

Task Force for establishing a longterm Secretariat

BFUG, Copenhagen, 15 December

Task Force (TF) for establishing a longterm Secretariat

- Based on the results of the previous TF on Rules of Procedures (2022-2024)
- exploration of a **longterm and independent Secretariat**
- no longer rotating as presently
- re its **legal, financial, organisational features, including staffing**
- to be **located in one of the EHEA countries**
- Go-no go decision: BFUG March 2026
- If positive, lay grounds for establishing the SEC by 2027

Agenda today:

1. Report on the work of the TF
2. Presentation on the potential features of the LTS, and identification of open questions, concerns, obstacles – in view of the go-no-go decision at Nicosia BFUG
3. Agree on a short list of hosts for the LTS: choose 3 from 5

Report – Task Force activities

- 9 meetings
- Further development of concept for the Longterm Secretariat (LTS)
- Hosting arrangement
 - Preparation of call for hosts, and evaluation forms
 - Evaluation of the call, review of the submission of 5 applicants
 - Online information session (22 Oct)

Part I: Longterm Secretariat – its functions and features



Legal form:

association, foundation, non-profit company – or other

- Other forms:
 - TR: international entity
 - CZ: part of an existing organisation
- Association – preferred over foundation, non-profit company
- similar framework in different countries (minimum number of members, non-profit, general assembly & executive board ...)
- differences in detail (e.g. minimum number of members: RO 3, DE 7, CY 20)
- Members can join any time
 - Foundation: only founding members; Company: no members
- Easy to establish
 - Foundation requires foundation capital
- Democratic governance easier to establish in an association than a foundation or company

Governance

BFUG oversees the LTS

LTS reports to BFUG - full accountability

no third-party interference

HoLTS & LTS staff

- implement workplan
- follow instructions evolving from BFUG & BFUG Board meeting, and of the Co-chairs
- attend BFUG and BFUG Board
- support working structures etc.
- provide annual technical & financial report

General Assembly

- BFUG members who are part of the association
- Associates
 - Consultative members
 - Countries which cannot join the association
- Observers?

Association Board

- ensures that a) WP is implemented b) SEC is in good state
- BFUG Board - Board members change
- Permanent Board members: Vice-chair, EC, CoE, ESU, EURASHE, EUA
- Committee to be appointed by the BFUG

Align association and BFUG structures as much as possible

- All or most BFUG members are members of the association
- No real difference between BFUG and association assembly
- Formal agreement that association assembly transmits the BFUG's decisions

Costs

Depend on

- Staff cost
 - How many, workload, activities
 - Country: price-level, taxes etc.
 - Salaries competitive at national / European level
- Location/country
 - Some impact on price-level
- Premises
 - All hosts offer premises

Annual budget

Item	Estimated cost (EUR)
Staff salaries (ca. 7 FTE)	675 000
Travel/meeting costs	65 000
Office space	75 000
Other administrative costs	50 000
Total	865 000

Financing the Secretariat

Annual total cost	865 000
EC contribution	250.000
=	615.000
Per BFUG member	13.000

- Lower than the average EQAR fee
- Possibility of adjusting fee to system size/ national income
- EQAR: 4.000-16.000 EUR

Fair cost sharing between BFUG members

- So far: all costs paid by the one member + EC

Annual fee for members of the association

- Fee levels determined by economic situation & size of system

If a country cannot pay?

- Principally, fee levels should be affordable for all countries

Solutions for countries which

- face legal obstacles, e.g. cannot join the association
- can temporarily not contribute

Country does not want to engage in the association, and contribute to the budget

- Not included in decisions concerning the LTS

EQAR fee system

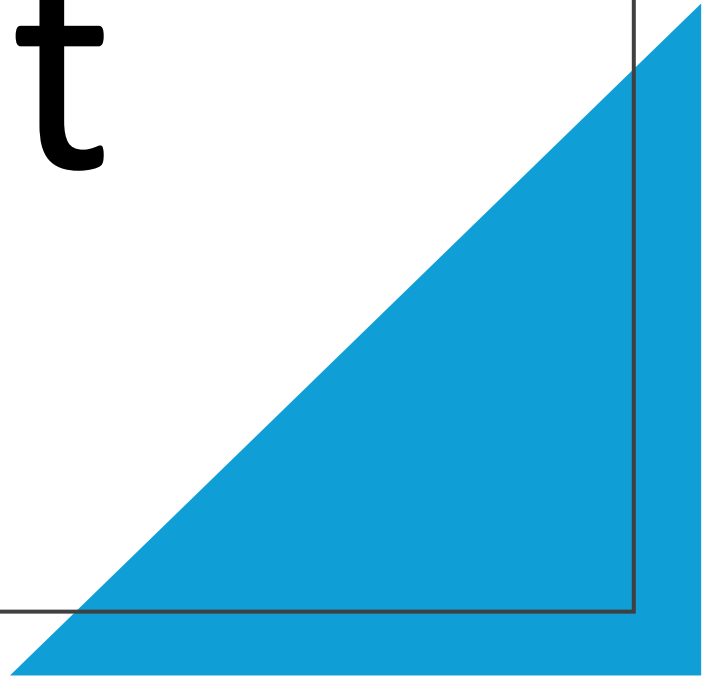
Indicative annual contributions per country (EUR)

