

Brussels, 20 December 2024

Application for a BFUG partnership status

Dear BFUG Board,

We are pleased to submit an application from the European Federation of Education Employers ([EFEE](#)) for a partnership status within the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG).

EFEE is a recognised European social partner organisation for education employers and represents 61 education employers' organisations across all education sectors — from ECEC and VET to higher education and research — in 27 European countries. In the higher education sector alone, EFEE represents 25 education employers including ministries of education, university rectors' conferences, networks of private universities and local governments. Our mission to improve the quality of teaching and management for all through European cooperation and dialogue is based on the European Pillar of Social Rights. Through its activities, EFEE raises awareness and strengthens commitment to the European policy agenda, and shapes European policy by amplifying the voices of its members. Thereby, EFEE is in constant dialogue with EU institutions as well as other European partners such as trade unions and various educational networks. With its expertise, EFEE can significantly contribute to BFUG's WG on Learning & Teaching.

EFEE's activities and the Work Programme align closely with BFUG priorities. Specifically, by supporting education employers and ensuring that their perspectives shape relevant policies at the European levels, EFEE contributes to inclusive, high-quality education and training systems, as outlined in Tirana Communiqué. In this commitment, as a European social partner in education, EFEE actively participates in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) facilitated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL). Part of these activities are two Working Group meetings, one of which is concentrated on the HE. This work, in turn, can be reflected in input for the BFUG's WG on Social Dimension.

Among its policy activities, EFEE co-leads the established European Parliament Intergroup on the Future of Education and Skills for a Competitive Europe. Since 2013, EFEE members and its Secretariat actively participated in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture's (DG EAC) Working Groups, structured within the European Education Area's Strategic Framework. EFEE's involvement in the Education and Training 2025 (ET2025) Working Groups enables direct contributions to policy discussions and strategic planning aligned with the EEA's objectives. In these working groups, including one on higher education, EFEE actively contributes through its members' expertise by attending the Peer Learning Activities, and plays a critical advocacy role for education employers across Europe. EFEE representatives ensure that the distinct needs and perspectives of education employers are fully represented in EU-level policy discussions. As outlined in the BFUG Work Plan 2021-2024 and coupled with EFEE's relentless work, we can provide input into Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue and an *ad hoc* Task Force to increase synergies between EU-initiatives, including EHEA, HE aspect of the EEA and the ERA.

Currently, EFEE manages eight projects aimed at building the capacity of education employers. These include a project on "*Sustainable competitiveness in the twin transition through higher education staff acquisition – academia-industry collaboration and hybrid careers supporting experienced professionals in accessing the teaching and research professions in HE in Europe*" ([HigherED4Industry](#)), which aims to bridge the gap between academia and industry by supporting experienced professionals in transitioning to teaching and research roles within higher education institutions across Europe. Another project, which includes HEIs, is the joint EFEE-ETUCE project about "*Schools as learning institutions – European social partners in education promoting effective quality and innovation management models in the education sector in a post COVID-19 era*" ([LearningSchools](#)), focusing on effective quality and innovation management in education institutions, including universities, after COVID-19. Through these projects, EFEE supports and promotes collaboration between education employers and public authorities by providing the space for stakeholders to meet and strengthen their partnerships, exploring country-specific education systems to discuss challenges and opportunities, and providing topic-specific policy recommendations.

In addition, EFEE has a strong network of education employers across Europe that fosters the organisation's collective voice and impact. In this commitment, EFEE is the coordinator of the Educational Leadership Network Europe ([ELNE](#)), which represents the voice of thousands of education employers, teachers, school heads, parents, students, researchers, and policymakers. This vast network unites 60 member organisations from 25 countries and is composed of top research-oriented universities and other relevant actors. ELNE is a European-level network that also encompasses a variety of national, regional, and local institutions within the formal education and training sector.

The partnership status at BFUG will offer valuable opportunities for EFEE, as collaboration with EHEA stakeholders will ensure that employers' needs and perspectives are considered in education reform development. Partnering with the BFUG will open doors for EFEE to broaden its network with education stakeholders, policymakers, and institutions across Europe. Additionally, the opportunity to participate in BFUG events and meetings will provide a platform for exchanging practices, and to be engaged in policies that shape the future of education. Looking at the above-mentioned BFUG Work Plan 2021-2024, we noticed that other relevant education actors are represented, while employers' voices seem not to be present. Therefore, we would like to fill this gap to ensure a diversified perspective in such a crucial area.

In summary, EFEE brings added value to BFUG with its extensive representation of education employers and delivers new insights regarding the practical needs of education leaders in various contexts. EFEE's mission and work can significantly contribute to BFUG's WGs, *ad hoc* Task Force or Coordination Group on GPD. Given our shared priorities, EFEE is eager to become and commit as a partner of the BFUG to further contribute our expertise and ensure the perspective of education employers is integrated into higher education policies and practices.

We remain at your disposal should you require any further information and thank you in advance for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Wisniewski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Daniel" on the top line and "Wisniewski" on the bottom line.

Daniel Wisniewski
EFEE General Secretary