

# Utrecht Network Annual Meeting

## Basel, 22 and 23 April 2005

### Minutes

#### Present:

Kaja Noergaard Bertelsen (Aarhus)  
Patricia de Clopper (Antwerpen)  
Martine de Pauw (Antwerpen)  
Gérald Zimmermann (Basel)  
Andrea Delpho (Basel)  
Cathy McEachern (Belfast)  
Helge Bjørlo (Bergen)  
Jutta Schmid (Bochum)  
Gianni Galloni (Bologna)  
Giovanna Filippini (Bologna)  
Magdalena Belkova (Bratislava)  
Don Sparling (Brno)  
Éva Jánosik (Budapest)  
Filomena Marques de Carvalho (Coimbra)  
Clare Murphy (Cork)  
Sabine Pendl (Graz)  
Christa Grassauer (Graz)  
Markus Laitinen (Helsinki)  
Susan Green (Hull)  
Karitas Kvaran (Iceland)  
Miroslaw Klimkiewicz (Kraków)  
Svend Poller (Leipzig)

Béatrice Delpouve (Lille)  
Katja Cerjak (Ljubljana)  
Patricia Tennberg (Lund)  
Maria Katsarou Tägil (Lund)  
Fernando de Hipolito (Madrid)  
Anna Callus (Malta)  
Natalija Ivanova (Riga)  
Michèle Debay (Strasbourg I)  
Christian Civardi (Strasbourg II)  
Sophie Mantrant (Strasbourg II)  
Marc Arnold (Strasbourg III)  
Maria Lazaridou (Thessaloniki)  
Marijke Delemarre (Utrecht Arts)  
Jeroen Torenbeek (Utrecht)  
Wessel Meijer (Utrecht)  
Bettina Nelemans (Utrecht)  
Raimonda Markeviciene (Vilnius)  
Milda Girdzijauskaitė (Vilnius)

#### Observers:

Joel Glassman (St Louis (MAUI))  
Traci Faschingbauer (St Louis (MAUI))  
Robert Castle (Wollongong AEN)

#### Friday, 22 April

Welcome by the rector, Prof. Dr. theol. Ulrich Gäbler

Rector Ulrich Gäbler welcomes all participants to the Utrecht Network meeting. The Universität Basel, founded in 1460, is the oldest university in Switzerland. It has its roots in the humanities of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when it started as a small university. The Universität Basel today has 9,000 students and offers a broad range of disciplines and competences. A fair share of the students and teaching staff and researchers come from abroad. Internationalisation at Basel started in the 1980s. The university is now actively involved in many networks. Basel uses the ECTS system, and all curricula will have implemented the Bachelor Masters system by the beginning of 2005/2006.

#### Practical matters

Jeroen Torenbeek welcomes everyone to the 19th Utrecht Network annual meeting. Special words of welcome go to Magdalena Belkova, representative of Comenius University Bratislava, Utrecht Network member since 2004.

### 1. Vilnius report (7 and 8 May 2004)

The minutes of the 2004 meeting are accepted.

### 2. State of the Art

Bettina Nelemans gives a presentation of the past, present and future of the Utrecht Network.

### 3. Student Mobility

Patricia de Clopper presents an update of the student mobility figures of the Utrecht Network. Bologna, Helsinki and Madrid are notably active universities when it comes to exchanging students with Utrecht Network partners. The Utrecht Network infrastructure is particularly used by language, law and political & social science students. Next year Patricia is planning to collect the data for these charts much earlier (towards the end of the calendar year 2005 at the latest).

Markus Laitinen asks whether it is possible to include the Utrecht Network market share per university in the overview, so that it becomes visible how important the Utrecht Network is for each of the members in terms of student exchange. Cathy Mc Eachern is interested to know what the statistics are for teaching mobility.

### 4. Budgetary Matters (1)

The overall financial situation in 2004 was as follows:

Income	€ 52,715
Expenses	€ 74,214
Reserve fund on 31 December 2003	€ 75,818

For the first time since the membership fee was established in 1998, the Utrecht Network spent more than it received.

