

The Results of the Official Visit of the BSUN Presidential Troika in Romania

19th and 20th of February 2007

BSUN Presidential Troika Members:

Prof. Dr. Stefan Barudov, President in office

Prof. Dr. Mikhail Zgurovski, Future President for 2008 - 2010 Mandate

The Official Host in Romania:

**Prof. Dr. Victor Ciupina, Representative of the Romanian Universities in the
BSUN Executive Board**

The BSUN-IPS:

Prof. Dr. Eden Mamut, Director

Meeting with Mr. Traian BASESCU, the President of Romania

President Basescu, expressed his personal appreciation for the activities and contributions of BSUN to the promotion of Academic cooperation in the BSR and in supporting the Black Sea Forum.

On behalf of the Presidential Troika Prof. Barudov presented the priorities of BSUN move in during the Bulgarian Mandate of leadership and expressed appreciation for the contribution of the Romanian Universities and of the Romanian Authorities to the BSUN activities. He also informed the President of Romania about the initiation of the process of legal registration of BSUN as an NGO according to the Romanian legislation.

President Basescu, assured Prof. Barudov of all required support on behalf of the Presidency of Romania and the Romanian Authorities.

Also, President Basescu underlined the great potential of the initiative of the European Council of the Local and Regional Authorities on establishing of the Black Sea Euroregion which is a project addressing the needs of the local communities.

Prof. Zgurovski, expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Ukrainian Universities for the support of the Romanian Authorities for the BSUN activities and presented the

Ukrainian initiative for organizing a Higher Education Forum which is intended to be a major event for the Academic community and for the BSR community in general.

In this respect, Prof. Zgurovski invited President Basescu to inaugurate this Forum that would give a strong message regarding the commitment of officials at the highest level on decision. To this event the organizers are intending to invite also the President of Ukraine Mr. Iuschenko.

President Basescu accepted the invitation and assured Prof. Zgurovski of his personal support for this initiative.

In addition, the Rector of the Ovidius University of Prof. V. Ciupina informed the President about the commitment of the OUC to support further the development of BSUN and on behalf of the OUC Senate invited President Basescu to the Inauguration of the 2007 – 2008 Academic Year in the campus of OUC. The invitation was accepted with pleasure.

The BSUN IPS Director Prof. Mamut informed the President about the involvement of the BSUN-IPS in the process of initiation the Black Sea Euroregion and transmitted a message from Prof. Ion Bostan, the former BSUN President.

Meeting with Mr. Mircea CIOPRAGA, Head of the Romanian Parliamentary Delegation to PABSEC and with Members of the Delegation

Mr. Ciopraga informed about the initiatives of the Romanian Delegation to PABSEC and about the interest for enhancing the cooperation with BSUN.

The BSUN President, Prof. St. Barudov informed about the current priorities of the Network and the need for support coming from the Romanian PABSEC delegation in the process of registering of BSUN as an NGO in Romania and at PABSEC for upgrading the statute of BSUN in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

And Prof. M. Zgurovski informed about the expertise of KPI in systems' analysis dedicated to studies on sustainable development and proposed a Joint Project for analyzing the possibilities of developing dedicated tools for the evaluation of the sustainability of higher education, innovation and research in the BSR.

At the conclusions of the meeting, Senator Aurel Gabriel Simionescu - member of the Romanian PABSEC Delegation informed about the recent initiative to allocate

budgets to the PABSEC Committees starting from 2008 and underlined the perfect match between this proposal and the required financial sources for the joint project with BSUN.

It was agreed to start exchanging information on this subject and in this respect, BSUN – IPS will have the obligation to prepare an official proposal to the Romanian PABSEC Delegation.

Meeting with Prof. Dr. Mihail HĂRDĂU, the Minister of Education and Research and Prof. Dr. Dumitru MIRON, Secretary of State for Higher Education

Main subjects:

- Minister Hărdău presented the current status of Higher Education in Romania including the project of the new law of higher education that is encouraging with additional subsidies the universities promoting mobility of students and staff;
- He pointed out that the accession of Romania to the EU is opening new opportunities for the Universities in Romania and implicitly for the BSUN members;
- The Minister underlined the special interest within the EU for Life Long Learning and considered that it would be of interest of BSUN to develop activities on this subject;
- He specially underlined that BSUN could have a significant contribution to the enhancement of the mobility of students and staff;
- The President of BSUN Professor S. Barudov, presented the current situation of the Black Sea Universities Network and the priorities for the current mandate, namely the contribution of Higher Education to the sustainable development of the BSR and the support to the member Universities for the integration in EHEA and ERA with an emphasis on the Bologna Process implementation;
- Also, Professor Barudov underlined some of the subjects of interest for cooperative Academic research like: IT&C, the involvement of BSUN member universities in innovative activities and transfer of knowledge, renewable energy sources, advanced materials and nanotechnologies, telemedicine;
- Professor Barudov emphasized the major commitment of the BSUN members for upgrading the legal status of the network by registering it as an NGO according to the legislation of one of the member countries. Taking

into account the contribution of the Romanian Universities to the development of BSUN and the support of the Romanian Government, he suggested the registration of the Network to be done according to the Romanian legislation. All parties agreed that this is a very important process and it should be based on the commitment and the full support of the Romanian Government;

