



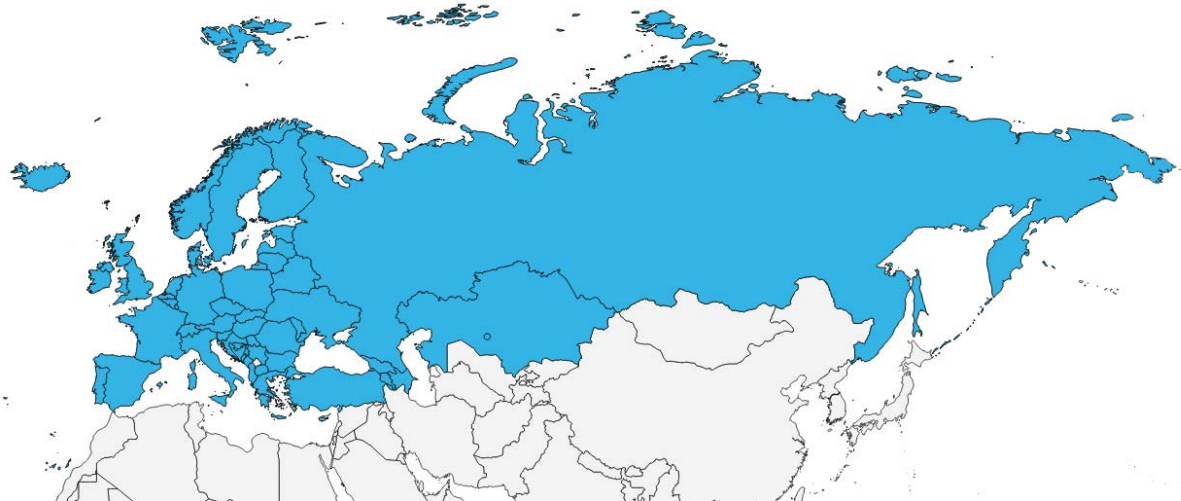
**20<sup>th</sup> ECA workshop, Paris 23 June 2017**

## **Organisation and Mechanisms of the Bologna Process**

Mariana Saad, BFUG Secretariat

The Bologna Process, officially launched in 1999 in the very city of Bologna, refers to a series of policy decisions aimed at creating the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. The main idea first announced in the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 and resumed in the Bologna Declaration of 1999 was to re-structure the tertiary education systems in Europe and create a common pattern for Higher Education in all the countries joining the process.

Although initiated by EU countries the Declarations of the Sorbonne and Bologna already saw Europe as something quite broader than the EU. Today 48 states have joined the EHEA which makes it a truly pan-European project.



### **How does the process work? What is its governance?**

-The process consists of a series of conferences held every two or three years by the ministers of the signatory states where the progress of implementation is reviewed and additional objectives are formulated. At the end of each conference, ministers issue a collective Communiqué identifying a set of new goals for the EHEA.

-The Ministerial conferences are organized by the BFUG with the support of the BFUG Secretariat and prepared by the working groups meetings and seminars that take place in between the conferences.

## **The governance structure consists of the following levels:**

- the Bologna Follow-Up Group - BFUG
- the BFUG Board
- the BFUG Secretariat
- the Working Groups and Bologna Seminars

## **Chapter I: The European Higher Education Area/ The BFUG members**

To explain how these levels interact, it is important to start with the organisation that brings together all the actors.

The BFUG is composed of representatives of the 48 signatory countries as well as several stakeholders. There are different sorts of memberships in the BFUG: member, consultative member and partner.

- **The BFUG / EHEA members are 48 countries and the European Commission.**  
To become a member of the EHEA, countries have to be party to the European Cultural Convention and to declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education.
- **Consultative members:** This is a non-voting category of members who represent stakeholder organisations and other institutions that have a European scope to their work and are instrumental in the implementation of the Bologna Process. The current eight EHEA consultative members are: Council of Europe (CoE), UNESCO, European University Association (EUA), European Association of Institutions of Higher Education (EURASHE), European Students' Union (ESU), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Education International (EI) and BUSINESS EUROPE.  
EQAR has a similar status to the consultative members (non-voting member of BFUG), but has so far not been officially named consultative member.
- **Partners:** Partners are organisations that wish to be associated with the Bologna Process/the BFUG but are not included in the Consultative member category. At present, the following four organisations are BFUG partners:  
the European Association for International Education (EAIE);  
the Council of European professional and managerial staff (Eurocadres);  
Eurodoc;  
the European Association for Promotion of Science and Technology (Euroscience).  
They can, upon request, attend BFUG events and may be invited by a WG/AG to send an expert who will participate to the work.

***Further technical experts, such as Eurostat, Eurostudent or Eurydice*** may be associated to the BFUG and invited to events upon specific request.

