package?
- How would a potential European degree (label) interrelate with the quality assurance processes as described in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the

² <https://rm.coe.int/168007f2c7>

³ https://ehea.info/Upload/Rome_Ministerial_Communique.pdf

⁴ <https://ehea.info/Immagini/Tirana-Communique.pdf>

European Higher Education Area (ESG)⁵ and the evaluation of joint programmes through the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes⁶? Are there any implications for these tools and the work of the quality assurance agencies as a result of a potential European degree (label)?

⁵ <https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/>

⁶ https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2018/04/02_European_Approach_QA_of_Joint_Programmes_v1_0.pdf



DGII/EDU/CDEDU-HE (2024) 12

Original: English

Strasbourg, 11 September 2024

Implementation of the Council of Europe Higher Education programme in 2024
and priorities for the future programme 2024-27

Report to the Bologna Follow Up Group

DGII-Directorate for Democracy/Education Department) Secretariat contact:
catherine.dreyer@coe.int

The Council of Europe Higher Education Programme

The higher education programme of the Council of Europe is guided by the **Council of Europe 2030 Education Strategy “Learners First”**. The Strategy not only provides the vision for the Council of Europe work in the field of education in general and higher education in particular, but also includes a Roadmap for its Programme of Activities 2024-2027.

The new Education Programme 2024-2027 was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in November 2023. At the end of 2023 the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee for Education were adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The higher education programme comprises the programmes related to the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, including its Co-Secretariat, running (jointly with UNESCO) of the ENIC Network; democratic mission of higher education, Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED), European Qualifications Passport for Refugees and the Joint EU/CoE Project ‘Supporting an efficient national mechanism of recognition of refugees’ qualifications in Italy’.

The work in the field of higher education is overseen by the Sub-Group on higher education policy of the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU). The CDEDU Sub-Group reports to the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education, which comprises representatives of public authorities responsible for education from the 46 member States of the Council of Europe, Holy See and Kazakhstan and a number of observers.

Through the adoption of its new terms of reference in October 2023, the CDEDU Sub-Group on Higher Education has been reinforced and its membership has been enlarged from 13 to 25 members, comprising representatives of Ministries, in charge of higher education, as well as academic representatives and international NGOs. To ensure better coordination of work with the Bologna Process, a representative of the EHEA is among the Sub-Group members.

The first meeting of the new CDEDU Sub-Group on Higher Education took place on the 14-15 February 2024 in Strasbourg. The Sub-Group reviewed the implementation of the projects carried out in the framework of the 2024-2027 Education Programme.

The second meeting of the Sub-Group on Higher Education will take place on 18-19 September in Paris.

On 10-11 October the 6th Plenary session of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Education will take place in Strasbourg.

Higher education projects

1. Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee

Overview

Together with UNESCO, the Council of Europe ensures the Secretariat of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC). The Lisbon Recognition Convention is one of the most ratified Conventions in the Council of Europe and it remains the only legally binding text in the European Higher Education Area.

Key priorities in 2024-2027

In 2024 the Lisbon Recognition Convention Bureau is pursuing its work on:

- Finalising the update of the ENIC- NARIC Charter
- Updating the ‘Revised Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education’(2007)

The workplan also foresees drafting a new text on 'digital solutions', taking into account the existing 'Guidelines for national online information systems' (2019).

The LRC Bureau started its work on the Revised Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education. The workshop on this topic was held in the framework of the next annual ENIC-NARIC meeting, which took place in Naples on 23-25 June 2024.

2. Contribution to the ENIC-NARIC Networks

Overview

Since 1994 the Council of Europe has been actively involved in running jointly with UNESCO the European Network of National Information Centres (ENIC). It is run jointly with the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) network, which was established in 1984 with the European Commission as Secretariat.

The ENIC-NARIC networks have joint initiatives, linked to supporting exchange on qualifications-recognition information on policies and practices and providing an opportunity for capacity building activities, as well as participating in consultative processes on international normative instruments related to qualification recognition.

For the efficient functioning of both the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the ENIC and NARIC Networks the renewal process is constantly required, given new developments in the field of higher education, such as the digitization, automatic recognition, micro-credentials, recognition of non-formal and informal education and recognition of prior learning, transnational education.

Developments in 2024

The current composition of the ENIC Bureau is as follows:

- Chiara Finocchietti (Italy) – ENIC President
- Dženan Omanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – ENIC Vice-President

The elections for the second ENIC Vice-President will be held at the next ENIC-NARIC meeting in Tirana (Albania) in May 2025.

The current composition of the NARIC Advisory Board is as follows:

- Gunnar Vaht (Estonia);
- Helén Sophie Haugen (Norway);
- Gianina Chirazi (Romania).

In 2023, for the first time, the Council of Europe launched a call to support ENIC centres, which are not eligible for the NARIC call and are part of the CoE Education Programme.

As a result of the call for pilot projects, nine applications were received for funding. Out of these applications the evaluation board decided to support six projects from the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Ukraine and United Kingdom. The projects were implemented until the end of 2023 and the projects' results were presented in the framework of a workshop at the last annual ENIC-NARIC meeting in June 2024.

The topics range from the recognition of refugees' qualifications to combatting education fraud to stepping up the capacity of the National Information Centres through enhanced training of credential evaluators.

The second call for ENIC projects was launched at the end of 2023 and currently three projects are being implemented from the following countries: Armenia (on refugee qualifications), Bosnia and

Herzegovina (on automatic recognition), Ukraine (on recognition of qualifications from temporarily occupied territories and on education fraud).

The 2025 annual ENIC-NARIC meeting will take place in Tirana, Albania, organised with the financial support of the Council of Europe.

3. Automatic Recognition

In 2023, the Council of Europe set up an Ad Hoc Working Group on automatic recognition of qualifications. Its terms of reference were adopted by the CDEDU Bureau at its meeting in February 2023.

According to its terms of reference, the purpose of this Group is to:

- Exchange views on the current developments, related to establishing the right to automatic recognition, making good use of the trial-and-error experiences across Europe;
- Advise the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Education on different possibilities and prepare an option paper to establish a legally binding text on automatic recognition.

In 2023-2024 the Council of Europe Ad Hoc Working Group on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications held five meetings. From November 2023 through March 2024, the Working Group organised consultations with the key stakeholders, notably students, higher education institutions and public authorities in charge of higher education.

The first consultation session with students was held in November 2023 in Tallin in the framework of the ESU General Assembly.

The second consultation session with higher education institutions, organised in cooperation with EUA and EURASHE was held online on the 15 March 2024, it attracted nearly 500 registration, with the final number of around 250 participants.

The third consultation session with public authorities in charge of higher education and other stakeholder organisations active in the field of higher education, including UNESCO and the European Commission, took place in Strasbourg (and online) on the 21 March 2024.

Through its consultations and discussions with key stakeholders, the Working Group has advanced the understanding of automatic recognition, underlining the differences and divergencies in approaches and identified the necessary steps to move forward.

The Working Group will present its findings and proposals for the work ahead at the next Plenary session of the Steering Committee for Education.

4. Recognition of refugees' qualifications:

There are currently three important initiatives implemented in this field: Draft CM Recommendation on "Valuing the Academic and Professional Skills of Refugees in Europe; the [European Qualifications Passport for Refugees \(EQPR\)](#) and the joint European Union and Council of Europe project '[Supporting an efficient national mechanism of recognition of refugees' qualifications](#)' in Italy.

4.1. Draft CM Recommendation on "Valuing the Academic and Professional Skills of Refugees in Europe".

In order to implement the CoE Education Strategy, in particular one of its priority themes 'Enhancing education's social responsibility and responsiveness', the Council of Europe started to work on the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Valuing the Academic and Professional Skills of Refugees in Europe (provisional title), containing principles and guidelines.

