

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UTRECHT NETWORK LUND 28 AND 29 APRIL 1995

Participants:

Utrecht Network

Marc Arnold (Strasbourg III), Minas Arsenakis (Thessaloniki), Poul Bonde (Aarhus), Guillermo Calleja (Madrid), Patricia de Clopper (Antwerpen), Richard Craven-Green (Hull), Beatrice Delpouve (Lille), Hans Joss (Basel), Björn Einar Aas (Bergen), Christian Civardi (Strasbourg II), Gianni Galloni (Bologna), Laurence Griffond (Lille - USA programme), Ingeborg Kunath (Madrid), Thóra Magnúsdóttir (Reykjavik), Wessel Meijer (Utrecht H.K.U.), Nora Murphy (Cork), Bettina Nelemans (Utrecht, minutes), Manfred Nettekoven (Bochum), Kaija Pajala (Helsinki), Sabine Pendl (Graz), Svend Poller (Leipzig), Inez Reimer (Leipzig), Kersti Schmölzer, (Lund), Monica Sprung (Bochum), Isabel Texeira (Coimbra), Jeroen Torenbeek (Utrecht, chairman).

Observers

David Colburn (University of Florida), Richard Downie (University of Florida), Peter Levitov (University of Nebraska, Lincoln), Thomas Saville (Southern Illinois University at Carbondale), Huub van Wersch (Hogeschool van Utrecht).

Agenda

Friday, 28 April

09.00 - 13.00 Welcome

Practical matters

State of the Art

Budgetary Matters

Expansion of the Network

Infopackage/Newsletter/Electronic communication

Future Plans

1. Medcampus/Unitwin/Alpha/Peace programme

2. membership fee

14.00 - 17.00 Working groups

Saturday, 29 April

09.00 - 10.00 US-EU programme

future of the programme

student placements

seminar Antwerp

10.00 - 10.30 election steering committee

11.00 - 13.00 ECTS-presentation, national promoter Sweden

+ discussion

13.00 - 14.00 closing session, look to the future

set place and date for next meeting

any other business

1. WELCOME AND PRACTICAL MATTERS

Jeroen Torenbeek welcomes everybody to the annual meeting of the Utrecht Network 1995, this year held in Lund. The newcomers, the universities of Helsinki and Reykjavik are warmly welcomed. David Colburn, Richard Downie, Peter Levitov, Thomas Saville will attend the ERASMUS part of the meeting as observers. Huub van Wersch of the Hogeschool van Utrecht will attend all parts of the meeting as an observer. Jeroen Torenbeek expresses his gratitude to Bengt Nilsson, Kersti Schmölzer, and their colleagues for the excellent organisation and their generous hospitality.

The agenda is set for the meeting.

2. STATE OF THE ART

Utrecht Network

Bettina Nelemans gives a presentation on what the Utrecht Network has achieved in the past few years and what it is hoping to accomplish in the future. The complete text is included in these minutes as an Appendix (Appendix I).

* statistics: In 1993/1994 as many as 403 students were exchanged within 18 institutions, an increase of 25% in comparison with the previous year. Numbers are expected to grow this year, since Basel and Graz are now also taking part. In 1995/1996 Helsinki and Reykjavik will officially join the Erasmus part of the UN.

* involvement: The UN is involved in numerous activities: Tempus; EU-US; Medcampus; Sigma (subject-oriented networks). All activities are briefly discussed.

* public relations: This year the UN published a leaflet containing general information on who we are and what we do.

Socrates

* Socrates was finally approved by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on 10 March. One of the salient elements, though, the institutional contract, will not be introduced until 1997. There is still considerable uncertainty as to how the programme will be implemented, but we should take the opportunity to try and get ourselves ready for the new European educational setting.

* Chapter 1 of Socrates concerns Higher Education (ERASMUS), chapter 2 deals with primary and secondary education (Comenius), and chapter 3 concerns the so-called horizontal measures (such as language training, open and distance learning, etc).

* Important constituents of the Socrates programme are: lifelong learning, academic recognition, equality of opportunity and a number of other features.

After the presentation of the state of the art a discussion on the future of the education programmes and the Utrecht Network follows. Some of the most noteworthy comments are mentioned below.

Poul Bonde says that the whole concept of an institutional network has changed over the past few years. A lot has been done and substantial experience has been gained from taking part in various programmes. The Utrecht Network has become a basic tool for internationalisation.

Christian Civardi proposes to ask teachers who have been involved in Teaching Staff Mobility to write a short report on their visit, in order to get a better insight into Teaching Staff exchange

within the Utrecht Network.