(detailed information can be found in the income and expenditure statement 2003 and 2004)

Michèle Debay (Strasbourg I) presents the financial audit report that she and Gérald Zimmermann (Basel) drew up after Michèle's visit to Utrecht on 4 March during which she checked the accounts of the Utrecht Network. Michèle asks for a clearer account of expenses made by Utrecht Network members with Utrecht Network money (e.g. for summer schools and site visits). It is necessary that the members know exactly how the Utrecht Network budget was spent. Given the fact that the spending pattern of the Utrecht Network is changing now that more activities are being undertaken, it is more important than in the past, that a budget for the coming year is presented. Michèle is of the opinion that the expenses made by financial auditors (travel expenses to Utrecht) ought to be covered by the Utrecht Network.

Mirosław Klimkiewicz says that fees paid by students for the summer schools are to be regarded as an indirect source of income and should therefore also be made visible. The same goes for the expenses made by teachers contributing to the summer schools. The question is where to make these sources of income and expenditure visible. The best place seems to be the individual summer school financial reports. Béatrice Delpouve adds that many people pay their own expenses (task force meetings, steering committee meetings, etc). Should this be recorded one way or another?

- Sabine Pendl invites the Utrecht Network members to look ahead with her to see what will happen to the Utrecht Network reserves if we do not change anything about our annual income and expenditures. The membership fee has been stable at € 2000 per year ever since 1998. The membership fee is a flat fee: the same for all members. Our reserves hovered around € 100,000 for quite some time, until recently. The annual meetings tend to cost about € 25,000 (inclusive of travel and subsistence) and make up a substantial part of our annual expenses.

Money is also spent, on an annual basis, on summer schools, communication (fliers etc), and task force activities. Sabine reminds the participants of the fact that the TAO costs are paid by Utrecht University. The annual income is, with 28 members and a membership fee of € 2,000, € 56,000. Should we raise the fee to € 3,000, the income would increase to € 70,000. Sabine presents three scenarios, showing what will happen to our reserves between now and 2008 if we adopt spending modes ranging from low, to medium, to high. If the membership fee remains unchanged we will have used up our total reserve by the end of 2007 if the high spending scenario is followed. Naturally, increasing the fee to € 3,000 will definitely give us more leeway, but even then there is an end to our reserves.

There is then room for discussion:

Filomena Marques de Carvalho reports that the Coimbra Group has recently increased its fee from € 6,500 to € 7,500 and will raise it again to € 8,500 again next year. UNICA has different fees for different members, ranging from € 1,500 to € 5,000. In the case of UNICA, members pay more than just the fee, which makes benchmarking difficult.

Filomena is very much in favour of raising the fee so that the number of activities can be increased. Anna Callus too, believes that raising the fee isn't a bad thing. Life has become more expensive after all, in the past years. Patricia de Clopper says it is remarkable that there hasn't been an increase for such a long time. Markus Laitinen utters a word of warning because of the changes at Utrecht. Do we know what the consequences will be in the long run? Don knows that the Compostela Group has recently cut the support. It may be wise to find other sources of income. Svend is in favour of keeping a minimum reserve of € 50,000 which should be left untouched. If 2004 is then regarded as a 'normal' year, the expenses could be divided by the number of members, so that we get a good picture of the average expenses.

The scenarios will be discussed during the working groups in the afternoon. By the end of the meeting we should be able to answer the following questions:

- What should be the minimum amount to be kept in the reserve fund?
- Is the membership fee to be increased from € 2,000 to € 3,000 in 2006?

Which of the three spending scenarios should we adopt: low, medium or high?