The first expert background study was produced and discussed at the first meeting of the Sub-Group on Higher Education Policy in February 2024.

The draft text has been circulated for comments to countries through the Steering Committee for Education, as well as to the ENIC and NARIC centres.

The draft Recommendation will be discussed by the Sub-Group on Higher Education at its next meeting at the end of September in Paris and will be presented at the next meeting of the Steering Committee for Education in October 2024.

4.2. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)-

An overview

The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) is a Council of Europe initiative aiming at facilitating the recognition of refugees' qualifications even in the absence of full documentation.

The EQPR project is developing synergies and cooperates with the UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants, which is targeting countries outside the European Region. The coordination is carried out both at the strategic level, as well as on a technical level.

Latest developments

There are 22 countries currently participating in the EQPR: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, United Kingdom. To date, over 100 EQPRs have been issued.

More than 80 credential evaluators from 22 participating ENICs are now trained on the EQPR methodology, which increases the capacity of the project to promote the EQPR as a valid and trustful tool to assess qualifications of refugees without sufficient documentation.

In June 2024 the event 'Hand in hand to support the integration of refugees-education, training and recognition of qualifications' co-organised by the Council of Europe and France Education International and the University of Lyon 2, supported by NGOs, explored practical tools and programmes helping refugees to continue their studies. The event was followed by an evaluation session, where 8 out of 22 countries were represented among the evaluators's team.

The next EQPR evaluation session will take place in Bonn, Germany from 23 to 27 September 2024.

4.3. The Joint European Union/Council of Europe project 'Supporting an efficient national mechanism of recognition of refugees' qualifications' in Italy.

Italy became the first country in which the Council of Europe is upscaling the use of the EQPR methodology, through the joint European Union and Council of Europe project "[Supporting an efficient national mechanism of recognition of refugees' qualifications](#)". This project is co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument and implemented by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the European Commission Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support.

The general objective of the project was to support Italian authorities in their efforts to design and foster reforms for recognising refugees' qualifications through the development of a national coordination mechanism within public sectors, in and beyond academia.

The project was implemented from 1 September 2022 through 31 August 2024.

5. Democratic mission of higher education

Latest developments

The work on the democratic mission of higher education is strongly linked to the fundamental values of the Council of Europe, respecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

With the launch of the new project “Academic Freedom in Action”, the Council of Europe Education department continues its work on the protection and promotion of the values of academic freedom, the premises of which were given in the Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the responsibility of public authorities for academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

To implement this project the call for experts was launched at the end of 2023 and eight academic experts were selected. To date the Working Group has held two meetings with the third meeting taking place end of September.

The Working Group is currently working on the preparation of an expert report on threats to academic freedom and the preparation of the [conference “Academic Freedom in Action”, scheduled to take place on 13-14 November 2024 in Strasbourg](#). The registration for the conference is open until 15 October 2024.

The collaboration between the Council of Europe and the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility, and Democracy also continues and the eighth instalment of the Global Forum on Higher Education is currently being prepared to take place at the Charles University in Prague, on 3-4 June 2025.

6. The Pan-European Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED)

An overview and main developments

The ETINED [Platform](#) is a network of specialists appointed by member States of the Council of Europe and of States Parties to the European Cultural Convention. Its mission is to:

- Share information and good practices in the field of transparency and integrity in education;
- Contribute to the development of adequate answers to challenges that corruption poses to the sector of education and higher education;
- Create a virtuous cycle in education, whereby all actors commit to fundamental positive ethical principles;
- Develop capacity-building for all actors.

Latest developments

The [ETINED](#) Platform is currently working on the following initiatives:

6.1. The Glossary of Terms related to Ethics and Integrity in Education.

Based on [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)18 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on countering education fraud](#), the glossary includes 135 definitions which aim to provide clarity on 76 key terms related to ethics and integrity in education.

Methodologically, the glossary integrates terms from various Council of Europe recommendations, spanning from 1998 to 2022, along with insights from reputable glossaries. The Glossary was

published in May 2024 and is [downloadable](#) free of charge from the Council of Europe Education Department website.

6.2. Setting up a Centre for Preventing and Countering Education Fraud

At its meeting in March 2024, the CDEDU recognised establishing a Centre on Preventing and Countering Education Fraud as a key initiative.

The CDEDU took note of the strong support received from the Italian delegation to the CDEDU, which indicated, on behalf of the Minister of Universities and Research of Italy, that the country was also prepared to offer logistical support, including hosting the structure of the future Centre in its territory.

Further discussion on this project will be carried out in the framework of the Sub-Group on Higher Education and the 6th Plenary session of the CDEDU.

6.3. FraudS+ “Student Awareness on Fraud in Education”

Following the endorsement by the CDEDU in March 2024, the Council of Europe launched the survey on “Student awareness of fraud in education”, building on the previous research from the Erasmus+ project "FraudS+ - False Records, Altered Diploma, and Diploma Mills Qualifications Collection".

The survey targets higher education students and its objectives are to:

- Understand the knowledge of students on fraud in higher education.
- Raise awareness about this issue and enhance their ability to address it.
- Support the creation of tools that promote ethics and transparency in higher education.

Currently, the survey replies are being collected and assessed by CIMEA, who are the partners in this project.

ENQA report to the BFUG 26-27 September 2024, Hungary

Highlights of ENQA's activities since April 2024

ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) is the designated stakeholder organisation of quality assurance agencies in the EHEA. ENQA represents their interests internationally, supports them nationally and provides them with comprehensive services and networking opportunities. Under ENQA's umbrella, the community of agencies drives innovation in quality assurance and refines quality assurance processes.

1. ENQA MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

ENQA's membership currently stands at 60 agencies in 32 countries in the EHEA, as well as 41 affiliates in 52 countries worldwide. There are ENQA members and/or affiliates in 45 out of the 47 EHEA countries (excluding Russia and Belarus).

Elections for ENQA's governing Board will take place at the General Assembly meeting on 24-25 October 2024 in Malta.

2. LATEST ENQA ACTIVITIES

ENQA's message to the Tirana Ministerial Conference

In advance of the 2024 Bologna Process Ministerial Conference, ENQA published its [message](#) to the Ministers of the EHEA. In the message, ENQA highlighted quality assurance as a prominent success story of the EHEA, while recognising that there is still work to be done, both in meeting existing commitments and in ensuring that the shared framework remains fit-for-purpose in the changing higher education environment.

In this context, ENQA calls on Ministers to take action on three key issues:

- Ensure that national legislative frameworks allow quality assurance agencies to operate in compliance with the ESG;
- Enable international collaboration by reducing national-level barriers in quality assurance and higher education while enhancing transparency;
- Maintain the relevance and added value of external quality assurance by allowing quality assurance agencies to implement flexible and enhancement-oriented approaches.

The key points of the message were delivered in a [speech](#) to delegates by ENQA's President, Douglas Blackstock. He highlighted that the recommendations address the topics raised by quality assurance agencies as being crucial to enable them to meet European level expectations; provide the accountability and transparency necessary to support recognition, mobility and international cooperation; and support higher education institutions and students with responsive and enhancement-led approaches to external quality assurance. ENQA members and affiliates regularly cite national legislation as being a significant barrier in achieving these aims — therefore, action by national authorities is key to success.

QA-FIT project draws to a close

The ENQA-coordinated QA-FIT project (Quality Assurance Fit for the Future) has continued its activities to explore in more detail key issues for the future of quality assurance in the EHEA, and specifically to gather further evidence to inform the revision of the ESG

In May 2024, the project consortium published two papers exploring perspectives on key issues for quality assurance. The paper '[The future of the ESG](#)' summarises the data collected from individual stakeholder groups with the objective of identifying and analysing commonalities and divergences in the perceptions of the ESG, and exploring key questions to be addressed in the revision. The paper '[Quality assurance and internationalisation](#)' explores the state of implementation of the various quality assurance policies and tools that support internationalisation, and discusses how current quality assurance arrangements both facilitate and inhibit international activities of higher education institutions..

