

## BFUG Board Meeting LXXXIX

Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Hosted by the Holy See in Vatican City State

### Minutes of meeting

### List of participants

Country/ Institution	First Name	Last Name
Belgium Flemish Community (BFUG Co-Chair)/ Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue Co-Chair	Liesbeth	Hens
Belgium French Community (BFUG Co-Chair)	Caroline	Hollela
Georgia (Outgoing BFUG Co-Chair)	Maia	Shukhoshvili
Holy See (BFUG Co-Chair)	H.E. Mons. Paul	Tighe
Holy See (BFUG Co-Chair)/ Drafting Committee Co-Chair	Melanie	Rosenbaum
BFUG Vice-Chair	Linda	Pustina
European Commission (EC)	Svein	Hullstein
Council of Europe	Villano	Qiriazzi
EURASHE	Jakub	Grodecki
European Students' Union (ESU)/ Working Group on Social Dimension Co-Chair/ Drafting Committee Co-Chair	Horia	Onita
European University Association (EUA)/ Taskforce on Review of Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the EHEA Co-Chair	Michael	Gaebel
Iceland (Incoming BFUG Co-Chair)	Una	Strand Viðarsdóttir
Hungary (Incoming BFUG Co-Chair)	András	Báló
Working Group on Monitoring and Fundamental Values Co-Chair	Tone Flood	Strom
Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue Co-Chair (online participation, only at item 7)	Ann Katherine	Isaacs
Working Group on Supporting the Implementation of the Roadmap for San Marino's Accession to EHEA Co-Chair	Jordi	Llombart
Bologna Implementation Coordination Group Co-Chair	Helga	Posset
Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA Community Co-Chair	Daniela Cristina	Ghitulica
BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Edlira	Subashi
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari
BFUG Secretariat	Ana	Zhibaj

The Outgoing Spanish BFUG Co-Chair and none of the Co-Chairs of WG 4 on Learning and Teaching participated in the meeting.

## **Welcome Address by H.E. Mons. Paul Tighe, Secretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education**

H.E. Mons. Paul Tighe, Secretary of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, extended a warm welcome to all participants at the BFUG Board meeting. He expressed gratitude towards the other Holy See Co-Chair and the organizing team for their efforts in coordinating the gathering, concluding his remarks with hopes for a fruitful and successful session ahead.

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

#### **1.1 Welcome by the BFUG Co-Chairs (Belgium Flemish and French Community, Holy See)**

Caroline Hollela (BFUG Co-Chair, Belgium French Community) expressed gratitude to the Holy See Co-Chair for their efforts in organizing the meeting, expressing hope for a productive Board meeting ahead.

Liesbeth Hens (BFUG Co-Chair, Belgium Flemish Community) extended warm greetings to all participants and concluded by wishing for a fruitful discussion.

Melanie Rosenbaum (BFUG Co-Chair, Holy See) extended a warm welcome to all participants and provided information on technical and logistical aspects relevant to the meeting.

#### **1.2 Welcome by the BFUG Vice-Chair (Albania)**

Linda Pustina (BFUG Vice-Chair) extended greetings to all participants and conveyed gratitude to the Holy See for hosting the meeting. She also expressed appreciation to the BFUG Co-Chairs for their collaborative efforts and acknowledged the work accomplished thus far.

### **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board BE VA 89 2 1 Draft Agenda](#)  
[BFUG Board BE VA 89 2 2 Draft Annotated Agenda](#)

### 3. Update from the BFUG Secretariat

Edlira Subashi (Head of BFUG Secretariat) provided updates since the previous BFUG meeting. Key points included ongoing collaboration and coordination with BFUG Chairs, along with support for the BFUG Working Structures. Furthermore, she detailed the extension of BFUG Co-Chairing Arrangements until 2030 and provided statistical analysis on BFUG Working Structures Meetings and Participation. Additionally, she disclosed a list of overlapping meetings during this work period.

Recommendations were made to improve the readability of statistical data and to include country-specific statistics on group memberships. The Head of the Secretariat assured that data would be presented individually for each working structure in the final report to facilitate comprehension.

