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Procedure for the Selection of post 2020 Ministerial Conference Host

Introduction

This paper aims to:

- outline the role and responsibilities of the country hosting the upcoming Bologna Process Ministerial Conference;
- provide an overview on how the selection of the host for the upcoming Bologna Process Ministerial Conferences was handled in the past;
- Outline a voting procedure for choosing the host for the next Ministerial Conference in case of several applications.

Role and responsibilities of the country hosting the upcoming Bologna Process Ministerial Conference

The host of the Ministerial Conference 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 participants¹;
- 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), 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 post 2020 Ministerial Conference.

The country hosting the upcoming Ministerial Conference acts as a 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 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.

¹ See annex 6 to BFUG proceedings 2018-2020, Language regime for Ministerial Conferences"

Historical overview

Following the call to host the Bologna ministerial meeting for 2009, three proposals were submitted to the 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 in January so that France remained as 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 discussed.

Looking at the existing precedents, it is customary that candidatures for hosting the Bologna Process 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 Bologna 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.

Proposal for a timeframe for the selection of post 2020 Ministerial Conference

The decision regarding the host of the next Ministerial Conference is expected to take place during the 2020 BFUG meeting in Kyiv (4 -5 March 2020).

The Bologna Process/EHEA Members interested in hosting the next Ministerial Conference should send their application letter to the Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat no later than 15 December, 2019. The letter should be signed by the Minister responsible for higher education.

The Secretariat will then forward the letters to the BFUG Chairs, and circulate them to the members of the BFUG at least two weeks prior to the 2020 BFUG meeting in Kyiv (March 2020).

Time frame	The election process
November 2019 BFUG Meeting Helsinki	Decision on timeframe and procedure for selection of post 2020 Ministerial Conference.
15 December 2019	Deadline for submitting candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference to the BFUG Secretariat
20 December 2019	Deadline for the Secretariat to circulate the candidatures to the BFUG Chairs
20-22 February 2020	Secretariat circulates the candidatures to the BFUG members (min. two weeks prior to the next BFUG meeting)

	EHEA members not attending the next BFUG meeting submit their votes in a sealed envelope to the BFUG Secretariat
March 2020 BFUG meeting in Kyiv	Finalising the selection procedure for the next host(s) of the next Ministerial Conference. 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 next Bologna Process Ministerial Conference

In case only one application for hosting the next Ministerial Conference is received, it will be circulated to the BFUG Chairs and sent to the BFUG members two weeks prior to the BFUG meeting in Kyiv (4-5 March 2020) for further endorsement.

In case two or more candidatures are submitted to host the next Ministerial Conference, the election process would 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 selection of the host of the Ministerial Conference in 2009 .

Election procedure

- Eligible to vote: the European Commission (EC) and all full BFUG country members, with the exception of those offering to host the event.
- The voting will take place during the Spring 2020 BFUG meeting (Kyiv 4-5 March 2020). Any country not able to attend the BFUG will have the option of submitting a bid in a sealed envelope to the Secretariat before the meeting takes place.
- 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 Secretariat will circulate the application letters from the countries indicating their willingness to host the conference in the timeframe indicated in the table above.
- No additional information other than the application letter will be issued by the countries offering for the host of the next Ministerial Conference in either before or during the BFUG meeting.
- Each country/EC will have two votes; the Secretariat will provide two ballot slips 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 Secretariat during the BFUG meeting, overseen by two observers. BFUG participants will be invited to volunteer to act as observers at the start of the BFUG meeting.
- The Chairs of the BFUG will write to the Ministers of the countries concerned, to advise them of the outcome of the vote. This will have the effect of the two countries receiving the least votes withdrawing their offer to host the next Ministerial conference.

Example A

Country	Number of votes
Country A	28
Country B	30
Country C	16
Country B is selected	

Example B

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