Riga Seminar Transcript

9:00 Opening of the seminar (Alberts Prikulis), practical information about the facilities available.

Agenda is approved without changes. Don, Ray, Alena, Alberto, Claudia, Jan leave the room to elaborate the theoretical background. Rest stays to discuss administrative and financial questions.

9:15 Information about the project - current state,guidelines from Brussels, issues to resolve (Helena Sebkova) - see presentation (will be put on website & sent by email).

Helena: The agency has recommended us to administrate the project throughly from the very beginning, to collect the financial costs supportive/evidence documents and send each 3 months a report. They expect us to make mistakes, and we have been promised that they will work with us. In fact we will have a contact person there – Ms. Aurelia. So far the 40% of grant has been received at the bank account in Prague. Those of You that have sent us the bank account-40% can be transferred as soon as possible. The money is enough to cover expenses of at least one year. So we expect to start working immediately. 2nd installement is expected during mid of next year. Before that we shall provide agency with midterm report as well as financial report on what has been spent. 2nd installement will follow if 70% of 1st installement has been spent and this fact can be supported by evidence. The agency will need 90 days to administrate and process the request for 2nd installement. We will also have to provide Brussels with evidence that we have spent 25% of own money. Agency has stated that each partner is fully responsible for the work that is dedicated to particular beneficiary. Another basic principle is that the grant covers 75% of total eligible costs and we will be asked to proof the cofinancing of 25% from local budgets of institutions. We are working with large universities and small enitities like our centre in Prague. Important - it is not required that each item in contract under each heading is cofinanced by 25%, which makes it simplier. But if it is necessary for clarity of your accounting, just do it. Anyway, we are warned by the agency not to leave the cofinancing for the end of the year otherwise it can get complicated. Therefore we believe that we can agree that each 3rd month we will ask you how it is cofinanced. Another important point is that the cofinanced activities have to be eligible, in other words the costs have to be eligible and on activities directly connected with project. The eligible costs are prescribed in detail in the contract, in the handbook -it is easy to see what can be paid, what not. Sure, there will be questions.

Alberts: In documents we find that if the budget is exceeded for certain item then the surplus is considered ineligible. There are 7 partners in the project, maybe one of the partners will exceed the costs in this particular item, but other is underscoring, is the surplus ineligible?

Helena: there are two views. F.ex. on wages one partner be bellow the ceiling and the other one exceed the ceiling. We perhaps can shift it among partners, but only in the case that the ceiling given by the agency is not exceeded.

Claudia: We have 2 types financing: staff costs and per diem, when we go to Riga we are above per diem, when we will go to London we will be below. Going to Riga costs 600 EUR, going to London will cost 50 EUR. Can we shift money between the seminars?

Helena: In principle it would be possible. Another important thing to mention is that the agency recovers interest yielded from the total amount of money.

Therefore we would like you to have special bank account solely for the project purposes, so that the interest rate is easily seen. However charges for opening special bank account are not eligible costs.

Claudia: Do they recover the real or notional interest? In PT we put everything in an account that does not yield interest.

Lubica: Yes, the account is with state treasure, there are no interests.

Helena: I did not speak in Brussels in details about that, but if there is no interest there is no sense to pay it. However we might check it. I would appreciate very much if you would formulate the question for me in written form. Another thing – I would like you to pay attention to visits. Agency is interested in work/results. Any time they may decide to come and see them, therefore you should be open for any visit any time. Also the agency would appreciate if we would invite their members to our seminars. Already in August you could read that part of project budget are ceiling of wages per day for every country, very different and this is the real ceiling that should not be exceeded, otherwise the amount exceeding the ceiling will not be considered as eligible, even in case that we would shift the money among partners. Another import rule is that these ceilings are valid for countries that don't have own national and institutional rules regarding wages of the employees. E.g. in CZ each institution is very autonomous as regards wages and have their own wages regulations saying that researchers can add a certain amount above the wage. If institutional or national rules exist, they have to be taken in consideration and the researchers have to be paid within national ceiling. Audits and visits from agency would like to see the internal rules and see whether people are paid in accordance with it.

Claudia: As I explained in email all of our salaries are paid by home institution. We hire researchers that work with us. Do you need name and contract with those people? And do you need to add the name of these people to research team?

Helena: There is no problem to add them, the basic research team is in application and it can be extended easily. We would need a formal letter with people's names. I would like to stress that it is not possible that team members are not employees of the institution that signed the contract. Our project does not have money dedicated to subcontracting. We were informed that each contract that is valid at national level will be accepted by the agency. Everything that the coordinator needs from beneficiary is to be seen in my presentation. We asked how we can orient us in documents written in different languages. There is translator available on the agency website, one can have a kind of imagination about the documents. In case we need some clarification, we will ask you.

Claudia: Where is the timesheet table available?

Helena: There is one on the website of agency, we can of course prepare our own timesheet paper for our project specifically, but for all the same.

Claudia: Do we have to backdate to 1st of January

Helena: I think that we will start our real work from the date of this seminar. We will have the timesheet and costs -related with Prague seminar. Anyway we have to provide agency with evaluation report and already paid costs already at the end of March and we will see what Ms. Aurelia will tell us.

Liudvika: Do you want the timesheets filled according to the project proposal or actual days worked?

Helena: According to actual days – otherwise the visits from agency can notice problems.

Liudvika: We will do fieldwork itself in fall - a lot of days in September, then writing reports and no real fieldwork.