Proposals were put forth to share the list of co-chairing arrangements with the BFUG to allow countries to prepare for their roles. However, it was noted that the list could remain unchanged until decisions were made. The Secretariat would approach countries to determine any necessary shifts, and the BFUG would initially receive the list as is, with updates following decisions.

Technical difficulties in document uploading were highlighted, prompting suggestions for a more systematic approach.

Concerns were raised regarding attendance in working groups, noting a trend of initial high numbers diminishing to few regular participants. The importance of active participation was stressed, prompting suggestions for further action. The Holy See Co-chair emphasized the need to clarify the outlined representation in working structures, suggesting indicating whether representatives were the respective BFUG delegates or further national experts.

The Belgium French Community Co-Chair inquired about plans for the handover process for the next Secretariat.

Regarding the next working period, there was a suggestion to review the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of existing structures to determine areas for consolidation or reduction.

The Council of Europe (CoE) expressed concerns about the focus on activity-related programs rather than result-based programs when discussing the number of meetings. They emphasized for the future the importance of prioritizing desired outcomes and being stringent with activity planning to avoid excessive meetings.

The Vice Chair proposed incorporating the number of meetings outlined in the ToRs for each working structure and comparing them with the actual number of meetings held. This would provide insight into meeting efficiency and adherence to planned activities.

The WG on SD Co-Chair noted that the increased number of meetings was partly due to feedback received during BFUG and Board meetings. He emphasized the necessity to deliberate on this

feedback and make necessary adjustments, emphasizing the importance of result-based activities and guidance for Co-Chairs to ensure efficient work. EUA emphasized the importance of respecting priorities in the next work period to ensure desired outcomes are achieved amidst various tasks and responsibilities.

The BICG Co-Chair raised concerns about the potential postponement of the discussion of the ToRs or decisions for BFUG Working Structures after the Tirana Ministerial Conference, as it could affect the Umbrella projects with ERASMUS co-supporting structures opening in June.

It was stressed that the adoption of the ToR of the working groups of the next working period should occur after the next Board in Iceland. The ToR should be discussed and approved by the BFUG.

The Belgium Flemish Community Co-Chair proposed holding either an exploratory session or a reporting session to showcase the outcomes of the working structures. It was recommended exploring lessons learned regarding working structures not supported by funding and examining how attendance in these structures is impacted by the lack of financial support. It was also proposed inviting one of the current Working Structures' Co-Chairs to the Board meeting in Iceland to present their work and discuss future approaches.

The Holy See Co-Chair encouraged the Board to propose discussion methods for determining future priorities and working structures within the BFUG. Furthermore, there was a suggestion to seek input from the working structures regarding potential collaborations among themselves.

The Head of Secretariat informed that the list of co-chairing arrangements would be circulated to the BFUG Co-Chairs, and upon their guidance, subsequent steps would be taken. She acknowledged the proposals for additional data on participation and attendance, which would be considered and presented in a report. The Secretariat clarified that until the BFUG decides, they cannot initiate the handover process with next secretariat team, but preparations are underway to compile lessons learned for the next working period.

For more information, please see: [\*BFUG Board BE VA 87 3 BFUG Secretariat Presentation\*](#)

#### **4. Information related to the organization and programme of the Ministerial Conference, the Global Policy Forum, and the technical BFUG meeting XCI**

Linda Pustina (BFUG Vice Chair) conveyed that the feedback received by the BFUG regarding the draft programme for the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum (GPF) had been forwarded to the Albanian authorities. She informed that these suggestions were currently under consideration, with ongoing consultations taking place. The Vice Chair mentioned that updates on the final programme would be forthcoming in the following days. As for the logistical aspects, she noted that practical information was nearing finalization and would be disseminated alongside the social programme. Regarding the GPF, it was agreed to utilize a video collage format for presentations featuring different participating ministers of non-EHEA countries. The duration of each presentation

would be determined based on the number of ministers involved. She also informed that the BFUG Meeting XCI would take place in the morning prior to the Ministerial Conference in the same venue.

