



Ms Rachel GREEN
Chair of the Bologna Follow-up Group
Department for Education and Skills
Sanctuary Buildings, Gt Smith Street
LONDON SW1P 3BT
United Kingdom

Brussels-The Hague-Luxembourg,

Dear Ms Green,

Following the request of the Bologna Follow-up, we, Ministers in charge of higher education in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg (BENELUX), have the honour to reconfirm the commitment expressed during the Bergen Ministerial conference to host the Bologna Ministerial meeting in 2009.

Cooperation has always been at the heart of the Bologna Process.

We intend to witness the spirit of joint endeavour and mutual respect for diversity by submitting this transnational application of three small countries with a long tradition of cross-border collaboration in a variety of fields.

Our cooperation in higher education, for instance for quality assurance, mobility, joint curriculum development and commitment to contribute to capacity building in other parts of the world is only a replica of this tradition.

We would opt for hosting the conference on 7-8 April 2009 at the historical location of the ancient University of Louvain – the oldest higher education institution in the BENELUX founded 1425 - of which the modern universities KUL and UCL share the legacy. Both institutions jointly accepted to give a warm welcome to the 2009 Bologna Ministerial conference in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve.

This choice has also a symbolic value. As a matter of fact, we as BENELUX countries, would like to give clear visibility to the substantial role of the academic community in the achievement of the Bologna goals.

Bologna is more than mere convergence of policies set by public authorities only. Higher education institutions, staff and students all together, have made an impressive contribution to the implementation and will continue to define the shape of the European Higher Education Area.

In 2009 the Bologna Process will be nearing the date set for realisation of its goals. It will therefore be highly relevant to look at achievements and reflect on the future. This could be the input for a “final act” at the anniversary celebration intended to be hosted by France in 2010.

In the meantime we can assure that in the full BENELUX spirit of “listening to each other” we will work with a concept of an open agenda which will be set in dialogue with all partner countries and organisations in the Bologna process.

Finally, we would like to stress that the BENELUX countries can rely on sufficient logistic and budgetary preparation to guarantee the provision of a secretariat based on one geographical location, supported by a separate Bologna website and an international staff with the necessary linguistic skills.

Should you still have questions on this application, please feel free to contact any of the BENELUX members of the Bologna Follow-up Group who will be glad to provide you with additional information.

Yours sincerely,

François BILTGEN

Minister of Culture, Higher Education and Research
Luxembourg

Marie-Dominique SIMONET

Minister for Higher Education, Scientific Research and
International Relations
French Community - Belgium

Mark RUTTE

State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science
Netherlands

Frank VANDENBROUCKE

Minister for Work, Education and Training
Flemish Community - Belgium

B-1210 Brussel 1210, Koning Albert II-laan 15, tel. +32 2 552 68 00.
B-1040 Bruxelles, rue Belliard 9-13, tel. +332 2 213 35 11.
NL-2500 BJ Den Haag, PO Box 16375, tel. +31 70 412 29 04.
L-2327 Luxembourg, 20, montée de la Pétrusse, tel. +352 478 66 19.