

Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

Fifth meeting, Online*

16 January 2023

09.30-11.30 (CET)

Minutes of meeting

List of participants

| Country | Name | Surname |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| Albania (Co-Chair) | Linda | Pustina |
| ASEC (Guest Speaker) | Roger | Chao Jr. |
| Belgium Flemish Community (Co-Chair) | Magalie | Soenen |
| Belgium French Community | Caroline | Hollela |
| CIMEA | Teresa Morales | de la Fuente |
| Cyprus | Kyriacos | Charalambous |
| EI - ETUCE | Agnes | Roman |
| EAC | Anna | Cragt |
| EUA | Elizabeth | Colucci |
| European Commission (Co-Chair) | Fiorella | Perotto |
| France | Mathieu | Musquin |
| Germany | Tim | Maschuw |
| Holy See | Melanie | Rosenbaum |
| Ireland | Orla | Lynch |
| Italy (Co-Chair) | Ann Katherine | Isaacs |
| Italy | Vera | Lucke |
| Malta | Jon | Vercelleono |
| Malta | Valerie | Attard |
| United Kingdom | Ella | Ritchie |
| Spain | Manuela Luque | Espadas |
| UNESCO | Andreas | Snildal |
| United Kingdom | Ella | Ritchie |
| BFUG Secretariat (Head of Secretariat) | Oltion | Rrumbullaku |
| BFUG Secretariat | Edlira | Subashi |
| BFUG Secretariat | Patrik | Bardhi |
| BFUG Secretariat | Enis | Fita |

Austria, ENQA, ESU, Kazakhstan, Romania and The Netherlands did not attend the meeting.

***Note:** This meeting was held online.

1. Welcome by the Co-Chairs of CG on Global Policy Dialogue

The Co-Chairs welcomed everyone in the meeting. Magalie Soenen (Co-Chair) introduced the invited representative of the ASEAN Secretariat, who will present the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025. Linda Pustina (Co-Chair) introduced the newly appointed Deputy Head of the Secretariat, Edlira Subashi. She summarized the deputy's duties within the Secretariat and advised all the members to consult directly with her for any issues that had arisen or might arise in the future. Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) stressed the importance of this year's work, leading to the Tirana Ministerial Conference. Fiorella Perotto (Co-Chair) praised the work that CG had done so far and wished everyone good work in the future, to bring the agenda further. The agenda and the minutes of the last meeting were approved as the meeting begun.

For more information, please see: [CG SE BA 5 Agenda of the meeting](#)

2. Update on the state of play from the three regional subgroups

2.1. [Africa subgroup](#)

Fiorella Perotto (Co-Chair) provided an update on the work carried out by the Africa subgroup, mentioning that it had recently held its first online activity with a focus on academic recognition. She explained that the goal of this first EHEA-Africa Conversation – held on 12th December 2022, was to facilitate an informal exchange of ideas and information among public agencies in charge of recognition in Africa and the EHEA. The exchange focussed on the added value, difficulties, similarities and differences, as well as the tools and mechanisms for international recognition, in intra-regional credit and diploma mobility within and between the two regions. Ms. Perotto continued by stating that this step was helpful in identifying issues that the two regions had in common. She thanked all the members of the Africa subgroup for their dedication and support and also noted some issues that would need to be addressed in the future. Ms. Perotto recalled also the organisational and logistical difficulties encountered during the preparatory phase and during the activity itself, in particular at the level the Secretariat, and expressed the hope that they will be prevented in the future. The WG members also appreciated the Africa subgroup's work.

2.2. [Americas subgroup](#)

Ann Katherine Isaacs (Co-Chair) summarised the subgroup's activities, mentioning that the subgroup successfully organized an event with a number of Latin American countries, hosted by Uruguay as president pro-tempore of MERCOSUR. This was a Colloquium, titled "Strengthening Global Policy Dialogue in Higher Education", in which the Subgroup and representatives of the Ministries of Higher Education of the countries involved discussed, first in an open session broadcast on YouTube, and then in a closed session, matters of common interest. She mentioned the authorities and countries that took part in the event, including UNESCO, the Ibero-American General Secretariat, Mercosur countries, and Andean community members. The similarities and contrasts between EHEA and its South American counterparts within the context of the sustainable development goals, and especially obstacles to mobility and inclusion, were the main focus of the discussion. The subgroup emphasized diversity in the EHEA as a value rather than something that should be overcome. One of the main takeaways from the second session was that the Latin American countries participating, of whatever political orientation, consider making HE available at low or zero cost to all sectors of the population (and retaining the learners that enter HE) to be the main way that public universities can contribute to the UN SDGs; whereas mobility in practice is seen as something only the privileged can access, largely with private means.