- On his behalf Professor Zgurovski underlined that current reality in the BSR where now there are EU member countries and EU neighboring countries. In this context, it is expected that the universities from Romania, Bulgaria and Greece will play a special role in bridging the cooperation between the universities from the EU neighboring countries and the EU member countries;
- In this respect, Professor Zgurovski stated that a very important contribution might be the support of the Romanian Universities for the accession to the EU RTD 7 FP;

Main conclusions:

- The Romanian Minister of Education and Research confirmed the special interest in the promotion of Academic cooperation in the Black Sea Region and in the activities of BSUN;
- According to Minister Hardau, the Universities in Romania have the full autonomy to take their decisions on the participation in different networks, consortia or other cooperative structures. Following this, the Ministry has no intentions to interfere in the decision process and the latter remains only a matter of the BSUN member Universities themselves. But, if the decision will be to reorganize the Network as an NGO registered in Romania, the Ministry will offer its support to this initiative by subsequent approvals, and will analyze the possibility of considering the new NGO as a national priority, if the assessment is that BSUN focuses on cooperation in education and scientific research in the public interest (according to the Romanian legislation the NGOs that are considered a national priority can receive subsidies for funding some of their activities);
- The Ministry is encouraging the Romanian Universities to initiate regional programs at BSc, MSc and PhD levels involving partners from the region and including the mobility of students and staff.
- In this context, the Minister suggested to the rector of the “Ovidius” University of Constantza the preparation of a proposal and promised to analyze the possibility of providing some seed funds in the initiation phase of such a project.

Meeting with Dr. Valentin NAUMESCU, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Secretary of State summarized the cooperative activities that have been developed jointly with BSUN and emphasized the consideration of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the contribution of BSUN.

He informed the BSUN Presidential Troika that as a follow-up of the Black Sea Forum, RMFA is considering the organization of a Conference on Intercultural Dialogue in the Black Sea Region (BSR) in June 2007.

On behalf of the BSUN Presidential Troika Prof. Barudov informed the Secretary of State about the priorities of BSUN;

In addition, Prof. Zgurovski, informed about the initiative of KPI to organize a Higher Education Forum in Kiev, April 2008. He pointed out that this event is supposed to have a triple signification:

- As a major event of the Programme of activities of Ukraine during the Chairmanship Mandate of Ukraine to BSEC;
- As an event that will be jointly organized with the BSUN 2008 Congress;
- As an event that will include the 10th BSUN Anniversary celebration.

Professor Zgurovski specially emphasized that this complex event has the aim of formulating the role of education, science and innovation (the so called “knowledge triangle”) in the sustainable development of the BSR.

He pointed out that the event is supposed to gather representatives of the Academic community, politicians, decision makers and the representatives of the civil society in order to generate a think-tank for future cooperative projects and programs.

Main conclusions:

- BSUN will start working jointly with the team appointed by RMFA for the development of the concept for the Conference on Intercultural Dialogue. In this respect, the possibility of organizing a dedicated BSUN Consortium and of developing a specific working program on this subject will be studied;
- KPI will inform officially the RMFA of Romania about the Forum intended to be organized in Kiev and possible support of the Romanian Government for this event will be analyzed;
- BSUN will keep informed RMFA of Romania about the legal registration of the Network. After the registration, the future NGO will have the full support of RMFA in requesting the statute of a BSEC Related Body.

Meeting with Prof. Dr. Anton ANTON, President of the National Authority for Scientific Research

The President of NASR Prof. Anton underlined the potential of BSUN for promoting cooperation for preparing FP7 proposals and of proposals for bilateral cooperative programs on S&T.

The participants were informed about the coming launches of bilateral projects of Romania with Ukraine, Bulgaria and Turkey.

The need for developing support activities with clear outcomes in the proposal forms for FP7 projects was specially underlined.

During the visit there have been presented the main fields of interest for the BSUN future activities and it has been concluded that these are fields of common interest both for BSUN and NASR.

The President of the NASR Prof. Anton pointed also to the fact that the presented priority BSUN programs are only in the area of scientific research and expressed his opinion that there are many other opportunities for developing programs for cooperation in education that could be a significant source of grants.

Conclusions:

- The BSUN-IPS will start the process of monitoring and identification of research competences and proposals for cooperative projects. The obtained information is going to be synthesized and structured in a dedicated database that will be used for promoting regional projects;
- BSUN will organize exploratory workshops that might be supported by the RASR and should be used for preparing valuable proposals;
- It is also possible to develop Joint Centers with the contribution of several partners for establishing research facilities and research infrastructure;
- The parties agreed to search for grant opportunities for education programs like MSc and PhD programs.