Catherine: Yes, there is profiling issue of when the time is spent. E.g. I am contracted to work 2 days on the project, but there are some weeks that I am working 5 or 6 days.

Helena: In the project there is no requirement related to each week. There is requirement for the whole WP- 5 months for each WP. End of 3rd month the national report should be ready for the audits and at the end of the WP the comparative report should be ready for the next seminar when the draft should be discussed. We were warned not to shift all of our work to the end of 3rd month.

Liudvika: Then we write as planned irrespective of how much work is done.

Catherine: We are given a template on how much work is spent each week.

Helena: If we agree that we prepare a template for one month because week is too short. Monthly template which will speak about real work done for the money paid.

Heather: Monthly is better.

Lubica: So then we will have to report for January-March now.

Helena: We will report within first 2 months the Prague seminar and we will start with template in March.

Liudvika: We have been spending days developing communication and developing theoretical framework so far as well.

Helena: You can put it in the February in real time or shift it to the March.

Catherine: I worked my contracted hours in January developing the theory framework; the institution needs to know what I have been doing since we have our own internal reporting. Is it possible to say that since the beginning January I have spent 20 days on the project or should I put them on March timesheet?

Helena: Don't make more complications. We have three month for the evaluation report,you're your work in month when really worked and show the related staff costs. If you see table for each WP, there is certain number of researchers, administrators, my view is to distribute them all evenly over 5 months (duration of one WP). For the leader of WP it would be fine to distribute working days through the WP evenly if possible, maybe the leader of the WP should be leaving more days to the last two months for the comparative report. But we need not to be all in the same situation. But every 5 months would be there for us to check the work done.

Claudia: Can you send us the timesheet template?

Helena: We tried to find a convenient template on the website; we will try to elaborate one more suitable within the following days. You can of course comment it.

Ewa: The question is how detailed it should be?

Alberts: What about the replacements of people?

Helena: If somebody would leave for 2 weeks, the other does the work instead, there is no problem about not informing us. In case the leave is longer and it is necessary to pay the salary to somebody else then it should be done in the formal way. The information should reach us and we will discuss it with agency.

Liudvika: The timesheets should be sent to you or Zuzana?

Helena: I forgot to say that we incorporated Zuzana in the project because she is knowledgable, she worked in Prague as accountant and is now in London close to Heather. Therefore everything concerning the accounting, also timesheets, should be sent to her.

Lubica: Is our participation in the seminar eligible costs for our worksheet?

Helena: Yes.

Catherine: Please, explain how per diems work.

Alberts: Question is whether you still keep your salary and get per diem on top of it.

Helena: It is up to the national rules whatever is valid in your country is valid for the agency.

Ewa: On one of the slides you have list of all staff involved in project.

Helena: In average we have main three people involved (as in project application documents), from those of you that speak of more people involved – we need formal list of names and categories. So that we anytime can answer to the agency who is the person paid from the project and what he /she has been doing.

Ewa: By the date of the report you need the list, but I don't know who will be there working for the project the next year.

Helena: Let me emphasize that it is not that strict that we cannot make changes after let's say two months.

Lubica: We are very under the ceiling with national daily rate, when shall we ask for changes of time.

Helena: We asked in Brussels - several countries are well behind ceiling- so perhaps we can use more people working on project. So we can use more working days within national regulations and below EU ceiling. But it was not affirmed in a written form. Let's try in the beginning of project, let's say we have 10 researchers, and salaries are so low that we can pay to 12 researchers for 20 days, if we do, and send to the agency, we can make visible to agency that there is something unusual. An important message from agency if you economize money we will be open for the discussion how to use the saved money for the project, but do not send the money 2013 back to the agency.

Helena: It really happens, on the basis of national rules- we can really save the money.

Lubica: We must prepare internal sheets of our working days and salaries, see what happens.

Helena: I think that this issue will be worthwhile by the end of this WP. By the end of the WP we will have to prove that we have spent all days, all working staff and that we participated in seminar- the overall costs of the WP. If we see that a country has saved we will see for the way to use the saved means.

Claudia: If there are problems to spend the per diem, why do the people stay cheap hotels?

Helena: If it is necessary to prove under national rules how much costs the hotel and the rest of the money is saved in fact.

Claudia: Then we might as well stay in a more expensive hotel.

Catherine: As myself I will receive full per diem for days that I have been away, however that will be paid to me in two different ways: I have to keep proof of costs that I have spent as receipts and those will be paid to me tax free as reimbursement. The remaining money will be paid to me as salary but I will have to pay taxes and other costs for that money.

Claudia: You send us per diem we spend money for hotels,taxi, and from the money we get Portuguese per diem deducted, we cannot go above Portuguese per diem. We have no incentive to save on the hotel etc.

Helena: It is very different in each country. I understand your question. But if you stay in a cheap hotel, you will save money within the project and maybe 3 persons can go to Glasgow instead of two.

Claudia: Does the excess money of the per diem that is not spent stays in CHES?

Helena: It is not very clear. I think that it can be spent somehow. I don't think that the rest of money can be spent in another way.

Lubica: You can use the money for the same purpose- travel costs and per diem. You can increase number of people who will participate in seminars.

Claudia: As our national per diem is a lot less then we might as well spend the money in nice hotels?

Helena: As you wish. Same with the air ticket-it was very difficult for us to calculate the price in advance. So we put 3oo EUR for the return flight. E.g. our visits in Slovakia are very cheap and we can save money. We also spoke in Prague what is an ideal explanation of 2 days seminar from agency. Prague is very advantageous city because it is located centrally and the travel time is roughly the same to other countries which is not the case for example for PT to go to LV. However I think that we can always do something to proof working almost two days to the agency.