##### 5. Expansion of the Network

Katja Cerjak reminds the members that the rectors of the Utrecht Network agreed, when they met in Graz in 2003, that the Utrecht Network should gradually expand. There are now lists for short term expansion (Rumania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Turkey, Croatia, Luxembourg, Cyprus), middle term expansion (former Yugoslav Republics), long term expansion (Russia). In 2004 the annual meeting decided to refrain from expansion for a year. The steering committee proposes to give priority to EU countries and the two countries that have yet to accede to the EU, most probably in 2007: Romania and Bulgaria.

The Utrecht Network has received a letter from Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iasi, Romania, saying that it is interested in Utrecht Network membership. Miroslaw Klimkiewicz says that the Bucovina region in Rumania has long standing historical, educational and cultural links with Poland and of course with Krakow, its former capital city. Furthermore, Miroslaw would like to see the Ukraine on the list as well, now that so many political changes have taken place there.

Markus recalls that a number of years ago, we approached Tartu, Estonia. Nothing came out of that at the time, one of the reasons being that they pursued membership of the Coimbra Group. In Estonia there is also the University of Tallinn, formerly known as the Pedagogical University. As yet it is not clear if they are interested in membership. Tallinn is not as comprehensive as Tartu, but may be interesting. Don remembers that Scotland came up a few times as well. There was also Luxembourg. Michèle Debay informs people that the University of Luxembourg is growing and that it is currently reorganising its institutions. Christian knows that the Luxembourg institutions of higher education were, a few years ago at least, mainly interested in fee-paying students.

The question is raised again as to how fast we should expand. According to Béatrice Delpouve the important thing is that we attract good partners. It is known that the big universities in Romania, like Cluj and Iași, are well adapted to the Bologna process. Sabine knows that Cluj has applied for membership with the Coimbra Group. Patricia is in favour of choosing the country first, and then focus on the university. Markus thinks that we should rather concentrate on the Utrecht Network first. We are now in a stage in which we should redefine ourselves. Any decisions taken on expansion are likely to be premature. Béatrice agrees that it is good to have principles, but we really ought to be flexible and move on. We have received an application from a university that may be interesting to us. Sabine would like to have a look at the profile that we defined for potential new members. Jeroen lists the criteria as we have them now: one university per EU country; high quality standards; comprehensive university; strong international office with good links with the faculties. Jeroen reminds the participants again that the rectors said we ought to expand, so we should definitely stick to this. The expansion will be discussed in more detail during the working groups.

## 6. Presentations of Task Forces and Interest Groups

### a) Summer school

Gianni Galloni reports. As everyone knows, four years ago the initiative was taken to set up Utrecht Network summer schools. Right now there are two courses: one offered by Bologna, the other offered by Ljubljana. Unfortunately, the planned course in Lille has fallen through because there weren't enough students and teachers. Finances weren't a problem since Lille had access to funds. Béatrice Delpouve (Lille) is interested to know if Utrecht Network members are interested in the Lille course. Karitas Kvaran wonders if French language wouldn't be a more suitable topic than *European economics, European Institutions, European business practice and corporate cultures*. Initially, Ljubljana too had difficulties recruiting enough teachers. Right now 25 students (among whom 6 AEN) have registered for the Ljubljana school. Students can still apply. The university is launching a special site from which all lectures will be available the same day. Bologna already has over 60 applications (of whom 6 MAUI and 9 AEN). Evaluation forms will be distributed at the end of the summer schools, to check how satisfied the students are. The Bologna course has moved to Ripatransone, to reduce the costs. Bologna may continue to need financial support from the Utrecht Network though. An alternative might be to raise the fees for students. The Task Force meets several times per year. There is also an academic committee responsible for the contents of the courses. The Task Force is considering setting up Curriculum Development modules and other joint courses.

Patricia Tennberg announces that Lund is interested in setting up a summer school on Architecture. What is the procedure for acquiring the Utrecht Network label? Gianni replies that there is always an interest in more summer schools. This was also the initial idea, to have a kind of carousel of courses. Patricia adds that the Task Force is making plans for future activities, and is looking at the finances to decide how the continuity of the Utrecht Network summer school can best be guaranteed.

