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Fifth meeting of the EHEA Working Group on Implementation - Fostering implementation of agreed key commitments

13-14 June 2017, Malmö (Sweden)

Minutes

List of Participants

COUNTRY	NAME & SURNAME
AUSTRIA co-chair	<i>Helga POSSET</i>
BELGIUM VL co-chair	<i>Noël VERCRUYSSÉ</i>
BFUG Secretariat	<i>Mariana SAAD</i>
CROATIA	<i>Loredana MARAVIC</i>
DENMARK	<i>Allan Bruun PEDERSEN</i>
EU COMMISSION	<i>Mette Moerk ANDERSEN</i>
ENQA	<i>Paula RANNE</i>
EQAR	<i>Eric FROMENT</i>
ESU	<i>Blazhe TODOROVSKI</i>
ESU	<i>Caroline SUNDBERG</i>
EUA	<i>Henriette STOEBER</i>
EI/ETUCE	<i>Riku MATILAINEN</i>
EUA	<i>Michael GAEBEL</i>
FRANCE	<i>Eliane KOTLER</i>
GEORGIA co-chair	<i>Maia MARGVELASHVILI</i>
GERMANY	<i>Katrin FOHMANN</i>
HUNGARY	<i>Zoltan LOBODA</i>
POLAND co-chair	<i>Bartłomiej BANASZAK</i>

ROMANIA	<i>Daniela Vasilica BURGHILA</i>
ROMANIA	<i>Marilena Aura DIN</i>
SWEDEN	<i>Cecilia GEORGE</i>
UNITED KINGDOM	<i>Anca GREERE</i>

Apologies from: the representatives from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, BDA, EURASHE, Greece, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine.

1. Welcome and Introduction to the meeting

Cecilia Christersson, Pro vice-chancellor of Malmo University, welcomed the participants. She underlined the importance for Sweden of Recognition of prior learning, the theme chosen by the group for this session, and wished the participants a fruitful meeting.

The Polish chair reminded the participants that the present meeting was closing the series on the report's topics. He presented several changes to the agenda to allow more time to plenary sessions on the report. The new agenda was adopted.

2. Recognition of Prior Learning: the case of refugees

The Swedish representative presented the main outcomes of the conference on "Refugees' impact on Bologna reform" that had taken place in Malmö 12-13 June. She pointed out the large international appeal of the conference that had attracted participants from twenty-three countries. She also underlined the diversity of situations encountered by migrants as although some countries have put legal frameworks in place, most have not. She drew the attention of the participants to the fact that it appeared clearly that all groups of applicants for recognition of prior learning were experiencing the same difficulties and that refugees' case was not special in this regard.

It was announced that a conference report would be soon available on line (www.uhr.se/bolognarpl).

In the following discussion participants underlined the fact that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) was handled very differently in different countries. Whereas in France the "Validation des Acquis de l'Experience" scheme allows for the delivery of a full diploma and avoids any stigmatization as the State forbids mentioning the procedure through which the diploma was obtained, in other countries RPL is only possible after sitting a traditional HE examen that will allow delivering a full qualification diploma.

Two points were especially discussed. One was the mentioning of RPL in a diploma: the Belgian chair pointed that it introduced suspicion. The delegate from ESU had already stressed the fact that in some countries RPL being delivered by single HE institutions, other institutions did not trust the decisions made elsewhere. This led to the second point, the structures of frameworks already in place for RPL and the place of Quality Assurance (QA). The representative for Germany as well as the representative for ENQA both stressed that QA should play a major part in RPL and in trust between institutions. The Austrian chair underlined how difficult it can be to get the right information when one needs it and advocated for a transparent and general procedure.

3. Reflections on the concept of implementation vs non-implementation

This session was dedicated to discuss “chapter I B” of the draft report. The Belgian chair summarized the chapter and launched the discussion recalling that AG3 had proposed a “cyclic procedure” to tackle non-implementation issues.

The representative for EQAR reminded the participants that the ministers asked at Yerevan for an analysis of the difficulties encountered when implementing Bologna reforms. He stressed that the Bologna process was suffering from both a lack of political leadership and from HEI resisting to applying new legislation. He wondered how a cyclic procedure that does not propose an analysis of implementation difficulties could help.

The representative from EI/ETUCE and the representative from Denmark both stressed that the same guidelines were understood and implemented differently in the EHEA countries. Political and academic background and history as well as institutional and financial resources led to important dissimilarities. The Danish representative stated that this should be addressed by the working group and that more practitioners should be involved. He also proposed to look at what has been successfully implemented so far. The French representative agreed with this last suggestion and stressed that mobility of students and joint diplomas were two great achievements of Bologna.