3. BUDGETARY MATTERS

The budget is settled. Of the 15,800 Ecus which have been assigned to us by the Commission, about 13,000 Ecus will be needed to cover the annual meeting in Lund (6,500 travel expenses, 6,500 living expenses). 1,000 Ecus will go towards Teaching Staff Mobility (a flat rate of 100 Ecus per institution, in total 10 institutions have applied for Teaching Staff Funds. 1,000 Ecus have been used for the production of the leaflet and the remainder of 800 Ecus will, for the time being, be set aside as a reserve to cover deficits. An overview of the expenditure is included as an appendix (Appendix II).

4. EXPANSION OF THE NETWORK

background

Compared to some of the other European institutional networks (such as Santander, Eurometropole), the Utrecht Network is quite small and selective. We have members in all European Union and EFTA countries, the underlying thought being that we have members in countries that participate in ERASMUS. In bigger European countries we have more than one member (Germany, France). We may now ask ourselves whether there is a need for the Utrecht Network to expand now that the European Union is expanding, too. What is the maximum of universities that we can admit without the Network risking becoming unmanageable? Also, there is the problem of English speaking universities. Cork and Hull both have an enormous influx of students already and cannot deal with even bigger numbers.

Edinburgh and Glasgow

Both institutions have been approached, but, unfortunately, are reluctant to join the Network because of too many other international commitments. The idea of approaching the University of Stirling is raised.

France

Patricia de Clopper is interested to know if people would welcome another French university. There are several possibilities: inviting an institution in the south of France (to improve the geographical spread), or asking Lille II and III to co-operate with Lille I. Lille I will try and see if placement of UN students at the Lille II and III can be arranged.

Poul Bonde is very much in favour of this mechanism by which new institutions are admitted through present members. He stresses the importance of the role of the international offices as go-betweens.

Valencia, Ljubljana and others

This year two institutions have made known that they are interested in becoming a member of the Utrecht Network: the Univerza V Ljubljani and the Universitat de València. A discussion follows first of all as to whether we should admit new members anyway, and secondly, as to whether we can accept the applications of the two candidates.

Guillermo Calleja is in favour of a relatively small network, comprising no more than 25 partners. Simultaneously, he realizes that we cannot just firmly close the door to anybody wishing to enter the UN.

Manfred Nettekoven agrees that the UN should not become too large. As opposed to some other

networks we operate as a cluster, whereas the colleagues often work with task forces. A maximum of 25 members seems reasonable. If we are to expand, English or French-speaking partners are to be preferred to others.

Jeroen Torenbeek agrees that the UN should not become too vast, but he is of the opinion that it is hard to say what the absolute maximum is. At present there are 22 members, which keeps the group to a manageable size. Even with observers we are still able to sit round one table at the annual meetings and to all know each other.

Björn Einar Aas suggests that we first establish the goals of the Utrecht Network in the light of the latest Socrates developments. Next we could consider bringing in institutions from Socrates-countries only, or broaden our scope to other countries across the world.

Bengt Nilsson stresses the need for good criteria: high quality institutions; broad universities (covering a wide range of disciplines); active in international co-operation; strong central international offices with good contacts at faculty level. Bengt calls for a strategic plan, defining the UN policy on admitting new members, especially those from Central and East European countries.

The question is raised whether institutions are members for life.

Everybody agrees that the UN should be a coherent type of network, consisting of universities with a similar designation. Naturally, there is also the quality issue. The idea is put forward for the steering committee to work on a policy document on the aims and perspectives of the Utrecht Network.

With regard to the two applications, the overall feeling is that there is no need for an extra Spanish partner in the UN. The application of Valencia is rejected.

As far as Ljubljana is concerned, a number of people wish there was more extensive information on this university. The question is raised as to whether students will be interested in going there. Minas Arsenakis expresses his concern on this matter. What will be the added value of including an institution like Ljubljana into the UN? There may be a language problem, since the language of instruction at the university is Slovenian. Perhaps the university can be asked to set up (summer)courses in English. It is debatable whether Ljubljana needs to be visited first, before the meeting can decide upon admission of the university to the Utrecht Network. Even though the standard procedure is to visit potential candidates first, the University of Iceland was also accepted without having been visited by members of the steering committee. Also, the Utrecht Network has been co-operating with Ljubljana for four years within the TEMPUS-programme. Björn Einar Aas confirms that the links between Bergen and Ljubljana are good. He adds that he is happy to welcome Ljubljana to the UN, as this is a university from a developing democracy. Bengt Nilsson is positive, too. After the debate 15 institutions vote in favour of and 6 against admitting Ljubljana. Ljubljana will be a new member of the Utrecht Network.

Criteria for membership will be developed by the steering committee.