Jeroen is happy to hear that plans are being developed and is looking forward to the strategic paper.

### b) Australia

Co-operation with Australia will be discussed in detail on Saturday morning.

### c) Degree Mobility + Intra-Networks

Christa Grassauer and Wessel Meijer give an account of the activities of the Task Force Degree Mobility. In Vilnius the members accepted all four proposals submitted by the Task Force: 1) Joint promotion of international Master's Programmes; 2) Participation in study abroad promotional campaigns; 3) Compilation of Bologna proof Utrecht Network programme table; 4) Preparation of Erasmus Mundus Action IV proposal – Action IV. A brochure presenting the 'finest Master's Programmes' of Utrecht Network universities was published in time for the higher education fair in Bangkok that Christa went to. The aim of the brochure is to increase the visibility of the Utrecht Network and to stress its

richness and variety. Selection criteria for courses to be included in the booklet were, among a few others, high quality and international orientation. The Utrecht Network was the only network at the fair, in which about 100 institutions took part. There were about 4000 visitors, among whom many Asian students who were mainly interested in programmes in English, in fields where they see job opportunities. Next time, the Utrecht Network summer schools should also be included in the brochure.

Cathy McEachern compiled a spreadsheet containing information on study abroad fairs organised by Utrecht Network members. The idea is that Utrecht Network partners can attend each other's fairs to promote their programmes and to raise their profile within the Network. The spreadsheet can be downloaded from the website. Institutions are asked to use the Utrecht Network brochure at fairs.

Unfortunately, the Erasmus Mundus proposal was rejected. The Task Force will apply again, taking into account the information that the Commission gave about the reasons for the rejection. More emphasis will be put on the European character of the Utrecht Network and on its broad experience in the area of student mobility. The original rationale of the application will be left in place.

The degree mobility Task Force puts forward a new idea: to stimulate the mobility of students within Master's programmes.

Sabine Pendl gives an account of the joint efforts undertaken by the big European institutional networks: Santander Group, Coimbra Group, Compostella Group, European Universities Association, UNICA and Utrecht Network). Representatives of these consortia met in Brussels on a few occasions to prepare an Erasmus Mundus Action IV proposal.<sup>1</sup> It is important for the Utrecht Network to be involved in this initiative. EUA is in the project too since they are known to be a powerful body that has the right connections with the European Commission. Béatrice is curious as to whether there are further plans for future co-operation. According to Sabine there aren't any such plans as yet.

The above implies that the Utrecht Network is currently involved in the preparation of two Erasmus Mundus Action IV proposals.

#### d) Latin America - interest group

Fernando de Hipolito reports on a meeting that he attended in the US in 2004, hosted by the University of Oklahoma on behalf of MAUI. Six representatives from Latin American universities were invited. The institutions constitute a multinational network: LAUI (Latin American Universities International). The universities are based in Bolivia (vice-presidency), Ecuador, Mexico (secretariat), Peru, Venezuela and Brazil (presidency). Joel Glasmann met with the group again in February 2005. MAUI and LAUI will now proceed with the development of exchange activities, which should start in September 2006. In October 2005 site visits will be made to the partners. LAUI is interested in working with the Utrecht Network. Jeroen thanks Fernando and Joel for their efforts.

#### e) Asia - interest group

A written report by Marrik Bellen is presented.

