



Meeting of the Bologna Coordination Group on Mobility, Vienna, 23 November 2007

Draft minutes

Participants

Armenia	Gayane HARUTYUNYAN
Armenia	Mher MELIK-BAKHSHYAN
Austria	Gottfried BACHER
Austria	Manuela FRIED
Austria	Florian PECENKA
Croatia	Ivan SIMONOVIC
Germany	Michael HARMS
Germany	Siegbert WUTTIG
Hungary	Katalin KURUCZ
Spain	Rafel BONETE
ESU	Bruno CARAPINHA
Bologna Secretariat	Cornelia RACKÉ

Welcome and information by Chair and Secretariat

The Chair (Gayane Harutyunyan, Armenia) welcomed the participants and initiated a brief round of introductions. Apologies had been received from Belgium/French Community, France, and Russia.

1. Adoption of the agenda

Document: Agenda of the meeting.

The agenda of the meeting was adopted.

2. Introduction of the main principles for the work of the coordination group

Documents: London Communiqué; Bologna work programme 2007-2009; 2007 report on social dimension and mobility; Terms of Reference

The Chair briefly introduced the documents that will form the basis of the work of the coordination group and reminded the group of the relevant paragraphs of the London Communiqué (2.2, 2.3 and 3.2).

Siegbert Wuttig (Germany) suggested checking if all parts of the London Communiqué are covered by activities and raised the question of what to do if the group identified gaps.

The Chair explained that it was indeed the task of the coordination group to make sure that all areas were covered and to advise the various conference organisers accordingly. In the end, the coordination group will have to prepare a report with solid recommendations on how to address the mobility problem.

Bruno Caraphina (ESU) added that these recommendations should be based on a number of cases of good practice and should focus on concrete proposals for action.

The Chair reminded the group that a number of issues related to mobility would also be taken up by other working and coordination groups and that therefore liaison with these groups would be important.

3. Discussion of specific tasks; how to organize the work and possible division of tasks among the countries and organisations participating in the coordination group

The Chair invited the participants to comment on the proposed terms of reference for the coordination group that had been circulated before the meeting.

In the discussion, the following points were made:

- The coordination group should have the task to make sure that the various events, such as the mobility campaign or the seminar on staff mobility and pension schemes are interlinked and can learn from each other. This implied that the group would have to play a more active part in the preparation of these events.
- Two different coordination tasks need to be distinguished:
 - (1) coordinating the events, to make sure they build upon and complement each other and cover all elements referred to in the London Communiqué.
 - (2) coordinating the results and recommendations of the events, integrating them into one coherent report with one set of recommendations.
- Although the conference organisers are part of the coordination group, it would be useful to assign one other person for each seminar who is not involved in the actual organisation but can advise the organisers and in the end also help to bring the results of the various events together.
- In addition to that, given that the group is rather small, all members of the group will have the opportunity to contribute and, for instance, to provide comments by e-mail.

It was agreed that

- To facilitate the coordination, the group would assign a contact person for each seminar or conference who would then act as adviser to the organisers and afterwards also provide a brief report to the group.
- The contact person could, for instance, attend meetings of the committee preparing a conference but could also be involved via e-mail or phone. It would be up to the contact person and the respective conference organisers to agree upon the details of the liaison.

The Chair then proposed to go through the planned events one by one, discussing the terms of reference that had been circulated before the meeting, and also allocating contact persons for each event.

Mobility campaign by Education International and ESU

Bruno Caraphina (ESU) briefly presented the project and informed the group about the state of affairs. The idea for the campaign had resulted from the mobility seminar in February 2007 and the idea was to make mobility of students and staff a permanent item in debates on higher education in each country.

The campaign will run until October 2008 and largely relies on local initiatives by member organisations of ESU and EI, addressing governments, rectors' conferences and other stakeholders. This also allows the organisers to focus on different problems in different countries, according to the local needs. Given that ESU has members in 36 countries, at least those 36 countries will be covered. Towards the end of the campaign questionnaires will be sent out to the member organisations to get an idea of how the situation has changed during the campaign. To validate the results of this survey and to conclude the campaign, EI and ESU will also organise a conference in Lille/France in October or early

November 2008. Another element of the campaign will be an interactive website where students and staff can share their experiences with mobility and the problems related to it. EI and ESU are supported by an advisory board and BFUG members have been invited to join that board.

The campaign is not meant to compete with existing initiatives of the Erasmus Student Network or individual countries, like Norway and Germany, but it is also not linked to those initiatives. Similarly, there are no plans to link the planned website with the Researcher's Mobility Portal or the "Study in Europe" website initiated by the European Commission.

The campaign will deal with both outgoing and incoming students from inside and outside Europe but the main goal is to increase mobility among European students. By 2020, 20% of all European students should be mobile at least once during their studies.

Gottfried Bacher (Austria) will act as contact person of the mobility coordination group for the EI/ESU mobility campaign.

Seminar on staff mobility and pension arrangements

Michael Harms (Germany) briefly presented the plans for this event and the state of affairs of the preparations. The seminar will most likely take place in June - the exact date still needs to be confirmed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

An internal working group has been set up and as far as the programme of the seminar is concerned, the following elements have been proposed:

- discussion about setting up information centres for pension rights;
- case studies of mobile researchers within Europe that have encountered difficulties;
- discussion of a pan-European fund for social security.

The idea is to discuss where exactly the difficulties are, where individual models are not compatible and what could be done about it.

The organisers would be very grateful to receive contact details of possible resource persons, be they experts from EI or simply mobile members of staff that have come across problems and could therefore help to illustrate those problems. Doctoral students will be included, as will administrative staff, but the focus will be on academic staff.

