**First Meeting of the EHEA Working Group on Structural Reform (13-14 December 2012, Brussels)**

**Outline of the breakout session on Recognition**

Chair: Fr. Friedrich Bechina (Holy See)

Facilitator: Carita Blomqvist (Finland – Lisbon Recognition Convention)

Rapporteur: Kevin Guillaume (Belgium – French Community)

**Purpose and background**

The main purpose of this breakout session will be to identify and discuss the more relevant questions and topics related to Recognition in the overall framework of the terms of reference of the WG on Structural Reform. It neither aims at just repeating or continuing the work of the former WG on Recognition (2009-2012) in a broader context, nor should it be a mere deductive exercises drawing conclusions from what has been said in the different Ministerial Declarations from 1999 to 2012.

From the beginning of the Bologna Process the theme of “Recognition” has always been on the agenda as a key issue which is specifically linked to many other goals and action lines of the Process. Building on the widely known Documents (like especially the Lisbon Recognition Convention), statements, and reports which analyzed both, national strategies as well as their implementation in academic reality, the breakout session invites to ask also new questions which have not been within the focus so much till now. By this, and setting the scene for the further work of the WG in the field of Recognition, the group will try to identify the more general aim, purpose and end of “recognition”, its conditions within legal or cultural backgrounds, its political impact and interdependency with other policy areas within the Bologna Process, especially with the other key issues of the WG (Quality assurance, Qualifications frameworks, and Transparency).

The following “Key issues” are a mere proposal. Everybody should feel free to put forth, in a proper moment of the discussions, also other relevant topics.

**Key issues**

1. ***The concept and end of “Recognition”***

* Why (for what end and purpose) we want better recognition?

Question for facilitating discussion:

*If a politician today would make the theme of recognition a key topic of his electorial campaign, how could he argue?*

* Is the question of “recognition” essentially linked to the concept of “academic degrees”? What is the original meaning and purpose of an academic degree?

Question for facilitating discussion:

*If your son or daughter would stop his/her studies shortly before completing the program and earning a degree, because he/she got the offer of a well paid and interesting job, what would be your council and how would you argue?*

* Do you think that – within the discussion of recognition issues – some … could have a “hidden agenda” or other than the common goals?

Question for facilitating discussion:

*When you follow discussions (of stakeholders, HE-politicians, country- representatives) on recognition, what do you think their “real interest” would be?*

1. ***The interdependency between “recognition” and other major issues of the Bologna Process***

* Which other means, instruments, political goals etc. (within the Bologna Process) precondition, facilitate, support … (fair) recognition?

Question for facilitating discussion:

*If you would get an important amount of money for enhancing fair recognition of HE studies and qualifications, how (for what) would you invest/spend the money?*

* Which other goals, measures, political reasons could be contradictory or conflicting with the goal of fair recognition?

Questions for facilitating discussion:

*What would you answer somebody stating that it is a sign of quality (excellence) of his University not to recognize studies completed at certain other (“recognized”) Universities?*

*Can you imagine abuses or negative effects of NQFs on fair recognition? If the answer is “yes”, provide examples!*

1. ***Major achievements (of the Bologna Process) within the context of “recognition”***

* What was/is the greatest success?
* In which question (in the context of “recognition”) you experience the widest gap between Bologna-expectations and Bologna-achievements?
* What are the major trends, challenges, chances in the context of “recognition” today?

1. ***What do you know about “recognition” outside Europe? – Test your knowledge!***

* Asia-Pacific Area

Questions for facilitating discussion:

*Which (3) of the following countries are currently putting more energy and resources (than other countries) into initiatives and means to promote recognition of qualifications within the region? And what could be the (different?) reasons of these countries to do so?*

*Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand. Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga …*

* Africa

Questions for facilitating discussion:

*At what stage is the development of updating the old Recognition Convention? And who are the “major players” in this project?*

* A Global Recognition Convention (?)

Questions for facilitating discussion:

*Who, at the moment, is advocating most strongly in favor of a Global Convention?*

*Which countries (Continents) are more in favor which are more critical? And what could be the reasons/arguments for their opinion?*

*What is common in the field of recognition between Europe and other Continents? What is different? What is most difficult? What is most urgent to do?*