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**Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research  
(CDESR)  
7<sup>th</sup> plenary session  
Strasbourg, 6 – 7 March 2008  
Room 9 – 09.30 hours**

## **CDESR TERMS OF REFERENCE**

as adopted by the Ministers' Deputies at their 1012th meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2007 in Strasbourg

Directorate General IV: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport  
(Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education/Higher Education and Research Division)

## **ITEM 3**

Distribution: CDESR Delegates and Observers  
Document available on <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/restricted>

## **Terms of reference of the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR)**

- 1. Name of Committee:** Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR)
- 2. Type of Committee:** Steering Committee
- 3. Source of terms of reference:** Committee of Ministers

**4. Terms of reference:**

Having regard to:

- Resolution Res(2005)47 on committees and subordinate bodies, their terms of reference and working methods (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 14 December 2005 at the 951st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies);
  - the Declaration and the Action Plan adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe at their Third Summit (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), and in particular Articles 3.3 “Education: promoting democratic citizenship in Europe” and 3.6 “Fostering intercultural dialogue” of Chapter III “Building a more humane and inclusive Europe”;
  - the European Conventions on culture and education, in particular: the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 018) and the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No. 165);
  - the Declaration of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education (Istanbul, 4-5 May 2007).
- i. Within the framework of the Programme of Activities, under Programme V.1.2. “Towards a European Higher Education area”, the Committee is instructed to, in line with the Declaration and the Action Plan of the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, applying the criteria set out in document CM(2006)101 final, develop under its own responsibility, taking into consideration the progress of work, proposals for the Programme of Activities for the years to come, which will focus on:
- the development of European Higher Education and Research on the basis of common democratic principles and the values of the European university heritage, such as the freedom of learning, teaching and research, and the self-government of academic institutions;

- promoting intercultural dialogue and democratic culture in the European Higher Education Area by identifying challenges for higher education in Europe in contributing to multicultural societies and setting up a platform to support networking efforts of institutions active in this field;
- ensuring equitable access to higher education for young people across Europe, improving its quality, facilitating the movement of students, graduates and teachers through the fair recognition of qualifications and the removal of obstacles to mobility, through the development and support of the Council of Europe's legal instruments on the recognition of qualifications and on academic mobility, aimed at creation of a European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) by 2010;
- ii. ensure the implementation of the Programme of Activities adopted by the Committee of Ministers, evaluate and disseminate its results;
- iii. ensure the follow-up of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (ETS No.165);
- iv. prepare sessions of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education and Research, with the assistance of the Steering Committee for Education if this is warranted by the theme adopted, and ensure that these are followed up;
- v. effectively co-ordinate its activities, from the viewpoint of their added value, with other international organisations and institutions active at the European level; develop appropriate co-operation with the governmental bodies, the associations of universities and other higher education institutions.

## **5. Membership of the Committee:**

### **5.A Members**

Governments of member states of the Council of Europe and of other states having acceded to the European Cultural Convention shall be entitled to appoint two representatives of the highest possible rank (i.e. one senior official, and one senior academic) chosen by the competent body or bodies representing the universities or all institutions of higher education.

The Council of Europe budget shall bear the travel and subsistence expenses for two representatives<sup>1</sup> of each Contracting Party (three in the case of the state whose representative has been elected as Chair).

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<sup>1</sup> As stipulated in Appendix 2 to Resolution Res(2005)47.

The senior official and the senior academic constituting the national delegation shall each have one vote.

## **5.B Participants**

- i. The Chair of the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) may take part in the Committee's meetings, without the right to vote and at the charge of the CDED administrative budget.
- ii. The Parliamentary Assembly may send representatives to meetings of the Committee, without the right to vote and at the charge of its administrative budget.
- iii. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe may send representatives to meetings of the Committee, without the right to vote and at the charge of its administrative budget.

## **5.C Other participants**

- i. The European Commission may send a representative to meetings of the Committee, without the right to vote or defrayal of expenses.
- ii. The following states with observer status with the Council of Europe may send a representative to meetings of the Committee, without the right to vote or defrayal of expenses:
  - Canada;
  - Japan;
  - Mexico;
  - United States of America.
- iii. The Education and Culture group of NGOs which has participative status with the Council of Europe may send (a) representative(s) to meetings of the Committee, without the right to vote and at the charge of the sending body.
- iv. The following intergovernmental organisations may send representatives to meetings of the Committee, without the right to vote or defrayal of expenses:
  - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO);
  - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD);
  - The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);
  - European Free Trade Association (EFTA);
  - Nordic Council of Ministers;
  - Arab League for Education, Culture and Science Organisation (ALECSO).

## **5.D Observers**

- i. The following non-member state and non-governmental organisations may send representatives to meetings of the Committee, without the right to vote or defrayal of expenses:

- Israel;
- European University Association (EUA);
- European Science Foundation;
- European Cultural Foundation;
- International Association of Universities;
- European Students' Union (ESU);
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE);
- European Federation of Catholic Universities (FUCE);
- Education International.

## **6. Working structures and methods:**

Within its terms of reference, the Committee elects a Bureau of eight members, composed of a Chair, a Vice-Chair and six members.

When electing the Chair, the Vice-Chair and members of the Bureau, the Committee shall seek to ensure the representation of both categories of members (one senior official and one senior academic).

In order to pursue its tasks the Committee may have recourse to ad hoc meetings of limited numbers of its members, consultants, higher education experts, within the budgetary resources available.

The Committee shall co-ordinate its work with that of the other Steering Committees of the Council of Europe, notably the Steering Committee for Education (CDED). It shall participate in the Organisations' cross-sectoral initiatives and contribute to the transversal programmes.

## **7. Duration:**

These terms of reference will expire on 31 December 2010.