In early September a [webinar](#) was held to present the above papers and discuss the future of the European quality assurance framework. A [Policy Brief](#) has been published, which gives insights into the project outcomes in the context of the quality assurance priorities set out by the EHEA and the European Union.

On 7 November 2024, a final project [event](#) will be held in Brussels to gather higher education stakeholders and policy-makers to discuss the current context for quality assurance and reflect on how the EHEA framework can evolve to remain responsive and relevant, drawing on the findings of the project activities. In conjunction with this, a final paper will be published that will propose some principles for the revision of the ESG.

Revision of the ESG gets underway

Following the mandate from the EHEA Ministers in the Tirana Communiqué, the first concrete steps for the revision of the ESG have been taken. A Steering Committee and a Drafting Group, have been established, consisting of representatives of the ESG authors. The first meeting of the Steering Committee will take place at the end of September, at which a roadmap for the revision process, including consultations with stakeholders and the BFUG, will be agreed. Approval of the final version by the BFUG is expected in 2026, followed by adoption at the 2027 Ministerial Conference.

3. ENQA AGENCY REVIEWS

In 2024, ENQA is coordinating 17 external peer reviews of quality assurance agencies. The review process assesses the compliance of agencies with the ESG, in line with the Bologna Process key commitment on quality assurance, and also provides recommendations to the agencies for their further development.

ENQA is currently engaged in an external review of its Agency Review service. The review will assess ENQA's compliance with the ESG, following the principle of cyclical peer review, and will follow up on the outcomes of the previous external review in 2019. The review is being coordinated by the Knowledge Innovation Centre, who were selected following an open tendering process. ENQA is currently finalising its self-assessment report. A panel of experts will conduct a site visit in December 2024 and will then provide a written report with analysis and recommendations. Further information about the review is available [here](#).

4. UPCOMING EVENTS

ENQA General Assembly 2024 will take place on 24-25 October in St Julien's, Malta. The [event](#) will address the topic of 'Quality assurance beyond the ESG' and elections for the Board will take place during the statutory part of the meeting.

QA-FIT project closing event will take place on 7 November 2024 in Brussels, Belgium. The [event](#) will gather higher education stakeholders and policy-makers to discuss the current context for quality assurance of higher education and reflect on how the EHEA framework can evolve to remain responsive and relevant, drawing on the findings of the project activities.

European Quality Assurance Forum 2024 will take place on 24-26 November, hosted by the University of Twente in the Netherlands. This year's [Forum](#) will focus on the theme of 'Enhancing education, research and societal engagement through quality assurance' and will offer an occasion to discuss the interconnection of the three missions. The early registration deadline is 20 September and the final registration deadline is 24 October.

ENQA Members' Forum 2025 will take place on 10-11 April in Paphos, Cyprus.

To stay updated on all ENQA's activities, subscribe to the quarterly news Bulletin through the link on ENQA's website [here](#).

Update on EQAR Activities

for the 26-27 September 2024 BFUG meeting

Contents

1. Register.....	1
2. New EQAR Director	2
3. Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR)	2
4. Projects where EQAR is involved.....	3
4.1. IMINQA	3
4.2. QA FIT	4
4.3. TPG LRC CORE.....	4

1. Register

At the April 2024 meeting, the EQAR Register Committee concluded that the following agencies demonstrated their substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG).

Approved applications:

- **CYQAA** – The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education
- **IEP** – Institutional Evaluation Programme
- **PKA** – Polish Accreditation Committee
- **Unibasq** – Agency for Quality of the Basque University System

At the July 2024 meeting, the EQAR Register Committee concluded that the following agencies demonstrated their substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG).

Approved applications:

- **A3ES** – Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education
- **AHPGS** – Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences
- **AQ Austria** – Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria
- **CTI** – Engineering Degree Commission
- **evalag** – Evaluation Agency Baden-Württemberg
- **QQI** – Quality and Qualifications Ireland

See also:

- Full list of the [Register Committee decisions](#)
- [Database of precedents](#), featuring various search/filter options and including relevant excerpts of RC decisions.
- [Key statistics](#) on the application process and ESG compliance (make sure to scroll down to view all the different charts).

2. New EQAR Director

Aleksandar Šušnjar has been appointed the new Director at EQAR and he started in his position as of 9 September 2024. More information can be found at the [link](#).

3. Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR)

DEQAR is the Database of External Quality Assurance Results on activities performed by EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies. DEQAR collects their reports and decisions (i.e. accreditations and evaluations) on higher education institutions mainly based in the EHEA, but also beyond.

Key Statistics (September 2024)

The DEQAR Website continues to attract ca. 3000 page views monthly, making up over a third of the total traffic to EQAR's website.

	March 2024	September 2024
Reports	97 197	102 687
Institutions	3740	4109
Agencies*	55	56
Coverage **	31	32

*Number of agencies that have at some point uploaded reports in DEQAR

** EHEA systems where DEQAR includes reports on at least 50% of the institutions listed in the European Tertiary Education Register ([ETER](#)), except where this does not represent a substantial part of the HE system:

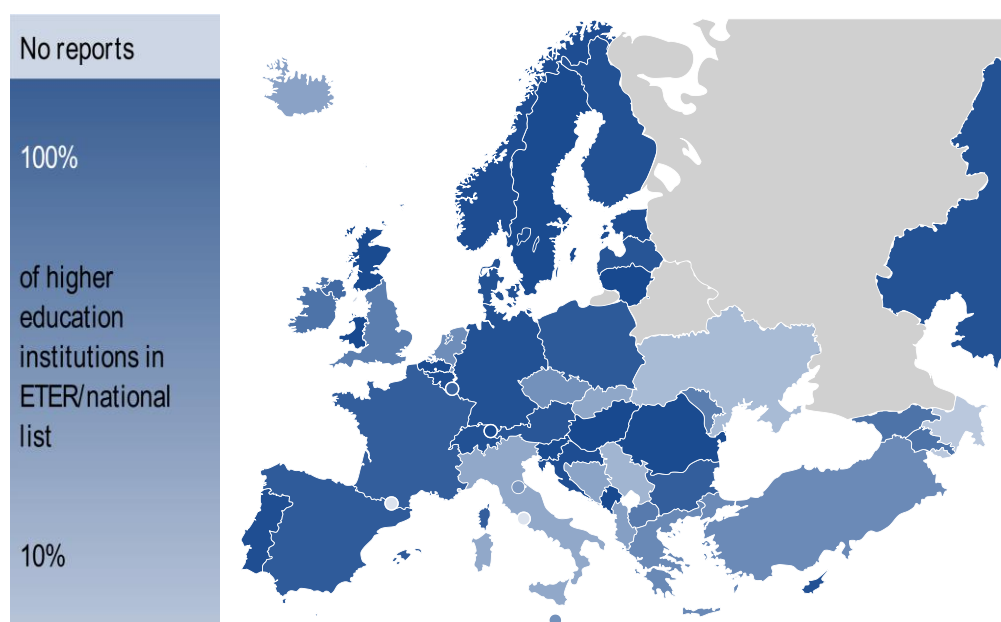


Figure 1: DEQAR coverage (percentage of HEIs with QA reports)

Updates from DEQAR:

- The number of higher education systems covered well as a result of EQAR agencies upload of external QA reports in March is thirty two: Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Belgium (French Community), Bulgaria, Denmark, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Moldova, Northern Ireland (UK), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland (UK), Spain, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and Wales (UK).
- Some **ENIC-NARIC** centres are **integrating information on accredited higher education institutions from DEQAR into their workflows**, with a view to speeding up the recognition process for qualifications issued by HEIs present in DEQAR.
- Since March 2024, **QA agencies can store accreditations and evaluations on other (alternative) providers** (i.e. providers not having degree awarding powers but offer programmes at QF level 5-8) and **micro credentials** (i.e. programmes of small volume not leading to full recognised degree). **First uploads** took place throughout the summer of 2024 – the results can be [accessed here](#).
- All DEQAR data, including the **programme accreditations**, is now uploaded to the **European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDC)** by default. As a result, all providers covered in DEQAR are able to issue accredited digital credentials in EDC.
- EQAR introduced **Glossary of terms** on its website, aimed to help end users understand the **terminology used in DEQAR**, including keywords such as “micro-credentials”, “other providers” and “higher education institutions”. The glossary can be [found here](#).