Members of the group are: Utrecht, Antwerpen, Lille, Lund. The group deals with the following issues: - How to identify Asian universities with adequate English taught curricula?; - Identifying prerequisites for setting up exchange programmes with Asian universities (e.g. with regard to the infrastructure of the receiving universities in terms of having a well functioning international relations office, accommodation services etc, quality of the courses offered, credit recognition and transfer, etc); - Identifying proper

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<sup>1</sup> Action IV is meant to enhance the attractiveness of and interest in European Higher Education outside Europe (e.g. at NAFSA and education fairs). It supports activities that improve the profile, the visibility and the accessibility of European higher education as well as issues crucial to the internationalisation of higher education, such as the mutual recognition of qualifications with third countries.

selection criteria (e.g. language testing); - Joint Marketing strategies of Utrecht Network members at education fairs, and other relevant venues; - The experiences with co-operating within Asia focussed networks (eg Asea Uninet, ASEM etc.); - More topics could be identified with regard to education and research with Asia (e.g. joint tendering through Asia Link). The idea is to share the best and bad practises of the members of the interest group with regard to these topics with the Utrecht Network members, and also to increase the number of participants in the SIG ASIA.

f) EuroMed - interest group

Anna Callus reports. Malta is preparing an Erasmus Mundus application Master's in Mediterranean Intercultural Dialogues and Fundamental Rights. She is interested to know whether there are other Utrecht Network universities that would like to participate. All members will be kept up to date by Malta.

g) Joint Programmes - interest group

In the past year Béatrice Delpouve tried to set up meetings for the areas of History and Chemistry. The History meeting never took place. The Chemistry group, however, has been quite successful and met on several occasions. Seven Utrecht Network universities are member of this group. Three or four of those will apply for an Erasmus Mundus project. In the future the special interest group may assist other groups that are considering setting up similar initiatives. Patricia de Clopper reminds the members that the summer school task force is looking into the possibilities of setting up an interdisciplinary joint programme in the field of human rights.

Jeroen adds that the activities of this special interest group have been good for the visibility of the Utrecht Network. Dealing with joint programmes may not be an easy job, but is undoubtedly a very rewarding one.

*Afternoon*

7. Presentation CasaSwap

Mikael Klint presents CasaSwap.com ([www.casaswap.com](http://www.casaswap.com)), a small company aimed at facilitating student mobility through a web-based system of swapping rooms among exchange students. CasaSwap receives funding from the European Commission.

8. Working groups and presentations

a) Task Forces: terms of reference - Miroslaw Klimkiewicz

This group dealt with questions like: Do we want to keep the distinction between Task Forces and Special Interest Groups?; Should the numbers of Task Forces be unlimited?; Do the existing Task Forces meet our needs?; What are the exact tasks of the Task Forces?; Should the number of members per Task Force be limited?

86% of the Utrecht Network members are in favour of maintaining the distinction between Task Forces and SIGs. 48% said they are against posing a limit on the number of Task Forces, while 48% have the opposite opinion. 42% of the people are of the opinion that Utrecht Network Task Forces and SIGs meet the needs of the members, 58% believe that the needs are met to some extent. 57% of the participants say that the number of members per Task Force ought to be limited to somewhere between five and seven. The overall idea was that things shouldn't be too overregulated.

b) Utrecht Network budgeting – Gérald Zimmermann

Questions that were addressed by this group were: Should we increase the membership fee?; If we decide to cut down expenses, which activities could be reduced you think?; Which of the spending scenarios do you favour (high/medium/low)?; Should we have a reserve fund and what should be the absolute minimum?; Do you have any other ideas/comments on finances?

Everyone agrees that it is about time to increase the annual membership fee. There should be some budgetary planning for the coming three years. New initiatives should only be supported for two to three years. In case of brochures like the Master's

Brochures, institutions must be asked to contribute as well. There must a reserve of at least € 30,000, others agree that a minimum amount of € 100,000 is more suitable. The Utrecht Network must keep in mind that in a while the TAO should be financed out of the budget too. As for the spending patters: the majority is in favour of the 'medium' scenario.

c) Profile of the Utrecht Network - Markus Laitinen

Some of the issues that were discussed by this group: What distinguishes the Utrecht Network as an Institutional network? (for example vis-a-vis other networks?); Do you have any ideas for brand-building and brand management?; Should we aim at other than "international" co-operation?; What can we learn from other networks?

