

Advisory Group 1: EHEA International cooperation

Brussels (Belgium), 22 July 2016

Bologna Policy Forum "Task Force" – Draft concept note

Introduction

The BFUG work plan for 2015-2018 is to prepare for the next EHEA Ministerial in Paris. The advisory group "EHEA international cooperation" has two main mandates

- Engage in a policy dialogue with non EHEA partners to carry out a cooperation strategy based on shared issues and identifying concrete topics
- Define the scope of the BPF in general and prepare the next 2018 BPF in Paris

The group is co-chaired by France, Spain and United Kingdom. As the host of the next Ministerial conference, France, represented by the BFUG vice chair, coordinates the co-chairing of the Group with the support of the Secretariat.

In the last Amsterdam BFUG, in March 2016, the composition of the advisory group was extended to BFUG members and experts from European and international organisations such as IAU, EAIE, ACA, OCDE and regional associations.

The advisory group prepares the decisions to be taken by the BFUG. It is helped by a specific task force to prepare options for the next BPF (EUA, ENQA, EC, ACA, ESU Romania, Flemish Belgium, France and UK). The task force is co-chaired by France and UK.

In order to have successful and purposeful international cooperation the Advisory Group needs

- to work in partnership with other regional HE blocs to identify which of the topics identified by Working groups 2 and 3 will be most fruitful to meet common goals
- to propose the best mechanism to bring initiatives in the area of international cooperation in Higher Education back to the next EHEA Ministerial meeting.

The origins of the Bologna Policy Forum

After four Ministerial conferences dedicated to structuring the EHEA and designing the main architecture and common tools¹, the Ministers asked the BFUG to make proposals for a more outward looking and integrate the **Bologna Process in a global setting**² (Bergen, 2005).

A « strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna process was adopted in London (2007)³, around five core policy areas

- Improving information of the EHEA
- Promoting European higher education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness
- Strengthening cooperation based on partnership
- Intensifying policy dialogues
- Furthering recognition of qualifications

¹ 1998 (Paris), 1999 (Bologna), 2001 (Prague), 2003 (Berlin)

² P. Zgaga, The Bologna Process in a Global Setting (2007).

³ <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/WGR2007/Strategy-for-EHEA-in-global-setting.pdf>

For each policy area, elements for possible future actions were proposed (annexe 1).

The Bologna Policy Forum was created to 'intensify policy dialogues'. It has been conceived as a way of increasing cooperation with Non Bologna countries, and to foster mutual understanding and learning in the field of higher education. The BPF has been described as "*an umbrella for meetings, workshops and seminars involving representatives of EHEA and non-EHEA governments, as well as higher education stakeholders, to be facilitated via governmental and organisational initiatives and programmes with equivalent partners in other regions, based on the existing initiatives of the Council of Europe, ENIC/NARIC, ENQA, ESU, EU, EUA, EURASHE, UNESCO, etc.*" (Elements for possible future actions, p 4-5, London 2007).

Facts and figures about the four Bologna Policy Fora

In 2009, at the Leuven Ministerial Conference, the first **Bologna Policy Forum** engaged 14 non-European countries, and international organisations and NGOs. In 2010, 23 and 2012, 19 non-EHEA countries were represented. The biggest countries in terms of student population and internationalisation were present at each forum until Yerevan (Australia and New Zealand, Canada and the United States, China, Japan and Brazil). In Yerevan, while it was suggested to focus the BPF on the Southern Mediterranean region, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan were the only participants.

The level of representation at ministerial level is decreasing since Vienna where it was the highest (12 ministers upon 23 participants in Vienna, 5 ministers upon 19 participants in Bucharest, 0 in Yerevan) - (Annex 2- BPF: participation).

The BPF programme has been organised after the main Ministerial conference (Leuven) or in parallel (Vienna, Bucharest and Yerevan), the adoption of the Policy statement being discussed jointly after the Communiqués (Annex 2 BPF: organisation).