Eurostat: Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union situated in Luxembourg. Its task is to provide the European Union with statistics at European level that enable comparisons between countries and regions.

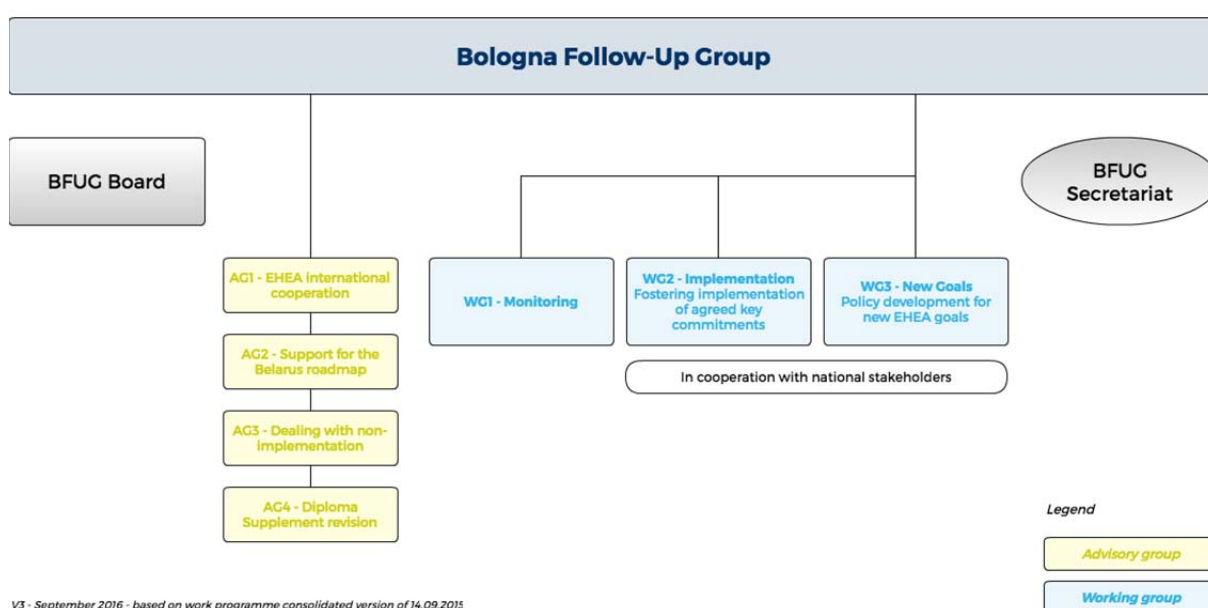
Eurostudent: the main aim of the EUROSTUDENT project is to collate comparable data on the social dimension of European higher education.

Eurydice: the Eurydice network supports and facilitates European cooperation in the field of lifelong learning by providing information on education systems and policies in 37 countries and by producing studies on issues common to European education systems.

## Chapter II: The Bologna Follow-Up Group

The Bologna Follow-Up Group - BFUG - is the executive structure supporting the Bologna Process in-between the Ministerial Conferences. It was created in the autumn 1999. The work between two meetings of the Bologna Follow-up Group is overseen by a Board. The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) supervises the Bologna Process between the ministerial conferences.

### Work programme 2015-2018



V3 - September 2016 - based on work programme consolidated version of 14.09.2015

- **Role of the Bologna Follow-Up Group**

The Bologna Follow-Up Group - BFUG - is the executive structure supporting the Bologna Process in-between the Ministerial Conferences. It is in place since autumn 1999. The BFUG is entrusted with:

- preparing the Ministerial Conferences, policy forums;
- overseeing the Bologna Process between these;
- and taking forward matters that do not need to be decided by the Ministers or that have been delegated by the Ministers.

***“Ministers entrust the implementation of all the issues covered in the Communiqué, the overall steering of the Bologna Process and the preparation of the next ministerial meeting to a Follow-up Group.[...] A Board [...] shall oversee the work between the meetings of the Follow-up Group. [...] The overall follow-up work will be supported by a Secretariat which the country hosting the next ministerial Conference will provide.”***

Source: Berlin Communiqué, 19 September 2003.

- **BFUG Meetings**

The BFUG meetings play an important role in overseeing the implementation of the ministerial Communiqués as well as in fostering the links between the EHEA members. BFUG meetings are in principle hosted by the EHEA Co-Chair and are convened at least once every six months. They usually last one-and-a-half days.

- **Chairmanship: BFUG Co-chairs and BFUG Vice-chair**

Since the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial Conference in 2009, the Bologna Process is co-chaired by the country holding the EU presidency and a non-EU country. The host country of the next Ministerial conference is nominated as the Vice-Chair.

