



Hungarian Rectors' Conference

Background information to the press conference on the Brazilian Science Without Borders scholarship program

The Science without Borders program is a scholarship opportunity funded by the Brazilian government, which allows 100.000 Brazilian BSc and PhD students, from the fields of natural sciences, engineering, health sciences and informatics to spend one year in a university abroad in the period between 2012-2015.

As the first country from the Central-European region, Hungary has joined the program in 2012, so Hungarian higher education institutions are among the universities of countries such as United States of America, Canada, Japan, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands.

The preparation of Hungary's access to the program was initiated in May 2012, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, János Martonyi and Zoltán Dubécz, the Secretary General of the Hungarian Rectors' Conference (HRC), started negotiations on the program with the Brazilian Ministry of Education during their visit to Brazil. The successful negotiation was closed by a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education (CAPES) – the state agency responsible for the organization and execution of the program – and HRC. According to the terms of the program, in each partner-country the Brazilian partner operates the project through a designated national organization that provides centralized, single channel administration and direct link with the higher education institutions. In Hungary – similarly to most countries' practice – this role is performed by the rectors' conference.

The negotiations continued in June 2012, during the Brazilian visit of Rózsa Hoffmann, Secretary of State for Education and Zoltán Dubécz. Throughout the negotiation and preparation of the program, the HRC has been in daily contact with the Brazilian Embassy in Budapest. Ambassador Sergio Eduardo Moreira Lima's support has contributed to the process, initiated by the Minister of Science and Technology Aloizio Mercadante, currently Minister of Education of Brazil, during his visit to Budapest, in November 2011.

According to the discussions during the visits and based on the signed agreement, the HRC started the execution of the professional tasks in the summer 2012. The foreign language course descriptions in the academic fields relevant to the SWB program, offered by the Hungarian higher education institutions wishing to join the program were collected and structured by HRC. As the result of the discussions with the institutions, the HRC managed to establish a homogenous portfolio including unified prices. In this portfolio 15 Hungarian higher education institutions (Corvinus University of Budapest, Budapest Business School, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, the University of Debrecen, Eötvös Loránd University, Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, University of Óbuda, University of

Pannonia, University of Pécs, Semmelweis University, Széchenyi István University, Szent István University, University of Szeged) were represented with all together 55 BSc, 7 health science and 45 PhD trainings. In September 2012, this portfolio was forwarded to CAPES, who has accepted and approved it, hence in November 2012 at the session of the Brazilian-Hungarian Joint Economic Committee, the CAPES and the HRC signed the final contract on Hungary joining the program and accepting up to 1000 BSc and 300 PhD students in the academic year 2013/ 2014. Based on this contract, on 20 November 2012, the call to Hungary for the academic year 2013/2014 was announced both at the Brazilian universities and at the official website of the program (<http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf>).

Descriptions of the Hungarian higher education institutions and the course information are available at the www.csfhungary.hu website operated by the HRC Secretariat. Furthermore, from the beginning of the application period, the colleagues of the secretariat, as the SWB program coordinators have been providing continuous information transmission to the students via the official email address of the program (info@csfhungary.hu), the official Facebook site www.facebook.com/ciencia.sem.fronteiras.hungria and at the private CSF-Hungria Facebook group. This means nearly ten thousand messages, emails and questions answered in the last 5 months.

The online application for the students was open between 20 November 2012 and January 25 2013 on the <http://www.cienciasemfronteiras.gov.br/web/csf> website. Each student could submit its application to only one country, and to Hungary the total of 627 applications were finalized. After the application period in Brazil, students had to apply also on the Hungarian website between 20 February and 20 March 2013, indicating their host institution preferences and sending their personal data. The applications were evaluated in a multi-stage system: first, the students' home institution, then the CAPES made a selection on the basis of academic performances and English language skills, ultimately, the proposals approved in both phases were evaluated by the HRC along with the host institutions. **Thus, from the 627 applications, 450 were approved both from the Brazilian and the Hungarian side, so there are 450 students expected to arrive in the next few months.**

The requirements of the application are defined by the Brazilian government, and these are the same in case of each destination country. The basic requirement is to have Brazilian nationality and to be enrolled to any Brazilian higher education institution on Bachelor level, having completed the minimum of 20% and the maximum of 90% of the studies.

The other basic requirement of an application is a successful IELTS or TOEFL language proficiency test. The required minimum achievement in these tests is determined by the host institutions. According to the Hungarian Higher Education Institutions' agreement, the HRC determined the minimum of 5 scores in IELTS and 59 points in TOEFL IBT; however, according to Brazilian students' demands these limits were later modified to 4 scores in IELTS and 41 points in TOEFL IBT, in case the students are willing to take part in a compulsory, intensive English language preparatory course held in the summer, in Hungary. This modification has increased the number of applicants with 120 more applications.

Similarly, the course offer has been expanded based on the feedback received from students. In December 2012, with the approval of Capes, the HRC extended the portfolio, which was sent out in September, with additional trainings offered by the institutions already participating and added the courses of three more institutions' (University of West-Hungary, University of Kaposvár and the College of Dunaújváros).

Vast majority of candidates have been accepted by the institution designated as most preferred. Accordingly, there are 252 students awaited to Budapest University of Technology and Economics, 58 to the University of Debrecen, 40 to Eötvös Loránd University, 22 to Szent István University, 20 to the College of Dunaújváros, 15 to the University of Óbuda, 11 to the University of Pécs, 9 to the Corvinus University of Budapest, 6 to the Budapest Business School, 5 to the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, 5 to the University of West-Hungary, 5 to Semmelweis University, 1 to the University of Pannonia and also 1 to the University of Kaposvár.

(The list of courses offered and the number of applications according to academic disciplines and courses can be read in annex.)

After the closure of the application period and the allocation within the country, until the 15th of April, the HRC has sent the registered confirmation letters to each student via email. Currently, the preparation of the visa issuance and the contracting between the students and CAPES is taking place. Students have applied from the entire territory of Brazil, from nearly 80 Brazilian universities, 22 Brazilian states, from cities thousand-miles-away from the Hungarian Embassy in Brazil. Therefore in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ad-hoc consular administration days are being organized in various big cities around Brazil in order to facilitate the Visa process.

The first 260 students will arrive on the 1st of July 2013. In the 10-week-long language preparatory course 120 of them will take part on a compulsory basis, and the for the other 140 the participation is highly recommended. The other group of students is expected to arrive in the beginning of the academic year in September 2013. The entire tuition fee of the students, as well as all their living expenses will be covered by the Brazilian government.

The accommodation and the insurance of the students will be covered by the students from their scholarship provided by the Brazilian government, but the HRC and the institutions play a central role in the organization and the realization of these issues. In Budapest, the students will be accommodated typically in rented properties, in other cities it will mostly happen in student housing.