Further general information on DEQAR can be found at: <https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/infographics/>

Information on how to connect to the DEQAR’s API and extract the data can be found here: <https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/connect-to-api/>

4. Projects where EQAR is involved

4.1. IMINQA

The Implementation and Innovation in QA through Peer Learning (IMINQA) project is a three-year ERASMUS+ co-funded project (May 2022 – April 2023) led by the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training in partnership with ENQA, ARACIS (on behalf of Romania) and EQAR.

IMINQA Working Group on Micro-credentials had its last two meetings, in April and September 2024, respectfully. EQAR presented the draft feasibility study on quality label for all providers working in alignment with the European Approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability. The paper delves into the feasibility of a quality label, evaluates the necessity of establishing a new one, and examines potential models for its implementation. In doing so, it explores the existing quality label landscape within European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and gathers insights from two key stakeholder groups, alternative providers and quality assurance agencies. It is expected to be completed by November 2024. In addition, EQAR showcased the first uploads of reports on certified micro-credentials and other providers, and the new Glossary section on the website (see also DEQAR updates).

4.2. QA FIT

The **QA FIT project** is led by ENQA having as partners EUA, EURASHE, ESU, EQAR, FINEEC, Irish University Association, ANOSR (NUS from Romania) and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (associate partner). The projects activities include a desk research, four surveys on the ESG implementation, four reports and four focus groups including one with national ministries (led by EQAR), a final report, a final webinar and then a final policy event in Brussels (autumn 2024).

On 10 September the QA-FIT consortium organised a QA-FIT Final webinar, where EQAR together with other partners presented the latest publication and the cross-cutting analysis that have been developed in 2023-2024. The participation of the webinar had high attendance of more than 300+ participants. The final conference of the event will take place on 7 November 2024 in Brussels.

4.3. TPG LRC CORE

The project is led by the Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (CIMEA) and aims to **support the work of the TPG B**. Other project partners include: HARNO, FEI, Nuffic, UHR, EUA, ESU and the Prime Minister Office – Albania. Main activities involve panel discussions and peer learning activities on common challenges (i.e. recognition of knowledge gained through alternative pathways, micro credentials, digitalisation of recognition workflows, European Degree etc.) and research that will further enable the peer learning.

EQAR is leading the **work group on digitalisation of recognition tools**. The group is organised **3 peer learning webinars** in autumn 2023 – each focusing on one of the phases of the recognition process. Main findings from each of the webinars will feed into publication on digitalization of recognition tools, which will, on one hand present good practices, and on another offer practical advices for digitalising recognition workflows. Main idea is that ENIC NARICs, recognition offices at HEIs and other actors in the field use the document as a guide/blueprint for digitalising their processes.

EQAR, along with EUA, ESU, Nuffic, HARNO and CIMEA, contributes to another work group in the project, **on quality assurance of recognition processes**.

EQAR contributed the publication “Ensuring and enhancing the quality of recognition process – Key considerations and recommendations” with analysis of DEQAR reports, The analysis, includes approx. 300 reports of HEIs based in 14 EHEA systems and looks into how EQAR registered agencies evaluate the work of HEIs in relation to ESG 1.4, with focus on the recognition aspects. The analysis can be [found here](#).

European University Association (EUA)

Activities - state Oct. 2024

This update provides a selection of EUA activities that might be of interest for you and your colleagues.

You are welcome to share this within your ministry, your organisation, with higher education institutions and other relevant organisations.

For more information, please check our website www.eua.eu or [sign up to the newsletter](#)

- [Publications](#) & [Expert voices](#)
- [Ongoing projects](#)
- [Events](#)

Recordings of past events are usually available on [EUA's YouTube channel](#)



[EUA 2023 annual report](#)

Upcoming events and initiatives

DATES	EVENT/INITIATIVE	PLACE	TARGETED AUDIENCE	LINK
18 September 2024	Webinar: EUA Leadership Development Programme	Online	Academic and professional support leaders of EUA member institutions; incoming or new rectors, vice-rectors with different portfolios (research and innovation, learning and teaching, student affairs, strategic planning, sustainability, digitalisation, internationalisation), deans, directors of human resources, or strategy	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/eua-leadership-development-programme-ask-questions-and-prepare-your-application.html
24 September 2024	Webinar "Developing institutional policies for Open Access books"	Online	Institutional leaders (rectors, vice-rectors and heads of administration), research department staff, research librarians, researchers, as well as representatives of other research performing organisations.	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/developing-institutional-policies-for-open-access-books.html

26 September 2024	Webinar “Strengthening research management in the European Research Area: Action 17”	Online	Institutional leaders and research managers from EUA members	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/strengthening-research-management-in-the-european-research-area-action-17.html
1 October 2024	Trends 2024: European higher education institutions in times of transition (webinar)	Online	The higher education community at large Policy makers	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/trends-2024-european-higher-education-institutions-in-times-of-transition.html
03-04 October 2024	2024 EUA Funding Forum	Helsinki, Finland		https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/2024-eua-funding-forum.html
22 October	Webinar: Universities and knowledge security: managing risks in research and innovation	Online	EUA membership at large	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/universities-and-knowledge-security-managing-risks-in-research-and-innovation.html
14-16 November 2024	2024 EQAF (European Quality Assurance Forum)	Enschede, Netherlands	University leaders responsible for QA, QA officers, QA agency staff and researchers working on higher education or the QA field.	https://eua.eu/events/274-2024-european-quality-assurance-forum.html
21 November 2024	High-level roundtable: “R&I for a prosperous and competitive Europe”	Brussels, Belgium	University leaders, national rectors’ conferences, European policymakers	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/high-level-roundtable-r-i-for-a-prosperous-and-competitive-europe.html
27-28 February 2025	2025 European Learning & Teaching Forum	Cork, Ireland	Vice-rectors for academic affairs, deans, heads of learning and teaching centres, and management involved in learning and teaching, students, policy makers and other stakeholders in higher education.	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/2025-european-learning-teaching-forum.html
16 – 17 January 2025	2025 EUA-CDE Thematic Workshop	University of Minho, Portugal	Academic leaders, doctoral school managers, professionals and doctoral candidates from EUA-CDE members	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/2025-eua-cde-thematic-workshop.html
10 - 11 Apr 2025	2025 EUA Annual Conference	University Of Latvia, Riga, Latvia		https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/2025-eua-annual-conference.html