Each country is responsible to nominate a person who will be in charge of fulfilling the tasks of the chairmanship. The Chairs have a joint responsibility to take forward the aims and actions laid down by the Ministers responsible for Higher Education in the Bologna Declaration and subsequent Communiqués of ministerial conferences. The Co-Chairs, in close cooperation with the Vice-Chair, chair the Bologna Ministerial Conferences and the Bologna Policy Forum as well as the sessions of the BFUG and the BFUG board. The Co-Chairs jointly represent the EHEA in European and international meetings. In the decision-making process the Chairs assume the responsibility to lead the way towards compromise and to provide political impetus for moving the Bologna Process forward.

The Co-Chairs may delegate tasks, such as external representation, to the Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair, always from the country organizing the Ministerial Conference, ensures continuity between the rotating chairmanships.

Immediately after Prague, inter-governmental structures for the Bologna process were established. Based on decisions of the Prague Communiqué, the former “enlarged group” became the Follow-up Group of the Bologna Process (BFUG).

The group was presided by the consecutive EU-Presidencies.

Belgium (2nd semester 2001); Spain (1st semester 2002); Denmark (2nd semester 2002); Greece (1st semester 2003); Italy (2nd semester 2003); Ireland (1st semester 2004); Netherlands (2nd semester 2004); Luxembourg (1st semester 2005); United Kingdom (2nd semester 2005); Austria (1st semester 2006); Finland (2nd semester 2006); Germany (1st semester 2007); Portugal (2nd semester 2007); Slovenia (1st semester 2008); France (2nd semester 2008); Czech Republic (1st semester 2009)

### ***List of Chairs and Vice-Chair from Leuven/Louvain***

#### From Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve to Bucharest/Vienna

1 July - 31 December 2010 Belgium Albania

1 January - 30 June 2011 Hungary Andorra

1 July - 31 December 2011 Poland Armenia

1 January - 30 June 2012 Denmark Azerbaijan

#### From Bucharest/Vienna to Yerevan

1 July - 31 December 2012 Cyprus Bosnia and Herzegovina

1 January - 30 June 2013 Ireland Croatia  
 1 July - 31 December 2013 Lithuania Georgia  
 1 January - 30 June 2014 Greece Kazakhstan  
 1 July - 31 December 2014 Italy Holy See  
 1 January - 30 June 2015 Latvia Iceland  
From Yerevan (2015) to Paris (2018)  
 1 July - 31 December 2015 Luxembourg Liechtenstein  
 1 January - 30 June 2016 Netherlands Moldova  
 1 July - 31 December 2016 Slovakia Montenegro  
 1 January - 30 June 2017 Malta Norway  
 1 July - 31 December 2017 Estonia Russian Federation  
 1 January - 30 June 2018 Bulgaria Serbia  
From Paris (2018) to Rome or Naples (2020)  
 1 July - 31 December 2018 Austria Switzerland  
 1 January - 30 June 2019 Romania "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"  
 1 July - 31 December 2019 Finland Turkey  
 1 January - 30 June 2020 Croatia Ukraine

- **Work plan and Working and Advisory Groups**

The BFUG has the possibility to set up working groups to deal with specific topics in more details and, also, receives input from Bologna Seminars.

Such as indicated in the Work Plan 2015-2018, BFUG and consultative members have been invited to express their interest in participating in one or more Working Groups (WGs) or Advisory Groups (AGs) and as co-chair by completing a declaration of participation, provided by the Secretariat. All WGs/AGs are open to participation from BFUG members, experts nominated by national authorities, consultative members and international experts proposed by the group. The groups report to the BFUG twice a year at the BFUG meetings where each group is represented by one of its chairs.

The BFUG decides on the Terms of References of the Working and Advisory Groups and decides which of the recommendations of the Working/Advisory Groups will be proposed to the Ministers. If it deems necessary, the BFUG may also provide an opportunity for all members and consultative members to express their views on the recommendations and reports.

### **Chapter III: The BFUG Board**

The BFUG Board supports the Chairs and the Secretariat and prepares the BFUG meetings. The responsibilities of the Board were defined by the BFUG during its meeting in Rome, 14th November 2003. The Board also advises the Working and Advisory Groups, since one co-chair of each WG/AG is member of the BFUG board meetings.

The current members of the Board are:

- the BFUG Co-Chairs double Troika (the outgoing, present and incoming Co-Chairs of the BFUG);
- the BFUG Vice-Chair;

- the European Commission;
- four of the consultative members (Council of Europe, EUA, ESU, EURASHE);
- one of the co-chairs of each working and advisory group.

The Co-Chairs and Vice-Chair of the BFUG are the same for the Board.

The Board usually meets at least one month (preferably six weeks) before each BFUG meeting. The host of the Board is normally one of the EHEA Co-Chairs.