Liudvika: In CHEPS the travel time is not considered as my personal time. There are two days paid, both the travel day and the day of the seminar.

Claudia: To get to Riga we spend a whole day, we change flights. If you say it is just two days, we meet only on Monday. Leaving travelling to both Sunday and Monday. The PT team would rather use more of the Sunday than to use the Monday. This is connected with us teaching on Mondays, otherwise we have to skip classes and we have to substitute classes.

Helena: This is suggestion for our UK partners.

Heather: We were thinking of doing some work on Sunday and then meet for dinner.

Claudia: To come here on Sunday it would cost 1080 EUR, travelling on Saturday it is often cheaper- in this case 600 EUR. So some work on Sunday, full day Monday and go back first day in the morning of Tuesday or Monday evening.

Alberts: Brussels reimburses us for the days we are in the seminar, but for Latvian regulations it is big enough to cover costs of travel day.

Helena: I would ask you to reimburse everything on basis of national regulations. Please notify us by short information what national legislation is, and we will put it in evaluation report and will see sometimes in April what agency says.

Claudia: Our national regulations pay per diem on basis of travel days.

Catherine: Has our institution received money?

Helena: I hope so. The bank in Prague said it takes 2-4 days to transfer the money. We do the transfer immediately after receiving the financial fact sheet.

Liudvika: 1 thing is writing reports, 2nd-real fieldwork at once and going to the institutions 7 times. I don't have problems writing the report on time and as demanded. The caveat is WP6 because this is when the report will be done without data on interviews, but basically on document analysis. We will have to take time to go to institutions to cover all questions with one visit.

Helena: I don't think that we can shift our work until fall as we spoke in Prague. It is necessary to have national report for 6th WP at the end of third month, so that coordinators of WP can work on comparative report.

Liudvika: The report will be based on document analysis, visit will be later.

Helena: If the report is there and the workload can be proven, the money should be spent. We have to keep the timing of WP.

Lubica: What is deadline for WP5?

Helena: 5 months from now. By end of July we should have all national studies and comparative study. Please read the project application documents – there is the sheet with deadlines.

Lubica: I know, but the project is always about to change.

Ewa: We need clear instruction what we need to send end of each month.

Helena: Evidence about workload, evidence of wages. The project says each 3rd month we should prepare evaluation report. But from you we need a monthly sheet with working load and salaries paid, as well as a kind of work done-short description. By the end of 3rd month national report should be ready and the rest 2 months then have to be spent on comparative study. It is up to you to distribute work over the available time. Plenty of materials on links on these useful addresses (see presentation). Evaluation of seminar (see presentation) have to be done, we received only two of them about Prague. It is evidence after all.

Alberts: Glasgow seminar is at the end of 3rd month, we possibly can not have the draft by then ready.

Liudvika: When is the deadline for national studies for WP5?

Alberts: End of May, so that in one week to Glasgow seminar I can see what there is and prepare a preliminary review.

Helena: I will do in details the time schedule of all deadlines at least for this year-first three WPs.

Heather: One question: you mentioned that you did not advise to invite people from analysed institutions to our meetings. I believe that we should invite them at least to something, showing them we appreciate their cooperation.

Helena: It was suggested on one of the evaluation sheets of the Prague seminar.

Liudvika: It was meant for the meetings (ethical issue) but to invite for the dinner is no problem.

Helena: We did not pay for the people to join us but what is possible is to make a short contract from research of the WP.

11:00 Bologna stocktaking exercises and internal quality assurance (Andrejs Rauhvargers) (see presentation)

Don: How it will be possible to connect this type of policy questions with the Eurostat? And what about EUA trends questionnaires? We will have the institutional view and you will have more the official version, national view.

Andrejs: It has always been like that. EUA has a big sample of universities, but they cannot visit all HEI in all countries.

Don: How to link quality and quantity – is there a possibility to do so?

Andrejs: Quantitative data is coming from Eurostat which show the real situation and then they will be combined with the answers on questions on social aspects – it should be an interesting report.

Ray: Looks like there is a problem, the implementation of guidelines requires changing beliefs, structures. The impression we get that it happens in small niches here and there, bologna gets larger, bologna is failing.

Andrejs: I have been in bologna from beginning and would feel personally if it fails. It could be expected, while change structures, and laws, just order and things start happening. My feeling about internal QA, is that people have not heard about ESG, but if they would they would understand that it is good to try to work differently but along the same lines.

Ray: One gets the impression that in many institutions in Europe now people' s notions of good practice is from what they have been doing up till now. People seem not to want let go of what they think. 12 years and very little change. Changes like this take 40 years.

Andrejs: Problem is that wish to move ahead is too strong. HEI are told that it is necessary to implement LO, they don't see that LO should be linked to assessment, linked to quality. Even those that work as mediators don't read till the end.

Lubica: People of HEI are interested about teaching, research. There is not enough people process oriented, not enough people in capacity of managers, teachers and researchers have to be experts in quality assurance. Its question of managers to implement policy documents among teachers, students, everybody.

Alberts: People don't realize for quality assurance and project management special skills are needed. People think we are experts in education, medicine, that's enough. When we try to establish something – we already have too many administrators in HEI.