There are different categories of networks. The Utrecht Network is among those that are very active. It has a solid image. Its name is ambiguous (is this the university or a consortium?). The Utrecht Network is a network of co-operation, not of competition. The Utrecht Network is a network run by international relations people, and is for international relations people. The costs of the TAO are hidden, and should perhaps be made more apparent. Markus stresses that these were some of the comments and that but they do not in any way form a common consensus. People had different opinions.

d) Expansion of the Utrecht Network – Don Sparling

The following questions were tackled by the groups:

- Do we want to expand?

Yes

- Who should be included?

There were three general answers: EU members, EU plus EU candidate members, and those countries eligible for the SOCRATES/ERASMUS programme. The third option reflected what was seen as still the central raison d'être of the Utrecht Network, student mobility. This also seemed to be the most popular choice. This would mean Estonia, Cyprus, Romania, Belgium and Turkey (Luxembourg does not have a suitable university). Scotland would also be a possibility, though the lack of success there in the past means that this should not be given priority.

- Should we prioritize any particular country or university?

It was not felt that this was necessary or advisable; instead, other factors (see below) would determine this.

- How quickly should we enlarge?

In principle there is no reason why several universities could not be admitted in any given year (the "big bang" model). However, in practice this would be highly unlikely, especially in view of the consensus that the admission process should involve a definite procedure (see below), which would involve work by the Steering Committee, a site visit, etc. In practice this will probably mean that for technical reasons the model of one new admission per year is the optimum.

- Should the Utrecht Network be restricted to public universities?

This elicited considerable discussion, and opinion was divided. At present the network includes only public universities, and many felt that this should continue to be the case in future. However, in both Bulgaria and, even more, Turkey, there are a number of highly reputable, progressive private universities, and if quality is a criterion, then these should not be excluded from consideration a priori. On balance it would probably be best to take both types of university into consideration, especially as other factors will be included in the selection (e.g. the comprehensive nature of the institutions) that might be more important.

- What should the procedure be for selecting a new member?

Some felt that we should give priority to universities that approach us. But it became clear from the discussions that this is never really the case – universities that have approached the Utrecht Network in the past with a serious interest in joining up have done so with the encouragement of already existing members. And other new members

have been included in discussions because of recommendations from current members. So this process should, in effect, be institutionalized.

1. The Steering Committee should send a letter to all members of the network asking them if there are any universities in the countries indicated above with whom they have had experience and whom they would recommend as members. On the basis of this, it should make up a "short list" of possible candidates.
2. An application form should be created that would include not only the basic details about the institution in question (very brief history, number of students, levels of study, etc.) but also those areas that are particularly relevant for potential membership, especially whether the Bologna Declaration three-tier distinction exists, whether the ECTS is in place, current mobility levels, international partners, courses/degree programmes available in English, etc.
3. Appropriate institutions should then be approached (network members that have already worked with these institutions might be the appropriate channel, at least in the first instance), and if interest is shown, this form should be filled in and evaluated.
4. Assuming the result is positive, then an on-site visit should be arranged by a two-member delegation, one of whom at least should be a member of the steering committee.

In the case of the University of Iasi, the steering committee should proceed, in line with the procedure outlined above.

Two final points:

- First, it was felt that there should not be expansion for expansion's sake. If a suitable university is not found in a particular country, then there is no point trying to include an institution just for the sake of filling in the colours on the European map.
- Second, it was pointed out that 'expansion' could also take place in other ways, for example by working with other consortia. Specifically, Svend mentioned a South African consortium that might be worth looking into.

