



Italian Ministry for Education,
University and Research
The Vice Minister

BFUG2 2a

***Italian Presidency of
the Bologna Follow-up***

Prot.4740/GP

Rome, the 9th December 2003

Dear Members of the Bologna Follow-up Group,

I send you, enclosed to this letter, the minutes of the meetings of the Bologna Follow-up Group and of the Board of the Bologna Follow-up Group which took place in Rome the 14 and 15 November 2003. You will find also enclosed the final document on the "Responsibilities of the Board and tasks of the Secretariat", as approved during the BFUG meeting.

As you know, in the organization of the meetings in Rome we had to postpone the Board meeting to the BFUG meeting, because important decisions on the Board had to be previously taken by the BFUG. In the Board meeting of 15 November, in addition to some special tasks appointed to the Secretariat, three draft decisions have been taken, that need now a final approval by the BFUG members. They are:

- the organization of the work programme basing on a bottom up approach: there will be not priority issues to "legitimate" the Bologna events and all the themes and the action lines of the Berlin Communiqué will be considered valid for the organization of a Bologna event, in order to guarantee the participation of as many actors as possible;
- a large use of all the possible working methods envisaged in the working paper of the Chair;
- the elimination of the role of General Rapporteur. The Secretariat will prepare a short document on the BFUG activities 2003-2005.

Therefore, you are kindly asked to consider this letter as a "electronic consultation" on these points and to communicate within two weeks to the Presidency any possible disagreement.

It is with pleasure that I take this occasion to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely yours,

signed Guido Possa



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***Italian Presidency of
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***Minutes of the Bologna Follow-up Group meeting
under the Italian Presidency
Rome, 14 November 2003***

Opening the working session, the Chair expressed the warmest welcome to the delegates attending the BFUG meeting for the first time: the representatives of the seven new Countries, Ms Marta Ferreira Lourenco of the European Commission, Ms Vera Stastna in her new capacity as representative of the Council of Europe, Mr Jan Sadlak of the UNESCO-CEPES. The Chair addressed a welcome also to the Vice Minister of Education of Norway and to the two invited speakers, Dr Christian Thune of ENQA and Prof. Pavel Zgaga, General Rapporteur of the BFUG to the Ministers in the Berlin Conference.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda. The Agenda proposed by the Chair was approved.

Item 2. Approval of the minutes of the BFUG meeting in Berlin the 17 September 2003. The minutes of the preceding Bologna Follow-up meeting held in Berlin the 17 September 2003 were approved.

Item 3. Short debriefing of the Berlin Conference (intervention of Prof. Pavel Zgaga, General Rapporteur to the Ministers at the Berlin Conference). Prof. Pavel Zgaga presented a short debriefing of the Berlin Conference and expressed his appreciation to all the members of the BFUG for the help and the support given in the accomplishment of his hard task. He announced that there are some technical modifications in the last version of his Report. This new version will be included into the Conference proceedings edited by the German organisers which will be ready at the end of the year.

The German delegation gave a brief presentation of a paper that was circulated as room document, "The Atmosphere in Berlin", depicting in a somehow humorous and witty way



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what happened during the Ministerial Conference of September 2003. Dr Mueller-Solger announced that the final documentation on the Berlin Conference will be ready within the end of this year.

Item 4. The ENQA work plan in view of the work to be accomplished in accordance with the objectives defined in the Berlin Communiqué (intervention of Dr Christian Thune, President of ENQA). Dr Christian Thune, President of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), illustrated his letter to the Chair of the BFUG of 7 November 2003. This letter is in fact an official ENQA report to the Follow-up Group on ENQA's planning towards the Berlin recommendations, to be conducted in cooperation with EUA, ESIB and EURASHE. Dr Thune gave a short explanation of the aim of ENQA, its members and its several activities and projects, and underlined that two important dimensions of Quality Assurance are the bottom up approach (full involvement of all the participants) and the accurate transmission of information. The letter contains as a annex a "road map" of the meetings and of the overall work plan in order to accomplish the goals stated in the Berlin Communiqué.

