

*Doc. Code: BFUGBoard\_IE\_HR\_34\_5e*

**Report of the first meeting of the ad hoc WG on the Third cycle**

After the BFUG meeting in Nicosia, where a proposal for Terms of Reference for an ad hoc WG on the Third cycle was inserted in the agenda but not discussed, and after a call from the Secretariat for countries interested in such an ad hoc WG, the three countries[[1]](#footnote-1) candidate for co–charing the WG (Italy, Romania and Spain) agreed on the organisation of a meeting[[2]](#footnote-2) with all interested countries, organisations and institutions. The main aim of the meeting was:

* To discuss the proposed ToR for an ad hoc WG to improve the proposal to be presented at the next BFUG in Dublin;
* To share views on a working paper[[3]](#footnote-3) to be used as a back up document to follow up the discussion in the ad hoc WG.

The participation was very varied, 15 out of 19 interested countries/organisation and the Secretariat and the discussion is resulted in the new proposal of ToR at the BFUG Board and BFUG attention. It was explained from the beginning to all participants that the existence of the ad hoc WG depended on the endorsement of the BFUG and that the final version of the ToR will have to be (i) discussed with the relevant WG “Structure” and (ii) endorsed by the BFUG. Nevertheless, the attempt to open the discussion on a topic highly prioritised in the Bucharest Communiquè as early as possible was very much appreciated.

The proposed items of the ToR could be divided into three macro-areas:

* Implementation of the Salzburg II Recommendations and of the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training, mapping exercise based on NQF and links between the second and the third cycle (Italy);
* Proposals for improving quality and QA procedures and tools to increase transparency (Romania);
* Proposals to increase mobility, internationalisation and employability (Spain).

Furthermore, there are transversal issues which impact on different tasks and which will be discussed accordingly: recruitment of Doctoral candidates, funding of third cycle education and data collection.

Each country co-charing the ad hoc WG will steer the work in one of the three areas but all three will be contributing to the work.

**Terms of Reference**

**on**

**the Third Cycle**

|  |
| --- |
| **Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Third Cycle** |
| **Contact persons** (proposed Co-Chairs)  Nicola VITTORIO-Italy ([nicola.vittorio@uniroma2.it](mailto:nicola.vittorio@uniroma2.it))  Marzia FORONI-Italy ([marzia.foroni@miur.it](mailto:marzia.foroni@miur.it))  Cezar Haj-Romania ([cezar.haj@uefiscdi.ro](mailto:cezar.haj@uefiscdi.ro))  Gloria Molero Martìn-Portugués-Spain ([gloria.molero@mecd.es](mailto:gloria.molero@mecd.es)) |
| **Composition**  The members of the group should:   * be balanced in terms of geography and experience; * cover expertise on the implementation at the institutional level of the “Salzburg II Principles” or of the “Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training” * cover expertise on employability and mobility policies, both for the second and third cycle; * cover expertise on transparency instruments, on qualifications frameworks and on recognition; * should include one representative of the ERA; * should include EUA, ESU, EURASHE and ENQA; * should include the Commission, EURODOC and BUSINESSEUROPE.   The following countries expressed their willingness to participate in the Ad-hoc WG:  Armenia, Austria, Belgium/Flemish Community, Belgium/French Community, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, EUA, EI, European Commission, […] |
| **Purpose and/or outcome**  Map the current implementation of the third cycle in the EHEA, in the light of the “Salzburg II recommendations” and the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training ;  Formulate policy proposals to promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, on the basis of the outcomes of the previous point and taking into account the developments foreseen within the ERA by Horizon 2020 and other EU initiatives.  Explore the need and feasibility of developing common principles for a better integration of the second and third cycle programmes within the EHEA to implement the link between education and research and to strengthen the synergies with the ERA. |
| **Reference to the Bucharest Communiqué**  “**Enhancing employability to serve Europe’s needs**”   * In this respect, we will sustain a diversity of doctoral programs. Taking into account the “Salzburg II recommendations” and the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training, we will explore how to promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, as the education and training of doctoral candidates has a particular role in bridging the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA); * Next to doctoral training, high quality second cycle programs are a necessary precondition for the success of linking teaching, learning and research. Keeping wide diversity and simultaneously increasing readability, we might also explore further possible common principles for master programs in the EHEA, taking account of previous work.   **“Strengthening mobility for better learning”**   * We are determined to remove outstanding obstacles hindering effective and proper recognition and are willing to work together towards the automatic recognition of comparable academic degrees, building on the tools of the Bologna framework, as a long-term goal of the EHEA.   **“Setting out priorities for 2012–2015”**   * Promote quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle, while also building additional bridges between the EHEA and the ERA. |
| **Specific tasks**   1. In cooperation with EUA and the Commission, analyse the current state of doctoral studies in EHEA countries, taking account of the two reference documents – the Salzburg II Recommendations and the Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training – and make policy suggestions. 2. Starting from the information provided by the existing National Qualifications Frameworks, map: i) the diverse kind of third cycle degrees offered by HEIs and possible pathways connecting them; ii) different types of doctoral programs in order to formulate proposals for better articulation of existing models and instruments. 3. Explore how the link between the second cycle and third cycle can be strengthened in order to facilitate progression, the development of research competencies and timely recruitment to doctoral programs. 4. Explore quality and quality assurance procedures in Doctoral training, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. 5. Formulate policy proposals to increase the use of existing transparency tools for third cycle degrees, based on existing good practices in the field, and explore new instruments to increase transparency of third cycle degrees. 6. Examine third cycle degrees, with a specific focus on Doctoral studies, in terms of barriers and incentives to international mobility and define policy proposals for improvement. 7. Analyse the results achieved by the different profiles of third cycle degrees offered, with a specific focus on Doctoral Degrees, in terms of employability and define policy proposals for improvement. |
| **Reporting**  Minutes of working group meetings will be made available to the WG “structure” and to the BFUG on the protected part of the website (by the Bologna Secretariat).  Reporting to the WG “structures”  Besides minutes, the Co – Chairs of the WG “structure” will receive all the working documents of the sub – structure. One of the Co – Chairs will ensure his/her participation to the WG “structure” meeting.  BFUG reports and updates.  To allow for good communication with BFUG as a whole and for the necessary consultations, the sub – structure will contribute to the progress reports of the WG “structure” and will submit at least two weeks before BFUG meeting any document for approval.  **The draft final report/conclusions will be presented and discussed no later than the BFUG meeting in the first half of 2014.** |
| **Meeting schedule:**  The sub – structure of the WG should meet at least 4 times:   * 10th and 11th December 2012, Rome; * May 2013, Romania; * October 2013, Madrid; * February 2014, Rome. |
| **Liaison with other WGs’ and networks’ activities**  Liaisons will mainly be ensured by the WG “structures”. Connections with the other WGs should be seek when appropriate. |
| **Additional remarks** |

1. Denmark and EUA withdrew their candidatures. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Rome, 10th and 11th December 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It is not meant to be a final report from the group but a support to follow up the work. Reporting will be done through the WG “Structure”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)