Concerns were raised regarding the delayed issuance of official invitations, prompting a commitment to expedite this process, as well as for the absence of a draft programme.

A query arose regarding delegation size and composition, as well as language interpretation services. The Vice Chair clarified that each delegation could consist of five members, with the possibility to select their invitees. Language interpretation in English, French, and Spanish was confirmed, with potential additional languages to be addressed by Albanian authorities upon request.

The Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA Co-Chair expressed interest in organizing a communication event alongside the Ministerial Conference, contingent upon need or request, seeking support for such endeavors.

The urgency of finalizing the official invitation letter along with initial practical information was stressed. It was also emphasized the necessity of completing the programme before sending out invitations. Consequently, it was proposed distributing a draft programme to accompany invitations.

It was concluded that official invitations with a draft programme, that was not expected to be the final version, but to allow for logistic preparation of travels, ought to be dispatched by March 18<sup>th</sup>, with the Secretariat tasked to communicate this decision to Albanian authorities via email on behalf of the BFUG Board.

## **5. Final reports from the Working Groups and Task Forces**

### **5.1. Working Group on San Marino Roadmap**

Jordi Llombart (WG on SMR, Co-Chair) conveyed that a week before the BFUG meeting LXXXVIII, the WG on SMR was notified of San Marino's adoption of the National Qualifications Framework. He mentioned that the WG convened an online meeting in early March to have the San Marino members present the update and revise content of the final report to reflect this newly approved legislation, which will be presented at the upcoming BFUG meeting.

For more information, please see: [\*BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 1 WG SMR Report\*](#)

### **5.2. Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG)**

Helga Posset (BICG Co-Chair) reported the finalization of the report. Furthermore, recommendations were made for the Tirana Communiqué to generate and publish actionable plans addressing any remaining implementation gaps. Moreover, emphasis was placed on a proposal for a parallel session during the Ministerial Conference, aimed at showcasing challenges and success stories from each TPG.

BICG had also outlined ToRs on how to continue, acknowledging the ongoing work required to fulfill key commitments by the TPGs. She recalled the importance of having voluntary participation in the co-chairing of groups.

EURASHE raised inquiries about the future direction of learning and teaching initiatives, including discussions surrounding its structural development and associated key commitments. The BICG Co-Chair acknowledged that the concept of integrating learning and teaching into a TPG had been introduced. While not currently part of the key commitments, its feasibility and execution would necessitate evaluation, ultimately subject to BFUG's decision. The Holy See Co-Chair suggested convening a discussion at the upcoming BFUG meeting to review key commitments and the outcomes of the WG on Learning and Teaching, ensuring alignment with BICG's objectives. The Incoming BFUG Co-Chair of Iceland suggested that learning and teaching initiatives might be more effectively managed by institutions rather than governments, prompting the need for further discussion on this matter.

For more information, please see: [\*BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 2 1 BICG Report\*](#)  
[\*BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 2 2 BICG Presentation\*](#)

### 5.3. Working Group 1 on Monitoring the Implementation of the Bologna Process

Tone Flood Strom (Co-Chair, WG on Monitoring) provided an update on the progress of the Bologna Process Implementation Report (BPIR). It was mentioned that a new draft of the report was expected to be ready in the upcoming days, with countries having a two-week deadline to review and provide feedback.

Concerns were raised regarding the current overload and the continuous introduction of new priorities in future reporting. Producing a comprehensive report for each Ministerial Conference was deemed challenging due to resource limitations. As a result, alternatives for future reporting were discussed, and a survey on these options would be distributed to the BFUG following the report's release.

ESU shared their perspective on the future of monitoring, proposing a fourth option and suggesting potential approaches. The WG Co-Chair elaborated on the reasoning behind considering a merger of options to alleviate the monitoring burden. However, it was acknowledged that combining comprehensive and thematic monitoring might present difficulties. The BICG Co-Chair sought clarification on the specifics of each option suggesting that the survey include brief descriptions of each option. She indicated the risk of losing valuable information if the comprehensive report was discontinued.