Catherine: And then the question, who authorises what, who mandates, who makes the decision, yes we have implemented it. One of the issues with this project is that we take policy documents that come with assumptions that come with the vision on higher education that needs to be interpreted at different levels of organization. Perhaps our interpretation of what implementation means is not as theirs. Whose vision we are implementing?

Andrejs: For stocktaking reports the situation was different. 1st report was sent to the bologna members mainly working at ministries. Some answers were too sweet. Starting from the 2nd we provided an idea of - by whom we want the report to be filled in by describing the stakeholders, with respondents coming from different levels. In Latvia we organized national seminars to introduce Latvia' s answer.

Claudia: It is also about the capacity to gather data and do the reporting. At HEI' s in USA there are offices of institutional research. Europe is more decentralized towards faculty. The policy is more that of the faculty. The pressure to report and gather data is increasing, it will be necessary to develop such capacity.

Ray: That change is coming from American business schools. Lot of assumptions-are based on business process reengineering, benchmarking, notion of standards and guidelines- this is basic language of business processes. The centralized model can change very quickly.

Alberts: We are moving into conceptual discussion.

12:00 Presentation and discussion on theoretical background for WP's (see presentation).

Don: We tried to give the necessary underpinning for discussing those research questions, starting with going back to what is our research problem, barriers, recommendations for modifications of ESG. Therefore we have three types of questions: which are barriers? Which are the elements of the ESG that are at stake at these barriers? If we see the barriers as policy arena where different actors are meeting, behaving and can transfer ESG from Bologna to their system level. Each of interfaces is a possible barrier. What results as research questions that have to be asked? There is a number of approaches. The first question is covered by implementation staircase with different levels and actors as possible barriers, for the second question - elements of ESG are tried to be mapped to our WP by Alberto and Amelia. For the behavior of actors the approaches are more or less sociologically oriented approaches but also empirical. We have external and internal barriers. I would like to add administrative side [to academic, state, stakeholders] which plays role in the quality assurance. The interfaces show where potential barriers could be found. Within the HEI the main interface is academic vs.administrative on different levels. The only barrier that our project is not that much focused on is the national vs. European. The people that have to work with ESG (e.g. have to formulate LOs) at departmental level such as professors, might have read ESG, but the question remains how much do they read – another possibility of interpretation or misinterpretation here. Are all standards addressed in our WPs? How the actors are really acting – it is easy to get too ambitious for this project considering e.g. what the importance of different academic tribes and territories is. It is important to realize that people have the different principles of action (academics vs. administrators, people from different disciplines etc.). The process itself has some characteristics-we ask for compatibility and not for conformity. We agreed to elaborate the theoretical foundation further and add a few things that are still missing, but whatever will came will not be revolutionary. What we have this morning is more or less a stable base from which we can work.

Ray: Last issue: what are the indicators of effect? What are the indicators that show this has been achieved-the implementation? Who decides what the implementation is and what are the indicators that it has been effected? Can we assume that the guidelines tell us enough what the effective implementation means? Who says they are good practice?

Jan: It’s not about personal judgment. It’s about the respondent stating it’s a good practice.

Alberts: When reviewing question from WP if we see positive answers [is there that? is it working?] we might suggest this might be a good practice. But before we include it we would ask the respondent if he considers it to be a good practice.

Claudia: From methodological point of view I wonder whether we should ever mention that phrase. We should elicit a response in that we have to make judgment if it’s a good practice. We can bias the response, we are inducing the response and people will be obliged to answer. “What is working” is a better formulation and then we make a judgment.

Alberts: The question is just to verify, but also to oblige the person to defend this example as good practice if necessary.

Alena: Maybe one way would be to ask in each country the HEI to elaborate a case study of good practice and the national expert would choose one at national level.

Ray: We asked once about good practice-nobody said anything, were very humble. We changed question to “have you made any interesting changes and why?”

Jan: This is unbiased then.

Don: But it doesn’t answer the question of effectiveness?

Ray: Why anybody would make change (assume make more effective)? Bologna is about saving money.

Heather: I wonder – the definition on quality is important, reputation feeds into it.

Don: There is the agreement to include stakeholders, do we need to have single definition?

Claudia: We have ESG and we check it against. When redrafting the research questions we have to make sure the ESG is covered.

Ray: Our WP on Access – ESG is not about access.

Jan: We added some aspects taking care at the same time to keep the project manageable.

Liudvika: We will be accountable at the end by ESG.

Lubica: We should not take ESG as dogma.

Catherine: There is a related issue about the utility of outomes of the project – we will be making recommendations about further work on implementation of Bologna across the EU. I would expect to expand our research to include other issues.

Jan: Do you think at the end of the day we should get something like ESG part1 version 2.0.

Liudvika: I don't think we can do credibly a new version, but recommendation.

Catherine: Who the outputs of this project can be valuable to? We might elaborate a set of recommendations that operate at different levels.

Alberts: We should see different time-marks. Before we start each the WP we might change questions, another time-mark is after we have seen results we can start making recommendations. I don' t see much possibility to change WP5.

Jan: In light of material you should considering rephrasing questions of WP5.

Don: We might revisit the research questions after first experiences. Not radically.

Catherine: Absolutely. We need the flexibility.

Alberts: We have 4 institutions to visit, for each question at least 2 respondents, and have respondents in reserve. I am not happy about visiting same respondents the same time.

Alberto: Unless we decide the ESG doesn't make law to us, we should cover all ESG.

Ray: This is policy transfer study. Barrier 1 is non engagement, 2- engaging but misinterpreting, reculturing etc.

