

Applications to the Bologna Process State of affairs February 2008

Introduction

Since the Bergen Ministerial meeting three types of relations to the Bologna Process are described.

- (1) Full membership : countries party to the European Cultural Convention that joined the Bologna Process (46 up till the present) and the European Commission
- (2) Consultative membership : EUA, EURASHE, ESU, CoE, UNESCO-CEPES, Business-Europe, Education International and ENQA
- (3) Partnership : Eurocadres, AIEI, Eurodoc

Only full members and consultative members participate in the BFUG on the basis of a Ministerial decision mentioned in a Communiqué.

For Bologna partnership it became common practice to grant the partnership status on the basis of a decision made at BFUG level. Partners are not mentioned in the Ministerial Communiqués. They are included on the mailing list of the Bologna Secretariat for messages of general interest (e.g. invitations to Bologna seminars).

At the moment Chair and/or Bologna Secretariat have been approached on:

1. Application for partnership by EUROSCIENCE
2. (Notifications of) applications for membership

1. Application of EUROSCIENCE to become a partner to the Bologna process

At the BFUG in Lisbon, October 2-3, 2008, the information was provided that the organisation EUROSCIENCE had applied for Bologna partnership.

In order to prepare the decision at next BFUG meeting of 13-14 March 2008, the BFUG requested that the Secretariat would prepare more background information on two points:

- Information on the criteria for membership and partnership to the Bologna Process
- Elements of added value of EUROSCIENCE to the process

In the past the following criteria have been applied for decision by the BFUG on partnership:

- The application concerns a non-profit organisation
- Membership of the organisation is open to citizens or organisations from all countries belonging to the European Higher Education Area
- The actual membership reflects representation from all over Europe

- The organisation provides added value to the Bologna process, meaning that its contribution should be relevant to the work of the BFUG and is not met by other members or partners.

Investigating the application of EUROSCIENCE while applying these criteria results in the following:

EUROSCIENCE (European Association for the Promotion of Science and Technology) is a non-governmental organisation of scientists, engineers, students and all those interested in the pursuit of science and technology for the benefit of the European society. It admits also corporate members. EUROSCIENCE has a membership of 2400 in 40 European countries. It accepts individuals from all the Bologna members states as full members, and has full members from more than 50% of the Bologna countries. It has 372 full members from 10 European countries outside the EU/EEA and 51 members from 16 countries outside Europe.

From the statutes EUROSCIENCE objectives are:

- to provide its members with an effective voice in discussions and policy making about science and technology and society in Europe
- to promote a scientific culture and a dialogue and mutual understanding between science and society, amongst others in order to warrant the free, but responsible pursuit of knowledge to the greatest benefit of society
- to foster a European spirit amongst its members through discussions of issues common to all
- to facilitate co-operation between all stakeholders in science and technology in Europe, and thus contribute to the understanding of science and technology as a common endeavour for the benefit of Europe and its citizens
- to further collaboration among European scientific institutions, as well as scientific and technological relations between Europe and the rest of the world.

Consideration

EUROSCIENCE combines in its organisation the variety of scholars and students that are at the heart of the educational and research process in higher education. It also bridges European and global players in the field. This could well be considered the added value of the organisation for the Bologna process. EUROSCIENCE fulfils criteria of openness of membership and other criteria as outlined above, to become a partner to the Bologna process.

Conclusion and proposal

If the BFUG considers that the above mentioned elements are of added value to the Bologna Process, there is no reason not to grant partnership. The Secretariat proposes to grant the partner status, also taking into consideration that the criteria for membership and partnership might be revisited in the near future, i.e. in the context of the Bologna Beyond 2010 discussions.

2. Current applications for membership

The Presidency, Secretariat and various member states received a range of signals in relation to (possible) application requests from:

San Marino
Monaco
Israel

N. Cyprus

A. General principle

The criteria for membership are laid down in the Berlin communiqué (2003):

Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration.

B. San Marino and Monaco

San Marino notified their intention to apply for membership of the Bologna process in a letter from the Secretary of State for Education and Culture, University and Social Affairs to the Bologna Secretariat dated 25 September 2007.

Monaco communicated by e-mail and telephone (January 2008) inquiring from the secretariat conditions for membership and indicating that they prepare a decision on applying for membership.

Proposed action

San Marino and Monaco are party to the European Cultural Convention and therefore eligible to the Process.

In the past, applicant countries were asked to provide information on implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Process, in their own system of higher education, by drafting a national report using the same format as the national reports used for stocktaking for the Bologna member countries. Concerning the present (expected) applications the same process will be followed:

- The Secretariat will provide San Marino and Monaco with the template of the national report as soon as available.
- The applicant countries forward their national report by November 1, 2008, which is also the official deadline for the national reports for stocktaking for all member countries.
- The applicant countries can seek advice from the Council of Europe and/or other members of BFUG for the drafting of the report
- BFUG will prepare the advice to the Ministers on the application of San Marino and Monaco at the March 2009 BFUG meeting,
- The final decision on accession will be taken by the Ministers at the Ministerial Conference April 29, 2009

C. Israel

Israel, as a country that is located outside the geographical scope of the European Cultural Convention, announced by a letter to the Belgian Ministers responsible for Higher Education that it will reapply and seeks an observer status to the Bologna Process. It has to be noted that the application of this country was not accepted at the London conference on the basis of non-compliance with the membership criteria.

Proposed action for BFUG: take note of the information provided
Observer status does not (yet) exist in the Bologna Process.

The issue of finding a way of involving countries with a historical or other special connection to the countries of EHEA, in particular the MEDA and TACIS countries who are in a process of setting up national teams of Bologna experts, while at the same time keeping the size of the BFUG manageable, could be taken up in the context of the Bologna Beyond 2010 discussions.

D. North Cyprus

North Cyprus also announced its intention for reapplying for membership to the Chair, the Secretariat and the whole BFUG.

Proposed action for BFUG: take note of the information provided

The issue of North Cyprus is a political issue that cannot be solved by Education Ministers before a solution is found at the competent diplomatic fora. In case of future change of the political situation, the education fora will respond accordingly.