Additionally, EUA suggested that the BPIR could be conducted every five years without the obligation for it to be presented at each Ministerial Conference. The CoE suggested that the BFUG shift its focus



towards general monitoring and entrust specialized expert bodies with conducting in-depth monitoring on various topics and priorities. Under this proposal, the BFUG would define priorities and agendas, delegating the responsibility of detailed monitoring to these expert bodies.

#### 5.4. Working Group 2 on Fundamental Values

Tone Flood Strom (Co-Chair, WG on FV) announced that the statements on fundamental values had been prepared for adoption and the WG was currently engaged in the piloting phase of the monitoring framework. Moving forward, the WG suggests continuing their efforts to support the EHEA's fundamental values in some form of working structure. It was informed that the report from the NEWFAV project, supporting the WG's work, will be available after the Ministerial Conference.

The Drafting Committee Co-Chair noted that several delegations had contributed feedback regarding the fundamental values section of the Communiqué, asking support from the WG on FV in reviewing this feedback.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 4 1 WG FV Report](#)  
[BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 4 2 WG FV Annex](#)

#### 5.5. Working Group 3 on Social Dimension

Horia Onita (Co-Chair, WG on SD) provided an update on the WG's progress, emphasizing the adoption of the document 'Indicators and Descriptors for Principles and Guidelines' during the previous BFUG meeting in Brussels. He outlined the current status of the WG report, set to include additional annexes and forthcoming proposals. Proposed objectives for the future WG on SD aim to create national action plans, establish monitoring systems, and integrate social dimension principles with other educational policy areas.

Proposed future activities included the production of policy recommendations regarding linkages with various policy domains such as UN SDGs, lifelong learning, democratic citizenship, quality assurance, and community engagement within higher education, among others. Additionally, efforts would be directed towards improving the glossary of key terms, particularly focusing on definitions related to higher education staff. To enhance synergy, an alternative suggestion proposed included the merging of the WG with other related areas such as engagement with society and lifelong learning.

EUA remarked that the WG on SD and lifelong learning was an enticing topic, yet expressed concerns that the focus on social dimension might overshadow lifelong learning. The WG on SD Co-Chair acknowledged this risk but highlighted that the WG had deliberated on the matter and identified potential opportunities to address it in future work. During discussions on proposed future priorities, the WG on SD Co-Chair mentioned that the priorities were outlined based on the understanding that the ToRs for the working structures would be presented at the upcoming BFUG meeting. It was

clarified that the ToRs of the future WG will not be addressed during the upcoming BFUG meeting in Brussels.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 5 1 WG SD Report](#)  
[BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 5 2 WG SD Presentation](#)

#### 5.6. Working Group 4 on Learning & Teaching

Jakub Grodecki (EURASHE), on behalf of the WG on L&T Co-Chairs, announced that the final report, encompassing WG activities, frameworks, meetings, and contributions on the Communiqué, had been prepared. He emphasized the significance of advancing the topic and connecting policy with practice to facilitate exchanges between institutions and policymakers, proposed in the form of a TPG. Concluding, he underscored the WG's view that the ongoing discussions within the group were crucial to sustain in the next period.

The Holy See Co-Chair requested amendments to the report on the section concerning contributions to the Tirana Communiqué. She reiterated concerns regarding the frequent absence of the WG Co-Chairs from BFUG and Board meetings. Regarding the proposal to involve policymakers in the group's work, she urged the WG to contemplate the actions governments could take on this matter and encouraged the group to consider the added value of BFUG discussions on student-centered learning, emphasizing the importance of perspectives beyond the national level.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 6 WG LT Report](#)

#### 5.7. Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Liesbeth Hens (CG on GPD, Co-Chair) provided an update on the group's progress subsequent to the BFUG meeting. This update primarily focused on advancing the work on the Global Policy Forum organization and statement, and finalizing the report. Additional information pertaining to the report, including details about the March CG meeting, had been incorporated and further meetings were scheduled in anticipation of the Forum, during which details and documents would be revised for inclusion in the final report version.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 7 1 CG GPD Report](#)  
[BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 7 2 CG GPD Presentation](#)

