BFUG work on Global Policy Dialogue / Bologna Policy Forum during the 2018-2020 period

Explanatory note: The BFUG Vice-Chair has been invited at the BFUG Board in Zurich on 3 July 2018 to provide suggestions for the part of the BFUG workplan dealing with the Global Dimension. Although time is limited, it seems crucial to give a strong positive and proactive response to the suggestions resulting from the Paris Ministerial meeting and the concomitant BPF. This means looking forward beyond 2020, but also making immediate operational and thematic decisions in order to ensure the usefulness and attractiveness of the 2020 meeting for the potential global partners and also to implement respectful, sustainable and constant -- rather than intermittent -- dialogue.

A Bologna Policy Forum held in conjunction with the Ministerial Conferences to which non EHEA countries and organizations are invited has been a fixture since 2009. On the various occasions it has been organized according to different formulas, with uneven success, and little activity between Conferences. At the recent Paris meeting the EHEA Ministers mandated the BFUG to "enter a global policy dialogue with other regions and international organizations". The Statement by the Policy Forum proposes facilitating this by creating a "Global Working Group". The BFUG Board believes that a more agile and output based format (rather than a full-scale 'Working Group') could be more suitable for quickly creating bases for real 'dialogue' and preparing the Rome Conference.

Matters for the consideration of the BFUG:

a) Focus of the work:

The Communique mandates entering a 'dialogue' with 'other regions and international organizations' on 'matters of common concern'. These are exemplified ("such as") with the themes addressed by the Paris BPF (inclusion and the civic role of HE). Other themes (such as the quality and recognition instruments elaborated or planned in various world regions, or the implications of the shift to student-centered learning) may prove attractive and useful for stimulating real multilateral dialogue, and may be perceived as more directly connected to world initiatives such as the upcoming UN High Level Political Forum to review progress on the Sustainable Development Goals most closely related to Education.

The Statement issued by the BPF, which included representatives of the EHEA member countries as well as international invitees, indicates:

1. an objective and an attitude: fostering useful dialogue among equals ("listen, learn and engage on common issues")
2. a need for continuity ("systematic and sustainable level of international cooperation")
3. a need to benefit from the existing resources in the HE community: experience of cooperation and mobility, reciprocal knowledge, and the opportunity to benefit from and build on the work already carried out or to be carried out in the future by HEIs and their organizations (often thanks to international cooperation projects supported by the EU Commission)
4. a range of activities: "joint workshops, conferences and importantly peer learning for innovative answers" as well as the next BPF.

b) **how can these commitments be addressed?**
In consideration of:

1. The mandate to engage in 'dialogue';
2. Existing links with organisations, HEIs, macro-regional organizations, etc.;
3. The important work already carried out in 2015-2018 by the Advisory Group 1;
4. the 'yearly' activities to be implemented in the coming months (the 'joint conferences', etc);
5. the limited time available to organise the BPF (foreseeably about 12 months to submit a pre-final plan and a maximum of 18 before issuing invitations to the 2020 PFP)

A small, informed and motivated Coordinating Group, with the support of the Secretariat, could be mandated to implement:

1. immediate follow-up (using a message containing a simple on-line link) with the countries and regional or international organisations of HEIs or HEI stakeholders that attended the Paris BPF to elicit information about their areas of particular interest, and ascertain their willingness to engage in 'global dialogue' with the EHEA in the coming months (until, at, and after Rome);
2. Immediate follow-up with the countries and regional or international organisations of HEIs or HEI stakeholders that did **not** attend the Paris meeting, giving an account of the ideas and commitments emerging from the Paris meeting, and inviting them too to express their interest and willingness to participate (concretely this can be done using and updating the contact list established by the AG1 in the run-up to the Paris meeting);
3. With the support of the EU Commission and HEI stakeholder organizations, contact the other significant HE networks and international initiatives that have created premises for macro-regional and/or national dialogue with the EHEA and the wider world;
4. Identify volunteers to host the 'joint meetings' as proposed in the Statement (or alternatively, or in addition, in connection with the previous point, designate as contributing to the 'Global Dialogue' appropriate initiatives already planned by countries, international HE organizations, other stakeholders).
5. Report to the BFUG in Spring 2019 and propose further suitable ways to address arising issues, including specific task forces or working groups if and as necessary or advisable.

c) **in what period of time should these commitments and concerns be addressed**
Given the nature of the commitment to organise a 'Global Policy Forum' and undertake the other promised activities, the 2018-2020 period, although brief, must be used intensively in view of the 2020 Rome meeting, and should also lay the foundations for a structured and meaningful future, beyond 2020.