5. MEMBERSHIP FEE

background

The idea of establishing a membership fee was first introduced at the Madrid meeting held in 1994, when it became clear that the launching of the Socrates programme would mean the end of ICP-funding. A fee would turn the UN into a network financially independent of programmes. Other networks like the Santander Group and the Coimbra Group have been asking a financial contribution of their members for quite some time now, so the idea of having a fee is a phenomena not entirely unfamiliar in the world of institutional networks. A 'flat fee' of 2000 Ecu

is proposed, 'flat' meaning that no distinction will be made between large and small, rich and less wealthy institutions.

discussion

Guillermo Calleja avers that the introduction of a membership fee is a necessity if we want to continue to work together and undertake activities, especially now that Brussels funding is becoming less certain and will no longer be linked up directly with programmes (ICPs), but with individual institutions. For a network to be solid and stable a good financial base is needed. Poul Bonde adds that establishing a fee is a logical consequence of a different way of distributing (Brussels) money. Part of the funds will still come from the same source, but follow a different flow, from Brussels to the institutions (via the institutional contracts) to the UN, instead of directly from Brussels to the UN. There is also some kind of political statement involved, universities paying a fee explicitly declare to be members. This is underlined by Guillermo Calleja, who says that contributing to the UN clearly demonstrates a real interest and commitment on behalf of the members. If a fee is to be established there should be no other expenses, Poul Bonde stresses. The fee should cover everything, ranging from travel expenses to new activities like, for instance, the organisation of workshops. Manfred Nettekoven says that a new programme (Socrates) automatically poses new challenges and new activities. He, too, stresses the logical consequence of having a membership fee following out of the start of Socrates. Also, a membership fee does not only buy you a ticket to the annual meeting, but it also gives you part of your profile. He expects that in the Socrates-era, competition between institutions will become stronger.

Christian Civardi wishes to know what the fee will be used for. Marc Arnold reminds the members that in future it is no longer self-evident that all Erasmus students get a grant. This means that the institutions will have more responsibility towards their students than is the case nowadays. He says that he prefers funds to be used for students, rather than for overhead costs. 2000 Ecu would be too much for his university. Beatrice Delpouve suggests that the travel expenses for the annual meeting be directly paid out of the institutional contract (Socrates) money, instead of out of the membership fee. Others argue that this might mean that in future not everybody will be present at the annual meeting.

Marc Arnold feels that the height of the contribution should depend on the size of the institution in terms of student numbers. Guillermo Calleja objects to this because bigger universities are not necessarily richer universities, on the contrary, they often have higher expenses. Björn Einar Aas believes that having a flat fee keeps the mechanism from becoming too complicated. Furthermore, it is suggested that the three Strasbourg universities start working more closely together and operate as one member (and, hence, pay the membership fee together).

conclusion

The overall feeling is that there should be a fee, not only for practical reasons, but also for strategic motives. It is expected that a membership fee will raise the profile of the Utrecht Network and its individual members.

Poul Bonde emphasises what has been said before: there is a clear need for a policy document, preceded by an evaluation of the activities which the UN has been involved in so far.

Christian Civardi asks for a letter which can be given to the vice-chancellors, containing information on the reasons for introducing a fee and a list of activities and items which the fee will be used for.

The steering committee will draw up a proposal, consisting of a detailed financial and activities

report, and a future plan.

ANNIVERSARY

In 1997 the Utrecht Network will celebrate its 10th anniversary. It might be a good idea to involve the Rectors of our institutions to increase their commitment and enthusiasm.

INFOPACKAGE/NEWSLETTER/ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Over the past few years the idea of introducing a newsletter has been brought up time and again by members of the Utrecht Network. During the course of this annual meeting, too, people are discussing the viability of such a UN-Newsletter. Other networks have newsletters as well. The problem with printed newsletters is that they soon become out of date and that there is a lot of competition. People receive heaps of written information through various channels already, and it is doubtful if there is a need for yet another printed newsletter. At this stage there seems to be a much stronger interest in improving electronic information channels. Manfred Nettekoven says that Bochum is now putting campus-information on World Wide Web, and there are possibilities of incorporating the Utrecht Network into the project. Wessel Meijer of the Utrecht Arts School says that his institution may be able to offer technical assistance. The idea is then put forward to try and put at least the Utrecht Network-infopackage on World Wide Web, and ask the Utrecht Arts School to develop some kind of framework for this. Björn Einar Aas suggests that each university designs its own home page, behind which information on the institution can be found. A next step could be to establish a Utrecht Network newsgroup, open to all members. Student applications and placements, too, might eventually be dealt with electronically. Manfred Nettekoven, Wessel Meijer and Bettina Nelemans will try to set up a tailor-made electronic information plan for the Utrecht Network and aim to have this implemented by the end of October.