#### 5.8. Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge-Sharing in the EHEA community



Daniela Cristina Ghitulica (Co-Chair, TF on EKS) presented an update on the TF's progress, highlighting the distribution of guidelines for the newsletter. Notably, no objections were raised, indicating approval. Comments received were incorporated to enhance clarity and outline clearer responsibilities for the BFUG Co-Chairs, Vice-chair, and others structures involved. She reiterated the importance of BFUG members contributing to the newsletter and led discussions on dissemination methods and channels, stressing the significance of reaching a broad audience. Recommendations were refined to ensure they are not obligatory. The TF is scheduled to convene another meeting the Monday after the Board meeting, with the finalization of documents expected shortly thereafter.

Belgium French Community Co-Chair proposed extending the validation timeframe for the newsletter content. She also shared some doubts about the availability of BFUG co-chairs to validate the content of a newsletter during their cochairing period. The TF on EKS Co-Chair noted that newsletter would be produced every 6 months, lessening the urgency. Additionally, the DC Co-Chair questioned the relevance of the newsletter's content for the BFUG, suggesting it may be more suitable for a national audience. It was also asked about the availability of information for biannual newsletters, its target audience, and the subscription process. The CoE proposed enhancing the dynamism of the EHEA website rather than maintaining a newsletter. They suggested publishing news on the website and social media platforms, allowing BFUG members to share it.

The Holy See Co-Chair suggested that the TF EKS formulate questions for the BFUG to discuss at the upcoming meeting regarding the continuation of the newsletter, to verify interest and ownership. This would facilitate a thorough discussion and decision on the matter.

For more information, please see: [\*BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 8 1 TF EKS Newsletter Guidelines\*](#)  
[\*BFUG Board BE VA 89 5 8 2 TF EKS Recommendations\*](#)

#### 5.9. Task Force on the Review of the Rules and Regulations for the Governance of the EHEA

Michael Gaebel (Co-Chair, TF on RR) reported that the main documents had been circulated, and a summary letter outlining decisions had been sent by the TF on RR last week. He informed that the Rules of Procedure (RoP) were currently under revision, with the TF aiming to share a slightly revised version for the next BFUG meeting. The TF Co-Chair emphasized the need for clarity in decision-making, and stated that the BFUG must decide whether to accept proposed text and steps. In the previous BFUG meeting, indecision on establishing a long-term Secretariat had been observed. He suggested a definitive decision in the next BFUG meeting and discouraged continued discussion in the next working period. Advice on facilitating discussions was welcomed.

The Holy See Co-Chair emphasized the importance of clarifying that the document should be seen as a policy document rather than a legal one. She pointed out some subtle changes in the RoP, questioning whether they should be made more transparent or left for delegations to discover and discuss. She also inquired about the presentation of outcomes at the BFUG meeting and sought clarity

regarding the proposal for a long-term Secretariat. She also highlighted the need to follow up on proposals to improve the Secretariat's functioning, suggesting it should be a task for the TF or carried over to the next working period if necessary.

The TF on RR was questioned about the number of countries they deemed sufficient to proceed with establishing the long-term Secretariat. In response, the TF on RR Co-Chair stated that this exceeded their mandate, but noted that so far, 20 BFUG members had expressed support, one BFUG member was against, and there were some undecided. They suggested it would be beneficial for BFUG Co-Chairs to assist the TF on RR in conveying the urgency of this matter at the BFUG meeting, as it represented the last opportunity for parties to express their support or opposition.

The Vice Chair highlighted the proposal presented together with Italy aimed at presenting specific suggestions to clarify BFUG's inquiries, considering the challenge of obtaining approval for lengthy documents at this stage. Echoing sentiments from some Board members, she emphasized the necessity to either support or dismiss this option to prevent repetitive discussions. Regarding the required number of countries to proceed with Plan A, she underscored its importance as a significant change in BFUG's organizational structure. She reiterated the significance of consensus, especially concerning financial matters, expressing uncertainty about BFUG's current ability to mandate fees for voluntary participation. She perceived this as a legal issue necessitating consensus among BFUG members.