The Dutch delegation drew the attention of the Group on the paper of ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation) which was circulated as room document. In this paper the ECA offers its collaboration to the ENQA for the project on Quality Assurance and to the BFUG for the project on the European Qualifications Framework. ENQA acknowledged the need to co-operate with the ECA as its work progresses.

Item 5. Communication of the European Commission "From Berlin to Bergen, the EU contribution". The European Commission illustrated its document "From Berlin to Bergen, the EU contribution", describing the Commission contribution to the implementation of the Bologna principles, through the promotion of specific Action Lines and Pilot Projects and through the financial support to a limited number of Bologna Seminars as well. Some delegations (Germany, Austria, Belgium) underlined the importance of the collaboration among ENQA and all the other quality assurance associations and networks, in order to giving voice to all the Institutions involved and to all the actors. Other delegations (Austria, Sweden) expressed their appreciation towards the initiative of the Bologna Promoters, particularly as a support to the new member countries. The Irish delegation sought clarification on the



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reference to the "European Register for QA Agencies", and its compatibility with institutional autonomy and national authority. The Swedish delegation voiced similar concern.

Answering to these and several other questions raised from the EC presentation, Mr Coyne pointed out that: the "European Register for Quality Assurance Agencies", that ENQA intends to set up, regards Agencies that already are ENQA members; the "Bologna Scoreboard" that the Commission intends to draw up as result of the stocktaking exercise will consist on a simple description of the level of the Bologna implementation in the individual countries; the "Bologna Promoters" will work in strict cooperation with the national Bologna contact points. As to the mapping of student and teacher mobility, Mr Coyne underlined the need of making use of indicators and the difficulty of having reliable statistics.

Item 6. Discussion and approval of a draft document of the Chair, concerning:

- ***responsibilities and composition of the Board***
- ***tasks of the Secretariat***
- ***priority issues for the work programme 2003-2005***
- ***deadline for submission of proposals for Bologna events***

The discussion has regarded the draft document submitted by the Chair.

Responsibilities and composition of the Board. Some delegations (Germany, European Commission, Belgium, Council of Europe) expressed themselves against too detailed a list and in favour of a more generic formulation. The need was also expressed (Belgium, Finland) to reconfirm that the BFUG is the only decision making body and that any possible decision by the Board shall be submitted electronically to the BFUG for final approval through written consultation (Sweden, Council of Europe). The Vice Chair stressed the need for the Board to take decisions on urgent matters, to be confirmed through a written round of comments by the BFUG delegations. The Irish delegation underlined the advantage of having a list of responsibilities for the Board, since it is clearly specified for all concerned the scope and remit of the Board, thus removing doubt and potential confusion. Some delegations (European Commission, Romania, Finland, Greece) recalled the possibility to delegate to the Secretariat the accomplishment of several tasks. The Latvian delegation proposed to erase the paragraph concerning the proposal to have only one representative per delegation in the Board.



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The Chair concluded that the part of the document describing the responsibilities of the Board should be reduced and should clearly describe the Board as a Body which is representative of the BFUG and has the mandate of preparing and monitoring the implementation of the work programme. Although the Board is an operational Body, the Board has to have the possibility to act in good time, if rapid decisions on specific matters have to be taken. In this case, the Board shall circulate proposals among the BFUG members by e-mail and final decisions will be taken only after such electronic consultation. The paragraph on the composition of the Board will be deleted.

Tasks of the Secretariat. The Vice Chair circulated, for information, a paper of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, concerning the administrative unit established in the Ministry for the accomplishment of the tasks related to the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-up Group. He expressed his conviction that the Secretariat, in its capacity as assisting Body of the BFUG and the Board, will be able to give a great contribution to the common work. He also proposed to modify the working paper of the Chair by substituting the sentence describing the tasks with the analogous sentence showed in the letter that he addressed to the BFUG members on 5 November 2003. The German delegation proposed, in addition, to include the possibility to have, among the staff of the Secretariat, seconded experts. The European Commission proposed the Secretariat to have an independent role and to act in representation of the BFUG and also as contact point for information on the Bologna Process. Several delegations (French Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Greece, Ireland) expressed their disagreement on having the Secretariat as an independent Body and as representative of the BFUG, while agreeing on having the Secretariat as contact point for information on Bologna. The Greek and the Irish delegations indicated that the relationship between the Secretariat and the Presidency would evolve with each Presidency and that it would be up to each Presidency to achieve an appropriate equilibrium.

