



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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Ms Ann McVie
Bologna Secretariat
Bologna Follow Up Group

Dear Ms McVie,

The Republic of Croatia is proud that since the beginning of contemplating the development of a European Higher Education Area its academic community has been actively participating in shaping a common framework for the development of European higher education – the Bologna Process.

Since 2001, when Croatia joined the family of countries that signed the Bologna Declaration, we have made substantial progress in advancing our higher education system. We have thoroughly reformed our legislation, harmonising it with the goals of the Bologna process and in accordance with specific national requirements. During the past two years we have established a number of higher education bodies, while also successfully applying the recommendations of the Lisbon Convention as well as developing a quality assurance system.

During the past academic year we have implemented the largest higher education reform in the history of Croatian education, harmonising all study programmes with the first and second cycles of the Bologna model. The Croatian academic community wholeheartedly supported the implementation of the Bologna process and thus enabled us to be among the leaders in reforming European higher education.

Moreover, in the past two years the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MoSES) has been implementing major reform projects on all levels of its education system. The strong support of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the professional community for further reforms outlined in the *Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010*, a strategic document adopted in June 2005 by the Croatian Government, represents a guarantee for the future advancement of education.

At the Ministerial Conference in Bergen, Norway, which I consider to have been extremely important and successful, I have expressed the aspiration that the Republic of Croatia be the organizer and host of one of the following Ministerial Conferences. With this letter of intent MoSES officially confirms its candidacy for host country of the 2009 Ministerial Conference.

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports would like to express its interest in hosting the Conference of European Ministers responsible for higher education in 2009 as well as heading the Bologna Secretariat for the 2007 – 2009 period. The Ministry possesses ample experience in organizing large international meetings and therefore we believe that we can successfully organize this important conference.

With the aim of setting up the Bologna Secretariat we plan to designate three persons, on a full time basis, in the Directorate of International Affairs within MoSES. The mentioned staff would have experience in working in a European context, possess knowledge of current trends and developments in higher education, and experience in working with other government agencies and higher education bodies. The Ministry will also provide a travel budget for members of the Secretariat.

In case the Board of the Bologna Follow Up Group should respond positively to our expression of interest for hosting the 2009 Ministerial Conference, we plan to hold it in Dubrovnik, a city of unique political and cultural history and world-renowned cultural heritage and beauty. As the city of poets, writers and scientists, Dubrovnik represents a significant center of European cultural development since the middle ages.

The history of higher education and scientific research in Dubrovnik stretches back to the far past. In 1624 the Jesuits established the "Collegium Ragusinum", which shortly afterwards became the first public institution of higher education in Croatia. Among famous students who attended this institution was also Ruđer Bošković, the most renowned Croatian scientist and founder of the dynamic atomic theory.

Presently, several educational institutions operate in Dubrovnik such as the University of Dubrovnik, the Centre for Advanced Academic Studies of the University of Zagreb, the American College of Management and Technology and the Inter-University Centre which has organised more than 1000 international courses for over 50000 participants.

In addition to being one of the most developed tourist destinations on the Mediterranean, Dubrovnik not only boasts a long tradition of organizing international scientific meetings, but also has the necessary infrastructure for hosting the Ministerial Conference. Regarding the conference venue, in Dubrovnik there are several luxury 5 star hotels with conference facilities and quality services capable of hosting this conference.

We would consider it a tremendous honour if the Board of the Bologna Follow Up Group would regard the Republic of Croatia as a worthy candidate for hosting the Ministerial Conference. On behalf of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, please allow me to express my sincere hope that the Board's deliberations will result in Croatia becoming the host of the 2009 Ministerial Conference.

Yours sincerely,

MINISTER



Dragan Primorac, M.D., Ph.D.