

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT BFUG: SUGGESTED APPROACH

Introduction

1. The Bologna Work Programme for 2005-2007 contains a number of topics for discussion by BFUG. It was agreed at the Manchester meeting of BFUG that the Secretariat would prepare a paper for discussion by the Board, suggesting how the topics for discussion might be prioritised.

2. This paper invites the Board to comment on, and agree, the suggested timetable and approach for BFUG discussion of the topics included in the 2005-2007 Work Programme.

Topics for discussion

3. The total of 12 topics listed below for discussion are included in the agreed Bologna Work Programme for 2005-2007. It has since been suggested that external relations is added to the list of topics for discussion, resulting in the list below:

- Share expertise to build capacity at institutional and government level
- Assisting the new participating countries to implement the goals of the Process
- Portability of grants and loans
- Awarding professional and academic titles – using new three cycle degree system
- Future development of EHEA post 2010 – global and European competition/co-operation, academic mobility etc?
- Social dimension
- European dimension (including joint degrees)
- Staff mobility
- Mobility
- Implementation of Quality Assurance standards and guidelines
- Implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks
- Exploration of arrangements to support the Process beyond 2010
- External relations – updates on international meetings like the one under the UK Presidency in Mexico and a Bologna-related meeting in China.

Progress to date

4. In October 2005, BFUG considered how to share expertise and build capacity across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and how to support the newer countries implement the goals of the Bologna Process. This led to the Council of Europe and the Austrian Presidency offering to hold an induction meeting for the new member countries in January 2006. It is intended that Austria/Council of Europe will give a short report about this event at the April meeting of BFUG.

5 BFUG also had an initial discussion about the portability of grants and loans during our October meeting. It was agreed that the Netherlands, working in conjunction with other interested countries, would prepare a more detailed paper for discussion at BFUG in April 2006. A decision on whether any further BFUG action on this topic is required will be taken at the April meeting.

Proposals

6. Five of the 13 topics are associated with working groups and projects included in the Work Programme. Where this is the case, we suggest that the issues for discussion are addressed during the regular progress reports from the relevant working group chairs or project lead. This would include:

- Social dimension
- Staff mobility
- Mobility
- Implementation of Quality Assurance standards and guidelines
- Implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks.

7. We suggest that Germany, with France who proposed the topic, is invited to lead a discussion at October BFUG meeting on the European dimension (including joint degrees). The discussion should be based on a paper and could incorporate feedback from the Bologna seminar on joint degrees that Germany is organising in September 2006.

8. Building on the work undertaken by the Norwegian Secretariat, we propose that the Secretariat prepares a paper as a background to an initial discussion about possible arrangements to support the Bologna process post 2010. The Bergen Communiqué asks BFUG to explore possible arrangements to support the continuing development of the EHEA beyond 2010 as a basis for consideration by Ministers. This could be linked to a discussion of the future development of EHEA post 2010, suggested by UNESCO-CEPES. This discussion could take place at the October 2006 BFUG meeting. Alternatively, discussion of both these aspects of the situation post 2010 could be deferred until the Spring 2007 BFUG meeting.

9. The need to discuss “awarding professional and academic titles – using new three cycle degree system” was proposed by Slovenia. We suggest that this topic is included in a BFUG agenda once the timetable for the BFUG meetings between October 2006 and May 2007 has become clearer. At that time, Slovenia will be invite to prepare a paper and lead the discussion.

10. This leaves the new topic: external relations. We suggest that this topic is included on BFUG agendas as and when external meetings take place. This will allow those taking part in meetings such as the recent UK Presidency event in Mexico to feedback to BFUG colleagues.

11. These proposals are shown in summary form in the table below.

Conclusion

12. The Board is invited to:

comment on, and agree, the suggested timetable and approach.

Bologna Secretariat, January 2006

Discussion At BFUG		
Subject	Notes	Comments
Share expertise to build capacity at institutional and government level		Initial discussion at BFUG, October 2005; agreed Council of Europe and others would continue to offer support as appropriate.
Assisting the new participating countries to implement the goals of the Process		Initial discussion at BFUG, October 2005; Austria agreed to organise an induction meeting for the new member countries in January 2006; report back to be given at BFUG, April 2006.
Portability of grants and loans	Proposed by Netherlands	Initial discussion at BFUG, October 2005; agreed the Netherlands, in conjunction with other interested countries, would prepare a more detailed paper for discussion at BFUG in April 2006.
Awarding professional and academic titles – using new three cycle degree system	Proposed by Slovenia	Slovenia to be invited to prepare a paper and lead discussion at a BFUG taking place between October 2006 and May 2007.
Future development of EHEA post 2010 – global and European competition/co-operation, academic mobility etc?	Proposed by UNESCO CEPES	Link to discussion on arrangements for supporting Bologna Process post 2010; to take place at October 2006 or Spring 2007 BFUG.
Social dimension	Proposed by France &	Link to discussion of proposals from Working Group on social

	Germany	dimension and data on the mobility of staff and students in participating countries.
European dimension (including joint degrees)	Proposed by France	Germany, with France, to prepare a paper and lead discussion, including outcomes from German seminar on joint degrees, at October 2006 BFUG.
Staff mobility	Proposed by EI - Pan European Structure	Link to discussion of proposals from Working Group on social dimension and data on the mobility of staff and students in participating countries.
Mobility	Proposed by ESIB and Germany	Link to discussion of proposals from Working Group on social dimension and data on the mobility of staff and students in participating countries.
Implementation of Quality Assurance standards and guidelines	Proposed by Germany	Link to update from ENQA on European Consultative Forum
Implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks	Proposed by Germany	Link to the report on implementation and further development of overarching qualifications framework.
Exploration of arrangements to support the Process beyond 2010.		Link to discussion on future development of EHEA post 2010; to take place at October 2006 or Spring 2007 BFUG.
External relations - feedback from international events	Proposed by Austria	Include on BFUG agendas as and when required