4. Discussion of the draft report

The session was introduced by a presentation of the last BFUG outcomes by the Georgian chair. The Belgian chair gave an overview of the seven AG and WG reports produced for the Gozo BFUG. He also informed the group about BFUG feedback on the cost of Reversed peer reviews that was judged problematic and about the discussion that took place on short cycles where the main issue was access and admission to bachelor degree when a qualification exam for entrance to university is required.

The discussion of the draft report focused first on the limits of the report. One of the main problems identified was how to base recommendations on a report from one single event most of the group members have not attended and have not discussed. It was also said that it would be very difficult to have recommendations on all topics identified as several had not been discussed by the group. The Belgian chair stressed that at the Bratislava BFUG the group had been asked to produce a 2 part report with a first part on key commitments and a second one on agreed commitments. Several participants warned that the report should not overlap with other group’s areas of expertise.

The second issue raised by the group was the structure of the report. Several members disagreed with the proposed structure although they recognised there were requirements made by the BFUG. For many the proposed structure does not highlight the recommendations properly. The representative for EUA proposed to structure the report by topics not events. The representative for EQAR especially stressed that the report should promote the reversed peer review scheme which was designed and set up by group members and is its most original proposition. The EQAR representative and the Belgian chair both agreed that the group had to come up with strong and original recommendations on implementation for the final Communiqué.

The participants also examined if the group’s recommendations had to be on methodology or on topics. The Belgian chair argued that according to the ToR the group was supposed to put forward policy proposals on implementation which meant that recommendations had to focus on methodology. The Swedish representative then stated that definition of implementation had to be a central point in the report.

Decisions taken on the structure and content of the report:

It was decided that the Belgian chair would re-elaborate the Introduction and the chapter on ToR taking into account the comments and remarks of the group. It was especially argued by the EU

commission representative that the sentence “this group failed” page 16 of the present draft was too negative and that the opposite happened in the Vienna meeting. She asked for a reformulation.

The Swedish representative raised the problem of new certifications for revised Qualifications frameworks. She explained that there was no proper body now where to send them. It was then discussed if this should not be mentioned in the report and a recommendation made on this issue. One suggestion was to re-activate the previous network.

It was agreed that recommendations and especially the paragraph on Reversed peer review should be in part I of the report. The representative from EQAR argued that the financial aspects should be dealt with in the chapter on methodology. It was suggested that descriptions of events should be put in an annex to the report.

It was agreed that a first complete draft of the report would be ready for the group’s next meeting in the autumn.

It was finally decided that the second part of the report would be on policy recommendations and organized topic by topic. A timeline and a division of tasks among the group members were agreed upon.

Detailed schedule:

A first deadline for a complete first draft of the report has been set for the next group’s meeting in Zagreb, early October 2017. Topic reports have to be ready 2 weeks before which means that all contributions have to be sent to the chairs by the end of August so as to allow the chairs to send a first draft to all group members 15 September. Comments from group members will be received by the chairs from 15 to 25 September and the chairs will then prepare the document to be discussed at the Zagreb meeting.

List of the division tasks/ topics:

- Short cycle: Noël Vercruysse
- Social dimension: Helga Posset
- Quality Assurance: ENQA (Paula Ranne/Maria Kelo) + Anca Greere
- Staff mobility: Riku Matilainen + Katrin Fohmann
- Student mobility: Helga Posset (+Nessie+ former WG mobility and internationalization)
- Recognition of Prior Learning: Cecilia George
- Recognition: Noël Vercruysse + Allan Bruun Pedersen

After the Malmö meeting, an eighth topic was envisaged by the chairs who asked the other group’s members for their opinion on the issue. This additional topic would be **Employability**, with Bartłomiej Banaszak in charge. It was suggested by the chairs to devote a session of the next meeting to the report on employability if needed.

Format:

Decisions were also taken regarding the format of the report and its length. It was agreed that reports on topics should be 1/ 1,5 page long and would consist of the following elements:

- 1. Context**
- 2. Analysis**
- 3. Conclusions**
- 4. Recommendation(s)**

It was added that when the contribution is based on an event it would be advisable to add the report and if possible the background papers produced on the occasion of the event (which can then be put in the annex).

5. AOB

It was decided that the Secretariat would prepare a note on the schedule, division of tasks and format of the report as agreed upon during the meeting and that it would be sent to the participants before the end of June.

The Croatian delegate had agreed on organizing the next group's meeting place in Zagreb in October. The Secretariat would help with setting up a date by centralizing the information of the group's members' availability (the dates selected are 2-3 October and 3-4 October).