The Holy See Co-Chair inquired whether the TF on RR was considering the possibility of assisting certain countries in paying the indicated fees. They asked if there were any plans for implementing bridging mechanisms to address this concern. The TF on RR Co-Chair indicated the inability to offer a definitive solution but mentioned ongoing exploration of possibilities, citing factors that complicate finding a clear-cut resolution.

The CoE emphasized the importance of engaging in dialogue with countries and further exploration to reach a consensus, noting that the proposal had been discussed in the past few BFUG meetings without adequate preparation from delegations. They suggested keeping dialogue open with broader participation from diverse countries and viewpoints to facilitate consensus-building.

Belgium French Community Co-Chair raised concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the TF on RR approach to steering discussions in the upcoming BFUG meeting. They noted the uncertainty surrounding whether decisions would be based on majority or consensus, highlighting the potential impact if countries oppose the direction. Due to this ambiguity, they questioned the feasibility of reaching a resolution for the Tirana Ministerial Conference. The TF on RR Co-Chair emphasized the importance of reaching consensus rather than unanimity for decision-making. They clarified the voting rules but hoped decisions could be made without resorting to voting.

The Vice Chair addressed the calculation of fees from the TF, noting the consideration of the EC's payment and the low estimated staffing size. Emphasizing clarity and consensus, she urged for a clearer commitment in the upcoming BFUG meeting, especially with regards to decision-making

timelines. As the last BFUG meeting, she stressed the importance of reaching a decision before the Ministerial Conference.

The Holy See Co-Chair highlighted concerns about the interlinked nature of the decision expressed by some countries. While recognizing the limitations of the rotating Secretariat, she emphasized the importance of establishing financial arrangements for a long-term Secretariat. Stressing the need for a legal justification, she underlined the necessity of discussing practical implementation details alongside expressing preferences during the decision-making process.

The ESU representative expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of achieving consensus alone. They pointed out the unique structure where the Communiqué encompassed both political and organizational commitments, noting the uncommon scenario where one part might require consensus while the other unanimity. Nevertheless, the current consensus process allowed for reaching a compromise even without unanimous support from all members.

Andorra emphasized the unity of the EHEA, highlighting that membership ought to remain possible regardless of a country's financial status. Norway underscored the political nature of legal and financial responses, noting that they represented commitments rather than binding agreements. The continuity of funding for a rotating Secretariat by the Commission was not guaranteed, and the associated costs of the current arrangement must be acknowledged.

The Vice Chair stressed the need for careful formulation of questions for the ministers regarding the exploration of a long-term Secretariat option. Asking ministers about their commitment to such a Secretariat implicates the financial and legal considerations previously mentioned. The CoE proposed that instead of posing questions, the BFUG Co-Chairs should outline three alternatives for the ministers.

It was noted that the TF on RR had sent questions to countries and was awaiting their responses, which could guide the Co-Chairs in reaching a consensus. Stressing the importance of decision-making and discussion within the BFUG meeting, they highlighted the need for input from countries to effectively guide discussions.

Belgium Flemish Community Co-Chair agreed on the necessity of decision in principles about the future of the secretariat in Brussels but cautioned about the clarity and presentation of decisions to ministers. She proposed a preliminary decision in principle followed by a final decision after a specified period, with clear guidelines for actions in between, emphasizing the importance of informed decision-making.

The Incoming Co-Chair of Iceland emphasized the need to clarify the purpose of the letter sent out and ensure that responses align with expectations. They suggested seeking guidance from the EC regarding funding availability post Romania/Moldova.

## **6. Drafting Committee for the Tirana 2024 Ministerial Communiqué**

Melanie Rosenbaum (Co-Chair, DC) introduced the revised draft Communiqué, with the incorporated feedback and post BFUG ideas. There was recognition of the additional attention given to mobility and a need for further deliberation on the key commitments.