MEDCAMPUS

Manfred Nettekoven of Bochum, the coordinating institution for the UN-Medcampus programme, elaborates on the latest developments. He recalls the fact that the programme is directed at the professionalisation of university administrators at universities in the so-called Non Member Countries in Northern Africa and the Middle East. The participating universities form a very heterogenous group of institutions, a complicating factor in the administration of the programme. Last year a UNIX computer networking course was organised at Utrecht. The course was attended by computer technicians of the universities of Cairo, Rabat and Vieux Kouba, and by university administrators of those institutions. The group of administrators not only took a computer course, but also discussed university management strategies with staff of the universities of Bochum and Utrecht. In the meantime two other universities have joined the programme: those of Malta and Ankara. The next step will be to organise two workshops in Bochum on International Relations Management and Computer Use for Teaching and Administrative Purposes. These workshops will be held in August.

UNITWIN

Participating universities in the Unitwin programma are Harare (Zimbabwe), Maputo (Mozambique), Western Cape (South Africa) and Windhoek (Namibia). European partners are Utrecht, Lund and Bochum. The programme is funded by UNESCO and it concentrates on issues

such as human rights, health, man and environment, mathematics education. The programme differs from Medcampus in that there is no real umbrella scheme. Jeroen Torenbeek draws attention to the fact that the Unitwin-programme was started in co-operation with Utrecht and that other universities might think of initiating something similar.

ALPHA

Guillermo Calleja gives an outline of the Alpha programme, a co-operation programme with universities in Latin America. Alpha is administered by DGI. The priority areas are social sciences and economics, medicine and health sciences, and engineering. The programme is mainly concerned with institutional management, the recognition of diplomas and degrees, and the harmonisation of courses. Two deadlines have passed already (end of January and end of April), but there is another deadline in October. The Universidad Complutense Madrid is willing to act as a coordinator for the Utrecht Network (comparable to Bochum and the Medcampus-programme) and to prepare proposals and make an inventory of existing contacts with universities in Latin America.

PEACE

Björn Einar Aas went to a Peace-meeting held in Louvain early this spring and enlarges on the items which were discussed at the conference. Peace, too, will be administered by DGI. The Peace-Programme is aimed at strengthening Palestinian and European co-operation. Unesco is the driving force behind the programme. A steering committee has been set up and one of its first proposals was to introduce a membership fee of \$ 800 to \$ 1000 for those universities wishing to participate. The fee is meant to cover management costs. The Americans have their own Palestine programme. Björn Einar Aas promises to keep everybody informed.

SASAKAWA

Jeroen Torenbeek has recently been to Japan where he visited a number of universities and the Sasakawa foundation. The Sasakawa foundation is named after Mr Sasakawa, a 96-years-old Japanese millionaire who has set up a foundation which gives money to universities all over the world. So far 54 institutions of higher education, among which Yale and Berkeley, have already received financial support from the Sasakawa foundation. Utrecht University, also, has received a gift of \$ 1,000,000. One of the aims of the foundation is to further the exchange between Japan and Europe, not only by means of funding individual universities but also by supporting networks of institutions. Jeroen Torenbeek has discussed the possibility of the Utrecht Network receiving support from the Sasakawa, but is not yet sure how things will develop. On behalf of the Utrecht Network Utrecht will prepare a request for funding and distribute it for approval. The first reactions to contacts between the UN and the Sasakawa foundation are positive. Poul Bonde suggests we find out what contacts UN members have with Japanese institutions.

WORKING GROUPS

1. Socrates and the Institutional Contract

During the session, the participants shared their knowledge and uncertainties about the implications of the institutional contract on the Socrates programme. The following subjects were discussed:

***Imbalances.** The draft student mobility table does not leave the possibility to specify between

which institutions students will be exchanged. Only the country can be indicated. This could have consequences in dealing with imbalances. In the network concept of Erasmus, imbalances between countries could be levelled out through balancing student mobility figures within the ICP. This will no longer be possible.

***Internal Procedures.** Information was shared on how universities prepared themselves for the Socrates programme. One of the implications of the institutional contract is that all activities must be "processed" centrally. There were, as of yet, no clear internal procedures, but it is obvious that for (very) large universities (like Madrid) more careful attention is required than for smaller universities. The following questions came up: Who will decide about priorities between different activities? Are the departments where successful ICPs were run by enthusiastic departmental staff, willing to share responsibility with the people at central level?

***European Dimension.** There was some discussion about the interpretation of the concept European Dimension. The possibilities range from a Europeanised module to a fully integrated English European four year curriculum.

***ECTS.** Most universities already participate in ECTS programmes at this moment. It is noted that joining ECTS, as well as being distinct, encompasses a number of easy to prove criteria.