The Chair explained that it was important to have at first a general description of the tasks of the Secretariat which could be helpful also after the Bergen Conference. Therefore, he concluded that the paragraph on the tasks will be substituted as proposed by the Vice Chair, with an additional bullet on the role of the Secretariat as contact point for information, while acknowledging that only the Chair and the Vice Chair have the duty of representation of



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the Bologna Process. The sentence regarding the relations of the Secretariat with the Norwegian Ministry will be added as provisional mandate of the Secretariat for the period October 2003-June 2005.

Work programme 2003-2005. A long debate concerning the priority issues took place. The delegations which took the floor identified several kinds of priority issues on which the work programme should be focussed:

- the projects on Stocktaking (with the three issues indicated in the Berlin Communiqué), Quality Assurance (ENQA) and the European Qualifications Framework;
- the 11 actions (9+2 additional actions) listed in the Berlin Communiqué;
- all the actions and themes indicated in the Berlin Communiqué.

In principle, the majority of the delegations were against the identification of a few priority issues as the basis for the next Bologna events, identifying this way of proceeding with an implementation "à la carte" of the Bologna principles (Germany, ESIB, European Commission) and as a top-down approach, not reflecting the voluntary nature of the Bologna Process (Finland). More over, some delegations (Council of Europe, Finland, ESIB) pointed out the need to include among the priority issues the social dimension and all the other themes quoted in the Berlin Communiqué, as the public responsibility (Council of Europe). Other delegations (Croatia, Norway) stressed the importance of doctoral studies. The Vice Chair proposed to delegate the Board to draw up a document summarizing the different positions on the work programme and listing the possible working methods. The Greek delegation pointed out that the three priorities quoted in the Berlin Communiqué were addressed to the Ministers and are not meant to be considered as priorities of the Bologna Process.

The Chair concluded that the work programme should be focussed on the three priorities indicated in the Berlin Communiqué for 2005 (Quality assurance, two cycle system, recognition) but leave room for a bottom-up approach to include other issues, with particular regard to the social dimension. The Board meeting of the following day will further discuss this matter and the results will be circulated among the BFUG members as part of the minutes of the meeting.

Deadline for submission of proposals. After a short debate, it was decided that the Chair will ask the



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delegations to submit further proposals to organize Bologna events within the 15 December 2003, in order to allow the Board meeting of 29 January 2004 to prepare a final decision - regarding only the Seminars to be held in the first half of 2004 - to be submitted to the BFUG approval by electronic consultation.

1. Item 7. Deadline for submission of candidatures for the General Rapporteur to the Ministers in the Bergen Conference and for submission of candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference of 2007

Candidatures for General Rapporteur. Any discussion about the General Rapporteur was postponed to the Board meeting of the following day, since several delegations expressed some doubts about the necessity of this role for the Bergen Conference.

Candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference. The Chair recommended to all the delegations to express their possible candidature within June 2004. However, the BFUG meeting to be held in the second half of 2004 will be considered as the final deadline.

Item 8. Communications of the Norwegian delegation on the next Ministerial Conference in Bergen. The Norwegian delegation communicated that the Ministerial Conference of 2005 in Bergen will take place the 19 and 20 May. Each country will be requested to have a delegation of 5 persons: 3 representatives of the Ministries, 1 representative of the Rectors Conference and 1 representative of the Student Associations.

Item 9. Next meetings of the BFUG. The Irish delegation communicated that the next BFUG meeting will take place in Dublin on the 9 March 2004. The day before, the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland will host a Conference in Dublin Castle on "Common Approaches to Vocational Training and Higher Education". The intended audience is Directors General of Higher Education and Directors General of Vocational Education and Training. Mr Mckenna underlined that Ireland attaches great importance to this Conference and will be encouraging all to participate.

Item 10. Any other business. The Bosnian delegation proposed to set up an Ad Hoc Group with the task of supporting the new countries in their first approach with the Bologna Process.