Example based on the current EQAR fee system: countries are assigned to one of four brackets based on an index calculated from their GDP (absolute) and GDP per capita. See below and in detail at [https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2024/12/Final EQAR Indexed Governmental Fees 2025.pdf](https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2024/12/Final_EQAR_Indexed_Governmental_Fees_2025.pdf)

Governmental Members

Group per GDP category ²	# of countries per group	Base fee	Fee 2023	Fee 2024	Indexed Fee 2025
Group 1	11	€ 16,740.00	€ 14,949.00	€ 18,304.45	€ 18,935.48
Group 2	8	€ 12,555.00	€ 11,213.00	€ 13,728.33	€ 14,201.61
Group 3	14	€ 8,370.00	€ 7,474.00	€ 9,152.22	€ 9,467.74
Group 4	10	€ 4,185.00	€ 3,737.00	€ 4,576.11	€ 4,733.87
Total		€ 443,610.00	€ 373,723.00	€ 485,067.79	€ 501,790.26

Part II: Hosting arrangement



Role of the host

Hosting must

- **respect & enable the agreed principles for the SEC ([revised concept note](#), BFUG Budapest 2024)**
 - independent, accountable to the BFUG, governed by the BFUG (incl. dismissal of HoS)
 - internationally staffed
 - reception of financial contributions from other BFUG members.
 - country: rule of law, no undue influence of authorities
 - long-term, robust arrangement (sustainable)
 - **support the Secretariat proactively, in particular during its set-up:** provision of legal advice, support finding premises, assist on establishing visa and residence permits; etc.

Hosting is welcome to

- offer in-kind contributions, e.g. office premises
- offer an extraordinary financial contribution (as any BP member)
- delegate staff (in consideration of the RoP, as any BP member)

Hosting must not

- finance the Secretariat
- interfere with its work
- do anything that would jeopardize its independence

Applications & review

So far

Call for applications - deadline 12 June

5 applications received (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, Türkiye)

TF: discussion in view criteria (independence, governance, employment etc.) and feasibility of the legal form

Additional questions to applicants

- further information from all
- specific questions to individual applicants

All documents shared with BFUG

- Applications
- Responses to the additional questions

Opportunities to ask questions to applicants

- Information session 22 Oct
- Written inquiries 13 Nov -10 Dec

- Discussion in the TF
- Each proposal reviewed by 3 reviewers
- All fulfil the principles
 - Independence and Accountability
 - Sustainability
 - Staff requirement
 - Non-profit
- Documents
 - Comparative overview of applications
 - Scores of three reviewers

1 Legal Form

The choice of the legal form is important as it can have implications on the governance and the operation of Long-term secretariat(LTS).

The applicants were invited to

1. explain whether and how an association and a foundation could be established in their national legal system, what would the consequences for the governance and operation of the LTS.
2. indicate other possible legal forms
3. share their views on which of these forms would be preferable and why

	CY	CZ	DE	RO	TR
Preferred legal form	Association (implicit)	Structure within the DZS agency	Association	Association	Entity of international nature
Other legal forms presented	Foundation, Non-profit company	/	Foundation, Non-profit company	Foundation	/
Other legal forms possible (not supported)		Association, Foundation		/	/

- TR: “international organisation/entity”
 - Requires the endorsement of the President of Türkiye
 - Features and conditions similar to an association? “No mandatory governance structures”
 - Council of Higher Education (CoHE) will serve as the Secretariat's interlocutor
- CZ: within a publicly funded, autonomous national agency DZS.
 - LTS not be a legal entity itself.
 - Develop an agreement between BFUG & DZS to ensure independence
 - E.g. BFUG selects Head of LTS - Director of DZS formally appoints

Staff

Price levels

Accessibility

- **Staffing**
 - International staff possible
 - National labour laws
 - Migration rules?
- **Cost & price levels** differ
 - not an obstacle, not a selection criteria
- **International accessibility**
 - Distance to airport
 - Direct connections and their frequency

