

Advisory Group 3 "Dealing with Non-Implementation"

Brussels (Belgium), 7 December 2017

Minutes

List of Participants

Delegation	First Name	Surname
EQAR	Colin	Tück
ESU	Helge	Schwitters
European Commission	Kinga	Szuly
EURASHE	Michal	Karpíšek
France	Hélène	Lagier
Iceland	Una	Vidarsdóttir
Liechtenstein	Daniel	Miescher
The Netherlands	Tessa	Bijvank
Poland	Zbigniew	Marciniak
Switzerland	Silvia	Studinger
BFUG Secretariat	Françoise	Profit
BFUG Secretariat	Marina	Steinmann
WG1 chair	David	Crosier
WG2 chair (Belgium fl.) (representative)	Magalie	Soenen
WG2 chair (Austria)	Helga	Posset

Apologies: Albania, Council of Europe, EI/ETUCE, Ireland, Turkey, Ukraine.

Welcome, update on the Tartu BFUG meeting and adoption of the draft agenda

The chair of AG3 (Iceland) opened the meeting and summarised the discussion on AG3 proposals that took place in Tartu (Estonia) at the BFUG meeting in November 2017. She reported that the WG2 chair (B fl.) provided a paper which will be useful developing the model further. She also received some input from Germany for the papers.

Regarding this meeting, the main purpose will now be to prepare the proposal for the next BFUG meeting. The names of the model and of the future "group" could be modified to illustrate the changed motivation. The final report for the group must also be written.

In addition, a presentation of main findings of the Bologna Process Implementation Report regarding the three key commitments by WG1 chair was on the agenda.

France explained that in Tartu, the French delegation understood that the model was not approved, but that AG3 instead was asked to work with WG2 on a new model. In addition, Belgium (fl.) explained that in Tartu, the Belgian (fl.) WG2 chair had been asked to provide some input for the model while the issue was not only a matter of rephrasing but about speeding up the process. Poland, EUSASHE, EQAR and the AG3 chairs confirmed this understanding and referred to details, e.g. making the wording more inviting; or fine tuning of the procedure (less bureaucracy). After Tartu, the AG3 chairs did not receive comments from other BFUG members than Belarus and Germany.

Work on rephrasing of current paperwork

The discussion started with stressing that the main purpose of the proposed procedure and group will be to support countries in implementation. The language of the document and the speed of the process will be decisive. Several BFUG members had asked for peer-learning starting immediately. The French representative underlined that France is against the proposed cyclic procedure as it was perceived as putting countries on trial while France welcomed the reversed peer review proposal made by WG2. EQAR reminded participants that the comment from France had to be taken into account to make the proposal acceptable for all BFUG members. In EQAR's view, however, there was no intention to put anyone on 'trial', but the proposal should ensure that all countries receive the peer support in those areas where it is needed. After a general discussion on what the procedure should be, it was agreed that every country will be invited to take part in a peer review. The cycle will include the proposals from WG2 and be open for specific tools requested by participating countries. The AG3 chair (Iceland) underlined that the process will be speeded up, and contain less bureaucracy.

The participants went through the steps of the proposed procedure to decide how the cycle will look like in the end. Having a clear start and end, within the cycle flexibility will be the guiding principle.

Step 1 Survey

The Bologna Process Implementation Report for all countries will clearly indicate a level of performance regarding the three key commitments. The "body" will start from this overview of performance, and group activities by key commitment.

Step 2 Formal invitation to all countries

Irrespective of the individual strengths and weaknesses, all countries will be encouraged to participate in peer-learning activities by providing examples of practice by invitation. The premise is that all countries want to improve. If a country does not want use the tool(s) provided, it should indicate what else would be needed. Thus, the invitation letters need to include open questions on which support would be needed. The invitation letters shall be complemented with a background paper explaining the three peer groups.

Positive incentives for participating countries would be helpful. The only and strongest incentive which lies in the capacity of the BFUG is "peer recognition". This can only be achieved by open and transparent information on the actual implementation status and achieved improvements.

Step 3 Response with focus of support needed/offered

All countries should respond indicating in which peer group(s) they want to participate. The expectation is to have volunteers from both the green and red/orange sides. Asking countries for action plans will not be proposed in order to reduce the burden and speed up the process.

Step 4 Peer support/Reversed peer-review

As the three groups (one addressing each key commitment) should meet relatively quickly, events/activities could be mentioned with the invitation. The first meetings of these groups shall take place in conjunction with the September 2018 BFUG. Another meeting might look at potential participants of peer learning activities and discuss if this would be useful for them or not. The model should be flexible enough to accommodate reactions of individual countries on what would be feasible for them.

Step 5/7 will be merged (with 4 or as step 5?)

As no new report will be available within the same cycle, having demonstrated willingness to improve will be the main result. Knowing where nothing at all has happened will only be possible after the end of one cycle.

Final step: Collection of data for the next Implementation Report

This step will not be overseen by a specific body other than the regular monitoring body (actually named "WG1").

The message will be that the EHEA has a problem with the three key commitments, and is trying to solve it together. Nevertheless, all countries have an individual responsibility for their own country.

Terms of Reference for the "body"

The new name to be proposed will be "Bologna Implementation Co-Ordination Group".

Countries will not only be invited to nominate members, but also persons to organise and support activities. Members of the "Bologna Implementation Co-ordination Group" will not be responsible for peer support activities. Co-ordination of the three peer support groups and providing input for events will be done by volunteers from countries. The "Bologna Implementation Co-ordination Group" will be responsible just for the follow-up of peer support activities. It will also inform and advise the BFUG on implementation of Bologna commitments. Any decision will be taken by the BFUG.

The AG3 chairs promised that all details for the procedure and the body will be included in the revised papers by the writing group. The draft will be circulated to all AG3 members. Feedback from WG2 chairs might also be taken into account, but the report will be a report from AG3 according to the mandate the group got. The documents will be provided for the next BFUG as one package with the report. Conclusions on where problems with the three key commitments lie have to be included in the final report. It should underline that there are other fora and documents in the EHEA dealing with implementation, not only AG3's work and papers.

Meeting with WG1 representative

The WG1 chair presented available data on three key commitments, e.g. regarding the cycles (credits per cycle, ECTS, NQF) or recognition.

After a question by France, the WG1 chair explained that the BFUG decided not to have a chapter on non-implementation integrated in the 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report but to produce a separable report on non-implementation. EQAR will send some comments on the quality assurance indicators as some countries were not depicted correctly. The WG2 chair's (Belgium fl.) representative asked for a further discussion with all WG2 chairs about the renewed approach by WG2 and AG3.

The AG3 chairs thanked EURASHE for the hospitality, the guests for their valuable contributions and all members for their work.

The AG3 members thanked the chairs for co-ordinating the group through this working period.