Alena: The management should know about that, the staff not always needs to know everything.

Ray: LO and assessment strategies have to be at lowest level-the level of practice. If there is disengagement between QA managers and practitioners-there is a problem. Another issue – the data we gather will take different forms, e.g. in our package it will take quantitative form. What software system we will be using for alleviated input/output. Think about data analysis software. We would need a database that is searchable and accessible. Many use Oracle. And data analysis software.

Claudia: The input- the raw data - the transcripts will be in Word. The treatment will be national. My interviews will be in Portuguese.

Ray: Is everyone able to use NVivo? It can be complicated to learn it.

Alberts: If you do the interview by yourself you need not to register in Portuguese.

Ray: We need a protocol, on how data will be gathered, stored, shared. Who and when will do what.

Claudia: The raw data will not be shared, the analysis will be shared and for reporting we have template.

Helena: The agency argues that the use of national language is important.

Ray: Maybe in two years we realize that there is another cut of this data that we need, so we might need to go back to data stored in Prague, so how the data will be stored?

Heather: I ’ d like the book to consider in a broader manner the various aspects the authors are interested in. So I expect that several authors would like to interrogate the data in another way.

Claudia: However you will not have knowledge of Portuguese language to analyze. If its quantitative date, we built data base and used it even after the project ended. We had it in Excell. When it comes to qualitative interview data, there is a language barrier. We should agree about the same coding tree, conceptual framework.

14:00 WP5 questions and discussion (Alberts Prikulis)

Alberts: I would like to repeat about deadlines. It is expected that each beneficiary will spend 40 or 50 full day’s work during the period of this work-package. We have to end the comparative analysis by 5 months - end of July. I ask you humbly to send the national studies by end of May, week or so earlier to prepare a review for Glasgow. Now about research questions in WP5-we did not change the questions. There are sub-questions/remarks to almost each of the research question. We have added the questions to the template sent in. By actors we see persons/departments responsible for answering the question. The instruments used (phone call, visit), the effects- the results.

Liudvika: Why don’t we have it for all report but for each question?

Alberts: When we take the WP we make a sort of matrix we mark the actors we will be questioned and think whether we will ask those actors one or other questions as well. That doesn’t change our attitude to concrete question.

Liudvika: We will be doing document analysis, there will be no respondents.

Alberts: The document is the result of somebody’s work, the person is responsible to have it uptodate, if we take something from the internet we have to verify its validity.

Catherine: This is a qualitative analysis.

Claudia: We decided in Prague that there will not be any interviews.

Jan: Each party for the WP will need some interview to check the understanding of the document/subject. If you are sure about the interpretation - go on.

Helena: We should not be too strict. The documents in different countries can be of different quality, websites are sometimes of not so good quality.

Ray: We need a coding protocol. Does the WP produces coding?

Liudvika: I suggest one coding tree –uniform across WP. Not realistic for all packages.

Alberts: We shall do that for WP6-WP12.

Ray: The analysis has still to be presented in a uniform way.

Agnese: That’ s why we introduced the smaller sub-questions/remarks to each of the question. To make a point of reference for making the analysis at the end.

Alberto: What do you call instruments?

Alberts: This is according to the template- the research methodology.

Don: The template is about the policy so that would be instruments of policy, barriers to policy.

Catherine: Many of those questions imply a lot of additional work.

Liudvika: My proposal is not to use the template.

Alberto: It is hard to define the questions before the conceptual questions are agreed upon.

Claudia: We had an agreement in Prague that WP5 was different, no time to go to institutions thus it will be mainly a descriptive WP. Today we would then agree how to do the questions in relation to common conceptual framework.

Alberts: I agree totally. Therefore we should not analyze the policy at all levels. The document on the website might have mistakes. Therefore we shall check its up-to-datedness. And that's it.

Don: We select our institutions, we can ask them. But the template is useful to answer whole WP, but not for every question.

Alberts: The template is for registering the answers that will be later used for the analysis.

Helena: The template will be in national language.

Alberts: This will help to analyze the institutions.

After lunch

Alberts: Question one is as in application.

Jan: What do you mean by "Is it a seprate policy"?

Alberts: It could be a chapter on quality assurance under some major policy document.

Claudia: Why to mention the availability of policy document in major EU languages? Is it common to have policy document at institutional level in English?

Alberts: Institutions participate in Erasmus – the policy documents in English provide for a trustful cooperation.

Don: What are the conclusions from that information that we can draw for our project?

Andrejs: It can help for us later as information, we probably do not use it in analysis.

Alberts: Question 2.

Don: We should make sure that we meet the standard with guidelines.

Andrejs: Whether in the state law there is a prescription for internal quality assurance system. I think it is a different system if it is predicted or made by own choice.

Jan: Is it of relevance for the countries involved [is there any country with such strict policy?]

Don: Could be. It is an interesting research question.

Alberts: Here you can see the sub-questions we ask for the question No5.

Agnese: The questions are very general. To make comparison we need some common aspects to analyse.

Catherine: What does the ESG says on this question?

Don: It just says.. there has to be statement on relationship.. And whether it's understood the simple way or the sophisticated way - it is going to be very revealing in our comparative analysis, what do institutions understand by such a guideline.

Claudia: I suggest not subdividing in sub-questions.

Ray: Maybe we just don't go deeper.

Heather: This is survey of internal quality system going through the documents. From each country you should get quoted various bits from documents -basically series of statements.