2.2 Location and accessibility

	CY	CZ	DE	RO	TR
Location	Nicosia	Prague	Bonn	Bucharest	Istanbul
Accessibility	EU non-Schengen	EU Schengen	EU Schengen	EU Schengen	Non-EU
International connectivity index (IATA, 2022) - country, not city	59 th place	55 th place	3 rd place	46 th place	10 th place

International accessibility

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Support & Financial & in-kind contribution

2.3 Support (non-material) from the host

	CY	CZ	DE	RO	TR
Support (non-material)	Assistance with legal registration, support in identification and leasing of appropriate office premises, facilitation of administrative procedures related to staff employment and integration, assistance with translation	DZS employee with relevant language skills will be made available to assist the Secretariat with communication in the local administrative or legal context as needed.	Support services closely related to the actual establishment and registration process of the sponsoring association or foundation are subject to the Legal Services Act, as is the ongoing advice provided to the Secretariat on issues relating to labour, tax and social security law.	Operational and administrative assistance, legal assistance, support in obtaining visas	Administrative support to streamline international hiring, liaison with authorities

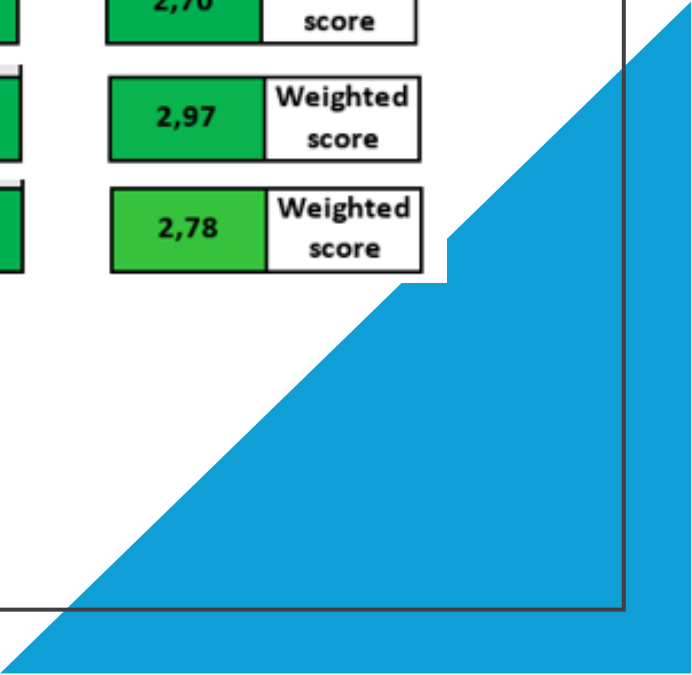
2.4 Financial or in-kind contribution

	CY	CZ	DE	RO	TR
Financial or in-kind contribution	Preferential access to public facilities for meetings and conferences subject to	1-3 fully equipped dedicated offices and meeting rooms.	Office space, IT infrastructure, basic administrative support	Equipped offices offered rent-free, covering the utilities for the offices,	Conference and meeting rooms, technical infrastructure, computer equipment

*Cyprus proposed a contribution in kind (office premises & utility costs), 27 Nov.

Scores of reviewers

Total Cyprus	/	3,00	2,67	3,00	2,67	3,00	2,33	2,33	3,00	2,80	Weighted score
Total Czech Republic	/	2,00	2,67	2,50	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,68	Weighted score
Total Germany	/	2,67	2,67	2,67	2,67	3,00	2,67	2,33	3,00	2,70	Weighted score
Total Romania	/	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	3,00	2,67	3,00	2,97	Weighted score
Total Turkiye	/	2,67	3,00	3,00	2,33	3,00	2,67	2,67	3,00	2,78	Weighted score



Opinion poll

- Each ballot:
 - up to 3 different candidates
 - no rank
- Selection of the 3 candidates
 - highest number of ballots (simple majority)
 - additional ballot between candidates with the same score, if needed

What's next?

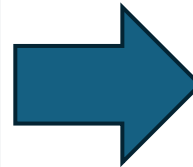
From Copenhagen to Nicosia

Long-term Secretariat

- further develop the concept
- identify and clarify questions
- consider situation of individual countries

Hosting arrangement

- additional information



BFUG Nicosia 9-10 March

Long-term Secretariat

- Decision on whether or not to establish it (Go no Go decision)

Hosting arrangement

- Decision on a hosting country

Your questions & suggestions not much time ...