*** Institutional Contract and the Utrecht Network.** How can the Utrecht Network continue to exist within its present framework of Erasmus ICP-95-NL-1235/17? This appeared to be the most important issue during the working group session. The introduction of the institutional contract, implies the disappearance of the network concept. Introducing a membership fee to be able to maintain the network infrastructure, as discussed plenary, is seen as a structural solution. More specifically in the Socrates scheme, it was suggested that each partner should add its Utrecht Network membership to the "European Policy Statement", a compulsory part of the institutional contract. Which specific text is most suitable and how it could be organised that each member uses the same, or at least, "compatible" texts is something that should be prepared in a smaller group. It was agreed to propose at the plenary meeting that Kersti Schmölder and Bettina Nelemans should take the initiative and that they invite every member to discuss the matter, after their preparatory work (it was suggested that this meeting should take place in Reykjavik).¹

2. The future of the Utrecht Network

The discussion revolved round a number of questions: Do we want more partners? Do we need a Task Force? Do we need our own office, like the Coimbra Group Office? What do other networks do? More questions were raised than answers were given. The issues mentioned below could maybe serve as a basis for a wider, more extensive dialogue.

profile

There is a large difference between the Utrecht Network and most of the other networks, in that we operate as a **cluster** of universities, whereas the other networks have an umbrella-function, and are made up of Task Forces. This is probably one of the strong characteristics of the Utrecht Network. We are not just a group of individual institutions, but in a number of respects we are a cohesive group.

aims

¹ report by Wessel Meijer

There should be more clarity as to what the **aims** of the UN are, and next we should find the tools that suit our purpose best. **Self-evaluation** is mentioned as a means of helping us to determine our goals and objectives. This evaluation could even be carried out by an independent, external body.

The aims of the Utrecht Network will need to be formulated in a strategic plan that lays down our plans for the next five to ten years. Plans with regard to initiating new activities, developing our relationship with other big networks, attracting sponsors, etc. Also important is to see whether the **structure** of the UN needs to be changed. Working groups might be a useful asset. They could develop plans on how to develop European modules or international curricula for example.

The wish for the Utrecht Network to keep its European identity is highlighted. At the same time it is felt by most of the participants that the UN should have an external outlook and work together with institutions in different parts of the world. The European identity which we want to maintain, could be strengthened by setting up European modules (one of the elements of the new Socrates-programme).

With regard to the Socrates-programme it is mentioned that some of the policy elements which need to be included in the institutional applications should be co-ordinated by the UN, so that all individual members have the same UN-information in their proposals. Also, we should define our new position under the Socrates-programme.

Setting up a training scheme for administrative staff might be a useful thing, especially since we work with administrative offices. In fact this is part of our profile. And after all, the Socrates-programme very much emphasises the need for efficient central offices, capable of administering international activities.

US-EU PROGRAMME

two years of growth, setbacks and new opportunities

The first year was very successful in all respects. Contacts were set up, an infrastructure was formed, the programme quickly gained momentum. Somehow the second year was more difficult, partly because financial support from Brussels and FIPSE was uncertain. Jeroen Torenbeek was told by the people of the European Commission that our programme is by far the largest programme in terms of student numbers. Brussels has expressed the will to continue, but it is unlikely that already existing projects will receive funding for yet another year.

Tom Saville gives the American perspective on the US-EU programme. Because of a lack of Student Mobility grants, students were less enthusiastic this year than they were last year to go to Europe. A second financial drawback was the plummeting of the American Dollar, making it more expensive for students to go abroad. Another reason for the decrease in student numbers may be that during the period the American students were being recruited, the students who had gone to Europe in year one, were still abroad and could not help motivate new students. The difference in size between ABEU and the Utrecht Network also appeared to be somewhat problematic in that the Utrecht Network has far more members and thus many more students to send out than ABEU. Moreover, the UN is older and has a longer tradition of exchanging students than ABEU. There is also the language problem which kept some American students from going to Europe. It should be mentioned, however, that language facilities are now being set up at some ABEU universities for Danish, Greek and Dutch. Tom Saville says that a way of raising the number of American students making use of the programme, may be to increase one-semester placements. Also, summer programmes could prove to be very attractive to American

students. He expects more students to show an interest in going to Europe next year when the first group of students has returned and can try and encourage new students to spend one or two semesters in Europe. The Utrecht Network partners are asked to send promotion material (videos, slides, catalogues, etc) to the ABEU members.²

Tom Saville asks people to keep in mind that there are ABEU institutions that, despite the fact that a balance in numbers is vital, receive students even though they are not sending out students this year. This proves that there definitely is an investment from the American side.

It is unlikely that the FIPSE will fund the programme as it is for much longer, since FIPSE usually does not finance activities like this one. It is certain that there will be no FIPSE funding for Student Mobility grants in 1995/1996. David Colburn suggests that there may be other possibilities in the near future to finance students, such as Fulbright. This could be a good incentive to students.

Peter Levitov explains that FIPSE provided seed money, enabling the programme to germinate. Time has now come to make sure the programme will continue perhaps even without external aid. The fact that fewer American students have shown an interest in studying in Europe for one semester or a whole year is of course disappointing but should also be seen in the perspective of the immense success of the first year, which was very hard to equal.

discussion

Christian Civardi is very much in favour of continuing the programme. His attitude is shared by all the others.

