

**Task Force
on the Long-Term Secretariat
12th Meeting**

21st 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	Roman	Klepetko
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
EHEA Secretariat	Irina	Duma

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

1. Welcome

The EUA Co-Chair welcomed everyone to the online meeting and mentioned that there is only one point on the agenda, namely discussing the Task Force (TF)'s input for the BFUG Board meeting to be organised on the 5th of February 2026.

2. Preparation for the BFUG Board meeting

The EUA Co-Chair invited the Task Force members to comment on the draft report to be presented to the BFUG Board, thanking the European Commission and Romania for their comments sent in advance.

Czech Republic confirmed that they agree with the proposed document and had no comments, suggesting to focus in the meeting on the document to be prepared for the BFUG meeting, which is due on February 23rd, 2026. They also agreed on the previous meeting's proposal to have a 5-minutes presentation at the BFUG meeting from each applicant country (Czech Republic, Germany and Romania) but had some doubts regarding the idea of organising an additional presentation session prior to the BFUG meeting. Iceland agreed that another online presentation session before the BFUG meeting would not be necessary, given that multiple opportunities had been already provided to ask questions to applicants.

The European Commission recalled the pending question on whether it would be problematic for the EC to transfer funds to the Czech Erasmus+ Agency (DZS) and confirmed that from the EC side there would be no issues in this regard. However, he noted that the situation might be different for BFUG members in consideration of their national legislation, which would make it difficult to transfer money to a public authority from another country without a formal arrangement.

Czech Republic noted that, following discussions on the financing issue with the legal department from DZS, the establishment of the Secretariat should be acknowledged on the political level, for example through a Memorandum or the Ministerial Communiqué. They proposed mentioning the host country and the form of organisation of the EHEA Secretariat in the Ministerial Communiqué, thus implying that countries should financially contribute to the operation of the Secretariat. Moreover, for the Czech model a template agreement should be developed, to include the purpose of the financial contributions, the rules and the process. They would provide in writing the details of how this arrangement would function with the Czech National Agency.

The EUA Co-Chair proposed sharing the writing description of this arrangement with the BFUG members. They also noted that neither the Ministerial Communiqué, nor the Memorandum would be a legal document in the strict sense, while some BFUG members may require a legal document for the basis of transferring financial contribution to the Secretariat host. In terms of receiving the financial contribution from the European Commission, the Co-Chair assumed that the Czech National Agency was already in the Commission's beneficiary list and, therefore, an additional legal document might not be needed.

The EUA Co-Chair recalled a potential solution raised in the previous Task Force meeting to have a Consortium agreement or bilateral contracts between the Czech National Agency and each of the BFUG members, even though the latter would create an additional administrative burden and therefore might not be feasible. Iceland confirmed that such an arrangement would indeed add another layer of complexity.

Czech Republic noted that their internal discussions were also around bilateral or consortium agreements but would rather prefer a less bureaucratic arrangement. Romania underlined that the difficulties envisaged with the financial transfer were related to the fact that the Ministerial Communiqué is not a legal binding document according to the international law, meaning that a public institution which is subject to the checks of the Court of Auditors would not have the possibility to transfer funds to another public institution without a formal legally binding arrangement. Romania considered that such an option may imply discussing an intergovernmental agreement, which might take years to conclude because it would need ratification either by the Government or the Parliament.. Another issue addressed was related to the purpose of financial transfer, since it would not follow the logic of a membership fee in an organisation. Romania proposed that the Czech colleagues would further investigate the issue.

Considering that the report of the TF should be delivered to the BFUG Board on time, the Icelandic Co-chair suggested that the issue should remain an open question noted as such in the report, with a solution to be presented by the Czech Republic before the BFUG meeting

The Czech Republic suggested submitting the final Task Force report before the deadline for the BFUG meeting, so that member states would have sufficient time to prepare, given the importance of the document. Iceland noted that it might be possible for some governments to need even four weeks in advance to prepare for the BFUG meeting, therefore the Task Force report should be finalised as soon as possible.

Moving on to the format of taking the decision at the BFUG meeting in Cyprus, the agreement was to propose to the BFUG Board that a vote is conducted for the Go/No-Go decision (including the decision on the fees) and an opinion poll for choosing the host.

3. Closing of the meeting

The EUA Co-Chair closed the meeting and reminded that the upcoming Task Force meeting would take place on February 12th from 15:30 CET, online.