To prepare the BPF, different options were proposed. On the one hand, four BFUG working groups were set up and produced reports with recommendations

- EHEA in a global context (2007-2009)
- The Bologna process in a global setting (2009-2010)
- International openness (2010-2012)
- Mobility and internationalisation (2012-2015).

On the other hand, National reports⁴ were asked to the non-EHEA participants for the Vienna BPF and different events took place between 2010 and 2012 in the frame of the BPF dialogue and involving a more regional scope (Asia, Latin America, Southern Mediterranean region, Africa, Global student summit)⁵.

The four Policy statements try to find a balance between general principles on the benefits of cooperation and the role of higher education in the great societal challenges and concrete proposals on specific topics. After Vienna, a list of EHEA and non-EHEA contacts was supposed to initiate a follow-up with the non-EHEA countries between two conferences but it didn't work after 2012.

However, concrete dialogues and actions are implemented at European stakeholders level (European Commission, EUA, ENQA, ESU, EAIE, ACA etc.) and national governments with other countries or regions of the world⁶. Moreover, national strategies for internationalisation have been addressed in many countries such as it was encouraged by the European Commission strategy in 2013⁷.

Lessons learnt / next challenges

The BPF, as it has been conceived until now, is one element of the strategy for the **external dimension of the Bologna process** conceived to promote the international prestige of the Bologna Process and increase the worldwide influence of the European area of higher education, in a context where

⁴ <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/forum2010/index.htm>

⁵ See the Statement of the third Bologna Policy Forum : "Beyond the Bologna process: creating and connecting national, regional and global higher education areas", Bucharest, 2012.

⁶ See the report of the first Advisory group « EHEA international cooperation » meeting in Paris on January 2016.

⁷ European higher education in the world, European Commission, April 2013.

competition was increasing very fast (2005-2007). As such, through policy learning and mutual understanding, the BPF contributed to make **EHEA a point of reference** for national reforms through regional approaches.

The interest for the Bologna process outside Europe was very high until the beginning of the 2010's. For some countries, this strong capacity of cooperation at European level was followed very carefully (Canada, United States, Australia). For other countries (Francophone Africa for instance), Bologna was an incentive to implement national reforms compatible with the EHEA (three cycle reform-LMD).

Many regions are engaged in the construction of regional higher education areas (ASEAN Africa, East Africa, Francophone Africa...) or at least in the design of specific integrative instruments, (regional quality framework, qualification framework).

At the same time, the national strategies for internationalisation of higher education might create tensions between competition of national goals and European approaches, if the aim of such strategies remains mainly to attract the best talents and increase market shares. To make Europe more attractive and competitive, internationalisation of higher education mainly focused on issues such as mobility, recognition of qualifications, quality of cross border higher education, curricula in English, strategic partnership. However, all the countries and the regions are faced with global societal, technological and political challenges and the tensions between global, regional and national levels seem to be stronger than ever.

Within this changing context, the next challenges are to place the policy dialogue between Regional Higher Education (and research?) areas, as an important dimension for cooperative policies. An EHEA initiative, based on a new vision for the BPF from 2018, could contribute to **bring Higher Education on a Global agenda** to find common solutions to address global societal, technological and political challenges⁸.

Revisiting the BPF

Possible evolution of the BPF concept

Two main options

- The BPF remains a **platform of mutual policy learning and understanding**

Invitations will be sent to high-level representatives (or ministers?) of specific countries or regions to prepare national or regional presentations or reports on strategic topics for higher education and its internationalisation

- The BPF becomes an **inter-regional policy dialogue between EHEA Ministers, non-EHEA Ministers and relevant regional stakeholders**

The 'policy dialogue' aims at deciding jointly concrete actions related to the main global priorities discussed in WG2 and WG3 in line with the existing global challenges and agendas

- New modes of learning and teaching to address global challenges (including citizenship, digitalisation, sustainable development, conflict understanding and solving)
- Building inclusive inter-regional cooperation policies (mobility/migration, gender equity...)
- Links between education, research and innovation

AG1 'EHEA international cooperation', with the support of the Secretariat prepares regional policy dialogues during 2016-2018 with voluntary regions and through joint events or events where EHEA representatives will participate in the name of EHEA. In order to offer an added value to the existing multilateral and bilateral policy dialogues, they work closely with the Commission, the BFUG consultative members and the Ministries.