Ray: I think it is better to rephrase the questions that start with "Does.." with "How does the policy.."?

Catherine: No8 doesn't fit conceptually – need more to answer than document analysis.

Ray: Let' s rephrase it "How would they know.."

Claudia: Why don' t we move it to the WP12?

Don: But here we look at what the institution is doing.

Jan: We wanted each WP to have connection with secondary education.

Catherine: Question No7 already contains the secondary education. No8 is more complicated.

Heather: Can I argue against moving No8? It is useful to see the evidence.

Catherine: Policy is about the intent not the result.

Alberts: Let's vote for moving the Question No8 to WP12. ->moving. We should answer the main questions (in bold) but use the supplementary questions as guidelines for creating those answers.

Jan: Maybe we shall add good practices?

Don: The good practice will depend on comparative analysis.

Jan: We should add an introduction on institutions we are reviewing.

Claudia: It will be in the overall report.

Final version of WP5 questions.

1. **Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place?** If not, why? Does the policy at national level prescribe the creation of internal quality assurance system? Is the institutional QA policy a separate policy? What is it based upon (learning outcomes, qualification of staff, equipment)? Is there an explicit reference to ESG? To what degree it is accessible publicly? In what major EU languages is it available?
2. **How does the policy involve the organisation of the quality assurance system?** If yes, please describe. Who is the person responsible?
3. **How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organisational units?**
4. **How does the policy address the involvement of students?** If not, why? Is there a requirement for students to be involved in the preparation of self-evaluation reports? If yes, in what status (observer, expert, member of a governing body?) Is there a requirement for students to be involved in decision-making as an outcome of evaluation? Who selects and appoints the representatives of students?
5. **How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research?** To what extent is research considered as a quality criterion of the institution and its structural units/employees/students? Are there specific incentives (e.g. financial) to promote the importance of teaching/research quality of staff and structural units?
6. **What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and revision?** Is the implementation mainly top-down or bottom-up? Is it

monitored continuously or sporadically (e.g. as part of an external evaluation)?

7. **How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?** Are there any activities directed to schools and pupils and aimed to enhance quality of secondary education? Please give examples of activities.
8. ~~**How would chairs of secondary education institutions know about this policy and what is the policy impact on secondary education institutions?**~~ ~~Do you have any data to indicate the impact on quality of secondary education? Do you have any data on increase of graduates of the secondary education to institutions/faculties having such a policy?~~ **[MOVED to WP 12]**

General commentary on these questions:

We should answer the main questions (in bold) but use the supplementary questions as guidelines [not obligatory] for creating those answers. The guiding principle is that we are looking for statements, almost certainly supported by quotes from policy documents, and not for implications or data about implementation effects. Reports should include an introduction on data collection methodology/activities and the institutions analyzed should be mentioned.

Claudia: Is it possible to meet in London as there are no direct flights to Glasgow from PT? To organize the seminar in airport friendly town?

Catherine: It would cost a fortune to hire a room.

Heather: Please try Edinburgh for flight connection.

Liudvika: CHEPS will organize the seminar in Harlem, to save the participants the ride by train to Twente.

Helena: It is up to national teams. As well as the responsible country should examine the best time to organize the seminar. It is not necessary to keep up to the seminar date' s written in the project application.

Claudia: Meeting on Tuesday morning steals another working day.

Ray: Using rooms on Sundays – there are security issues; we have to pay a double rate.

Claudia: Do you really need to meet over two days? We might meet those 2 hours on the Monday.

Helena: I suspect we will not receive an answer from agency before we hand in evaluation report. We were told that it is possible to meet on one day if we arrange in advance with the agency, but the agency warned us not to send separate questions.

Heather: This is risky – the Commission might want us to return funding.

WP6

Ray: ESG doesn't contain word- access. "Access" implies progression; the students or special target groups should not only access, but continue studies. SSI: semi-structured interviews, Data: possibly information can be derived from policy documents and hard data. In this package we might look for trends and patterns.

Claudia: Some countries have different types of secondary education and this is an important defining characteristic of different cohorts and access "issues".

Ray: The countries might say: we have this cohort as an issue in our country. Women in engineering could also be an interesting cohort. By question "what is done" we are asking about how institutions manage and use data, not for the data itself. Quality assurance is a form of risk management. A quality regime should know what the risks are, where there may be problems, and use data to identify and mitigate risks. Do you have the statistics and if you do – do you use them to lessen the risk of e.g. losing the students?

Claudia: What was the motivation for the inclusion of this work-package in the project?

Helena: Because “access” was perceived as a key component of quality. “Access” is implicity involved in ESG, but is not mentioned.

Don: As Andrejs said: the social dimension of Bologna is becoming increasingly important.

Heather: I believe the new version of ESG will have something on access in it.

Catherine: Do people change information on basis of collected data?

Don: Question No4- What are perceived to be the main drivers of change? We are interested in maybe that Bologna process is one of the drivers?

Ray: Question No6 –e.g. some institutions have Vice-rectors for internationalization. The responsibility might be internal and external.

Claudia: In the UK “fairness” is the responsibility of the institution, but in other countries (e.g. Portugal) this is perceived more as the responsibility of the state. This question might be problematic because institutions don't necessarily have responsibility, instead access can be defined by law in some countries. Therefore we should excise “fair” from question No6.

Don: Access to what exactly? Programmes? First cycle, second cycle, third cycle?

