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## **Procedure for the Selection of the 2023 Ministerial Conference and 2020-2023 BFUG Secretariat Host**

### **Introduction**

This document aims to:

- Outline the role and responsibilities of the country hosting the 2023 EHEA Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat 2020-2023;
- Provide an overview on how the selection of the host for the upcoming EHEA Ministerial Conferences was handled in the past;
- Inform about the deadline for submitting applications to host the 2023 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat 2020-2023 and the time frame of the selection process;
- Outline a voting procedure for choosing the host for the next Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat in case more than one application is presented.

### **Role and responsibilities of the country hosting the upcoming 2023 EHEA Ministerial Conference and the BFUG Secretariat 2020-2023**

The host of the 2023 Ministerial Conference and 2020-2023 BFUG Secretariat is expected to provide the necessary logistical and financial support to ensure the successful organisation of such an event. This includes the following minimum requirements:

- Conference room fitting at least 100 ministerial delegations, with each delegation having a maximum of 5 participants;
- Simultaneous interpretation for participants<sup>1</sup>;
- Rooms for bilateral meetings and parallel sessions;
- Meals and local transport throughout the conference for all members of the ministerial delegations.

In connection with the Ministerial Conferences, a Bologna Policy Forum (BPF) was organised in 2009 (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve), 2010 (Vienna), 2012 (Bucharest) 2015 (Yerevan) and 2018 (Paris). It is foreseen that a Global Policy Forum will take place in 2020 (Rome). It is foreseeable that another such Forum will be held in conjunction with the 2023 Ministerial Conference.

The country hosting the 2023 Ministerial Conference and the 2020-2023 BFUG Secretariat acts as Vice-Chair of the Bologna Process / European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Vice Chair's role is to ensure continuity within the rotating Bologna Process / EHEA Co-Chairing system, in which the two BFUG Co-Chairs change every semester. The chairs (Vice-Chair and Co-chairs) have to give the necessary political impetus to the whole process. The division of tasks between the Co-Chairs and the Vice-Chair is defined at the beginning of their mandate by each chairing team.

<sup>1</sup> See annex 6 of the [BFUG Rules of Procedure 2018-2020](#): Language regime for Ministerial Conferences

The host of the 2023 Ministerial Conference is expected to maintain the BFUG Secretariat for the period 2020-2023, between the two Ministerial Conferences. The BFUG Secretariat should provide neutral support to further the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area under the authority of the BFUG.<sup>2</sup>

## Historical overview

Following the call to host the EHEA Ministerial Conference for 2009, three proposals were submitted to the BFUG Secretariat by December 2005 from the Benelux countries, Croatia and the Slovak Republic. The candidate countries wrote to Finland, as incoming Chair of the BFUG, asking to organise a voting process amongst the BFUG members to elect the host country for the 2009 Ministerial Conference. The Finnish Minister asked the BFUG to define a selection mechanism and, as a result, a voting system was developed for the BFUG meeting in Helsinki (12-13 October 2006).

For the following Ministerial Conference in 2010 (Budapest – Vienna Ministerial Anniversary Conference) one application was submitted jointly by Austria and Hungary. Similarly, for 2012 one country (Romania) expressed its interest and submitted an application to host the 2012 Ministerial Conference in Bucharest. Moreover, for 2015 again one country (Armenia) expressed its interest and submitted an application to host the 2015 Ministerial Conference in Yerevan. In each of these cases the BFUG agreed on the applications submitted, and therefore no voting procedure was initiated. For the 2018 Ministerial Conference, France and Georgia submitted applications in November 2014 to the BFUG Secretariat. Georgia withdrew its application before the BFUG meeting in January so that France remained the only candidate as host of the Ministerial Conference in 2018. In the BFUG meeting in Malta in May 2017, the application of Italy to host the 2020 Ministerial Conference was received and approved.

Looking at the existing precedents, it is customary that candidatures for hosting the EHEA Ministerial Conferences are submitted following a call for proposals launched at BFUG meetings, usually in the second half of the year preceding the year in which the new host is starting its term. The application letters are received by the BFUG Secretariat and are subsequently forwarded to the BFUG Co-chairs and Vice-chair and circulated before the BFUG meetings in which a decision is made on this matter. Candidatures should also include the hosting of the BFUG Secretariat as part of their expression of interest. The BFUG Secretariat should provide neutral support to further the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area under the authority of the BFUG.