Ms. Isaacs also informed the CG members that the following week three CG members (Isaacs, Lynch, Cirlan) would participate in and hold a session at the annual meeting of the Council of Higher Education Accrediting Bodies (CHEA) in Washington DC. Their session is entitled "*Fostering global discussion about diversity in a common framework*" and will take place on January 24. She also mentioned that the subgroup hopes to hold a second Colloquium with LA countries during the present semester.

2.3. Asia subgroup

Magalie Soenen (Co-Chair) gave an update on the Asia subgroup, stating that four new expert groups were being set under the ASEM education process. These groups will be working on SDGs and education, recognition and balanced mobility, lifelong learning including TVET and digitalisation. This last group which had been previously set would continue its work. The Standing Working Group under the ASEM framework was still operating as a steering group in setting out the vision and strategy for the future.

It was discussed that the countries and organizations were invited to nominate representatives for the four groups, while Italy, holding the ASEM Secretariat through CIMEA, will facilitate this process. As soon as the process is finished, the groups would set up their first meetings and start working on their terms of reference. Ms. Soenen also highlighted some of the upcoming events such as the SOM meeting in May 2023 and the ASEM Ministerial Conference end of 2023 or beginning of 2024. She also mentioned the end of the SHARE project, active for many years between the EU and South-eastern Asian countries. It was emphasized that the cooperation with South-eastern Asia was expected to continue under the name Global Gateway, organized by the European Commission.

3. Presentation of the 'Roadmap on the ASEAN¹ Higher Education Space 2025' & discussion on possible cooperation

Mr. Roger Y. Chao Jr. (Head of ASEAN Secretariat) provided a brief background of himself and his role on developing regional integration in higher education in the Southeast Asian region. He expressed the importance of the SHARE Program on pushing forward the agenda of the "Roadmap" and the support of SEAMEO², an organization that works in the education area in the region. A summary of the development of the ASEAN community building was provided, building from the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Higher Education. In line with the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Agenda, the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 calls for the consolidation of a rules-based, people-oriented and people-centered community in Southeast Asia.

The regionalization of higher education in Southeast Asia was introduced, highlighting the service sector liberalization, HE mobility and mutual recognition, regional frameworks and ASEAN awareness/capacity-building. In order to develop an ASEAN-branded scholarship, a project was funded to look into the various funding mechanisms, mobility schemes and areas of interest. The project focused on regional frameworks that are essentially equivalent to the EHEA, as well as ASEAN awareness and community engagement, especially in terms of identity building. The study on enhancing intra-ASEAN university student mobility in 2020 was highlighted as the most recent of the higher education regional initiatives (1980-2000), which was presented as a thematic report to address the needs of the region, which includes equity, diversity and inclusion, internationalization, and regionalization.

Participants were informed on the Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025's vision, main objectives and key principles. Following this, the opportunities and challenges for creating and maintaining an ASEAN higher education space were presented, focusing on sustainable funding, strengthening partnerships, effective operationalization of regional frameworks and instruments, increased mobility, recognition issues and the successful implementation of digital transformation of education systems.

Through a program run by SEAMEO, the movement for harmonization in Southeast Asia began in 2006. However, the notion of attaining consensus has slowed down the advancement of higher education as a whole. The SHARE Program and the European Union have helped to increase awareness of and progress in higher education. Further, higher education is one of the five components of the connection package for the Global Gateway. The other goal of this plan is to get everyone together to talk about what they are all doing and, in general, to support one another because all the different elements of the higher

¹ ASEAN - The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

² SEAMEO - The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization

education sector must cooperate. The SHARE program, as well as efforts carried out by ASEAN Member States and partners, are only a few of the various current initiatives that comprise the implementation plan. The implementation currently only consists of the promises made by member governments and organizations.

In addition, it was said that the CG's role should be one of connecting people and groups. One of the topics to reach out on to other regional networks or other parts of the world, such as Africa, would be recognition. The challenges Southeast Asia has and the possible cooperation with the CG were also addressed. It was underlined e.g. that the credit transfer procedures introduced in Southeast Asia, which were based on a variety of mobility strategies, did not take into account geographical considerations. The Asian Qualifications Framework could be further developed, incorporating quality assurance. The strong push for online and blended learning and especially the integration of micro-credentials are also important topics.

Members of ASEAN also addressed the QF revision and its inclusion of micro-credentials. Given how the framework is formed and how the political structures are in the region, having an Asia Pacific Qualifications Framework will be very challenging and time-consuming. A suggestion was made that the CG could consider multilateral conversation amongst sub-groups on particular themes coming from partners in various regions in the following steps. In light of the Erasmus experience, it was emphasized that the lack of a regional credit transfer system makes intra-regional mobility challenging. It was determined that themes including recognition, credit transfer mechanisms, qualification frameworks, micro-credentials, and interregional mobility would be potential areas for continued cooperation through this group in 2023 as well as to narrow down the scope of the Global Policy Forum in 2024.