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Mr Neetens announced two following events organised by ESIB: a Seminar to be held in Madeira on the 17 November 2003, "Crossing the borders of Higher Education", and the 7th European Students Convention that will be held on 10th-13th February 2004 in Dublin, devoted to the topic of Qualification Frameworks.



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***Minutes of the meeting of the Board
of the Bologna Follow-up Group
under the Italian Presidency
Rome, 15 November 2003***

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda. The Agenda of the meeting was approved.

Item 2. Open discussion on the implementation of the activities according to the decisions taken in the BFUG meeting of 14 November 2003, regarding in particular:

- Work programme and working methods***
- Possible Working Groups***

Work programme and priority issues.

The majority of the delegates (Finland, European Commission, Belgium, Council of Europe, Austria, Norway) expressed themselves in favour of considering all the themes and actions quoted in the Berlin Communiqué as possible issues on which to organize the Bologna events. The Irish delegate, on the contrary, was in favour of the identification of some priorities, given the limited time available to the Bergen Conference in 2005. The delegate of Flemish Belgium proposed the next meeting of the Board in Oslo on 29 January 2004 to check for possible overlapping of some proposals, and to suggest, where appropriate, a possible re-orientation of some events or possible synergies with other member countries to jointly host a seminar.

The Chair concluded that no priorities should be identified and that all the actions and themes of the Berlin Communiqué will be considered as legitimate in order to organize a Bologna event. The Chair further noted that all "Bologna events" must include an invitation to all the BFUG members and circulation of the final results and recommendations to all. Moreover, the Board in its meeting



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of 29 January in Oslo will look at the proposals carefully in order to avoid overlaps.

The Austrian delegate proposed a paper to be drafted with a definition of the main features that a Bologna event should have and an outline of a "road map" of Bologna events compatible with the Presidencies. The Vice Chair noted that in the short time available it will not be possible to accommodate more than 10 seminars. The Council of Europe pointed out that a list of "Bologna related events" should also be prepared, including events such as the ACA Conference (on which the German delegation circulated a paper).

As to the timetable, the Secretariat recalled that, in the provisional list of proposed events prepared by the Presidency, there are not events foreseen for the first half of 2004. The European Commission objected that a concentration of events in the second half of 2004 and in the first half of 2005 will be inevitable. The Secretariat proposed to prepare a framework of Bologna events and that the new proposals to be sent directly to the Secretariat or to be sent jointly to the Secretariat and the Presidency.

The Chair concluded that the main address of the BFUG is the Presidency and therefore the proposals of Bologna events shall be addressed to the Chair.

Other issues were also raised by the delegations. The Austrian delegate observed that the new member countries required particular support in order to familiarize themselves with the complexity of rules and procedures of the Bologna Follow-up Group. Therefore, it would be very helpful to organize for the delegations of the new members pre-meetings before the BFUG meeting, in order to explain the Agendas. Ms Weitgruber proposed the new members to be assisted by the Secretariat.

The Finnish delegate recalled the good job made in this direction by CoE, EUA and ENQA. The Council of Europe pointed out that similar difficulties existed in other areas including new representatives of the "old" delegations and representatives of that delegations which never, or very seldom, participated in the BFUG meetings. The Greek delegate suggested the National Reports provided by the new members could be a good starting point in order to identify the best supporting measures towards them. The Secretariat proposed to go through the National Reports of the new countries and the establishment of a small Working Group with the CoE and other participants in order to find ways to give advice to the new members.



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The Vice Chair raised also the issue of the organization of the European Qualifications framework project, proposing that the Secretariat and the Danish delegation to draw up a paper in order to prepare the discussion in time for the BFUG meeting in Dublin on March 2004.

The Chair concluded that the BFUG shall be proactive in respect to the representatives of the new member countries and to all the other delegations which need to be assisted with supplementary information. He invited the Secretariat to take appropriate initiatives in this direction, with the support of the Council of Europe, and to organize special sessions or pre-meetings of information on Bologna dedicated to the delegations above mentioned.

Working methods.

The Vice Chair recommended the use of a large range of working methods, including Working Groups. The Secretariat circulated two papers concerning suggestions on the work programme and on the use of different working methods.