## Timeframe for the selection of the 2023 Ministerial Conference host

The decision regarding the host of the 2023 Ministerial Conference is expected to take place at the Rome Ministerial Conference 2020. In its meeting in Helsinki in November 2019, the BFUG decided the timeframe for the selection of the 2023 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat host.

**The Bologna Process/EHEA Members interested in hosting the 2023 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat should send their application letter to the Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat no later than 15 March 2020.** The letter should be signed by the Minister responsible for higher education. The country expressing its interest to host the 2023 Ministerial Conference should also host the BFUG Secretariat for the period 2020-2023, between the two Ministerial Conferences.

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<sup>2</sup> More information in the [Terms of Reference of the BFUG Secretariat 2018-2020](#)

The BFUG Secretariat will then forward the letters to the BFUG Chairs and circulate them to the BFUG members at least two weeks prior to the 2020 BFUG meeting in Split (May 2020) The selection process will be then finalised during the Split BFUG meeting for the endorsement by the Ministers in Rome.

<b>Time frame</b>	<b>The selection process</b>
November 2019 BFUG Meeting in Helsinki	Decision on timeframe and procedure for selection of 2023 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat host.
15 March 2020	Deadline for submitting applications to the BFUG Secretariat
25 March 2020	Deadline for the BFUG Secretariat to circulate the candidatures to the BFUG Chairs
20 April 2020	BFUG Secretariat circulates the candidatures to the BFUG members (min. two weeks prior to the next BFUG meeting)
27 April 2020	EHEA members not attending the May BFUG meeting submit their votes in a sealed envelope to the BFUG Secretariat
4-5 May 2020 BFUG meeting in Split	Finalising the selection procedure for the host(s) of the 2023 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat 2020-2023. The host(s) will be finally endorsed by the EHEA Ministers responsible for higher education at the 2020 Rome Ministerial Conference.

### **Proposal for the selection procedure of the host country for the 2023 EHEA Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat 2020-2023**

In the case that only one application for hosting the 2023 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat is received, the BFUG may endorse the selection without further procedures.

In the case that two or more candidatures are submitted to host the 2023 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat 2020-2023, the election process will follow the voting procedures described below.

#### **Voting procedure for the next Ministerial Conference in case of more than one application**

The voting procedure proposed is based on the procedure set up for the selection of the host of the Ministerial Conference in 2009.

#### **Election procedure**

- Eligible to vote: All full BFUG country members and the European Commission (EC).
- The voting will take place during the Spring 2020 BFUG meeting (Split, 4-5 May 2020). Any country not able to attend the BFUG will have the option of submitting their vote in a sealed envelope to the BFUG Secretariat before the meeting takes place.
- The BFUG participants will carry out any necessary consultation with their Ministers in advance of the BFUG meeting, to ensure they have a mandate to vote. To assist with this, the BFUG Secretariat will circulate the application letters from the countries indicating their willingness to host the Ministerial Conference in the timeframe indicated in the table above.

- No additional information, other than the application letter, will be issued by the countries offering to host the 2023 Ministerial Conference and BFUG Secretariat neither before nor during the May 2020 BFUG meeting.
- Each BFUG member will have two votes; the BFUG Secretariat will provide two ballot slips each for this purpose.
- The ballot will be secret.
- The outcome will be based on a simple majority of the number of votes cast. In the event of a tie, there will be a second round (see examples below). In the unlikely event of a further tie, the Chairs will draw lots.
- The votes will be counted by the BFUG Secretariat during the BFUG meeting, overseen by two observers. The BFUG participants will be invited to volunteer to act as observers at the beginning of the BFUG meeting.
- The Chairs of the BFUG will write to the Ministers of the countries concerned, to inform them on the outcome of the vote.

#### Example A

Country	Number of votes
Country A	28
Country B	30
Country C	16
<b>Country B is selected</b>	

#### Example B

Country	Number of votes
Country A	28
Country B	28
Country C	18
<b>Second round</b>	
Country A	38
Country B	36
Country C	Withdrawn
<b>Country A is selected</b>	