EUA expressed concerns regarding the coherence of the text, noting some repetition in sections related to innovation. They highlighted the lack of clarity on the follow-up process within the BFUG. Additionally, EUA pointed out the absence of a specific commitment from all students, as seen in the Rome Communiqué, regarding every student having an international experience.

The EC acknowledged significant improvements in the text and emphasized the synergy between the EHEA and the EEA, as they were based on key commitments that complement each other. They expressed a desire to include certain joint priorities in higher education and highlighted the importance of references to recognition and joint degrees. The Commission also stressed the significance of addressing careers for academics within both the EEA and the ERA, proposing enhancements to the text. They noted the importance of referencing the European Universities Alliance as a central flagship initiative and suggested rephrasing the section on student representation within the alliances.

The DC Co-Chair emphasized that the decision not to mention European Degrees was unanimous, driven by past experiences of insufficient concreteness and feedback received from several delegations. Regarding the European Degrees, she proposed a discussion within the BFUG to address this matter and then potentially establish a commitment.

EURASHE inquired whether Eurograduate should be mentioned alongside Eurostudent. In the paragraph concerning innovative EHEA, they suggested starting with lifelong learning as an umbrella concept and then delving into specific topics such as teaching and learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and other related components. Additionally, they proposed distinguishing between programs and degrees, suggesting that while joint European degrees may not be necessary, programs and degrees should be considered, with joint degrees serving as a means to deliver these programs.

The discussion highlighted concerns about lengthy sentences and paragraphs attempting to cover multiple aspects at once, indicating that breaking sentences could enhance readability. Confusion arose regarding sentences about AI, as well as the role of the BICG and the assessment of the necessity of all key commitments in a paragraph preceding the section on key commitments, underscoring the need for clarity. While the beginning of the Communiqué demonstrated improvement, discrepancies in wording were observed in the section on Tirana commitments, highlighting the importance of maintaining consistency in phrasing throughout the document.

ESU concurred with the EC's proposal to substitute "automatic recognition" for LRC. Further deliberations took place within BFUG regarding the criteria for elevating a commitment to a key commitment, as a means to bolster its mandate. ESU expressed support for this stance.

The DC Co-Chair proposed starting an analysis or alternatively suggested the option of deleting the paragraph and corresponding section if deemed too burdensome. The Incoming Co-Chair of Iceland expressed concerns about AI and internet ethics, cautioning against overcommitment in the Communiqué. She recommended informing BFUG through updates on other work in the area and involving ETINED for input without creating a new working structure. She noted existing work in various forums and suggested acknowledging it, requesting BFUG to report on it in the next meeting.

EUA commented that the Communiqué's beginning with the last 25 years wasn't an ideal start and suggested improvements. They noted that the wording on fundamental values required smoother rephrasing. Regarding intercultural experience, they observed its subtle presence compared to the Rome Communiqué. EUA highlighted the significant advancements in Erasmus results from in recent years, recommending their inclusion to reflect these achievements.

The CoE stressed the importance of integrating AI awareness and its related elements, rather than simply initiating analysis. They emphasized the need to consider the implications of AI and suggested integrating AI as a transversal dimension across various working topics.

The DC Co-Chair informed that the DC would have a meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March and encouraged everyone to submit feedback beforehand. It was further mentioned that all BFUG delegations would be requested to provide comments at the latest by March 27<sup>th</sup>.

For more information, please see: [BFUG Board BE VA 89 6 DC Draft 2.0 Tirana Communiqué](#)

## **7. Draft 6 of the Statement for the Global Policy Forum**

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair, CG on GPD) informed that following the BFUG meeting in Brussels, they incorporated and reviewed the feedback received and subsequently shared it with the CG during an online meeting. Following several comments, they integrated the feedback and prepared draft 6 for the Board.