Recent events & publications

EVENT/PUBLICATION	DESCRIPTION	LINK
Event “Unleashing the full potential of the European innovation ecosystem” 10 September 2024	<p>Joint event of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European University Association</p> <p>The need for innovative solutions is growing faster than ever before. With vast scope for cross-border cooperation and exchange among a variety of stakeholders, Europe’s innovation landscape can tackle growing societal challenges with new ideas. Nevertheless, Europe’s potential as a well-functioning and cohesive innovation ecosystem must be better understood and supported.</p> <p>On the occasion of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU, and in conjunction with ongoing discussions about the successor programme to Horizon Europe, representatives of the university sector will join policy makers for an afternoon of debate on how to tackle the fragmentation hampering Europe’s innovation capacity. Showcasing existing achievements at institutional level and inspiring examples of effective multi-stakeholder mobilisation, this event will outline ideas and approaches to orchestrate impactful innovation ecosystems for a competitive Europe. It will also explore how frameworks such as the European Research Area (ERA) and policy measures aiming to enhance R&I capacity can be strengthened to tackle the divide between leading and emerging innovators that causes underperformance in knowledge valorisation. The event will therefore explore ways of building innovation capacity equitably and synergistically across Europe, reflecting the merits and uniqueness of each region as well as the complex and dynamic nature of their innovation ecosystems.</p>	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/unleashing-the-full-potential-of-the-european-innovation-ecosystem.html
Report “Trends 2024 - European higher education institutions in times of transition” 25 July 2024	<p>For the European higher education sector, the past five years have seen many changes and transformations, some gradual, others more drastic and disruptive. In the ninth edition of the European University Association’s long-running series, Trends 2024 provides an overview of how European higher education institutions experienced changes over the past five years, due to higher education reforms, and in the wider context of societal, political, economic and technological changes, marked among others by the implications of Covid-19 pandemic and Russia’s war against Ukraine. The report also sheds light on how higher education institutions see their future direction.</p> <p>Based on survey responses from 489 higher education institutions in 46 European higher education systems, Trends 2024 analyses the institutions’ perspectives and strategies with regard to their multiple missions. It focuses on the education mission, changes in the student body and the education offer, learning and teaching enhancement, the rise of non-degree education, and developments in mobility and internationalisation.</p>	https://www.eua.eu/publications/reports/trends-2024.html
Webinar “Better knowledge valorisation in the European Research Area: Action 7” 2 July 2024	<p>The next webinar in the European University Association’s series ‘A new ERA for universities’ will explore the European Research Area’s seventh action, on upgrading EU guidance for better knowledge valorisation. It will be held on 2 July 2024 from 10.00 to 11.30 CEST.</p> <p>Action 7 aims to strengthen innovation ecosystems for knowledge circulation and valorisation by providing guidance on addressing increasingly complex knowledge value-chains, new market opportunities created by emerging technologies, and new forms of industry-academia collaboration and involvement of citizens. Concretely, it has generated a series of guiding principles and codes of practice for stakeholders on issues such as the management of intellectual assets, citizen engagement, standardisation, and industry-academia co-creation.</p> <p>Together with a panel of experts, participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the implementation of activities related to action 7 and how they</p>	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/better-knowledge-valorisation-in-the-european-research-area-action-7.html

	<p>impact universities. They will also learn about synergies with other actions and potential next steps.</p>	
<p>Event “2024 EUA-CDE Annual Meeting” 26 - 28 June 2024</p>	<p>The 2024 EUA-CDE Annual Meeting focused on the topic of data from various perspectives. Hosted by the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, it discussed this topic by looking into the available data on doctoral education and how this data impacts management and strategy in this field.</p> <p>Through a mix of traditional and interactive sessions, this conference tackled a broad spectrum of issues. These included the key role of data in the strategic development of doctoral education, duration and completion rate of doctoral programmes, artificial intelligence and FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable) data training. Over three days, the Annual Meeting provided a platform to reflect on how to develop data management skills at the doctoral level and how to facilitate access to data infrastructures for doctoral candidates, among many other topics.</p> <p>In addition, EUA-CDE organised a dedicated session featuring the presentation of a Thematic Peer Group report on institutional support for postdoctoral researchers and stimulate an exchange between participants on how to successfully foster this type of support within European universities.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/2024-eua-cde-annual-meeting.html</p>
<p>Webinar “Reforming Academic Career Assessment: current insights and future directions” 25 Jun 2024</p>	<p>What are higher education institutions and research organisations doing to enact reforms in academic career assessment? A workshop that took place on 25 June presented the latest findings.</p> <p>As part of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), a dedicated Working Group on Reforming Academic Career Assessment (ACA) has gathered data on both organisational and broader national and international initiatives aimed at reforming academic career assessment. This workshop highlighted the key outcomes from its large-scale survey and case studies, offering valuable insights into the current landscape of academic career assessment reforms.</p> <p>Participants had the opportunity to learn about the findings and provide further input to the Working Group on potential lessons learned, as well as share experiences from reforms in their own context. These discussions informed the co-creation of an adaptable toolbox for academic career assessment, considering all university missions and the broad scope of activities, skills and competences of academic staff at different stages of their career.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/reforming-academic-career-assessment-current-insights-and-future-directions.html</p>
<p>Position “The next leap forward for transnational cooperation Supporting sustainability and impact within and beyond European Universities alliances” 20 June 2024</p>	<p>The European University Association (EUA) calls on European and national policy makers to make a substantial leap forward in supporting transnational university cooperation including the alliances under the European Universities Initiative, through policy reform and funding based on a long-term vision.</p> <p>The goal for the next years, until 2030, must be to create a strategic, transparent and smooth system of transnational university cooperation that benefits the entire university sector and builds on best practices from within and beyond alliances under the European Universities Initiative. This is crucial to promote high quality in education and research, and thereby unleash the potential of European universities in contributing to Europe’s sustainable future and its international competitiveness.</p> <p>This EUA position outlines nine key ways in which universities and policy makers can work together over the next years to achieve this.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/publications/positions/the-next-leap-forward-for-transnational-cooperation.html</p>
<p>Webinar “Artificial intelligence and ethics: the place of new technologies within university missions”</p>	<p>The exploration of artificial intelligence within universities continues to demonstrate how new technologies can enhance, transform or complement long-standing practices in learning & teaching, research and institutional management. As this culture of experimentation takes hold within institutions, excitement and appetite for innovation continue to build. But as the impact of these technological</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/artificial-</p>

18 June 2024	<p>advancements become more tangible for the user, their limitations – as well as their capabilities – are increasingly exposed. Within the university sector, and across society more broadly, concerns are raised about the quality and integrity of data used in developing AI tools. The apparent threats to citizens’ privacy and other civil liberties have put ethics at the centre of the debate around the deployment of AI.</p> <p>With the adoption of the AI Act, Europe is emerging as a frontrunner in seeking to protect citizens’ freedoms and ensure that humans stay in control of life-impacting decisions. But how will the essence of this legislation translate to the institutional setting? As universities continue to innovate and build momentum in the rollout of AI, it is essential they look beyond the immediate application of new technologies. Universities’ responses to AI need to consider the place of artificial intelligence within the wider institutional mission and the potential impact of these technologies in society.</p> <p>This webinar will address the evolution of human-machine interaction, the climate impact of AI, and (un)democratic access to new technologies as key considerations in integrating AI technologies. Speaker presentations will trigger reflection among participants on the responsible adoption of new technologies and how this aligns with universities’ values and broader mission to society.</p>	intelligence-and-ethics-the-place-of-new-technologies-within-university-missions.html
Webinar “MSCA4Ukraine re-launch webinar and info day” 14 Jun 2024	<p>With a recent top up of €10 million from the European Commission, the MSCA4Ukraine scheme will be able to support additional researchers displaced from Ukraine. This webinar will officially relaunch MSCA4Ukraine and provide information to participants on how to apply to the 2024 call for proposals.</p> <p>The EU-funded MSCA4Ukraine scheme currently offers dedicated fellowships and support to 125 researchers from Ukraine, enabling them to continue their work at academic and non-academic organisations in EU member states and Horizon Europe associated countries, while maintaining their connections to research and innovation communities in Ukraine. Funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), the initiative is led by Scholars at Risk Europe and implemented jointly with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the European University Association.</p> <p>During the webinar, MSCA4Ukraine will be officially relaunched by Normunds Popens, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission, and Igor Taranov, Head of Department, Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine.</p> <p>The launch will be followed by a dedicated information session for potential applicant organisations and researchers from Ukraine. The consortium partners and speakers from the European Commission and European Research Executive Agency will provide practical information on eligibility, application and evaluation processes. Participants are encouraged to engage actively and ask questions throughout the event.</p>	https://www.eua.eu/en/events/eua-events/msca4ukraine-re-launch-webinar-and-info-day.html
Webinar “What do the indicators say about the Bologna Process?” 11 June 2024	<p>The webinar introduced the monitoring framework of the Bologna Process and discussed the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of evaluating progress in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In addition, key findings from the most recent monitoring cycle were presented.</p> <p>Newly released or forthcoming data on selected topics were presented by different EHEA stakeholders: the European Commission/Eurydice highlighted findings from the Bologna Implementation Report, the European Students’ Union from its Bologna with Students’ Eyes report, and EUA from its Trends 2024 report. Speakers then discussed their findings on themes such as the EHEA key commitments and credit mobility, drawing conclusions for the next round of the Bologna Process.</p>	https://www.eua.eu/en/events/eua-events/what-do-the-indicators-say-about-the-bologna-process.html