Bruno Carapinha (ESU) informed the group that EI has been working on this topic for some time and would be willing to support the conference organisers.

The group agreed that it would be helpful to receive a written update from all conference organisers, clarifying the plans and the state of affairs. This update should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat for further distribution among all members of the group.

Bruno Carapinha (ESU) agreed to act as contact person for the coordination group, possibly together with a colleague from EI.

Seminar "Fostering student mobility: next steps?"

Given that the organiser of this conference, the French Community of Belgium, was not represented at the meeting, Cornelia Racké (Bologna Secretariat) briefly introduced the plans for this event, which aimed at proposing concrete measures to make mobility become a reality, and to do so at three levels: governments, higher education institutions and students. The conference would also address the question of asymmetric mobility.

In the discussion, the following comments and recommendations were made:

- The seminar should address the crucial question of flexible curricula referred to in the London Communiqué. How can we design curricula so as to facilitate mobility?

- It is very difficult to influence where students go. Tailor-made funding schemes could be a start. After the end of the Cold War, Austria set up a very intense cooperation with countries in Central and Eastern Europe and also a special scholarship programme, where Austria covered the expenses of the students coming to Austria and the partners in Central and Eastern Europe (Romania, for instance) paid the costs of the Austrian students coming to their countries.
- Information about the possible study destination is crucial – not only for students but also for members of staff sending out those students. Doubts about a possible study destination are often the result of a lack of information.
- Mobility has changed with the Bologna Process. It used to be mainly horizontal mobility but with Bologna the emphasis has shifted to degree mobility. While for politicians it does not seem to make a difference (mobility is mobility), for higher education institutions and their staff it does make a substantial difference, which should therefore also be addressed at conferences dealing with mobility.
- The conference of the French Community of Belgium should focus on a small number of topics, such as the tricky question of balanced mobility, the issue of flexible curricula, recognition, or the cross-cutting issue of funding or the social dimension more generally.
- As far as equitable balance is concerned, it has to be kept in mind that some of the mechanisms (e.g. Erasmus) are limited to those 32 of the 46 countries participating in the LLL programme. Bilateral agreements that de facto extend Erasmus also to the other Bologna countries might be a possible solution.

Florian Pecenka (Austria) and Ivan Simonovic (Croatia) are part of the scientific committee that is preparing the conference. Ivan Simonovic (Croatia) and Rafael Bonete (Spain) offered to act as contact persons for the coordination group.

Conference on Mobility – Erasmus Mundus II

In the absence of the French organisers, the Chair briefly presented the plans for the French mobility seminar, which will in essence be the conference launching the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus programme. A steering committee has been set up.

Siegbert Wuttig and Katalin Kukucz volunteered to act as contact persons for this event. The Bologna Secretariat will inform the French colleagues accordingly.

Seminar on joint programmes and student mobility

Unfortunately, the Russian organiser was not able to attend the meeting either. The Chair explained that there was not much information about the seminar yet, apart from title and possible dates.

With a view to the final report, which needs to be submitted to BFUG by mid-January, the group recommended having the Russian seminar still in 2008.

Michael Harms (Germany) and Gayane Harutyunyan (Armenia) will be the contact persons for this seminar.

4. First discussion on the preparation of the report (information provision and cooperation with stocktaking working group)

The Chair explained that the group would have to submit a report to the Bologna Follow-up Group by mid-January 2009 and asked the group for suggestions how to prepare this report. After a brief discussion it was agreed to opt for a concise report, which would mainly summarise the main results of the various events, highlighting the main recommendations for the following period and also for "Bologna Beyond 2010".

By doing so, the group should also identify possible gaps and keep in mind what would be needed for policy-making in the following working period. An important task of the

coordination group would also be to produce a concise and well-formulated paragraph for the 2009 communiqué.

Chair and Secretariat will prepare a first draft of both the report and the communiqué paragraph by the end of November 2008 as basis for the discussion at the coordination group meeting early December 2008.

When preparing the 2009 report, and in fact during the entire working period, the coordination group as well as the conference organisers should build upon the previous report rather than duplicating the work of the 2005-2007 working group on mobility. All members of the group who have not done so yet are therefore strongly advised to read the relevant passages of the 2007 report (pp. 45 onwards).

As far as stocktaking is concerned, the prime responsibility clearly lies with the stocktaking working group but the mobility coordination group could possibly comment on the questions dealing with mobility. A useful question could, for instance, be: What are national funding schemes? How do Bologna countries support mobility?

Given that the Chair is also a member of the stocktaking working group, liaison with that group should not be a problem. With the network on student support, the data collection working group and the social dimension coordination group the necessary exchange of information and coordination would be assured through close contacts among the chairs of the respective groups as well as through the Bologna Secretariat.

5. 2007-2009 mobility milestones

Document: work plan of mobility coordination group, distributed during the meeting

The Chair asked the members of the group to send their comments on the proposed work plan by e-mail to the Secretariat by 10 December. It was agreed that the terms of reference of the coordination group would be amended to include the outcomes of the meeting and would subsequently be circulated for a last round of comments. Both documents would then be part of the update that would be submitted to BFUG in preparation of its March meeting.

The coordination group agreed to have two more meetings:

19 September 2008, Yerevan

- To discuss the results of the two seminars in May and June 2008 with a view to the final report and also providing further input for the following seminars.
- To discuss the outline of the final report.
- To prepare a written update that needs to be sent to BFUG in preparation of its October 2008 meeting.

8 December 2008, Brussels (to be confirmed)

- To discuss the results of the remaining seminars.
- To discuss the draft of the final report that will be prepared and circulated by Chair and Secretariat by the end of November 2008.

6. Any other business

Since there was not other business to attend to, the Chair thanked the members of the group for their participation and commitment and closed the meeting.