Since EU-funding, too, will probably come to an end, it is expected that the number of European students that travel to the US will slightly decrease. Luckily, most Utrecht Network universities have access to funds other than EU-funds, so that their students can still take part in the programme. For a number of universities, unfortunately, this is very difficult to realize. All contact persons are asked to inform Utrecht as soon as possible whether their students will go to the U.S., despite the absence of funding.

There is tremendous potential for growth within the programme. The seminar, which will be organized in Antwerp in May, will probably be quite rewarding.

Despite the reassuring words of the American colleagues, some concern is expressed about the diminishing enthusiasm on the American side. After all, a lot of time and energy has been put into the programme. and it would be rather unfortunate if the output (i.e. the number of students actually being placed) turned out to be relatively small.

Marc Arnold is interested to know how many students we can expect to send next year. If each institution can only send one student it is hardly worthwhile to recruit people, as many will have to be disappointed.

seminar in Antwerp

The Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen will be organising American Science Days in May. The lectures which will be held during the conference will also be accessible to American students who are currently studying at one of the Utrecht Network universities and to other UN students. The programme is made up of academic, cultural and social activities. Special lectures

² For your information: Utrecht Network leaflets were sent to all ABEU institutions in large quantities at the beginning of this year. It is particularly important to raise the profile of the UN, since we want to continue co-operation with the ABEU Network on a network basis and not as individual institutions. Making UN-information accessible via Internet will be a next step in making ourselves better known to our American partners.

concentrating on American-European relations (in all senses) will be organised for the ABEU students.

The seminar will be attended by a large number of European and American scholars and by 33 students among whom 14 ABEU students.

procedures, timetable

Tom Saville proposes to have more than one selection and placement round. The Europeans have a little more time because the American academic year ends earlier than in Europe. Two selection rounds would in the end take up a lot more time though, so people prefer to stick to one round only. **1 March** as the deadline for submitting applications seems satisfactory to all parties. Carbondale and Utrecht will then make sure that placements are finalized by mid-April. Carbondale and Utrecht realize that this year things went rather slow and promise to be more efficient in 1996.

The need for contacting the coordinating offices (i.e. Carbondale and Utrecht) rather than individual institutions is acknowledged. Also, students should not contact coordinators.

ELECTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Guillermo Calleja, who replaces ex-vice-rector Carlos Seoane, is officially accepted as member of the steering committee. He will stay on the steering committee until the next annual meeting.

Poul Bonde, whose term has now come to an end, expresses his wish to serve another term on the steering committee. This is approved of by the meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

* Lund is intensifying its contacts with South-East Asia, and offers to be the 'contact university' within the Utrecht Network for South-East Asia.

NEXT MEETING

The three universities of Strasbourg kindly offer to host the next annual Utrecht Network meeting. The meeting will most probably be held right before or after Easter. There seems to be a preference for late March.

STATE OF THE ART - LUND MEETING

UTRECHT NETWORK

As we are approaching the ninth year of our existence, the Utrecht Network is going through times in which education and research are adopting a character which is more international than it has ever been before. Not only are contacts between institutions all over Europe strengthened and the number of academics and students increased year by year, there is also a tendency towards more coherence, a better adjustment of the various international programmes which were launched in the 80s and early 90s. Within that framework I would like to have a look with you at what the Utrecht Network has achieved in the past year. As usual we will not only focus on the past but also on present and future developments. After that I will give you an update on the Socrates programme, which, as you will probably know, was formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on 10 March. Some confusion has arisen now that members of the Socrates Committee have objected to the fast introduction of the institutional contract, arguing that institutions do not have enough time to implement the programme. Some people say that the institutional contract may not be introduced until 1997/1998, and that after 1995/1996 there will be a second transitional year. More about Socrates later. After the presentation there will be time for discussion.

1. The Utrecht Network

past, present and future

student and teacher mobility - Erasmus, Tempus, EU-US, Medcampus, newcomer's day, Sigma, leaflet

Again we have been doing very well as far as student exchanges are concerned . In 1993/1994 (the most recent year of which data are available) as many as 403 students were exchanged within 18 institutions. That means an increase of over 80 students (25%) compared to the previous year when an equal number of institutions (18) were participating. The numbers should be somewhat higher again this year, as Basel and Graz are now also taking part. In 1995/1996, as you know, Helsinki and Reykjavik will officially join the Erasmus-Utrecht Network.

Unfortunately, the imbalance problem of student flows has not really been resolved. Some universities are still receiving many more students than they are sending out, likewise, a number of institutions are sending out more than they receive. Last year Lund organised a kick-off day, to familiarize their own students with study-abroad programmes and enable them to meet foreign students, but also to introduce Lund University to the colleagues of the Utrecht Network. The effects of the kick-off day were twofold: Swedish students were encouraged to spend some time abroad, and colleagues from partner universities got the opportunity to get to know more about this university and pass on this information to their own students at home.

