

SECOND MEETING OF THE BFUG WG1 ON MONITORING

Kapelle-Ufer, 110117, Berlin (Germany)

13 September 2016

Venue: Federal Ministry of Education and Research

Draft Minutes

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MONTENEGRO (CO-CHAIR)	Aleksandar Vujovic/ <i>apologies</i>
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Nadezda Kamynina/ <i>apologies</i>

There were 18 participants present at the 2nd meeting of the Working Group 1.

1. Welcome and introduction by the WG1 Co-Chairs

Mr. Frank Petrikowski, the German representative and the host of the meeting of the working group welcomed the participants at the new premises of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

Mr. Andrejs Rauhvargers, the Latvian Co-Chair in his turn welcomed members of the working group. He mentioned the excuses of Ms. Tone Flood Strøm who was not able to come because of an illness and the absence of the Montenegrin Co-Chair. Moreover, it was stressed that the quality of the documents prepared and the comments received are a good indication that the working group is moving in right direction.

Mr. David Crosier, the Eurydice Co-Chair of the WG took over by reminding everybody that during the 1st meeting in Oslo the working group members agreed to produce a draft structure of the 2018 Monitoring Report for everybody's comments. Firstly, the comments were received from the members of the working group and then the revised version was circulated to the BFUG members. Thus, the focus of the 2nd meeting is to discuss the comments received by the countries and see whether and how to integrate them in the draft as well as develop data collection tools that will be presented to the BFUG in December in Bratislava (Slovakia). Endorsement of the tools will allow launching of the data collection in the next year.

2. Adoption of agenda

Document: Draft Agenda

The Agenda of the meeting was adopted without additions.

3. Brief feedback from the recent meetings

On behalf of the BFUG Secretariat, its representative Ms. Gayane Harutyunyan briefed on the recent meetings:

- In March the BFUG meeting took place in Amsterdam during which finalised the discussion on the working structures of the 2015-2018 period.
- Advisory group 1 on "EHEA international cooperation" met in May and made decision on 3 main issues: (i) to give mandate to the co-chairs of the group to define relevant policy topics for regional cooperation; (ii) to update the existing roadmaps of dialogues with the Mediterranean and Arabic countries; (iii) to create a task force to rethink the Bologna Policy Forum and to develop a concept paper. Further to that the Task Force met in July to discuss the draft paper on the 2018 Bologna Policy Forum. It has been suggested to recommend the BFUG to organise an integrated event but with 2 final statements the EHEA Communiqué and the statement of the Bologna Policy Forum.
- Advisory Group 2 on "Support Belarus roadmap" met in June for the second time. So far, Belarus has introduced a new HE legislature which is regarded by the national authorities as the most important task for implementation. Moreover, the Belarus volunteered to fill the previous questionnaire to assess the status-quo of implementation.
- Advisory Group 4 on DS met in June to discuss what kind of revision is required. Also it was noted that the EC has launched an interesting and well-structured project to collect information on DS and in particular, to see how it could be digitalised
- Working Group 2 on "Implementation" met for the second time in June. During the meeting, two thematic sessions were discussed: one on short cycle and another one on social dimension.
- It was also mentioned that on September 14 in Berlin the Bologna Secretariat for the second time will organize a meeting of the Co-Chairs for exchange of information on how things are progressing.
- The next BFUG meeting in Bratislava (Slovakia) will hold a thematic session on the issues related to autonomy of university and academic freedom. Council of Europe is leading the discussion and Magna Carta Observatory is also participating in it. The outcomes of the discussion will be used by the WG 1 to think how to collect information from national level. Moreover, the group will take into account what has been done by the EUA in that relation.

4. Consideration of comments provided by BFUG members and WG Co-chairs

Structure of the 2018 Report (document prepared by the Co- Chairs)

The deliberations related to the comments received from the countries started with a general comment on the importance to reflect in the 2018 Monitoring Report the ways and mechanisms used by each country to implement the Bologna Reforms: how the countries disseminate information internally, whether and how they involve stakeholders, etc. It was also mentioned that:

- it can be considered good practice for countries to establish national working groups in correspondence with the European structures (eg BFUG) to promote implementation;
- it could be beneficial for countries to exchange information about national mechanisms for implementation - to show different possibilities for supporting implementation;
- it could be useful to show maps in the implementation report indicating evolution of results from 2012 to 2015 and to 2018.

In reply to these points it was stressed that

- there is a need to distinguish what a country can or should report for the Implementation Report, and what can be reported by the working group to the BFUG (so that the point about national working groups to support implementation may be an issue for the BFUG rather than the Implementation report);
- for the third bullet point, the implementation report aims to compare progress over time, and includes trends data particularly on statistical indicators. However, with some qualitative indicators it is perhaps better to focus on the current picture, as countries may have understood concepts in indicators slightly differently at different times, and hence it may appear that there is change where in fact it does not exist.