<p>Webinar “Navigating micro-credentials: institutional, national, and European perspectives” 5 June 2024</p>	<p>Shorter forms of learning in higher education have existed many years. However, until recently, they were of little public interest and did not play a major role in most institutional and national strategies. This has changed due to the accelerated need for skills, including for the digital and green transitions, and to improve employability through re-skilling and up-skilling. Indeed, ‘micro-credentials’ have become a policy priority of the European Union, as well as in many national contexts, alongside a substantial increase in the numbers of higher education institutions providing such courses.</p> <p>New developments in higher education usually come with high hopes and big concerns. Therefore, an upcoming webinar as part of the Erasmus+ MicroNet project will bring a sense of reality to often rather polarised scenarios by sharing institutions’ experiences of exploring micro-credentials and examples of national and European approaches.</p> <p>For example, for learners and their employers there is the promise of better, quicker, cutting-edge, more flexible learning, with less barriers and at lower costs through micro-credentials. Meanwhile, providers look to better serving society and responding to skills needs - but may also look at micro-credentials as a new or additional income source, or even a new business model. In addition, policy makers see a way to boost lifelong learning in light of demographic change and rapid and unpredictable economic and societal transformation.</p> <p>That said, there are also major concerns, such as loss of quality, challenges regarding the award and recognition of the micro-credentials, and that this might bring about a transition from reliable publicly owned structures and institutions providing reliable degrees to ‘gig education’.</p> <p>During this webinar, institutions from different European countries will present their projects and share some of their successes and challenges. The discussions will also take into consideration the community of learners and external partners and analysis of the role and impact of system and European level policies and frameworks for the successful use of micro-credentials.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/navigating-micro-credentials-institutional-national-and-european-perspectives.html</p>
<p>Webinar “Paving the way for an impactful FP10” 28 May 2024</p>	<p>As Europe enters a future marked by both unprecedented challenges and opportunities that extend beyond national boundaries, the European Union’s tenth Research and Innovation Framework Programme (FP10) stands to become the continent’s key commitment to placing research and innovation (R&I) at the forefront of societal and scientific progress.</p> <p>With the design of FP10 on the horizon, this webinar discussed how to shape the programme to strengthen its critical role as a catalyst for excellent, cooperative, inclusive and impactful R&I across Europe. It also specifically looked at how the programme can better support universities in fulfilling their R&I missions for the benefit of society. Event participants had the opportunity to engage with experts, gaining insights into the evolving discussions and strategic developments that will define FP10.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/paving-the-way-for-an-impactful-fp10.html</p>
<p>Webinar “Building a just scholarly publishing ecosystem” 22 May 2024</p>	<p>This webinar (22 May 2024, 15.00-16.30 CEST) will focus on universal and perpetual Open Access to scholarly outputs, in a just scholarly publishing ecosystem*, the first priority of the EUA Open Science Agenda 2025.</p> <p>During the webinar, participants will be invited to discuss challenges, needs and expectations in the transition towards a just scholarly publishing ecosystem. This will include discussing a recent proposal by cOAlition S, Towards Responsible Publishing. This proposal identifies key challenges of dominant publishing models and proposes a vision for a community-based scholarly communication system fit for Open Science in the 21st century. A set of principles is proposed to develop this community-based scholarly communication system. Discussing this proposal will</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/building-a-just-scholarly-publishing-ecosystem.html</p>

	prompt a broader discussion on the future of scholarly communication, from the perspective of universities.	
Webinar “Artificial intelligence: From experimentation to institutional strategies” 17 May 2024	<p>In the one and a half years since ChatGPT made generative artificial intelligence widely available, universities have been experimenting with the application of this technology. For the most part, these experiments have been contained within a specific faculty, department or laboratory, driven by the curiosity of individual students, educators or researchers. Much has been – and continues to be – discovered: the application of AI for the benefit of writing, brainstorming or generating overviews of research literature are just some of the use cases being explored within the institutional setting. Universities, as important testbeds for new ideas and nascent technologies, should continue to facilitate experimentation. But as institutions begin to emerge from this pilot phase, it is time to pool individual experiences and collectively reflect on where AI can add value to university missions.</p> <p>This webinar will present initiatives carried out at the national and institutional level that take a more concerted approach to examining experiences from the past year and a half year. Participants will gain insight into how this ‘gathering-of-experiences’ can inform the beginnings of a university-wide response to AI that supports an institution’s strategic goals and values.</p>	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/artificial-intelligence-from-experimentation-to-institutional-strategies.html
Webinar “Shaping Europe’s future: the 2024 European elections and their importance for universities” 15 May 2024	<p>The 2024 European Parliament elections, which will take place on 6-9 June, hold great importance for European universities and the millions of students and staff in higher education across our continent. Therefore, on 15 May (11.00-12.00 CEST), the European University Association will hold a webinar to discuss why it is important for university communities across the EU to go to the polls this year.</p> <p>These elections will shape the direction of EU policies for the next five years. Crucial decisions will be made in regard to the allocation of the next generation of EU funding programmes for research, innovation and education, as well as to policies in areas such as digitalisation, EU foreign policy or EU enlargement, which also impact universities.</p> <p>In addition to their connections with local communities and partners across Europe, universities play a major role in upholding European values within our civil society. Moreover, many of their students will exercise their right to vote for the first time this year. This is why they are actively engaging, including by organising events to discuss the impact of the 2024 elections on research, education, and innovation.</p> <p>As the voice of Europe’s universities, EUA is championing the European Parliament’s #UseYourVote campaign, supporting universities in raising awareness about the importance of this elections.</p>	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/shaping-europes-future-the-2024-european-elections-and-their-importance-for-universities.html
Webinar “The Social Dimension in higher education: its context and its future” 14 May 2024	<p>The sixth webinar of the EUA series "Toward Tirana 2024, the Bologna Process and developments in the EHEA" will discuss the current state of the social dimension in higher education, contrasting institutional perspectives with European policies. This event takes place on 14 May 2024, from 14.00 to 15.00 CEST.</p> <p>The Social Dimension has been extensively explored under the recent cycles of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) thanks to the work of the Social Dimension Working Group. With the 2020 Rome Communiqué, EHEA ministers adopted the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA, and expressed their commitment to implementing these in their respective systems.</p> <p>This webinar will take a step back from the BFUG discussions and delve into the experiences and historical context of the social dimension at two higher education institutions. Speakers will highlight the rationale and motivations of various</p>	https://www.eua.eu/events/eua-events/the-social-dimension-in-higher-education-its-context-and-its-future.html