No regions are excluded. AG1 Chairs send Letters of invitation to regional high level policy makers in charge of higher education and research.

Since 2016, the co-chairs and AG1 members have initiated a dialogue with

- The Mediterranean countries. The Union for the Mediterranean answered positively and participates now to the advisory group schedule. An event is planned for 2017. It could be focused on the implementation of the three cycle system in the region.

⁸ Such global agendas are initiated for Higher Education at stakeholders levels (see the action of ESU or EAIE, and IAU) whereas for Research, the G7 dialogue Forum, for instance has been involving Ministers of research for a decade.

- The African Union and the Association of African Universities couldn't participate in the last London meeting in May 2016 but discussions are in progress. The Inter-University Council for East Africa can be interested in an event (November 2016) with the five African regions and EHEA.
- The organisation of Ibero-American States is interested in involving Latin America in the process.
- Germany and Flemish Belgium represent EHEA in the ASEM dialogue.
- An event with the ASEAN region is planned during the IAU general conference in Bangkok (November 2016).

Annex 3 presents a draft timeline for regional dialogues.

Revisiting the organisation

Two main options (taking into account that the EHEA Ministers can't afford to stay more than two days including travel and the non-EHEA Ministers 3 days)

- **The BPF is a specific international event**
 - After the main EHEA Ministerial discussions: (half a day for instance) to share good practices and find common answers Higher Education (and its internationalisation) can address to global challenges
 - It can be preceded one day before the Ministerial by a meeting with the high level representatives engaged at regional levels (to discuss the recommendations to be proposed to the Ministers at inter-regional level)
- **The BPF⁹ is more integrated to the Ministerial**
 - A first part of the Ministerial deals with the issues of EHEA implementation and non-implementation (for a discussion between EHEA Ministers only ?)
 - A second part focuses on the 'new goals' and includes in the discussions the non-EHEA Ministers and Regional representatives
 - A third part includes the discussions for the communiqué(s)

Different options for the communiqués

- Common communiqué EHEA + non-EHEA with two different types of commitments (at EHEA level and inter-regional level)
- EHEA communiqué (for EHEA ministers) and a "an inter-regional statement" with a plan of action for the international cooperation to be followed up.

Annex 4 presents a draft timeline for the organisation of the BPF in Paris (2015-2018)

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⁹ It could be necessary to think of a new name (Bologna or EHEA international summit?).

Background documents

Bologna Policy Forum Communiqué

<http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=44>

- Louvain-la-Neuve (2009)
- Vienna (2010)
- Bucharest (2012)
- Erevan (2015)

The EHEA in a Global Setting: 2014 Strategy Review (2015) in Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG WG on Mobility and Internationalization, Annex 9 (BFUG document)

<http://bologna-yerevan2015.ehea.info/files/MI%20WG%20Report.pdf>

Beyond the Bologna Process: Creating and connecting national, regional and global higher education areas Background paper for the Third Bologna Policy Forum Bucharest, April 27th, 2012 (2012) (BFUG document)

http://conference.osp-ua.info/materialy/BPF%20Background%20Paper_FINAL%20VERSION.pdf

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in a global context (2009) (BFUG document)

http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Documents/2009_EHEA_in_global_context.pdf

Strategy for the European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting (2007) (BFUG document)

<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/WGR2007/Strategy-for-EHEA-in-global-setting.pdf>

Looking out: The Bologna Process in a Global Setting On the “External Dimension” of the Bologna Process (2007) (BFUG document)

http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/WGR2007/Bologna_Process_in_global_setting_finalreport.pdf

Articles

Que Anh Dang, The Bologna Process goes East: from ‘Third country’ Jargon to prioritizing Inter-regional cooperation between the EU and ASEAN, Bologna Process researchers’ conference, 2015.

Sjur Bergan,

To be completed...