

CANDIDATES FOR 2009 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Introduction

1. BFUG agreed in October that bids to host the 2009 Ministerial conference should be sent to the Secretariat by 31 December 2005 for further consideration by the Board. Three bids have been submitted, from the Benelux countries, Croatia and the Slovak Republic.
2. This paper invites the Board to discuss and agree a method for making a selection amongst the three bids.

Action since BFUG

3. At the end of November, the Secretariat wrote to the three countries who had confirmed their intention to bid, to outline in more detail what is involved in providing the Secretariat. The letter listed the duties of the Secretariat, described the experience of the Secretariat staff and the need for English language skills, and highlighted the financial commitment of providing the Secretariat, supporting the Work Programme and hosting the conference. A copy of the letter that was issued is attached for information at Annex A.
4. The Benelux countries, Croatia and the Slovak Republic all submitted their formal bids by the deadline set. Each bid confirms that they are able to provide a suitably skilled Secretariat and meet the financial commitments. A copy of each bid is attached at Annex B.

Options for selection

5. A number of possible options for making a selection amongst the three bids are listed below.
 - Austria, as the Presidency, could broker an agreement amongst the three countries, i.e. reaching an agreement that two countries withdraw their bids.
 - More detailed criteria could be developed by the Secretariat to allow the Presidency and/or the Board to make a decision.
 - The country could be selected by a secret ballot by BFUG either at the April BFUG meeting or by email before that (using the same procedure used for BFUG nominations to the Board).
 - The country could be selected by a secret ballot by the Board (using the same procedure used for BFUG nominations to the Board).
 - The country could be selected by a drawing a name from a hat.

6. There are advantages and disadvantages inherent in all of the approaches suggested. For example, it may be difficult to develop criteria that are fair, transparent and acceptable to all three countries who have bid. A ballot by the Board may be seen to be insufficiently inclusive by the wider BFUG. A ballot at the next BFUG would considerably lengthen the selection process, but holding a ballot by email would not allow each country to present their case in any depth to BFUG members. Using a draw may be seen to be trivialising the significance of the Bologna Process, although it would have the merit of being a quick and even-handed means of making the selection.

Conclusion

7. The Board is invited to:

- consider the possible selection options highlighted above
- identify any further options for discussion
- agree the selection method and, if appropriate, make the selection.

Bologna Secretariat
January 2006