Item 3. Organisation of the stocktaking. The Chair invited the EUA and the Secretariat to give a short presentation of their respective documents on the subject. The relevant document of the Secretariat was circulated. The EUA illustrated the content of its paper and stated that the stocktaking exercise should contemplate three levels: the three priorities, all the action lines and themes of the Berlin Communiqué, the HE Institutions and students. Whereas the stocktaking is a national responsibility, the EUA underlined the importance of being involved in the project, having regard to existing material coming from several sources, such as the TRENDS III or the Quality Culture Project. The Secretariat referred to its document and pointed out that the first steps should be to decide who will be responsible for the Stocktaking Project and the most appropriate method for carrying it out. Dr Nyborg proposed the setting up of one or several Working Groups to work on the subject and to report to the BFUG on March 2005. The Vice Chair recalled the importance of the involvement of the European Commission in the project and underlined that a crucial aspect will be to establish proper relations between the stocktaking and other possible reports. Against the proposal of the Chair to make use of questionnaires, several delegates (Finland, ESIB, Austria, French Belgium, EUA, Council of Europe, European Commission) objected that the Group has already at its disposal a great amount of data collected from different



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sources and stated the great importance of having all the actors involved in the stocktaking project. The need of drawing political considerations from such an exercise was also emphasised (Belgium, ESIB).

The Chair concluded by asking the Secretariat to prepare a discussion paper to be presented at the Board meeting in Oslo on 29 January 2004 - taking into account the working documents presented by the European Commission and the EUA. He suggested the setting up of Working Groups for the preparation and the monitoring of the stocktaking exercise. The final decision, however, will be taken during the BFUG meeting of 9 March 2004 in Dublin.

Item 4. Contacts with the ENQA in view of the work to be accomplished in accordance with the objectives defined in the Berlin Communiqué. On the basis of the document illustrated by Dr Christian Thune, President of the ENQA, the day before, and of a document of the EUA circulated electronically before the meeting, a debate followed, with the participation of several delegations. The Finnish delegate proposed to invite Dr Thune to attend all the Board meetings, but the Vice Chair objected that it was more appropriate to leave to the Chair the decision of inviting the President of ENQA, as well as others, in the meetings of the BFUG or the Board.

Item 5. Financial support by the European Commission to the Bologna activities. The European Commission informed that, in February 2004, the EC intends to publish a "Call for Proposals" specifically meant to provide financial support to the activities related to the Bologna Process. The EC will communicate the deadline for application in the BFUG meeting in Dublin, March 2004. As far as the countries not participating in the Socrates programme are concerned, any decision will be taken in late May 2004. Given that the probable time table of the Bologna events will be from June 2004 to May 2005, the EC will consider all the proposed events and will select and support activities which relate to the interests of the European Union.

Item 6. Candidatures for the General Rapporteur to the Ministers in the Bergen Conference. Several delegates (European Commission, Belgium, Norway, Finland, Council of Europe, Austria) expressed their reservations on having a General Rapporteur for the Bergen Conference, putting forward different reasons, such as: in Bergen there will be the results of the stocktaking and the ENQA report and it



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is not advisable to have too many documents to submit to the Ministers; there is a need for a shorter document (maximum 5-6 pages) easily understandable for everybody. The Irish delegate replied that a detailed report represents a source of useful information and a guide for future actions. The Finnish and the Austrian delegates expressed the need for a document reflecting the political conclusions to be drafted from the results of the Bologna implementation 2003-2005 and proposed to appoint a Working Group, supported by an external expert, to prepare a paper on this subject. The Norwegian delegate underlined the necessity of having a report 2003-2005 while stating that the Secretariat should not be responsible for political conclusions. The EURASHE emphasised that for the transparency of the process and the dissemination of information a report is indispensable.

The Chair concluded that the role of the General Rapporteur appears to be no longer essential and suggested that the Secretariat be given the task of preparing a short report to the Ministers in Bergen on the BFUG activities 2003-2005.

Item 7. Candidatures for hosting the next Ministerial Conference of 2007. The final deadline of December 2004 was reconfirmed.

Item 8. Proposals by the delegations to host Bologna events. The Chair will ask the BFUG delegations to send further proposals to host Bologna events within the deadline of 15 December 2003. The delegations will be also asked to send a paper with a short presentation of the events, explaining more in details the relevant content.

