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РЕСПУБЛИКА АРМЕНИЯ  
МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ  
И НАУКИ  
МИНИСТР

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
AND SCIENCE  
MINISTER

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№ 01/05.1/13377-11 18. 11 2011

Ligia Deca

Head of Secretariat,

Bologna Follow-up Group Secretariat

Dear Ms. Ligia Deca,

In March 2010 the Ministerial Conference adopted the Budapest-Vienna Declaration on establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). On one hand, the Bologna Process launched in 1999 has reached its goal and brought 47 European countries together in close cooperation in order to reform higher education. On the other hand, structural reforms of the first decade are still taking shape and the challenges of the second decade are more demanding and ambitious to ensure the reformed structures will work in practice.

Armenia joined the Bologna Process in 2005 in Bergen. Since then, the main focus of the higher education reforms implemented by the Government of Armenia (GoA), on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the Higher Education Institutions (HEI), are the Bologna goals with their unique understanding of cooperation, public responsibility, academic freedom, and autonomy.

Higher education is gaining increasing importance nowadays as a key policy area combating economic recession and assuring long term sustainability and economic growth. Higher education institutions, both in Europe and Armenia, should be ready to support these reforms.

The greatest strength of Armenia is the long tradition and culture to value higher education. Our first university dates back to 1282, and nowadays, higher education occupies a central place in the plans of the Government of Armenia. Bologna reforms are creating tremendous opportunities for the development of the Armenian HEIs and making them attractive to the students from other countries.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia would like to sincerely express its interest and commitment in hosting the 2015 Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, thus underlining our country's dedication to the Bologna reforms and further development of the EHEA.

Becoming the 2015 Ministerial Conference host country Armenia will create a precedent of the first non-EU country, from the 47 Members of the EHEA, holding the Ministerial Conference and therefore the key Bologna process principal of equal footing of EU and non-EU countries will be underlined. Furthermore, Armenia will become also the first CIS country holding the Ministerial conference, in this event stressing the 47 countries ministers' will to provide a more accessible higher education, together with an increased attractiveness of the EHEA to other parts of the world. This will become a turning point in the Bologna process signifying that the major movement of making the EU and the partnership countries a political community with a common set of values and references, which ensure its coherence and endow its actions with legitimacy and meaning, is not limited to just EU member countries.

Armenia is also among the countries of the EU Eastern Partnership, which to varying degrees, are carrying out political, social and economic reforms, and have stated their wish to come closer to the EU. In line with the Eastern Partnership principals, Armenia promotes democracy and good governance and supports economic and social development through sector reforms, the central one being higher education. Accordingly, the EU integration is the key of the Armenia external policy and higher education is the important platform of this policy.

In the view of what was stated above, we enthusiastically and confidently offer Yerevan, the capital of Armenia with 2793 years of history, as the host of the 2015 Ministerial Conference. Although Armenia is a small country, it has a well-established network of universities, the largest one being Yerevan State University established in 1920, with a current student enrollment of over 14,000 students.

The conference will take place in Yerevan Complex Center. Its futuristic shape of a *Reborn Phoenix* -- is symbolic of the nation that rose from its own ruins. This building is a prime example of the advanced and modern architecture created in Armenia. The Yerevan Complex Center is 3 km from the center of Yerevan. It is one of the highest points of the city, which provides a great view of the city; and can be seen from almost everywhere in town. The Complex Center holds many different international events, conferences, celebrations and concerts. It will host the Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2011 in December. The complex consists of two big halls; the concert hall and the sports hall, in addition to the *Hayastan* conference hall designated for big conferences and political summits. It has the necessary capacity to host 600 persons, with all required facilities for bilateral meetings, parallel sessions and simultaneous interpretation of up to six languages.

We will be delighted to offer the participants meals in the best traditions of national and international cuisines. The necessary arrangements will be made for local transportation throughout the conference for all members of the ministerial delegations.

The Armenian Ministry of Education and Science is ready to take the full responsibility of hosting the Bologna Secretariat until the next Ministerial Conference in 2015 as agreed by the Ministers in the Berlin Communiqué. Being aware that the previous Secretariats were remarkably successful, we aim to ensure the same standards and coherence of agreed activities and maintain the international character

of the Secretariat. A team of 4-6 national experts with international experience and expertise will be engaged to manage all the activities of the EHEA. The team will get all the necessary support of the Ministry of Education and Science as well as the Yerevan State University, State Engineering University of Armenia, Yerevan State Linguistic University and when necessary, other universities ensuring its smooth operation and complementing the budget in this respect. The staff members of the above mentioned universities will participate in activities of the EHEA working groups.

In case additional information and clarifications are required please do not hesitate to contact our representatives in the Bologna Follow-up Group.

On behalf of the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science let me express my gratitude to the organizers of the Ministerial Conference of Bucharest and wish you success.

I would like once again to assure our full commitment for the proposal to host 2015 Ministerial Conference in Yerevan.

Cordially yours,

Armen Ashotyan,

Minister

Ministry of Education and Science

Republic of Armenia