For more information, please see: [Roadmap on the ASEAN Higher Education Space 2025](#)

4. Draft work plan: next activities, start of subgroups 'Global Policy Forum' and 'Policy forum statement', including overview by the INGLOBAL project

4.1. Start of subgroups 'Global Policy Forum' and 'Policy forum statement'

Magalie Soenen (Co-Chair) provided an overview of the composition of the subgroups on 'Global Policy Forum' and 'Policy forum statement'. The Global Policy Forum subgroup comprised of Linda Pustina as Co-Chair, with the interest of France, Netherlands, UK and EUA. The Policy Forum Statement subgroup included Magalie Soenen and Ann Katherine Isaacs as Co-Chairs, with the interest of ETUCE, Holy See, Ireland, Netherlands, UK, France and Belgium French Community. It was noted that the subgroups are open to others who want to join and the list would be sent to the members to have a good overview of the current composition of the subgroups. Ms. Isaacs provided a summary of the Policy Statement subgroup roadmap, with the aim of meeting in the first week of February to review what was done in the last period, taking into consideration the existing Statement, expanding some of the points; and organizing a process whereby the results of the ongoing work of the various subgroups can be taken into account progressively. Presumably, there will be the regional meetings in the autumn, or possibly in the early spring of 2024, so the outcomes of those too should be brought into the statement.

Ms. Soenen summarized that the work of subgroups have to take into account the planning of the BFUG Board meeting on 31st of March and the BFUG Meeting on the 11-12th of May. The first drafts of Statement as well as a first idea of setup of the GPF should be presented to the BFUG. The feedback of the Board and the BFUG should then be taken into account. The next CG Meeting should therefore be planned before the BFUG Board Meeting.

The update on the Global Policy Forum subgroup, as stressed by Linda Pustina (Co-Chair), will be discussed at the following meeting because the Albanian National Working Group for the Ministerial Conference is



soon to be set. She requested that any suggestions or requests be forwarded to the Ministry of Education and Sports, so that they can be taken into consideration for the meeting's planning and logistics. She provided information on the establishment of the national working group, which will support the Vice-Chair and be in charge of organizing at the national level the Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum (GPF). The first meeting of the subgroup may be held, as soon as it is established.

4.2. Overview by the IN-GLOBAL project

Vera Lucke (Italy) presented an overview and update of the IN-GLOBAL project and what concerns the CG on GDP. Firstly, the draft website was introduced within project, in order to accommodate activities, such as: BFUG and stakeholders' events, events outside EHEA, the project outcomes and links from EHEA websites, CIMEA website and Erasmus+ website. The idea of the project is to increase knowledge within the EHEA and also to spread information for stakeholders to give more visibility on CG events. She informed the CG members on the creation of an IN-GLOBAL Twitter account to promote BFUG and EHEA events and to retweet ongoing activities. The idea is to create more visibility and the promotion of all events, creating contact lists of national EHEA stakeholders, international HE stakeholders and national agencies for the promotion of HE systems. The Rome Communiqué would be translated in the EHEA languages, if accepted by the members, collecting and using existing translations if already available. There is financial support for the countries to do a translation and for the publication on the IN-GLOBAL website. It would also be asked whether the BFUG Secretariat could publish it on the EHEA website.

Support for the GPF's preparation can be provided, including a professional layout for the Statement. Additionally, the Bologna events for the African, Latin American, Asian and Arab regions that are part of the worldwide initiative were highlighted. The project can provide support in such cases, and these events should take place in an EHEA country. The project can also support participation in events outside of EHEA, including the CHEA annual conference, financial support for a December virtual MERCOSUR event, and future events, as well as involvement by CG Group members in activities outside of their home region.

Some concerns were expressed by CG members about the translation of the Rome Communiqué: certain expressions and different interpretations can work differently in different countries. It was underlined that the responsibility of checking/revising the translation should be in the hands of the respective EHEA countries. Another request was related to the possibility of supporting the translation of events, because for the Africa event, it was challenging for the French speaking part to intervene in English. Vera indicated that it is not sure yet whether this kind of costs could be supported by the project, but if there is a request, it will be taken into account. It was emphasized that the project funds will foresee to cover travel expenses and for other costs (room rental or catering) for the organization of hybrid or physical meetings it needs to be checked. Another issue raised was regarding travel from non-EHEA countries to the EHEA, which still needs to be checked.in-

For more information, please see: [IN-GLOBAL Project: Overview and Update](#)

5. Decisions on next meeting, deadlines

Magalie Soenen (Co-Chair) proposed to set up a next CG Meeting in March, three weeks before the BFUG Board Meeting, in order to allow the two new subgroups to work and come up with the first proposal for the CG. It was agreed to send out a Doodle for the week of 6th of March. No other business was raised and the CG on GPD meeting was concluded with thanks to the Co-Chairs for the well-organized meeting.

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