Claudia: We need all cycles. All research seems about undergraduates, but difference lies within postgraduate. This is where difference between research and non-research university lies, this is where the money issues come. However it is a huge task. However, the second and third cycles are the locus of many of the quality issues and challenges that are most complex at the moment.

Heather: Addressing all the cycles might be extremely complex and we might not have the resources to consider all the cycles. Why don’t we think of another project of researching the postgraduates?

Catherine: What about dealing with the diverse nature of institutions/programmes? We can't create a complete dataset and so we must be explicit about the limitations in our research methodology.

Helena: But the second cycle is very important.

Liudvika: Another thing is the diversity of master programs, we can get in deep, deep forest.

Catherine: We shall consider only first cycle, but report to the Agency that we need to consider cycle two and three with additional funding.

Amelia: Standard No6 would fit with that - information systems and awareness.

Ray: We should change question No2 to be more explicit about the profile of students at the institution.

Catherine: From a methodological perspective, this work-package is probably relatively straightforward, similarly like WP5 and will include discussions with two or three key actors in the institution (e.g. head of registry, head of quality etc.).

Final version of WP6 questions.

1. What is the institutional policy on access? To what extent does your

institutional policy align with national policy? How is information made available to the secondary sector?

2. What data do you collect on offers/enrollments/non-completion/graduates? Within the student profile of your institution, can you disaggregate this data to provide information on different cohorts (e.g. mature learners, learners with disabilities, different ethnic groups)?
3. What is done to support the admission and progression of distinct cohorts of students? How does this vary by academic programme? Distinct cohorts might include:
    - Lower socio-economic groups
    - From ethnic minorities
    - Non-native language speakers
    - Mature students
    - Students with disabilities
4. How has the pattern of enrollments changed in the last decade (by academic programme/cohort)? What are perceived to be the main drivers of change?
5. Have any of these developments altered the approach to the way that your university manages quality?
6. Where does responsibility lie for ensuring and monitoring access?
7. Are there any problematic issues surrounding access and quality in your system?

WP 7

Jan: In this WP we really wanted to keep the number of questions under 10, to make it manageable even though there is so much to reflect upon. Some questions are extended by keywords to guide you (not obligatory).

Andrejs: The notion of learning outcomes is the most important, so we might make it a separate question.

Jan: It is just a question of structure – whether we make it separate or leave as part of another. In any of these cases we will need to answer it.

Ray: Within the quality system around the assessment the most important thing is the extent to which the assessment improves student learning- that is the key transformation that the assessment is not just about measuring the achievement, but it is part of the process of learning. For that purpose the most crucial is feedback.

Don: You have to be more explicit what you mean by “diagnostic, formative, summative”.

Catherine: It would be interesting to find out the institutional policy on feedback- the national definition of the word. E.g. in Montenegro “feedback” is understood as student evaluation of programs.

Jan: First cycle only or all cycles?

Catherine: The student assessment and feedback policy covers the student body in general, without making the distinctions.

Alberts: Basically it is the culture in each faculty as it is established and it does not matter which cycle the student is in. If you want to know procedures students can be unreliable respondents.

Catherine: However it would be interesting to know how do students perceive the assessment and if the feedback has helped them to improve their learning.

Ray: On what basis will you choose students that are going to answer the questions? These questions seem to be covering too broad an area, including student evaluation of their experience as well as student assessment (student assessment policy and the real assessment).

Claudia: We talk about the student leaders that sit on boards of Student Unions, not any students. It is the same with staff members – you will not interview the “random” staff, but the responsible members. It is a methodological approach that can be done in three years with so many WP.

Don: Do we find evidence, that students have been influencing this or that.

Alberto: The European students are far better organized than the academics and the rectors.

Alena: One should not ask for the personal opinion, but ask for what is the opinion of his fellow students.

Liudvika: It depends also on Student Union, some of them are representing the official point of view- very well organized.

Alberts: WP7 still has some time to reformulate the questions and we can all contribute by rethinking the questions in other WPs. It is still unclear whether all of the questions currently in this WP should stay there. Maybe some of them could be integrated in other WPs.

Final version of WP7 questions.

1. What is the institutional policy on student assessment and feedback?
2. How are student assessment procedures appropriate for their purpose (diagnostic, formative, summative) and for measuring the intended learning outcomes?
3. How are student assessments made according to the rules by qualified personnel? To what extent are the assessments dependent on the judgement of a single examiner?
4. Do student assessment procedures have clear criteria for:
    - Marking?
    - Informing students on the type, method and criteria for assessment?
    - Student absence or illness?
    - Student class participation?
    - Exam enrolment?
5. How are student assessment procedures subject to administrative verification checks?
6. How do assessment procedures reflect student's knowledge and skills gained at the secondary education level?
7. How are the requirements of HEIs for HE entrance examinations/procedures reflected by secondary education institutions?
8. What are the ways of student involvement in institutional quality assessment processes in general (e.g. in assessing quality of tuition, services, infrastructure)?
9. Are there any examples of good practice, or on the other hand, especially problematic issues concerning quality and students in your institution?

Introductory meeting for the writers of the book.

Heather: As already decided in Prague we will publish the book with Sense publishers. We clearly are not going to sell book that is tied in tightly with the ESG. The working title that I suggest is: “Barriers to achieving quality in HE”. The length of the book is 70 to 75 000 words. We will have to keep up to that amount of words as it is connected with costs. It would be useful to have 10 writers, 7000 words per each of them- a reasonable lenght. There should be one author from a country; so far have agreed to contribute- Don, Jan, Helena, Alberto, Ray, Cath, me, Ewa, somebody from Latvia. I haven't heard anything from Slovakia.

