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**EHEA Ministerial Conference and Third Bologna Policy Forum**

**Bucharest, 26 – 27 April 2012**

- Evaluation report -

1. **Short overview of the events**

On 26-27 April 2012, the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports with the support of UEFISCDI organised the eighth edition of the Bologna Process/ EHEA Ministerial Conference and the third edition of the Bologna Policy Forum in Bucharest.

The two events gathered at the Palace of the Parliament around 500 participants from over 80 countries and 30 international organisations. The Ministerial Conference brought together the 47 EHEA Ministerial delegations, the representatives of the European Commission as well as the Bologna Process consultative members.

The delegates present at the Ministerial Conference attended both plenary and parallel sessions and discussed the current status of the Bologna Process implementation and challenges ahead, as well as the [Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué](http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/%281%29/Bucharest%20Communique%202012%281%29.pdf) and the [EHEA Mobility Strategy.](http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/%281%29/2012%20EHEA%20Mobility%20Strategy.pdf)

The 2012 EHEA Conference was organised in conjunction with the Bologna Policy Forum, which brought together members and heads of delegation from over 20 non EHEA countries along with representatives of international organisations from the field of higher education. The overarching theme of the third Bologna Policy Forum was "Beyond the Bologna Process: Creating and connecting national, regional and global higher education spaces”, with four parallel sessions for in depth discussions, focusing on: mobility, quality assurance, social responsibility and employability. The Bologna Policy Forum was finalised with the adoption of the [Bologna Policy Forum Statement](http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/(1)/Bucharest%20BPF%20Statement.pdf).

With the aim of establishing and enhancing international cooperation in the field of higher education, countries and organisations met during the two days of the event for a number of bilateral meetings, facilitated by the organisers in the Palace of the Parliament.

The organisers arranged two social events, at Victoria Palace on 25 April and at the Romanian Athenaeum on 26 April, where a small concert was put in place by the Romanian Philharmonics ”George Enescu” of the National University of Music Bucharest.

Additional information regarding the events at the Palace of the Parliament is available on the official Website of the Conference at: <http://www.bologna-bucharest2012.ehea.info>.

1. **Evaluation form and methodology**

Following the event, the organisers have carried out a survey meant to assess the events in Bucharest and provide useful feedback tool for the organisers. An evaluation form was distributed online to all participants registered for the EHEA Ministerial Conference and Bologna Policy Forum. The participants were given seven days to complete the form. The surveyed sample included: heads of delegation, member of delegation, guests from abroad, guests from Romania and members of the press.

The evaluation form was designed to assess *event sessions* and *administrative aspects* regarding the organisation of the EHEA Ministerial Conference and Bologna Policy Forum*.* A standard five-level Likert scale was used to assess the satisfaction rate of various aspects regarding the two events. The survey also provided open-ended questions, giving the opportunity for respondents to share their views.

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1. **Results**

The organisers have received a total of 57 evaluation forms over the seven-day period from participants of the EHEA Ministerial Conference and Third Bologna Policy Forum. 69% of responses were provided by members of the delegation, while 30% of responses came from heads of delegation and guests. No responses were received from press representatives.

The statistical data regarding the composition of the sample is made available in the form of a pie chart below:

The overall response rate was 12.5% (57 responses out of 450 participants). As we consider the sample large enough to provide an accurate representation of the overall satisfaction with the events, we have provided below a summary of responses on the event sessions (I) and administrative aspects (II).

**I. EVENT SESSIONS**

The surveyed participants scored their overall satisfaction with the EHEA Ministerial Conference and the Third Bologna Policy Forum as “outstanding” on 25% of the cases, “more than satisfactory” on 58% of the cases, “satisfactory” on 15% of replies and only 4 % have rated the event with “less than satisfactory”.

**EHEA Ministerial Conference**

Regarding the content of the discussions during the parallel and plenary sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference, 95 % participants were satisfied or above the level of “satisfactory” with the way the sessions were managed and included all the inputs of the participants on the Bucharest Ministerial Communiqué.