For a overview of the commitments and further comments, see the annexed table.

Annex

Potential areas of endeavour

The Table illustrates the relevant passages from Paris Communiqué and the Paris "Statement".

The Communiqué	***Considerations***	***Proposed measures***
1. The BFUG is mandated to enter a "global policy dialogue" with other regions and organizations.		
"As a follow-up to the Bologna Policy Forum, we mandate the BFUG to enter into a global policy dialogue to improve regular cooperation with other regions and international organisations. This dialogue should focus on promoting mutual learning and joint initiatives on issues of common interest, such as social inclusion and the wider role of higher education".	Key points: - A term: Global Policy Dialogue - A frequency: regular cooperation - A method: mutual learning and joint initiatives on issues of common interest - Examples: 'such as' social inclusion and the wider role of HE (but there can be others)	In order to carry out this Mandate effectively the first step is to consolidate what was accomplished in Paris and build a stronger and more constant involvement of other countries, organizations and macro-regions. The proposed Coordinating Group should plan and oversee this procedure, with the support of the Secretariat.
The BPF Statement		
1. Observations on the Forum		
The Paris Bologna Policy Forum "has provided an important opportunity for a multilateral dialogue and exchange of ideas between members of the EHEA, Ministers from other countries and a range of stakeholders"	The participation of EHEA members with the non-EHEA members is appreciated and needs to be taken into account in future planning.	It will be important to consult the non-EHEA partners to determine which themes can best be placed at the center of the BPF (or whatever its equivalent will be called) in Rome 2020 and how to make 'dialogue' most effective.
HE has "a long tradition of forging international links"; "productive partnerships"; HEIs and stakeholders are "key drivers of international cooperation"; through "mobility", "partnerships"; and in general collaboration for "solving global issues".	Higher education institutions, their organizations and networks, have a patrimony of practical and theoretical knowledge of HEIs in other (including non-EHEA) countries which needs to be **made visible and brought to bear** on the proposed 'Dialogue'	The need to involve more in a more meaningful way HEIs and those who work and study in them, is once again stated. On the Global level this may happen largely through their organizations; however, the challenge of finding ways to involve actual practitioners needs to be underlined.
2. ***Appreciation for the EHEA and mention of other HE macro-regions***		
EHEA exemplifies "the kind of progress that can be made by bringing together a large number of countries on a voluntary basis"; "similar approaches have been adopted	The EHEA's example has proved to be of interest in other parts of the world, where similar developments are taking place. In part thanks to EU funded	The world regions which were not present in Paris, or which were under-represented should be contacted, and suitable ways for

by other regions...”;	initiatives, HEIs and Ministries of macro-regions have in several instances cooperated to set up such tools as common frameworks and credit reference systems, as well as creating guidelines for student centered LTA etc.	encouraging their participation implemented.
3. ***Accomplishments, Prospects and Potential for the BPF***		
“We believe that the Bologna Policy Forum, supported by Ministers and international organizations, can bring about a more **systematic and sustainable level of international cooperation**”; [It must allow for diversity]. “It should define realistic ambitions and goals”, [in a] “spirit of exchange”: ... “those responsible for HE [need to] **listen, learn and engage** on common issues”	In this statement of appreciation for the BPF we can also see underlined the need for continuity, reciprocal respect and attention to international partners in fixing themes and goals.	The proposed Coordinating Group or initial Task Force, should be ‘tasked’ with re-establishing contacts with those present at Paris and as many as possible of those not present in Paris, to verify and build on the information gathered by the AG1 on ‘realistic ambitions and goals’, as well as on further themes of interest.
Common issues mentioned: “quality, academic freedom, student participation, social inclusion, the status, the autonomy and the wider role of HEIs”	The two themes emphasized in Paris (‘social inclusion’ and HE’s ‘wider civic role’) are mentioned, but along with others, such as ‘quality’ and ‘student participation’, showing a desire for a wider variety of themes.	The choice of these or other themes should be made in view of the global partners’ involved. Macro-regions may be interested in looking at the compatibility of the instruments they are developing with those of other regions.
“The 5th BPF has initiated a **global policy dialogue** focusing on two common concerns: social inclusion and the wider civic role of education”	The shift from Bologna Policy Forum to Global Policy Dialogue is significant; although Bologna has taken until now the initiative and will continue, certainly, to provide the prime mover for future GPD, the shifting terminology indicates a desire for greater responsibility on the part of the wider community.	It is proposed that the Coordinating Group or start-up Task Force in the coming months institute a quick and user-friendly follow-up with the attendees of the Paris BPF and all other potential partners to verify choices of theme and format.
“social inclusion and widening **access**”: around the world disadvantaged groups have (growing) problems of access, but in addition there is the problem of “**success**”: that is retention, progression, successful completion and good employability”.	In parallel to developments of the debate in the EHEA here too it is pointed out that ‘access’ is not enough, that ‘success’ up to and during employment is the goal. This implies attention to LTA and its suitability to the world of employment and to changing student profiles.	Here there can be potential overlap with some of the activities proposed to address LT. In several world macro regions, as well as in single countries, thanks to EU support and European projects (such as Tuning) regional guidelines for LTA have been elaborated and published
In the present time of change, the role of HEIs is vital: for the economy, but also for their **“social, cultural and leadership role”**. They should build “social cohesion”	This passage summarizes the implications of HEIs wider responsibility; and again corresponds to concerns that are very much at the forefront in the	There are initiatives on this issue in the framework of European projects, which could be indicated as relevant, and their