Regarding lines 34-39, she noted that two CG members suggested removing certain elements as they were deemed irrelevant to international discussion and policy. However, some members advocated for retaining them due to their importance, particularly their link with the labor market, student-centered learning, and teaching.

There was a query about whether the reference to the Rome Communiqué in lines 5-6 could be made more general. The CG Co-Chair concurred, stating that it should indeed be more general, reflecting the commitment to the new understanding of global policy dialogue.

It was asked about the distribution of the GPF Statement to the invited parties and its finalization timeline before or during the GPF. It was clarified that once countries confirm, the list would be sent to the Secretariat to facilitate the distribution of the draft GPF statement.

For more information, please see:

[BFUG Board BE VA 89 8 Draft 6 Statement Global Policy Forum](#)

## 8. Discussion of the Draft Agenda for the Upcoming BFUG Meeting XC

Caroline Hollela (BFUG Co-Chair, Belgium French Community) outlined the draft agenda for the upcoming BFUG meeting in April. She presented three inquiries for the Board's discussion: the need for revising or determining time allocation, the possibility of having three breakout sessions with the topic of the 'future of Bologna' to be addressed, and specific guidance on the discussion format for certain agenda items. She recalled the importance of having enough information regarding the program and choreography of the ministerial to be presented to the upcoming BFUG.

A proposal was made to rearrange the TF on RR update before the presentation of final reports by other working structures, which was agreed upon. It was noted that presentations of final reports from Working Structures would be concise, around 10 minutes each.

Incoming BFUG Co-Chairs suggested drafting a letter to BFUG Working Structures to gather information on outcomes and priorities for the next work period, aiming to identify potential collaborations and focus efforts on main priorities. Working Structure Co-Chairs would be asked to provide their views on priorities within their respective areas of responsibility within 27<sup>th</sup> of March.

ESU noted the need for additional time allocation dedicated to the discussion on the Draft Communiqué, and suggested reconsidering the inclusion of breakout sessions, which had been disregarded in previous BFUG meetings.

The Holy See Co-Chair suggested addressing the item on candidacy with the possibility of a secret ballot, keeping the discussion brief.

It was also suggested to start discussing the draft Communiqué on the first day of the meeting and continue on the second day. Additionally, it was proposed to hold discussions on the priorities of working structures before addressing the draft Communiqué agenda item, to ensure the discussions have an impact on the Communiqué.

For more information, please see:

[BFUG Board BE VA 89 7 BFUG XC Draft Agenda](#)

## 9. Information on the next meetings

### 9.1. BFUG Meeting XC Belgium (11-12 April 2024)

Caroline Hollela (BFUG Co-Chair, Belgium French Community) conveyed that the save-the-date for the BFUG meeting in April, along with the registration link, has been sent to the BFUG. She also mentioned that the invitation and practical information on the meeting would be sent on the upcoming days. The Co-Chair concluded by extending a warm welcome to everyone for the upcoming BFUG meeting to take place in Brussels.



## 9.2. BFUG Board Meeting XCII Iceland (Incoming Co-Chair)

Una Strand Viðarsdóttir (Incoming Co-Chair, Iceland) indicated that preparations for the Board meeting would be aligned with the schedule of the BFUG, tentatively targeting the last week of August or the first week of September. She urged members to communicate via email regarding the feasibility of these dates, aiming to address any challenges that may arise regarding attendance. Additionally, there was a query about the potential provision of accommodations such as guesthouses for the members.

## 9.3. BFUG Meeting Hungary XCIII (Incoming Co-Chair)

András Báló (Incoming Co-Chair, Hungary) shared that the BFUG meeting would be held on September 26-27, with Budapest as the likely location. He also inquired about the potential inclusion of a keynote address in the agenda.

## 10. AOB

Caroline Hollela (BFUG Co-Chair, Belgium French Community) announced the launch of a video on the 'Bologna Process' across various social media platforms and encouraged members to share it.

S.E. Mons. Paul Tighe (Holy See) expressed gratitude for the great level of cooperation, and concluded the Board meeting by looking forward to meeting everyone at the BFUG meeting in April.