	<p>inclusive practices implemented at their institutions, and discuss how they are rooted in institutional strategies.</p> <p>Finally, the event will reflect on the relevance and applicability of the current initiatives on the social dimension coming from the BFUG.</p>	
<p>Webinar “EUA’s Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP): what is it, how does it work, and why should you choose it?” 06 May 2024</p>	<p>This information session will offer an overview of EUA’s Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP), now that registrations for the next round of evaluations are open.</p> <p>Since 1994, IEP has offered enhancement-oriented voluntary evaluations on a peer-review basis. Through its context-sensitive and comprehensive approach, IEP has supported more than 340 institutions across the world in developing strategic leadership and capacity to manage change. Key to IEP’s success is its pool of more than 50 highly experienced international experts including rectors, vice-rectors, students, and senior higher education professionals. Furthermore, IEP is registered as a quality assurance agency on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).</p> <p>During this information session, a member of the IEP Steering Committee will explain the main characteristics and added value of the programme, representatives from two recently evaluated institutions will discuss their experience, and the IEP Secretariat will provide some practical information.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/events/euas-institutional-evaluation-programme-iep-what-is-it-how-does-it-work-and-why-should-you-choose-it.html</p>
<p>Briefing “European Parliament elections: 6-9 June 2024 Your vote matters to shape the future of Europe and its universities” 30 April 2024</p>	<p>Why is the European Union important for universities, and what does the European Parliament do?</p> <p>Ahead of the 2024 European elections, taking place from 6 to 9 June in the EU’s 27 member states, this short factsheet lays out why these elections are important to EUA members, their students, staff and wider communities across Europe.</p> <p>EUA is also supporting the #UseYourVote campaign, and further information, including the exact date of the elections in your country, can be found in all EU languages on the European Parliament’s 2024 elections website.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/publications/briefings/european-parliament-elections-6-9-june-2024.html</p>
<p>Report “University Autonomy in Europe IV: Country Profiles (III)” 25 April 2024</p>	<p>EUA’s Autonomy Scorecard country profiles delve into in-depth system analyses, offering insights into recent developments and presenting the sector’s perspective.</p> <p>The 2023 edition of the European University Association’s Autonomy Scorecard, the most comprehensive yet, provides a full comparative analysis of the state of play of university autonomy in 35 higher education systems in Europe.</p> <p>For the first time, each profile better contextualises the higher education landscape via a dedicated section, along with radar charts that visualise the system in question’s autonomy score. For this edition, the country profiles are released in three batches. This final batch comprises the following systems: Wallonia-Brussels (Belgium), Croatia, Cyprus, England (UK), France, Lithuania, Portugal, Scotland (UK), Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Türkiye.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/publications/reports/university-autonomy-in-europe-iv-country-profiles-iii.html</p>
<p>Position “Paving the way for impactful European R&I. EUA’s vision for FP10” 8 April 2024</p>	<p>In this document, EUA outlines its strategic vision for FP10, offering its contribution to shaping the programme. After describing current and emerging trends, this vision examines the current state of play and challenges of the ongoing Framework Programme (Horizon Europe) and the European R&I landscape within a broader context. It subsequently formulates recommendations, pinpointing what should be added, modified, or removed for the programme to reach its ambitious goals. This includes a particular focus on the programme’s budget, structure, core principles and horizontal topics.</p>	<p>https://www.eua.eu/publications/positions/paving-the-way-for-impactful-european-r-i.html</p>

EURASHE briefing – XCIII Meeting of the BFUG

Dear members of the BFUG,

We are providing you with this written update as an extension of the oral update given by our Representatives during the BFUG meeting XCIII in Budapest in September 2024.

Message from EURASHE President Hannes Raffaseder

Dear BFUG Colleagues,

As we reflect on the Tirana conference and embark on the new cycle under the leadership of Romania and Moldova until 2027, I would like to thank you for your continued cooperation in building a stronger EHEA. At this pivotal moment, EURASHE calls for even greater ambition to make European higher education more integrated, innovative, and responsive to society's needs. Despite geopolitical uncertainty and the risk of disinvestment in higher education and research, we cannot allow our ambitions to be reduced and should keep demonstrating the value that knowledge and skills bring to our economies and societies. EURASHE joins in the calls for increasing the Erasmus and Horizon funds to strengthen competitiveness by harnessing more of Europe's talent and innovation.

One of EURASHE's priorities in the upcoming period is to work closely with countries and partners to enhance our understanding of national strategies that support lifelong learning. We would like to focus on the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in economic transitions, including the green and digital agendas. We would like to explore how student centered learning and micro-credentials can bolster lifelong learning, improve access to higher education for diverse student groups, and strengthen the link between higher education, innovation, and the world of work.

In line with the BFUG's intention to streamline the agenda for 2024–2027, we look forward to discussing the next work programme. In particular, and in contrast to the previous two cycles, there seems to be a consensus that Learning and Teaching (L&T) should be integrated across all the structures rather than being subject to a stand-alone working group. This will provide more space for this core subject and involve diverse voices from within the EHEA community.

To ensure adequate space for topical debates, we propose extending the timeframe of Bologna meetings. The current 1.5-day format often limits in-depth discussion, particularly on pressing and strategic issues.

EURASHE urges countries to fully implement the key commitments, as many obstacles to mobility between different EQF levels and countries persist. For instance, despite integrating short-cycle higher education into the EHEA in the 2018 Paris Communiqué, students seeking to continue their education in other countries still face obstacles to recognition. Beyond integration, higher education must actively address Europe's challenges, notably social and territorial inequality of opportunity. To retain citizens' trust, higher education must demonstrate accountability to society. We urge a strong commitment to fulfilling the Tirana Communiqué commitments to fostering competences for digital and green transitions and enhancing higher education's local and regional impact.

September's meeting in Budapest is the first since the Tirana Ministerial Conference. I would like to thank all the outgoing and upcoming co-chairs for their efforts and while I cannot personally join you on this occasion, I send all my best wishes from Austria.

EURASHE Strategic Priorities

Our strategy for 2023-2025 aims to make EURASHE a reference point for a wide range of policymakers and higher education institutions that seek to harness the power of applied higher education to address the green and digital transitions. The thematic priorities are shown in the figure below. Three horizontal subjects (Skills, Quality in HE and Applied Research) are complemented by two overarching concerns, namely to promote both local engagement and transnational cooperation.



In 2024, EURASHE dedicated its annual conference to the priority of transnational cooperation, building on the momentum of the European Universities Initiative. In the most recent Erasmus+ call, several alliances were awarded funding that focus specifically on applied education and research. Furthermore, EURASHE is pleased that a Community of Practice has been established with the support of Erasmus+ funding, and that we can contribute as an associate partner.

Applied universities are close to the world of work and regional skills ecosystems. Therefore EURASHE is involved in the Centre of Vocational Excellence (CovE) initiative, both as a beneficiary in one of the Erasmus+ supported CoVEs and in working groups set up by the European Commission and the European Training Foundation. While they are part of the same section of the Erasmus+ Programme, and despite calls in the European Strategy for Universities, much more could be done to integrate these two flagship initiatives of the European Education Area.

The importance of applied higher education and work based learning was demonstrated this month by a EURASHE site visit to Aix-Marseilles University (AMU). While France does not have a binary systems of traditional and applied universities, AMU joined EURASHE last year to collaborate at European level on the subject of skills ecosystems and regional labour market demands. The site visit included examples of applied higher education in other non-binary systems, namely Spain and the United Kingdom.

EURASHE Communities of Practice

The EURASHE Communities of Practice were established in 2022 to develop the three horizontal priorities of the 2023-2025 strategy (Skills, Quality of HE and Applied Research). The Communities of Practice are open to both EURASHE members and non-members. A core group meets more regularly while the wider group benefits from virtual forms of cooperation and information sharing as well as online meetings.