Lubica: Are you going to have only 7 authors or there might be several?

Heather: I always end up rewriting chapters that are not written by native English speakers. You can have joint chapters.

Lubica: Can we have several authors and an editor per national country?

Heather: I will be the overall editor. You can have several authors of the chapter.

Don: Heather needs a contact person now.

Heather: Some of you would like to have the chapters connected to what we are doing in the project. We have to keep in mind that this is not going to be a report, but an interesting book. I wonder if Don would be interested in writing about the nature of barriers. What should be done next: I would need people to send me working titles with authors named, probably with a short overview on the contents of the chapter. I will be working on the book proposal and I will have to feed in the working titles to the publisher. If you would chew it over the next month and let me know. We probably will discuss in June, I will need to finalize it soon after that. I will need to have a shape of the book and we will see whether there are any gaps. At the moment I want to do an overview chapter.

Ray: 3 sections, 1) conceptual framework, 2) thematic, 3) illustrative case studies.

Heather: Case studies might not fit the concept of this book, but we could discuss it.

Liudvika: Each chapter – approx. 15 pages and 5 pages of references.

Heather: Helena would like the book to be ready to finish in the end of third year. I would need 3 months before that. April 2013 should be the final date for the chapters to come in. We should finish by December 2013.

Cont. March 8, 9.00

Jan: I will provide You with addition to theory bits-used as annex. A more detailed instrument typology that can be used will be written down. Within two weeks I will send extended theory bits+tools to everybody.

Alberts: Let' s look at the Slovakia' s document, where it is discussed where to go with each question.

Alberto: We mix 2 kinds of instruments: policy instruments and methodology instruments. The policy instruments depict the policy you want to implement; those could be incentives, senate decisions etc. Methodology instruments are used to collect information, basically research instruments.

Don: We would need then two templates.

Jan: One could rephrase and use "methods" instead of "instruments".

Alberts: Is it useful to apply snowball sampling if we are going to interview the responsible people?

Don: There is a difference between informal and formal organization, therefore snowball sampling can be useful.

Lubica: We could prepare manual in which we identify who is responsible for what, ways how to inform internal/external stakeholders, ways to disseminate information at the institution.

Alberts: Once one will want to start collect data, a list of people to visit for each WP would be necessary.

Alena: To some questions the target groups are different, for some they are the same. In every country they are different; we do not want to prescribe who should be interviewed. We have specified 3 target groups. The proposed methodology is according to target group' s characteristics. Thus we would use questionnaire for academics.

Lubica: We don't know your case, it means it's up to you to decide how to proceed.

Alberts: We need general guidelines; the whole set of persons to question. The respondents might repeatedly be the same for questions in other WPs. I suggest- to have developed a common framework during Glasgow meeting.

Lubica: We shall first experience WP5, and then start doing.

Alberts: I suggest creating the list of possible respondents after having sent in the national report.

Lubica: We should be flexible to change.

Helena: However it is difficult to think so many years ahead. The Czech Republic is preparing Act on Higher Education. The intention of the current government is to push it hard to adopt it by next year. We are clear now about WP5. We shall do this for the upcoming work packages, but not for each of them-let' s say for one year' s work packages.

Don: WP6 should be crystal clear by meeting in Glasgow, so those would be packages 7, 8, 9.

Helena: Yes, we definitely would not like to question same people several times; that would make them hate us.

Alberts: Do we agree that in about 1 month' s time we start preparing the list for packages 7, 8, 9. In the end of April we should have a clearer idea about the frame we will be dealing with.

Jan: The new conceptual framework is already on IBAR website.

Heather: Please send it by email, at least as a link.

Ray: In terms of our work with partner institutions. Did we agree to go once per year to institutions?

Helena: In any case we need to have the upcoming work packages done on time. The agency has not let us prolong the deadlines.

Alberts: In a week's time could I get info on HEI' s that are decided to visit?

Ray: Can we expect to have all questions ready after June?

Don: I hope so. This will limit our visits to the HEI.

Heather: We shall decide upon the project information dissemination measures. There are several conferences which could be used for informal informing of people about our project (no publication). Here the list with people who might do the dissemination:

- Annual ENQA Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Seminar, 16-17 June 2011, Helsinki, Finland (Alberto);
- The 2011 CHER annual conference: "What are the prospects for higher education in the 21st century? Ideas, research and policy", Reykjavík, 23-25 June 2011

- 36th International Conference „Improving University Teaching", July 19-22,2011, Bielefeld, Germany (Ray)
- EAIR 33rd Annual Forum 2011; "Bridging cultures, promoting diversity: higher education in search of an equilibrium", Warsaw, Poland, 28-31 August 2011 (Ewa)
- Heather is invited to go to Brussels in summer to exchange the experience with EUA that works on improving the ESG

Heather: So far we planned to start the seminar in Glasgow at 17:00 on Sunday. We should cover some working questions and then have a nice dinner. Our team suggests looking for flight connections with Edinburgh, as it is only some 50 km from Glasgow. Ryanair spoke of opening up a connection with Porto and Edinburgh/Glasgow in June- this information would be useful to check.

Lubica: It would be nice to have all necessary and important things done by Monday evening.

Heather: Tuesdays are useful for picking up some ideas. If somebody cannot make it to attend the meetings, they cannot.

Helena: Please asap let know the UK team of your possible travel connections so that in case of need the meeting can be arranged on another day.