## **Chapter IV: The Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat**

The overall follow-up work is supported by a Secretariat usually provided by the country hosting the next Ministerial Conference.

Between 1 of July 2015 and 30 June 2018, the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-up Group is held by France, as organizer of the next 2018 EHEA Ministerial Conference.

Yerevan to Paris - 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018

Between 1 of July 2015 and 30 June 2018, the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-up Group is held by France, as organizer of the next 2018 EHEA Ministerial Conference. It will continue along the same lines as agreed previously at the BFUG meetings: the Secretariat will provide neutral support to further the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area under the exclusive authority of the BFUG, its Co-chairs and Vice-Chair.

The structure is working in an international way including staff members provided by EHEA member countries (at present Germany and Armenia).

- **Role and functions**

When the Bologna Secretariat was first established following the Berlin meeting of Ministers responsible for higher education, the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) agreed, after discussion, upon its role and functions. These proposals for a Secretariat were accepted by the BFUG Meeting in Rome in November 2003.

The main tasks of the Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat are:

- supporting the Chairs in their work
- providing administrative and operational support for the BFUG and its Board;
- supporting all BFUG Working / Advisory Groups;
- acting as an external and internal contact point for the European Higher Education Area;
- preparing the Ministerial Conference in France (2018) and the Fifth Bologna Policy Forum under the supervision of the BFUG.

In order to provide up to date information not only for the BFUG but also to the wider public, the Secretariat maintains the European Higher Education Area website ([www.ehea.info](http://www.ehea.info)).

- **Previous Secretariats**

Berlin to Bergen - 1 January 2004 to 30 June 2005

The first BFUG Secretariat was set up by Norway.

Bergen to London - 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2007

The United-Kingdom provided a Secretariat to the Bologna Follow Up Group and its Board for the two year period up to 30 June 2007. Their aim during this time was to deliver information and news about the work programme and developments in the Bologna Process leading up to the Bologna 5th Ministerial Conference in London on 17-18 May 2007.

London to Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve and Budapest/Vienna - 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2010

From 1 July 2007 until 30 June 2010, the Bologna Process was supported by a Secretariat which was jointly operated by the higher education ministries of the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg - for the last year with support from Austria and Hungary - in preparation of the 2009 and 2010 ministerial conferences. The office of the multinational Secretariat was located in Brussels.

Budapest/Vienna to Bucharest - 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2012

Starting from July 1st, 2010, Romania took over the responsibility of hosting the Bologna Secretariat. At this occasion, the official website of the European Higher Education Area, <http://www.ehea.info>, was launched.

Bucharest to Yerevan - 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2015

Starting from July 1st, 2012, Armenia took the responsibility of hosting the Bologna Secretariat.

Yerevan to Paris -1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018

Starting from July 1st, 2015, France hosts the Bologna Secretariat.

## **Chapter V: The Ministerial Conferences**

The Ministerial Conferences have taken place in Bologna, 18-19 June 1999 - Prague, 18-19 May 2001 - Berlin, 18-19 September 2003 - Bergen, 19-20 May 2005 - London, 17-18 May 2007 - Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009 - Budapest/Vienna, 10-12 March 2010 - Bucharest, 26-27 April 2012 - Yerevan, 14-15 May 2015.



*Yerevan Ministerial Conference, 2015*

## **The next Ministerial Conference will take place in Paris - France, in 2018.**

Ministers decide at Ministerial Conferences about the central aspects of the EHEA, including its further developments and commitments by its member countries. The Ministerial Conference also decides on new applications for membership to the EHEA as well as any other main changes to the process.

A Communiqué is adopted at each Ministerial Conference that outlines decisions taken by the Ministers. To find the texts from the Communiqués please visit: <http://www.ehea.info/pid34363/ministerial-declarations-and-communiqués.html>

### ***List of Communiqués:***

1999 Bologna Declaration  
2001 Prague Communiqué  
2003 Berlin Communiqué  
2005 Bergen Communiqué  
2007 London Communiqué  
2009 Leuven Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué  
2010 Budapest-Vienna Declaration  
2012 Bucharest Communiqué  
2015 Yerevan Communiqué

### **The Bologna Policy Forums :**

Since the 2009 Ministerial in Louvain, a Bologna Policy Forum is held in association with the main Conference to foster dialogue with non-EHEA countries and partners.

A Statement is issued at the end of the Forum summarizing the discussions and stressing the values and topics to be put forward in future international HE cooperation.

You can find the texts of the Statements here:

<http://www.ehea.info/pid34364/bologna-policy-forum.html>

### ***List of Statements:***

2009 Leuven Louvain-la-Neuve Statement  
2010 Budapest-Vienna Statement  
2012 Bucharest Statement  
2015 Yerevan Statement