

Minutes of the
9th Task Force on establishing a long-term Secretariat meeting
21st of November 2025, online

List of participants

Nr.	NAME	COUNTRY/Organisation
1.	Michal Karpisek	Czech Republic
2.	Michael Gaebel	EUA, Co-chair
3.	Hugo Miguel Pinto de Abreu	European Commission
4.	Blazhe Todorovski	EQAR
5.	Una Strand Viðarsdóttir	Iceland, Co-chair
6.	András Báló	Hungary
7.	Luminița Matei	Romania
8.	Horia Onița	EHEA Secretariat

Kazakhstan, Italy, San Marino and Türkiye were absent.

The EUA co-chair opened the meeting and informed TF members about the comparative table with the overview of the expressions of interest that had been priorly circulated to the Task Force. He continued with reporting the discussions in the BFUG Board meeting, namely that the Board had expressed their expectation that the TF propose a shortlisting of applications for the BFUG meeting in Copenhagen, as well as the desire to receive more information which should nevertheless be summarised in a format suitable for ministries.

The EUA co-chair noted his explanation to the Board that the TF was prepared to offer more information yet would not propose a shortlisting to the BFUG, which was seconded by the Icelandic Co-chair and Czech Republic. In this sense, Iceland noted that eventually the TF can only provide information since the TF could not intervene in the political decision of the BFUG.

The Secretariat added that in the BFUG Board several members supported both an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the expressions of interest as well as a quantifiable assessment against the criteria in the Call.

The Czech Republic suggested to prepare a table including only the legal formats proposed by the applicants, informing that the Czech ministry clearly rejected the option of establishing an association in the Czech Republic. He also added that the TF could note its opinion that most probably the association is the most feasible legal format while explaining the special case of the legal formats proposed by the Czech Republic and Türkiye.

The European Commission considered that the Task Force should propose an objective technical assessment of the applications against the evaluation criteria, weighing the scores and explaining the process to the BFUG, notwithstanding the right of the BFUG to adopt their own opinion and take the political decision.

Romania supported the intervention of the EC and suggested to follow the procedure in the Call adopted by the BFUG, presenting the aggregate data from the individual reviews conducted by TF members while also explaining the limits of the approach. Romania also emphasised that the TF should respect the criteria adopted by the BFUG in the Call, noting that the Call specifically requested applications for separate legal entities with legal personality, which not all applications respected.

In response, the EUA Co-chair suggested to include more input from the TF in the comparative table beyond the section of the legal format, as well as to provide a shorter overview table on the main criteria. He also added that the BFUG would discuss issues pertaining to governance, membership and finance model before the discussion on the hosting arrangements, thus the TF should make sure that the two topics are addressed separately, while acknowledging that some aspects such as the in-kind benefits might also impact the hosting decision.

The discussion moved to the question on how to present quantifiable information to the BFUG in addition to the comparative table. Supported by Iceland, Czech Republic suggested to prepare a summary table with the main criteria and the assessment in the traffic-light system conducted by the TF based on a proposal from the TF co-chairs. Iceland suggested to ask again Czech Republic and Türkiye to explain how their proposal would comply with the independence principle and submit the answer to the BFUG.

The European Commission, supported by Romania, suggested that the traffic light system should also be translated into a number, thus allowing better differentiation between applications and clarity for the BFUG members. The EC also suggested that an average of the individual opinions of the TF members would be more advisable than seeking to find a consensus in the TF, since the latter would uniformise reviews and might lead to virtual ties between the applications. The EC added that where the individual views had been totally different, the TF might do a second evaluation.

The TF agreed to keep only three colours, with the dark green colour ('exceed expectations') be translated into the green colour ('fully meets requirements'). The assessment would not include financial information, yet the table would still comprise comparison figures and indexes (without actual figures) and in-kind contributions.

The European Commission suggested that the outcome should be an ordered list of the applications to the BFUG, differentiating the applications based on the criteria in the Call and arguing that the TF cannot reject this delegation by arguing on the complexity of the task or lack of information. He also added that financial costs might also play a role in the decision of the BFUG if the difference between applications is minor. In reply, the TF agreed that the table would include both colours in the three-scale (red, yellow, green) and numerical information based on the averages of individual reviews, with the 'dark green' assessments turned into 'green'.

In the end, the EUA Co-chair explained the follow-up steps and the material to be presented to the BFUG: powerpoint presentation, report of the TF, overview with summary and scores and

comparative table annexed, paper for the governance discussion. For the paper, the Co-chairs would revise the previous work of the TF on membership model and finances, including membership fees. The EUA co-chair also noted the facility for the BFUG members to ask additional questions in writing through a form.

The TF agreed that the next meeting would take place on the 16th of December between 14:30 – 15:30 CET, online.