Visit to the Faculty of Computer Sciences – “Politehnica” University of Bucharest and meeting with Prof. dr. Dumitru Popescu, Dean, Prof. dr. Ioan Dumitrache, Prof. dr. Nicolae Tapus

The Faculty leadership presented to the members of the delegation of BSUN the current status, the capabilities, activities and perspectives of the Faculty and a number of training facilities. During the follow-up discussion, potential joint projects in the framework of BSUN were discussed.

Meeting with the professors of the PUB and discussions on the main directions of BSUN activities

After a presentation with proposals given by Prof. Eden Mamut, BSUN IPS Director, it was decided to organize the future activities based of the following priority joint projects:

- Sustainable Development, responsible Prof. M. Zgurovski, KPI;
- Networking on innovation and knowledge transfer, responsible Prof. S. Barudov, VTU;
- Renewable Energy Sources, responsible Prof. E. Mamut. OUC;
- Advanced & Multifunctional Materials, responsible Prof. E. Andronescu, PUB and Prof. V. Ciupina, OUC;
- IT&C - Networking & High Performance Computing, responsible Prof. I. Bostant TUM and prof. N. Tapus, PUB;
- E-health & Telemedicine responsible Prof. C. Avci, IU and V Yatsenko, KPI.

The participants have agreed that for each of these priority projects the appointed responsible persons will initiate the following steps:

- Establishment of a dedicated BSUN Consortium;
- Initiation of a strategy for FP7 calls;
- Initiation of dedicated mobility programs;
- Initiation of Regional Summer schools, Workshops, Conferences;
- Development of a web-page.

Meeting with Prof. Dr. Ecaterina ANDRONESCU, Rector of the “Politehnica” University of Bucharest and President of the National Conference of Rectors

Prof. Andronescu was informed by the BSUN leadership about the Network status and priorities. During the follow-up discussion she expressed her support for the selected priorities of the Network activities and initiatives undertaken.

Meeting with Prof. Dr. Ioan PANZARU, Rector of University of Bucharest

Prof. Barudov presented the current situation in the BSUN and some of the priorities for developing cooperative projects.

In addition, Prof. Zgurovski underlined the importance of the contribution of the Romanian Universities to the development of BSUN and expressed the full support of the Ukrainian Universities for the registration of BSUN as an NGO in Romania.

Also Prof. Zgurovski informed about the intention of KPI to organize a Higher Education Forum in April 2008, inviting to this event Prof. Panzaru. The invitation was accepted.

Consequently on behalf of BSUN priority areas for cooperative projects were presented and the possibilities of UB to contribute to the development of working plans for some of the directions were discussed.

It was agreed that Prof. Panzaru will study the possibility of the involvement of some of the research groups from UB in the following areas:

- Sustainable development (coordinated by KPI) where UB might contribute on aspects related to ecology, geography and social dimension;
- Intercultural dialogue (where UB has a UNESCO Department on Inter-Confessional Dialogue and a Research Group on Oriental Studies);- Studies on geopolitical strategies where there are several research groups from the UB Faculty of Sociology.

It was also agreed to evaluate the potential of some of the research groups in the UB and to indicate if UB could play the role of a coordinator for the priorities in the area of intercultural dialogue or geopolitical studies.

Session of the BSUN Troika on administrative issues

- Prof. Barudov presented the Application of the Sevastopol National University of Nuclear Energy & Industry for BSUN Membership.
- The Application was thoroughly discussed and analyzed, and during the discussion, Prof. M. Zgurovski presented the applying University as a very important Higher Education Establishment with all accreditations in Ukraine. As a result it was agreed by the BSUN Presidential Troika to invite the University as a full BSUN Member for which the respective proposal is to be forwarded to the BSUN Executive Board Meeting in Istanbul, May 2007;
- The BSUN Bologna Observatory is going to be established at VTU as a Virtual Centre with a Web-page that will be mirrored in each BSUN member country;

- The VTU is to appoint a specialist to support the BSUN IPS in the reconstruction of the BSUN Portal. Also, KPI is to nominate a specialist that will contribute to this Project;
- Prof. Zgurovski presented the MOU with Federalist Group (FG) that is a political lobbying and business development group interested in cooperation with BSUN in the development of a Program on Energy Security in the BSR. The proposal was considered by the Presidential Troika to be of interest and it was agreed that Prof. M. Zgurovski shall send a letter to this FG, expressing the interest of the BSUN Troika for the initiation of cooperation and addressing an invitation to the FG to propose the initial approach for such a cooperation;
If
- The members of the Troyka agreed to start the process of preparing a Document for the legal registration of BSUN as an NGO in Romania and in this respect, a BSUN Executive Board Meeting was scheduled to be held in Istanbul on May 4th 2007;
- The BSUN President Prof. S. Barudov presented an initiative to organize a BSUN Virtual University, while Prof. M. Zgurovski presented a UNESCO Project for a Central and Eastern European Virtual University. After discussions it was agreed to appoint a group of experts to analyze the possibility of putting together both initiatives. In this respect, the final decision is to be taken at the BSUN Executive Board Meeting in Istanbul, May, 2007.