Item 9. Next meetings of the Board. The next meeting of the Board will take place in Oslo on 29 January 2004.

Item 10. Any other business. None



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BOLOGNA FOLLOW-UP GROUP

***Responsibilities of the Board - Tasks of the Secretariat
Final document approved by the members of the BFUG
during the meeting in Rome, the 14th November 2003***

"Ministers entrust the implementation of all the issues covered in the Communiqué, the overall steering of the Bologna Process and the preparation of the next ministerial meeting to a Follow-up Group... A Board...shall oversee the work between the meetings of the Follow-up Group... The overall follow-up work will be supported by a Secretariat which the country hosting the next ministerial Conference will provide. In its first meeting after the Berlin Conference, the Follow-up Group is asked to further define the responsibilities of the Board and the tasks of the Secretariat." (Berlin Communiqué, 19 September 2003).

Preamble

The main purpose of the Bologna Follow-up Group consists in raising the general awareness of the Bologna principles and in promoting the widest participation in the Bologna Process of all actors in Higher Education.

In order to achieve this, the process must be open, participatory and inclusive, while at the same time, generating debate and awareness. The full involvement of member countries must be encouraged at all stages, as each decides on the most appropriate means - legislative or otherwise - for implementing the objectives of the Bologna Process. Equally, the support of all of the partners in Higher Education is central to the realisation of these objectives. However, the genuine commitment to the process can only be maintained through a bottom-up approach, which will also preserve the progress achieved to date and improve it furthermore.

In the last few years, the Bologna Process has gained momentum and enlarged its boundaries in a way, which could not have been foreseen by its "founding fathers". The scale of involvement is such that this process can no longer function without a permanent support structure. However, such a structure needs not be large or excessively bureaucratic. On the other hand, it must be capable of dealing with complex or multifaceted issues, while allowing for flexibility of procedures and approach.



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Against this background, the members of the Bologna Follow-up Group, during the meeting of 14 November 2003 in Rome, approved the following:

Responsibilities of the Board of the Bologna Follow-up Group

The Board supports the Bologna Follow-up Group in its activities and has the mandate to provide efficiency to the management of the Bologna Process, assuring at the same time its continuity. As such, the responsibilities of the Board consist of co-ordinating and monitoring the effective implementation of the work programme.

The following list, which is not exhaustive, illustrates the scope of this responsibility:

- overseeing the preparation of the next Ministerial Conference by means of supporting and coordinating the realisation of the Bologna events, as described and listed in the work programme 2003-2005;
- providing support and assistance to new members as they seek to meet the objectives of the Bologna Process and, at the same time, looking after the effective participation of representatives of the candidate countries in the Bologna events;
- maintaining contacts with ENQA as it undertakes the work defined in the Berlin Communiqué;
- co-ordinating actions for the preparation of the stocktaking exercise for 2005;
- organising Working Groups composed by BFUG members and/or experts on special issues decided by the BFUG.

The BFUG may also delegate to the Board tasks it deems appropriate and necessary to achieve the objectives of the Bologna Process.

In line with these responsibilities, the Board shall prepare issues for the BFUG. If urgent decisions have to be taken on specific matters, the Board will consult through e-mail the BFUG members before taking any decision.

Tasks of the Secretariat of the Bologna Follow-up Group

General mandate

The tasks of the Secretariat will include:

- administrative and operational aspects associated with the next Ministerial Conference, including the setting up of a web site;
- secretarial functions as directed by the BFUG and the Board;
- execution, under specific mandate from the BFUG or the Board, of special tasks concerning the implementation of the work programme
- function of reference point for information on the Bologna Process and the activities of the Bologna Follow-up Group.



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The Secretariat is made up by persons of the Country hosting the next Ministerial Conference. There is also the possibility to second national experts to the Secretariat. The Secretariat is under the authority of the Chair of the BFUG while, as to the administrative aspects, it is responsible to the Country hosting the next Ministerial Conference.

Additional mandate for the present Secretariat

The Secretariat is organised as a special section within the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and operates under the administrative rules of the Ministry. Tasks performed under a mandate from the BFUG/Board will be reported back to the BFUG/Board.