Teaching staff mobility numbers went down a bit in 1993/1994 . 12 teachers were exchanged with Utrecht Network funding. At the beginning of that year 23 people were still planning to go abroad. In all 5,657 Ecus were spent on TM, which meant an average of 471 Ecus per person. The average time spent abroad was one and a half weeks. 12 out of 18 institutions were involved in the exchange of academics. Early this year (1994/1995) 24 academics requested for Utrecht

Network funding. It remains to be seen if they have actually all gone. As you know it is always difficult to say why people decide not to go. Planning teaching staff mobility a long way ahead can in a number of instances be more difficult than organising student mobility.

It goes without saying that probably far more teachers are exchanged between UN-institutions than we have records of here. It might be interesting to find out what kind of 'concentrations' there are in the field of academic Utrecht Network exchange. A better insight into this matter could help us set up joint curriculum programmes for example, or summercourses. Anybody interested in discussing this matter with us is welcome to do so.

Tempus

Where 170 students were exchanged in 1992/1993, this number has now risen to 192 from East to West and 11 from West to East, 203 students altogether.

For those of you here who are involved in the TEMPUS programme, it must already be clear to you that organisational matters will change drastically in the next year. Instead of submitting one overall proposal for the whole of the Utrecht Network, 5 separate applications (Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Lithuania) had to be put in for the year 1995/1996. The implications of the new management structure are that Utrecht's role as the co-ordinator will be quite different, since each of the projects will then have its own co-ordinating unit. Naturally, this is one of the big topics to be discussed at the Tempus-meeting here in Lund. It is expected that Utrecht will remain to play some kind of overall co-ordinating role.

The one-year-pre-JEP which I referred to last year (with Bergen, Bochum, St Petersburg and Utrecht) has not really been successful. A proposal for a three year JEP was unfortunately not accepted, the activities described in the application lacked a certain degree of coherence.

EU-US

As you know we will be dealing with the EU-US programme in more detail tomorrow morning, but I would like to briefly go into the programme now, saying that this year 45 students went to one of the 12 American partner institutions and an equal number of people spent (or are still spending) one year or semester at one of the Utrecht Network universities. We were awarded 92,000 Ecus, 60,000 Ecus of which were allocated to student mobility grants (1,500 Ecus per student). One of the problems that we are dealing with at the moment is the lack of certainty about the future of the programme. From the undiminished enthusiasm of many of the members it can be concluded that there is very strong support from our side to continue the programme. As many as 96 European students applied for a study abroad period at one of the ABEU institutions. Maybe the continuation of the programme should not depend too much on whether or not Brussels and the FIPSE will decide to subsidise the programme next year.

Medcampus

Medcampus is one of the smaller programmes that we take part in. At present Bochum, Madrid and Utrecht are the European partners. The number of non-European partners has gone up by two. Both the Malta Council for Science and Technology and the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, have joined the project. The first activity to be undertaken within the Medcampus programme was a computer course for nine representatives of the universities in Algeria, Morocco and Egypt. The course was organised in Utrecht last year in June. There were three computer experts who learned how to set up computer networks. The other six people, all administrative staff, took a course in Database and word-processing and apart from that they had

meetings with non-academic staff about the management of a university and the International Office. The six people spent two days at the Ruhr-universität Bochum in order to meet professionals in similar fields as well. The future of the Medcampus programme was discussed on Malta some weeks ago. Manfred Nettekoven will talk about this later this morning.

Newcomers

Each year when we meet we talk about expansion of the Utrecht Network. We are still relatively small compared to some other institutional networks in Europe. COMNET, for instance, has approximately 70 members. Networks like the Coimbra Group and the Santander Group are rapidly expanding, and in that respect we can still say that we are one of the smaller and more selective networks in Europe. I will come back to the co-operation between the six big European networks in a minute.

Before that I would like to say that for the very first time we have organised a so-called newcomers' meeting which was intended to help the four newest members integrate quickly into the Utrecht Network without too many problems. These four universities are, as you know, Basel and Graz, which have in fact already actively participated in student exchange for a year, and Helsinki and Reykjavik. With the newcomers we discussed various issues, ranging from pure network-logistics to policy matters. More about the expansion of the Network later on this morning.

