

TIRANA EHEA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

29 - 30 MAY 2024

Global Policy Forum Statement



Global Policy Forum Statement as adopted on 30 May 2024

As Ministers responsible for higher education, and representatives of students, higher education institutions and organizations participating in the EHEA Global Policy Forum, we reaffirm our conviction that higher education must expand its ability to address present and future challenges to global peace, just and inclusive social and economic development, wellbeing, and democracy.

Higher Education is a foundation for inclusive, equitable and democratic societies. In their 2020 Rome Communiqué, the EHEA Ministers for Higher Education committed to “developing a more innovative, inclusive and interconnected European Higher Education Area (EHEA)”. We all aspire to a world that recognizes that quality education is a basic human right and where the global target to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” becomes a reality, in line with the United Nation Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4).

In the lead up to the Forum, the EHEA Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue has exchanged information and engaged in dialogue on topics of common interest with partners in different world regions. Conferences, seminars, and colloquia have provided multiple opportunities to share knowledge about our higher education systems, and to explore together the challenges we face.

Global multilateral higher education dialogue and collaboration at the level of governments and institutions can foster mobility, strengthen respect for fundamental values of higher education (such as academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and student and staff participation in higher education governance)¹, improve the quality, relevance and inclusiveness of higher education; and contribute to social justice and lasting peace. Our shared objectives and the ever-greater connectedness of our higher education institutions can provide a strong foundation for meaningful cooperation.

International mobility, of both students and staff, fosters intercultural and international understanding. Physical mobility remains a powerful tool, while innovative blended mobility experiences and virtual learning environments are becoming increasingly important and can open up new opportunities for international exchange and collaboration. We commit to working to align tools for mobility and recognition of foreign qualifications and learning periods abroad in ways that improve compatibility, ensure transparency and consolidate trust between macro regions.

We aim to improve our institutions’ capacity to enable learners to develop the competences they will need for employment and for their personal and civic lives, including awareness of and commitment to the principles of sustainability. We also commit to supporting higher education institutions in deepening their engagement with their stakeholders, including local communities and employers.

Moving forward

We see positive potential for all our countries, institutions and organisations in continuing to work together to:

- Foster innovation in learning and teaching, including digitally supported learning and teaching, opening up to new skills, including transversal skills, and ensuring their link to employability and citizenship, while addressing the ongoing issues of unequal access and retention.
- Promote student-centred learning that takes place in a research-informed learning and teaching environment, and the implications of this for the flexibility of study programmes and life-

¹ See the *Tirana Communiqué*

long learning pathways, including forms of non-formal and informal education.

- Further facilitate access to higher education by underrepresented and disadvantaged groups, including refugees and migrants, and strengthen the links between higher education and other systems such as VET to reach untapped talent.
- Promote the development of training and education in environmental and climate change.
- Further develop all forms of reciprocal mobility of people and knowledge, both in and across regions, as one of the most important keys to global understanding and to excellence in higher education, balancing incoming and outgoing mobility.
- Make learning credits comparable and transferable according to compatible standards and overarching frameworks, building transparency and understanding at global level, and providing secure and interoperable modes of digitalization of data on qualifications and learning achievement.
- Develop joint approaches to the handling of, adaptation to and, as much as possible, shaping of technological developments, most notably artificial intelligence and, along with this, deal with the challenge of disinformation.
- Reach a common understanding of the ethical principles and values of international academic cooperation by sharing, on an equal footing, our experiences, practices and lessons learned on global issues such as equity, inclusion and access to quality education, effective quality assurance practices and principles, and attractive academic careers.

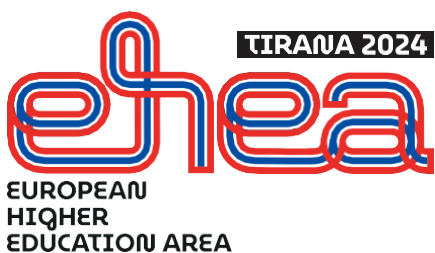
We consider the entry into force of the UNESCO *Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education* a landmark achievement, and call for its ratification. Building on pre-existing regional conventions, it is an important step towards reaching SDG 4. To benefit fully from this achievement, we commit to working towards greater exchange of knowledge about our higher education systems, policies and instruments and, where possible, compatibility between national and regional qualifications frameworks, and the quality assurance systems and mechanisms developed in different world regions.

Continuing Dialogue

We take up our responsibilities towards our countries and peoples in order to realise the potential of higher education to find solutions to the world's challenges. We want to enable present and future generations to think and act ethically, creatively and critically, to address and resolve the challenges they will encounter.

We invite all participants in the EHEA Global Policy Forum to continue to engage in global policy dialogue and to identify the themes where synergies can be found between regions, and with global organizations such as UNESCO and OECD, be it at the intergovernmental level, or in transnational exchange and collaboration between higher education institutions and organisations.

The next EHEA Global Policy Forum will be held in Iași/Chișinău.



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