

**Task Force
on establishing a Long-Term Secretariat
11th Meeting**

15th of January 2026

Online

Minutes of the meeting

List of participants

Country/Institution	First Name	Last Name
EUA (Co-Chair)	Michael	Gaebel
Czech Republic	Michal	Karpisek
Czech Republic (DZS)	Roman	Klepetko
Czech Republic (DZS)	Michal	Uhl
European Commission	Hugo Miguel	Pinto de Abreu
EQAR	Aleksandar	Šušnjar
Iceland (Co-Chair)	Una	Strand Viðarsdóttir
Romania	Luminița	Matei
Germany	Andrea	Herdegen
Germany	Michaela	Böhme
EHEA Secretariat (Head)	Horia	Onița

Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, San Marino and Türkiye were absent.

1. Welcome & Approval of the minutes

The EUA Co-Chair welcomed everyone and introduced the additional representatives from Czech Republic and Germany to the group. The TF acknowledged the minutes from the 9th TF meeting, held in Copenhagen following the BFUG meeting.

The EUA Co-Chair stressed the relevance of those minutes especially for the TF members who did not attend the BFUG meeting, ensuring a broad overview of the discussions related to the following steps to be taken by the TF. They noted that a particular point raised was related to the budget and financing of the LTS, with another point of interest related to the practicalities of establishment. The EHEA Secretariat also pointed out that the BFUG meeting minutes would be circulated in due course.

2. Governance and financial arrangements for the Long-term Secretariat

The EUA Co-Chair recalled the BFUG discussion on establishing the membership fees, briefly presenting the options of fees adjusted according to the size of each country, the option of equal fees for all BFUG members, respectively the question on the possibility for BFUG consultative members to contribute through fees as well. Nonetheless, he emphasised that it would be up to the BFUG to decide on how the EHEA Secretariat would be funded. The Icelandic Co-Chair noted that the TF is expected to provide two membership fee models, one with equal payment

for all member countries, and the other with adjusted fee depending on GDP and GDP per capita (EQAR model).

Regarding the discussions held at the BFUG meeting, the TF considered that the new stage of the process should focus on concrete practical issues for the Go/No-Go decision and the set up of the Secretariat.

In terms of governance, the EUA Co-chair noted that the structures for an association seemed rather clear, however with a pending decision on the format of the Board. The Icelandic Co-chair noted that the issue of the rotating Board members would be problematic and, therefore, another model would be more appropriate. The EHEA Secretariat recalled that some members of the Board are engaged for a longer period, including the European Commission and the Vice Chair, with other members potentially selected by the BFUG. They also highlighted that the association Board could also thus serve as a sub-structure of the BFUG Board.

Czech Republic noted that in the case of Germany and Romania, the organisational model proposed would imply establishing a General Assembly, while for the model proposed by the Czech Republic, there would be no such case. Czech Republic also considered that regardless of the form of organisation, there should be a binding document mandating the payment of membership fees in a form of a statement adopted by the ministers. Czech Republic noted the importance of knowing how to proceed with financing and invoicing to the BFUG members.

Supported by the European Commission, Romania invited the Czech colleagues to suggest ways that would allow public authorities to pay a fee to the Czech national agency, as they could not identify a legal basis in the Romanian law to justify their payment since this would not represent a membership fee or a contribution to an international organisation. Czech Republic clarified that they are funded through various programs, each including their own separate budget lines. Therefore, the EHEA Secretariat budget would not intervene with the finances of other projects conducted by the agency. Czech Republic added that the Head of the Secretariat would have access to the budget information, and a treasurer of the agency would be allocated to handle the EHEA Secretariat matters.

Iceland believed that in their case the transfer would be similar to the situation of paying for projects like Eurostudent. The European Commission acknowledged the complexity from the Czech case and noted that, if the solution is not clear enough, it might raise issues regarding VAT in some member states. The TF invited the Czech Republic to explore possible solutions to the issues raised, to be discussed in the following Task Force meeting. DZS proposed that the BFUG would create an association for collecting the membership fees, which would then be transferred to the national agency, thus reducing bureaucratic work.

Regarding the LTS establishment in the Romanian case, EUA asked whether it was mandatory to have a university as a founding member of the association. Romania clarified that having a university as a founding member was not necessary but would contribute to a quicker establishment, yet it would not have to be the university that later hosts the Secretariat. Romania further clarified that the option of including a university was also considered given that university autonomy is enshrined in the Romanian Constitution and that the higher education community was the final beneficiary of the Bologna Process. The university would be a non-voting member and, if needed, could even withdraw from the association without any implications for the functioning of the Secretariat.

3. Input for the BFUG

The EUA Co-Chair proposed updating the documents and writing a report on the developments since the previous BFUG meeting, to be presented in Cyprus. The Co-chairs asked the TF to address any remaining questions to the applicant countries, so they could prepare the answers for the BFUG meeting. The TF noted that the BFUG members should primarily rely on the documents already provided, but agreed with having short presentations from the candidates.

4. Close and dates of next meetings

The EHEA Secretariat confirmed that the upcoming two meetings were already scheduled, namely on January 21st (16:00 CET) and February 12th (15:30 CET). The EUA Co-Chair noted that further meetings should be scheduled for the preparation of the BFUG meeting, and thanked everyone for their participation.