

ADVISORY GROUP 3 “DEALING ON NON-IMPLEMENTATION”

Brussels (Belgium) – 14 January 2016

Draft Minutes

List of participants

ALBANIA	Linda Pustina
BFUG Secretariat	Fabien Neyrat
BFUG Secretariat	Nina Salden
COUNCIL OF EUROPE	Villano Qiriazzi (apologies)
EI/ETUCE	Alessandro Arienzo
EQAR	Colin Tück
ESU	Blazhe Todorovski
EU COMMISSION	Mette Moerk Andersen
EURASHE	Johan Cloet (apologies)
FRANCE	Patricia Pol
ICELAND	Una Vidarsdottir
IRELAND	Wendy Ross (apologies)
LIECHTENSTEIN	Daniel Miescher
NETHERLAND	Hester van den Blink
POLAND	Zbigniew Marciniak (apologies)
SWITZERLAND	Silvia Studinger
TURKEY	Hasan Mandal (apologies)
UKRAINE	Olena Rusnak (apologies)

The representatives of the Council of Europe, EURASHE, Ireland, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine had submitted apologies for absence.

1. Welcome, introduction to the meeting and tour de table

The participants were welcomed by the Chair of AG 3, Una Vidarsdottir from Iceland.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The members of AG3 adopted the agenda.

3. Terms of reference for advisory group 3: discussion on remit and roll

The Chair explained that non-implementation was a central issue to the discussions and conclusions of the Yerevan Ministerial conference in 2015, and that the Yerevan Communiqué stated that “Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA” (Yerevan Communiqué). The Chair reminded the members of AG3 that one of the main tasks of this meeting was to find and agree on a set of key commitments and core values that represent the minimum EHEA commitments.

This group has been asked to produce recommendations for the Ministerial conference in 2018, on possible procedures that could be adopted towards countries that do not implement the minimum EHEA criteria. All participants agreed that non-implementation is a very delicate issue, as none of the EHEA countries have fully implemented all current Bologna commitments.

4. Application for co-chairmanship

Prior to the meeting, only one member (Iceland) had volunteered to chair AG3. In the meeting Daniel Miescher from Liechtenstein volunteered to co-chair the group and the proposal to put the suggestion forward to BFUG was accepted unanimously.

5. Links with other working groups:

The co-chairs of AG3 recalled that at the recent meeting of all co-chairs of WGs and AGs in Brussels an emphasis had been put upon the fact that the scope of activities of AG3 necessitated close cooperation with WG1 on Monitoring and WG2 on Implementation.

WG1, responsible for the next Implementation report 2015-2018, will be the source of data regarding the state of implementation of EHEA commitments and will provide the strong evidence base on the progress of implementation that is needed for AG3 to continue its work.

Members of AG3 agree that setting up a “black list” of non-compliant EHEA countries did not fall under the remit of AG3. Nevertheless, the co-chairs stressed that AG3 has received the mandate to come up with suggestions on how to deal with countries that showed limited or complete lack of implementation of key EHEA commitments. It was suggested that implementation of key commitments could be included in a summary overview of all EHEA countries in the next Implementation Report, produced by WG1.

Furthermore it was agreed to ask WG1 for a summary of implementation of key commitments for all EHEA countries, based on the 2015 Monitoring report.

WG2 supports implementation on agreed goals on a national and institutional level by peer learning activities and peer exchange events. It was agreed that close collaboration was needed between WG2 and AG3 and WG1 to target peer-learning at relevant countries.

6. Full implementation vs. core implementation: what are possible core tools and reforms?

The members of AG3 had a long and detailed discussion on the core values and commitments of the EHEA, and where to focus the group’s work. It was agreed to focus on three key commitments to be presented at the BFUG meeting in Amsterdam, so AG3 could be given the mandate to focus its work in this way. The three commitments were felt to be central to the Bologna process, and to be prerequisite for implementation of less quantifiable core values of the Bologna process.

Key Commitments

1. A Three-Cycle system compatible with the QF-EHEA and scaled by ECTS
2. Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)
3. Quality Assurance in conformity with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

Iceland, Liechtenstein, the European Commission, EQAR and ESU will draft the paper outlining these key commitments to be submitted for approval at the next BFUG meeting in March 2016 (Amsterdam).

ESU and EI/ETUCE will provide AG3 with data on levels of academic freedom and mobility to show the link between the implementation of the 3 key commitments and core values of the Bologna Process.

Furthermore, it was agreed that the drafting group prepare a paper outlining the proposed measures to be taken by AG3 if and when the paper on the key commitment is approved by BFUG, with the aim that countries identified as not having implemented the key commitments have done so no later than 2020.

7. Peer-support and willingness to take action to improve

Once the three key commitments have been adopted by BFUG, AG3 will develop a proposal of an escalating procedure for dealing with non-implementation. There is consensus within AG3 although membership is voluntary, implementation is not, and so all members need to be open for peer support if it is felt to be needed by WG1.

8. Possible recommendations

AG3 will develop recommendations for an escalating procedure to be adopted at the Ministerial meeting in Paris in 2018.

9. Division of work until our next meeting

1. Working paper of key commitments (AG3 drafting group)
2. Working paper on proposed measures to be taken by AG3 both short- and long-term (AG3 drafting group)
3. Co-chairs to as for summary of current implementation of key commitments from WG1 (Co-chairs and WG1)
4. Calendar of Peer learning activities and events provided by WG2 (BFUG Secretariat)

By early June 2016, co-chairs will ask for suggestions on procedures for countries that fail to meet key commitments that will form the basis for discussions in the meeting of AG3 in September (Co-chairs and all AG3 members).

10. Reporting to BFUG 1/16

1. To propose to the BFUG Co-chairs that they arrange a joint meeting between co-chairs of AG3, WG1 Monitoring and WG2 Implementation to discuss common actions.
2. To have A) a document defining the three key commitments to be monitored, and B) a document on future work adopted by the BFUG in Amsterdam (March 7/8)
3. To ask WG1 on Monitoring to include in the 2018 Implementation report a chapter dedicated to the implementation of the key criteria.
4. To ask WG2 to share its calendar of Peer learning activities and events that could be relevant for the targeted countries.

11. Any other business

There was no other business

12. Date and location of the next meeting

The next meeting will take place in Iceland in September 2016.

Iceland will confirm the venue and schedule as soon as confirmed by the Icelandic Ministry of Education.