

BFUG5 6
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NEW CONSULTATIVE MEMBERS AND BFUG PARTNERS

1. BACKGROUND

In its meeting 1-2 March 2005, the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) adopted the following criteria for consultative members and for BFUG Partners:

1.1. 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.

1.1.1 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.

1.2. Relevance of the stakeholder group

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.

1.3. 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.

1.3.1 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.

1.4. Organisational form

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

1.4.1 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.

1.5. Procedures

Potential new consultative members should send an application to the Secretariat of the BFUG, documenting that they satisfy the listed criteria for consultative members. The Secretariat will place the application on the agenda of the BFUG, which will advise Ministers. Decisions are made by the Ministerial Conference.

Relevant organisations may be accepted by the BFUG as BFUG Partners, provided they satisfy the listed criteria for such partnership.

2. APPLICATIONS TO BECOME CONSULTATIVE MEMBERSHIP OR BFUG PARTNER

Based on the criteria, the Secretariat has received three applications for consultative membership and one application for BFUG partnership.

2.1. EI Pan-European Structure

Following a previous application for consultative membership from ETUCE, the European Trade Union Committee for Education, the EI Pan-European Structure (PES) has sent a rephrased application for consultative membership, in a letter dated 22 March 2005 (document BFUG5 6a), taking into account the criteria. ETUCE is an incorporated member of PES.

2.2. UNICE

Following a previous wish to be more closely involved in the Bologna Process, UNICE (the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe) applies for consultative membership in a letter dated 22 March 2005 (document BFUG5 6b).

2.3. EQUAL

EQUAL (European Quality Link, a consortium of national and regional accreditation bodies, associations of educational institutions and professional networks aimed at the improvement of management education in Europe and abroad) applies for consultative membership in a letter dated 28 March 2005 (document BFUG5 6c).

2.2. EUROCADRES

Following a previous wish to be more closely involved in the Bologna Process, EUROCADRES (The Council of European professional and managerial staff) applies for BFUG partnership in a letter dated 24 March 2005 (document BFUG5 6d).

3. THE APPLICATION FROM EI PAN-EUROPEAN STRUCTURE

3.1. A short description of EI Pan-European structure

Education International European Region (EIE) and ETUCE cooperate within the EI Pan-European structure. ETUCE is an autonomous body within PES. EIE and ETUCE have a joint address and largely a joint staff. The former application for consultative membership for ETUCE was signed by the president of Education International European Region with a joint EIE/ETUCE/PES letter head.

All ETUCE affiliates are also members of Education International (EI). ETUCE is composed of national organisations of teachers and other staff in education in the European Economic Area (EU and EFTA countries). EIE is composed of national organisations of teachers and other staff in education in Europe as such.

PES represents 142 organisations in 45 European countries.

3.2. PES in relation to the proposed criteria for consultative membership

3.2.1. Added value and stakeholders

A possible contribution from PES will be relevant to the Bologna Process. In the BFUG meeting in Noordwijk, it was stressed that the implementation of the Process will be of high importance in the coming years. A good working relation with organisations of university staff would be helpful.

In many areas, such as mobility for staff, PES represents stakeholder groups that cannot be easily covered by existing consultative members. Arguably, this does not necessarily mean that cooperation with the BFUG must imply consultative membership, but PES represents relevant stakeholder groups listed in the proposed criteria for admission of new consultative members.

3.2.2 Representativeness and organisational form

PES is a European non-governmental organisation, and it is not a sub-organisation of any member or consultative member.

The mandates of PES and of ETUCE clearly reflect its relevance to the Bologna Process. It is stated that PES shall promote regional cooperation and collective action to protect and advance the rights and interests of teachers and education employees and that ETUCE shall promote free mobility of teaching staff and promotion of quality in education are among the defined priorities of the organisation.

A short survey among the BFUG members within the European Economic Area (EEA) shows that the majority of major national unions of teachers and other staff in higher education are members of ETUCE. PES includes both ETUCE and European organisation outside the EU/EFTA.

3.3. Conclusion on the application from PES

As far as the Secretariat can see, PES fulfils the criteria for consultative membership.

4. THE APPLICATION FROM UNICE

4.1. A short description of UNICE

UNICE is the major union for employers' confederations in Europe. Organisations from 32 countries are full members, including three countries from outside the EEA.

4.2. UNICE in relation to the proposed criteria for consultative membership

4.2.1. Added value and stakeholders

UNICE may give added value as a consultative member, in the effort to increase employability among higher education graduates. In addition UNICE is the representative organisation for European industry, taking part in policy discussion and development, and linking industry and competence building.

The Bled seminar recommended to the BFUG *strengthening active participation of employers' and trade unions' organizations as well as professional associations at various levels.*

In its position paper, UNICE also emphasises the necessity of developing a system of comparable quality requirements in quality assurance, and mobility of students and teachers, as major fields of interest.

4.2.2. Representativeness and organisational form

UNICE is composed of central and nationally representative confederations and federations of industry and/or of industrial and other businesses and/or of employers from Member States of the Council of Europe.

UNICE is a European non-governmental organisation. It is not a sub-organisation of any member or consultative member.

4.3. Conclusion on the application from UNICE

As far as the Secretariat can see, UNICE fulfils the criteria for consultative membership.

5. THE APPLICATION FROM EQUAL

5.1. A short description of EQUAL

EQUAL (European Quality Link) is a consortium of national and regional accreditation bodies, associations of educational institutions and professional networks aimed at the improvement of management education in Europe and abroad.

EQUAL has 16 member organisations. These organisations are mainly schools and trade unions from 32 Bologna countries in the field of business.

5.2. EQUAL in relation to the proposed criteria for consultative membership

EQUAL represents the field of management higher education. Its main field of interest, of relevance to the Bologna Process, are accreditation and quality assurance.

It could be argued that EQUAL represents special professions, not in line with the criteria on relevance of the stakeholder group.

It could also easily be argued that EQUAL is not the most representative organisation in its field of interest, accreditation and quality assurance.

5.3. Conclusion on the application from EQUAL

As far as the Secretariat can see, EQUAL does not fulfil the criteria for consultative membership.

6. THE APPLICATION FROM EUROCADRES

6.1. A short description of EUROCADRES

EUROCADRES has a wide field of interest, organising more than 5 million professionals and managers in all countries throughout Europe, in industry, public services and administration.

EUROCADRES is open for membership for organisations from all over Europe. Organisations from 22 countries are members. Among them, two countries are from outside the EEA.

6.2. EUROCADRES in relation to the proposed criteria for BFUG Partnership

6.2.1. Added value and stakeholders

EUROCADRES may very well give added value to the Process as a BFUG partner. For instance, the Bled seminar concluded that the acceptance and relevance of first cycle degrees is partially lacking on the labour market and that a concrete effort of all stakeholders is needed to raise awareness of this problem.

EUROCADRES organises professionals and managers that are often the ones who will first meet first cycle graduates when they enter the labour market.

6.2.2 Representativeness and organisational form

EUROCADRES is a European non-governmental organisation, and it is not a sub-organisation of any member or consultative member.

6.3. Conclusion on the application from EUROCADRES

As far as the Secretariat can see, EUROCADRES fulfil the criteria for BFUG Partnership.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The Follow-up Group may advise the Ministerial Conference to grant the EI Pan-European Structure and UNICE consultative membership.

The Follow-up Group may grant EUROCADRES BFUG Partnership.