Sigma

One of the most revolutionary enterprises which the Utrecht Network ventured into this year was and as a matter of fact still is, the Sigma project. In Madrid last year we already discussed the possibility of co-operation of the six big institutional networks in Europe : the Coimbra Group, Comnet, Eurometropole, Santander, Unica and the Utrecht Network. In July 1994 these groups, joined under the name Sigma, submitted a proposal for subject-oriented networks to the Commission. The application was accepted in October and this is when things came off the ground. Six scientific committees, each comprising academics from all European Union countries (apart from Luxembourg) and Norway and Switzerland were formed. The six disciplines are : Business Studies, Communication Studies, Languages, Archaeology, Teacher Training and Women's Studies. For each of these disciplines national reports have been written by the members of the scientific committees. The national reports contain information on the state of the art of education within a particular field in a particular country. Also, junior researchers were appointed for each discipline to write a report on what has been achieved in that subject area from an Erasmus point of view. Now that most reports have been written, the chairpeople of the scientific committees are preparing for conferences which are to take place either this spring or early next academic year. By then it should be clear what developments the respective subject areas have gone through in the past years, and what needs to be changed in the near future. It is uncertain yet if the groups of academics will keep on working together or whether this was only a temporary thing. Also, whether Sigma, the group of European networks, will continue co-operating in the coming years remains yet to be seen.

Finally, a glance at the financial side of Sigma. The project was awarded 545,000 Ecus by what used to be called the Task Force, now DG xxii. Most of the funds were used to cover travel and living expenses of the experts to the scientific committee meetings and the conferences. The remaining funds are for translations and publications of the national reports (all these reports have to be published in English and in French) and for the management of the whole project. The Coimbra Group Office in Brussels coordinates the Sigma project.

Leaflet

Last but not least I would briefly like to mention the Utrecht Network leaflet which was produced this year. Despite our relatively long existence of almost nine years, up until early this year we never had our own PR-document, and it was felt by a large number of people that there was a need to launch some kind of document, introducing the Utrecht Network to outsiders. Each of you received a total of 1,000 leaflets with the name of your institution written on the cover. So far we have had mainly positive reactions. Although some programme-money was used to finance the brochure, Utrecht University covered the bulk of the expenses.

2. Socrates

The Socrates programme was finally approved by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on 10 March. The idea then was to distribute the guidelines and application forms in April or May and set the application deadline at the end of October or November this year. However, the Socrates committee met on 10 April and a number of members thought it unwise to introduce the institutional contracts as early as 1996, as this would not give the universities enough time to set up an infrastructure and establish sufficient administrative support structures. Even though nobody can tell exactly what will and what won't be initiated, we think it is best to just start from the assumption that Socrates will soon be launched and to make sure that we are well prepared. When talking about we I am referring to both the individual institutions that we represent and the Utrecht Network as a whole.

I will give you a short update here on the basics of Socrates.

"The overall aim of the Socrates programme is to help improve the quality and relevance of education for children, young people and adults, to increase access to the range of learning opportunities available across the Community, and to give more young people the chance to gain personal experience of other European countries as they prepare for their future careers." The programme should ensure the closest possible co-operation across national boundaries in the pooling of educational resources. The idea is that all 15 Member States plus Iceland and Norway take part in the programme. Six East European countries might join in later: Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Rumania. There are negotiations about participation of Cyprus and Malta as well. Socrates will be in operation until the very end of this century: 1999.

The objectives of Socrates have economic, political, social as well as cultural backgrounds. One of the latest draft versions of the Vademecum says that Socrates builds on the achievements of previous programmes, such as Erasmus, Lingua, Eurydice and Arion. It is the first truly comprehensive programme at European level concerned with the promotion of co-operation in the educational field. The institutional contract should strengthen the internal lines of communication between central university administration, faculties and departments.

There are three chapters, Chapter 1 concerns Higher Education (Erasmus), Chapter 2 concerns School Education (Comenius - nursery, primary and secondary education), and Chapter 3 concerns the Horizontal Measures.

The three chapters again, are made up of six sections:

Chapter 1 = section 1, higher education

Chapter 2 = section 2, school education

- Chapter 3 = section 3, language training
- section 4, open and distance learning
- section 5, exchange of information and experience
- section 6, complementary measures

The institutional contract, then, covers all activities mentioned under chapters 1 and 3, apart from so-called 'academic development projects', 'support for European associations of teachers and students a publications' and 'certain open and distance learning activities'. The contract will extend over a three-year period. EC-support will be allocated on an annual basis. The application form would, according to our information, need to contain the following:

- a. a signed cover page with the name of the institution
- b. key data on the institution
- c. a list of contact persons
- d. an institutional student mobility table
- e. an institutional teaching staff mobility table
- f. an institutional activities table
- g. an activities table per subject area band
- h. a European policy statement
- i. a summary description of each of the activities

Some keywords and phrases in the Socrates documents are: European dimension, lifelong learning (1996!), less favoured regions, equality of opportunity, academic recognition, open and distance learning, languages, exchange of information and experience, institutional responsibility and commitment, institutional strategies for European co-operation, geographical balance, complementary funding.

More information on Socrates can be found in the three documents that we have at our disposal at present: The Vademecum, The Guidelines for Applicants and The Appendix: The Application Form, all of which are draft versions.

Bettina Nelemans, April 1995.