through provision of appropriate values, skills and 'aptitudes [sic]' to promote "civic participation, social inclusion, sustainability and global citizenship"-	EHEA too; although addressing them introduces not only LTA issues but broader ethical issues which are not easy to solve.	results shared: dialogue partners in other world regions can be invited to share similar results in view of the Rome 2020.
4. Commitment of the Ministers (conclusions and aspirations)		
Support for "**ongoing interregional dialogue** on issues of common concern"	Each of the words in bold has implications for the immediate and more distant future: 'ongoing' again emphasizes the need for continuity, 'dialogue' for discussion between equals, and 'interregional' suggests the need for the EHEA to interact with equivalent groupings of countries.	The need for the EHEA to interact with comparable entities has to be taken into consideration. Single countries and organizations are to be welcomed in the dialogue, but the main goal will be the involvement of macro-regions whenever possible.
...dialogue among: "policy makers, stakeholder organizations, students, staff and higher education institutions"	The other needed participants are listed, and although 'policy makers' are present, the emphasis is on the actual 'practitioners' and their organizations.	Here, in the international context – as within the EHEA -- the BFUG and its representative body or bodies are called upon to build a stronger and more positive link with the people and institutions concretely involved in HE.
Proposes that a **"Global Working Group"** be established in the 2018-2020 Work-plan	The proposal that there be a WG shows the desire to ensure that the Dialogue takes place and develops	We propose creating an agile Coordinating body (4-6 persons, in order to meet frequently (including virtually) and work fast and informally.
Request to **'countries' to express interest in holding "high level workshops** on a yearly basis (?) on 'social inclusion' and the 'wider role' of HE	The idea seemingly is to hold voluntary initiatives where 'dialogue' can take place more frequently than on occasion of the EHEA Ministerial Conferences: the details are not clear.	In the framework of the on-going large-scale international projects, the most relevant probably being CBHE projects or regional tendered projects, some meetings on appropriate themes could be officially designated EHEA joint global meetings, on the example of the 'official Bologna meetings' which were held in the early years of the Process. Clear guidelines will need to be agreed as to what kind of events would qualify for the 'stamp' or 'label'.
Commitment to "collaborate, share and identify future goals" "**through joint workshops, conferences and importantly peer learning for innovative answers**....	Here again there is a request for initiatives of different sorts where 'dialogue' and 'peer learning' can take place, but how these would be organized and by whom is not clarified.	As above. The proposed Coordinating Group or Task Force will check with the Paris BPF participants about their ideas and proposals in this area, and look carefully at any

		initiatives which can be organized ex-novo or designated as Global Dialogue events.
To “further develop international partnerships”: call on HEIs to “**explore all opportunities** provided” by E+ HO2020 actions etc.	Here the invitation is to continue the ample and valuable work already undertaken and under way.	In addition to encouraging EU HEI’s to present ambitious international projects under E+ (and HO2020), and to recommending that these possibilities be foreseen and expanded in the future EU programmes, it will be of fundamental importance to build on the many projects already carried out or under way. With the support of the EU and the existing compendia, a map of the most relevant can be produced.