The way implementation is done at the national level is very important and there are a lot of things that are happening in the countries as well as on the European level (HERE project, EUA projects, etc.).

The positive trend is that, with increasing attention to implementation, the working group is required to identify areas that need to be supported. Therefore, countries should be careful with what they are reporting. There are indicators that are systematically cross-checked and compared with those of other sources in order to have information that is as objective and as clear as possible.

Comments made by each country were discussed in turn and it was agreed by the group which comments are going to be integrated in the revised proposal for a new structure of the 2018 Monitoring Report. The key comments and concerns expressed were as follows:

- Limitations related to the definition of a higher education institution: it was clarified that in the report what is used is a standard definition of international data collectors which is referring to number of students.
- It was agreed to include in the report a section on “Fees and student support”.
- It was agreed to have the RPL in the recognition section.
- It was suggested that data related to credit mobility and migrant students could be added. It was clarified that Eurostat data, including a specific statistical data collection to non ESS countries, will be used for all statistical indicators. Hopefully there will be improved data on these and other topics – but there will be gaps. These will be explained and commented on in the report.
- In Chapter 1 to include reference to, and indicator(s) on, academic staff.
- To include in the report information on existence of official graduate surveys in countries without further synthesis report.
- Scorecard on recognition: The problems last time were connected with late timing of the request, and the fact that questions asked were not robust enough, in particular related to automatic recognition which is still an area with many unclear issues. However, it is an

important topic which Eurydice is also working on with the EC in the context of a Mobility Scoreboard to be launched in December. A scorecard indicator on recognition of qualifications has been developed in this context and there are relevant data for the EU countries. Thus, for the EHEA there is going to be a proposal for a composite indicator comparable with other indicators that will be used in 2018 report.

- Share of men-women completing higher education: it was suggested to have data for each cycle separately rather than the overall picture. It was suggested to include data on the share of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects.
- To ask countries whether they have national strategies or national plans for widening access and participation in higher education.
- To include data on recognition of Diploma Supplement by employers and on the relevance of mobility experience for employability: In both cases it is difficult to find a source for information.
- Inclusion of more information on staff mobility is another area of limited information though at the moment data collectors are working with EI on it.
- ESU and EUA will be the main sources for information on teaching practices.
- For the European approach to QA of joint programmes, questions will be asked on how countries have taken this forward. Considering the data gathered by EQAR on countries legal framework and on the use of the European approach by registered quality assurance agencies, EQAR, will be consulted for additional information.

The EUA representative informed that there will be no Trends report in 2018. Most probably a focused report on teaching and learning will be produced. EUA has a scorecard on academic freedom and autonomy of institutions and its new version will be published in April 2017.

7. Structure of the 2018 Implementation Report (Continuation)

Draft proposal for a new structure

The proposed report structure is quite comprehensive and workable. Some topics (noted above) will be added to it since they dropped out of the current proposal. The working group suggested to add a concluding part or an executive summary to the report, or both.

It was also stressed that, in line with the work of the advisory group on non-implementation, there will be a selected minimum things that need to be achieved, and these should be clearly presented from the information in the Implementation Report. But the main discussion of the report will be upon availability of data. Moreover, Eurydice also proposes the development of country diagrams showing the way programmes are structured in the EHEA countries. This would be an on-line annex.

8. Discussion on data collection methods and cooperation with other partners

It was highlighted by Eurydice that the data collection will be organised in the best way in order to reduce as much as possible the burden on countries in filling out questionnaires.

For this period the intention is for old indicators to be provided to countries within an excel-based questionnaire pre - filled with 2015 data. Countries will need either to confirm the data and move to the next category or to provide explanations. This is different from what was used previously. In parallel a relatively short questionnaire will be developed to collect information for the new indicators. There are tools on the market that could be used. The 2015 tool is an open source tool which gives the possibility to ask as wide a range of questions as is needed

“LimeSurvey” that was already used in previous data collection exercises is a free well-working tool. Some countries have already experienced it. More sophisticated tools will require budget: it will be recommended to use the one that has been used previously under the condition that the Bologna Secretariat supports that.

9. Conclusions and next steps

Time frame:

At the end of January 2017 the questionnaire will be sent out to the countries while testing of new indicators, which is an important task, could be done within the working group via email.

The next meeting date depends whether there is potential to discuss in the beginning of December closer to BFUG dates and most probably in Bratislava. Otherwise the working group will meet after the data has been collected and some parts of the first draft of the monitoring report are ready.