When reviewing the plenary sessions of the EHEA Ministerial Conference most respondents have assessed positively the “quality of moderation” (97%), “relevance of questions and answers” (98%), “interactivity in discussions” (86%), “time planning of the session” (92%) and “relevance of the briefing” (95%).

However 14% of participants felt there was a lack in the level of interactivity during the plenary sessions rating their answer with “poor” and “less than satisfactory”. Comments have also pointed out that “*delegations did not take the floor once, neither in the plenary or parallel sessions*” or that “*when discussing the Communique, the only interactivity reached was when some countries were actually supporting previous ones*”.

**Bologna Policy Forum**

Respondents were also asked to assess their level of satisfaction with the parallel sessions of the Bologna Policy Forum (BPF). Similarly to the EHEA plenary and parallel sessions, the BPF parallel sessions were rated with satisfied or above the level of satisfied for the *“quality of moderation”* (by 84% of respondents), for the *“relevance of the questions and answers*” (by 89% of respondents), for the *“interactivity in discussions*” (by 87% of respondents), for the “*time planning of the session”* (by 95% of respondents) and for the “*relevance of the briefing”* (by 95% of respondents). The interactivity in discussions during these sessions was rated lowest in comparison to the other assessed features.

The distribution of respondents in the four parallel sessions of the Bologna Policy Forum are described in within the below chart:

Further on, the organisers have asked respondents to express their views on how they would like to see the Bologna Policy Forum evolving. Participants were also asked whether the focus of the forum should be primarily on exchanging regional and national experiences or if it should focus on sharing updates regarding the evolution of the Bologna Process.

The opinions were divided with respect to coupling the EHEA Ministerial Conference with the Bologna Policy Forum. Those against stated that joining the two events “has shown over the last Ministerial Conferences that it discourages participation of ministers from EHEA countries for reasons of time restraint” and have recommended considering the “development of annual forums focusing on education, innovation and leadership across disciplines to enhance sustainable development”.

Most participants agreed that the focus of the forum should be both on exchanging regional and national experiences and on sharing updates on the evolution of the Bologna Process. However the focal point of the forum should be on the former rather than on the later. The exchange of views on regional and thematic priorities is perceived “as a source of inspiration” and should therefore be further encouraged.

On the question on whether their country or organisation will be willing to organise an event under the Bologna Policy Forum umbrella (conference, seminar, training, roundtable etc.), 21 respondents have replied that they will be willing to organise such an event, while 15 respondents have replied negatively.

**II. ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS**

**Organising team**

The support and assistance provided by the organisers was rated in general as highly positive. 92% of the surveyed participants rated their satisfaction level before the event with “*outstanding*” or *“more than satisfactory”*, while 84% of the pool kept these answers for during and after the event.

The participants seemed also content with the information provided on the public and restricted area of the conference Website, with the conference Manual and the registration process. The percentage of “more than satisfactory” and “outstanding” levels of satisfaction exceeds by far the “less than satisfactory” levels of evaluation.

**Location of the event**

With respect to the venue of the conference, participants valued in a high proportion (61 of respondents) the *conference location and meeting rooms*, as well as *the access to the internet* (51 of respondents). Over 60% of respondents were “more than satisfied” or above that level with *the bilateral meeting rooms*, the *exhibition and promotional stand area* and with the *access to computers and copy machines*.

**Satisfaction with accommodation, meals and social events**

Respondents expressed a high satisfaction level with their accommodation, 93% of them rating their hotel lodging with “more than satisfactory” or “outstanding”. Quality of meals also scores high with 83% of respondents choosing the last two high levels of satisfaction.

With respect to the social events, participant replies show a somewhat higher level of satisfaction with the concert evening offered by the organisers at the Romanian Athenaeum on the 26April. However, only 9% percent rated the event at the Victoria Palace on the 25 April as less than satisfactory, while 62% were pleased with the event.

**Sightseeing tour**

Unfortunately the sightseeing option was organised and communicated rather late to the participants of the EHEA Ministerial Conference. As such not many have benefited from this options as can be seen from the replies provided in the evaluation form. Only 9% of those questioned have taken a touristic option.