EURASHE invites members of the BFUG to share the following links to join the communities among the higher education community:

 Join EURASHE Skills Community of Practice [here](#)

 Join EURASHE Quality Assurance Community of Practice [here](#)

 Join EURASHE Research Community of Practice [here](#)

EURASHE Annual Conference

On 22-23 May 2024, just before the Tirana Ministerial, EURASHE organised the 33rd edition of its Annual Conference, hosted by the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences (St. Pölten, Austria). The title of the event was Stronger Together: Fostering Transnational Cooperation in Applied Universities and builds on the experience of the European Universities Initiative and other examples of deep transnational cooperation among applied higher education institutions.

The event featured high-level keynote speeches and panel discussions on several topics linked to transnational cooperation and breakout sessions on the EURASHE core themes of applied research, quality assurance, skills, and regional impact. European Commission Director Sophia Eriksson-Waterschoot opened the event with an inspiring keynote speech, while Pedro Teixeira, former Portuguese Secretary of State for Higher Education, gave a provocative presentation about the missions of European Universities Alliances. Participants enjoyed five plenary sessions discussing transnational cooperation from different angles, e.g. policy, collaboration with extra-European institutions, and the involvement of students.

In addition, the event offered stimulating breakout sessions on quality assurance, lifelong learning, applied research, and regional impact, plus a focus on European-funded projects and the latest updates from the three EURASHE Communities of Practice. Overall, all discussions emphasised that no matter which part of the continent we are based in, we all share the same challenges and for this we need to push for deeper collaboration between our institutions.

We now turn our attention to next year's Conference, which will take place at the [Polytechnic University of Portalegre](#) (Portugal) **on 14-15 May, 2025**, and focus on the subject of regional competitiveness. We hope to see you there!

Forthcoming EURASHE Position papers

Forthcoming position papers include a package on research policy, including the next European Framework Programme (FP10), and Open Science.

[List of EURASHE Projects can be found here](#)

UNESCO Higher Education Activity Report for the Bologna Follow-up Group Meeting

September 2024

This report provides an overview of UNESCO's activities since spring 2024 which are of relevance to the European Higher Education Area.

1. UNESCO's Education Strategy and Results

UNESCO recently published its **Strategic Results Report** detailing the Organization's strategic impact since 2020. The following paragraphs provide a short summary of key achievements in the field of education over the past four years, with the full report available [here](#).

UNESCO led a comprehensive overhaul of the global education architecture, elevating education to the highest levels of the global agenda. The establishment of the [SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee \(HLSC\)](#) and the [Multilateral Education Platform \(MEP\)](#) underscored this effort and helped pave the way for the 2022 [Transforming Education Summit \(TES\)](#), and its pre-summit in Paris, which helped to reignite the sense of urgency around SDG 4.

Through the SDG 4 HLSC and the [Global Education Monitoring \(GEM\) report](#), UNESCO has driven advocacy on education financing, fostering regular dialogue between Ministers of Education and Finance and launching the [Multilateral Financing of Education Initiative](#) as part of the New Financing Pact. This has been crucial in maintaining momentum for education investment and ensuring continued progress towards SDG 4.

In addition, UNESCO also introduced a new [Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development](#), adopted unanimously by 194 Member States, which marks a significant step toward enhancing education's role in contributing to a more peaceful and sustainable world.

UNESCO's thought leadership has shaped the global education agenda through key reports such as the [Futures of Education](#) report and the *GEM reports*. These reports have informed national consultations in over 100 countries and have been among UNESCO's top publications, translated into multiple languages.

2. Higher Education

In 2023, the [Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education](#) entered into force.

Thirty three (33) countries have ratified it, representing over 25% of the world's 6.4 million internationally mobile students, with Georgia, Luxembourg, Ecuador, New Zealand and South Africa being the latest to join. More than 30 UNESCO Member States report to be at an advanced stage in the ratification process, including Canada who recently completed its national procedures.

The implementation of the [interim work programme](#) (2024-2025) adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference of the States Parties in 2024 is underway, in particular related to the development of operational guidelines for the Global Convention, research studies on quality assurance, including

transnational education, and the recognition of refugee qualifications as well as advocacy.

An open-ended working group has been elaborating the draft operational guidelines since July 2024, which will also be consulted with the regional convention committee bureaus and all States Parties before submission to the next ordinary session of the Intergovernmental Conference in June 2025.

The call to ratify and implement the Global Convention featured prominently in the **Tirana Communiqué**, adopted at the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Ministerial Meeting in Tirana, Albania in May 2024. During the meeting, UNESCO promoted the convention and also brought together the presidents of the regional convention committees, with the support of the In-Global Project, to discuss ways to enhance inter-regional cooperation.

At the regional level, Greece ratified the **Lisbon Recognition Convention** in September 2024, allowing the treaty to reach nearly universal ratification within the region. At the same time, Qatar became the third country to ratify the regional **Arab States Convention**, which requires two more ratifications to enter into force.

With regard to information exchange, the [ENIC-NARIC Annual Meeting](#) took place in Naples, Italy, in June 2024, supported by the Council of Europe, European Commission and UNESCO as the co-Secretariats. The **African Network of National Implementation Structures** held an informal meeting in September 2024, following its establishment two years earlier, to discuss ways to operationalize the network and start developing a workplan. The [Asia-Pacific Network of National Information Centres \(APNNIC\)](#) will meet in early December 2024, while the **Network of National Information Centres in Latin America and the Caribbean (CINLAC)** continues to have regular sessions online.

The **UNESCO Qualifications Passport (UQP)** is being implemented in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. More than 30 new evaluators have been trained, 139 passports have been issued, some 30 UQP holders have been admitted to universities and more than 200 scholarships have been identified to support further learning of the UQP holders.

The **Campus Africa Flagship**, launched in 2022 as part of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029, is aimed at supporting more inclusive, quality-assured, equitable and gender-responsive higher education systems in Africa by focusing on three key action areas: (1) Strengthening Africa's local research, development and innovation systems to propel inclusive growth, innovation and development, particularly in three sectors relevant to the Continent, i.e. agribusiness, renewable energy, and technology (including artificial intelligence); (2) Enhancing the mobility and employability of higher education students and doctoral candidates, including through scholarships; (3) Revitalizing and connecting Africa's tertiary education systems and institutions through data collection and knowledge capacities, research collaboration and academia-industry partnerships and employability services for students.

On the third component, the UNESCO-China Funds-in-Trust Phase III project promotes youth employability by enhancing the quality and relevance of technical higher education in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. Since 2022, partner universities of the project have completed labour market analyses and student tracer studies, launched competency-based curriculum reforms, and developed new programmes tailored to labour market demands and skills forecasts. The project has reached over 13,000 youth through awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-development workshops, entrepreneurship challenges, with some 1,500 graduates benefiting from substantial skills development opportunities in STEM subjects. Additionally, over 500 educational staff received training in competency-based pedagogy.

Three **higher education data-based initiatives** were also launched in recent months. The most notable of these is the [UNESCO Higher Education Policy Observatory](#), which provides detailed country profiles, comparisons and global and regional overviews. In addition, the [Internationalizing Higher Education](#) report showcases data from 63 States on recognition and mobility, international cooperation as well as policies and practices in higher education. To complement this, a [factsheet](#) with the most recent data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) on global and regional enrollments, mobility and gender parity was produced.

In addition, higher education also featured prominently at UNESCO's [2024 Digital Learning Week](#) in September 2024, including a session dedicated to AI in higher education and discussions on developing a competency framework in this area.

3. Major Upcoming Meetings

- **International Forum of UNESCO Chairs and Partners** (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25 – 27 September), including sessions on the futures of higher education and Campus Africa. More information [here](#).
- **World Teachers' Day** (Paris, France, 4 October). More information [here](#).
- **Global Education Meeting** (Fortaleza, Brazil, 31 October – 1 November), including a session on Equitable access, quality, and mobility in higher education. More information [here](#).
- **UNESCO International Forum on the Futures of Education** (Suwon – Gyeonggido, Republic of Korea, 2- 4 December). More information [here](#).