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## **CRITERIA FOR NEW CONSULTATIVE MEMBERS AND BFUG PARTNERS**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

In a letter dated 4 May 2004 to the Norwegian Minister of Education and Research, the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) asked to be recognised as a consultative member in the follow-up structures of the Bologna Process. Later the Secretariat has received supplementary documents. ETUCE was invited as a guest to the Berlin Ministerial Conference.

In a letter to the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the Norwegian Minister of Education and Research dated 14 October 2004, EUROCADRES (The Council of European professional and managerial staff) expresses a wish to be more closely involved in the Bologna Process.

On 1 November 2004 UNICE, the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe, addressed a letter, with a position paper enclosed, to the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science. UNICE sees itself as a stakeholder in major fields of the Bologna Process, hoping their views and suggestions will be fully taken into account as the debate on higher education evolves. UNICE was invited as a guest to the Berlin Ministerial Conference, and also chaired the working group on Bachelors and the European labour market.

In the Board meeting on 13 September 2004, the Secretariat was asked to prepare a short paper on conditions for admission of new consultative members for the December meeting. At the meeting on 25 December, several members of the Board expressed the view that there should not be a significant increase in the size of the decision-making bodies in the Bologna Process. The Board concluded that focus should be on developing the Bologna Process through association rather than new consultative members. The matter was further discussed at the meeting of the Board on 25 January 2005.

In this document, the Secretariat proposes criteria for new consultative members and BFUG Partners (formalising a relation to the BFUG), coming back in the next BFUG meeting with concrete proposals regarding such members and partners based on criteria decided here.

### **2. POSSIBLE LEVELS OF INTEGRATION**

#### **2.1. Consultative membership**

Consultative membership is defined by participation in the BFUG, decided by Ministers. It does not necessarily imply participation in Board meetings. To carry out the task of preparing the BFUG meetings in the best way, the Board should be kept as small as possible.

## **2.2. BFUG Partnership**

It is already good practice that organisations with a particular interest in specific topics are invited to seminars dealing with these topics. Such organisations have also been invited to the Ministerial Conferences. Some of them have now expressed an interest in closer relations to the BFUG. Up to now, consultative membership has been the only formal relation. The BFUG may decide to introduce an additional relation – BFUG Partners – also to cover existing working relationships, such as ENQA and the ENIC-NARIC Networks.

BFUG Partners should

- be listed on the web and on all BFUG mailing lists, thus ensuring them the same information and invitations to seminars as for BFUG members;
- receive invitations to participate as observers to the Bologna Ministerial Conferences.

A partnership implies some kind of mutual responsibility. It would therefore be natural if BFUG Partners invited BFUG representatives to seminars, conferences etc. of relevance to the Bologna Process.

## **3. POSSIBLE CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION**

It is suggested that criteria should focus on added value to the process, relevance of the stakeholder group, representativeness of the organisation and its organisational form.

### **3.1. Added value to the Bologna Process**

Present consultative members are either inter-governmental organisations active in higher education or organisations representing higher education institutions or students. Any new consultative member or partner of the BFUG should give the process an added value, meaning that their contribution should be relevant to the work of the BFUG.

#### 3.1.1 Additional criteria on added value for new consultative members

Any new consultative members should also meet the following criteria:

- their contribution cannot be easily covered by an existing consultative member;
- cooperation with the BFUG may not be better covered at another level.

### **3.2. Relevance of the stakeholder group**

As remarked by the Bologna Follow-up Seminar in Bled, organisations that may contribute to stronger links between higher education and the labour market are relevant to the Process. Organisations that may contribute to stronger links between higher education and other educational fields may also be relevant.

Organisations representing special professions do not match the BFUG, which deals with *general* principles and structures in higher education.

- Organisations should have higher education as a central field of interest.
- The stakeholder group should be relevant to the principles, action lines and goals of the Bologna Process.

### **3.3. Representativeness**

A new consultative member or a partner should not be a sub-organisation of a member or consultative member of the Bologna Follow-up Group.

#### 3.3.1 Additional criteria on representativeness for new consultative members

Any new consultative member should:

- be the most representative organisation in its field of interest,
- be a European organisation, or a European branch of an organisation,
- accept organisations from all the Bologna member states as full members,
- have full members from no less than 50 % of the Bologna countries,
- have full members from countries outside the EU/EEA and EU candidate countries.

### **3.4. Organisational form**

A new consultative member or a partner should either be a non-governmental organisation (NGO) or an inter-governmental organisation.

#### 3.4.1 Additional criteria on organisational form for new consultative members

Its mandate should reflect its relevance to the Bologna Process and its right to give an opinion on behalf of its members on matters relating to the Bologna Process.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Consultative membership of the BFUG should remain restricted. Potential new consultative members should satisfy the listed criteria. Decisions are made by the Ministerial Conference.

Relevant organisations may be accepted by the BFUG as BFUG Partners, receiving information and invitations to seminars and also being invited to send an observer to the Ministerial Conferences.