## Saturday, 23 April

### *Morning*

#### 9. EU-US and Australia programmes, state of the art + student placements

##### MAUI (EU-US)

Traci Faschingbauer (UMSL) informs the participants of the placements of the 2005/2006 cycle. Twelve Utrecht Network students are still on the waiting list because of limited capacity. US institutions must work with semesters since it is essential to them to keep the exchange balanced. Six MAUI students are participating in the Bologna summer school. Hopefully this number will continue to increase. Patricia de Clopper proposes a conversion rate of three students (summer school) to one (full academic year). Cork, Madrid and Lille are the most active senders of students. On the US site OSU and OU are most active. Joel Glasmann (UMSL) adds that American students on the whole prefer short term programmes to which Jeroen adds that Utrecht Network universities should really aim to promote their summer schools to help balance the exchange. Joel says it is really important for MAUI students to be informed about new summer schools in October already, since this is when they start planning their summer activities. A tuition fee waiver would be much appreciated. It goes without saying that American students are willing to pay for their accommodation.

##### Australia

Jutta Schmid (Bochum – lead university for AEN-Utrecht Network exchange) reports on behalf of the Australia Task Force, the aim of which it is to increase the exchange. Jutta is happy to announce that the interest in Utrecht Network summer schools is growing. Utrecht Network universities are trying to recruit more AEN students, not only to regular course modules, but also to winter schools and the like. AEN representatives will visit



Utrecht Network institutions after the EAIE conference in September. The Task Force will apply for funding to support their visit. Universities that are not participating in the AEN exchange are Lund and Belfast. Madrid and Macquarie are very active both as far as sending as well as receiving students are concerned.

Robert Castle (Wollongong) says that Macquarie is sending as many as 15 students to the Utrecht Network summer schools this year. This is a direct result of the site visit undertaken by the Task Force in 2004. The site visit has also brought about an increase in the overall number of AEN students going to Europe. Wollongong, currently the lead university on the Australian side, is compiling a list of courses taught in English. Kerry Lyon and Jutta Schmid are doing a very good job in running the exchange and coordinating the two consortia.

#### 10. EAIE conference, Krakow, 14 – 17 September 2005

The next EAIE conferences will be held in: Krakow (2005), Basel (2006), Trondheim (2007) and Antwerp (2008). As for the Krakow conference, the Utrecht Network will again have a booth at the information market. Members are asked to play an active role in promoting the Utrecht Network. Miroslaw is willing to arrange Task Force and steering committee meeting space, and a restaurant for the Utrecht Network meal, if necessary.

#### 11. Rectors' and Presidents' meeting 2006

Since there is an EUA conference in Brno in October 2006, Masaryk will consider hosting the next Utrecht Network rectors' and presidents' meeting there. The meeting would need to last about two and a half hours, including lunch. The lunch meeting in Graz (2003) was a good format.

#### 12. Budgetary Matters (2)

We all agree on the following:

- we don't want the Utrecht Network to go bankrupt
- the preferred option is 'medium spending'
- we can either increase the fee to € 2500 in 2006, and to € 3000 in 2007, or raise the fee to € 3000 at once
- The annual meeting will be continued to be funded out of the Utrecht Network budget, otherwise people may decide not to come to the meeting

Proposal I: the annual fee will be increased to € 3000 in 2006. 27 members are in favour. There is one abstention. The proposal is accepted.

Proposal II: the minimum reserve fund should equal the annual income, i.e. 28 x € 3000 = € 84,000 (until now € 56,000).

There is then a discussion on what to do if the TAO is no longer paid for by Utrecht University. € 30,000 would then not be enough. Don Sparling is of the opinion that we should then need to rethink things. The reserve fund should somehow reflect the number of members. Markus asks what the reference date would be: 31 December. The following is then proposed:

Proposal IIa: the minimum amount in the reserve fund should be € 50,000. Two vote against, two abstain, 24 are in favour. The proposal is accepted.

By the end of the calendar year the steering committee should come up with a budgetary proposal for the new year.

Don Sparling is wondering whether there will be need to be a continuous investment in the summer school, or whether these should at some stage become more self-sustained, which was the original idea. How about new summer schools? Svend, member of the Task Force summer school, says that the concept of seeding-money has failed. It is difficult for the summer schools to become self-sustained, unless they start operating on a more commercial basis and raise the fees. Don's understanding of this is that the summer schools have become a permanent part of the budget. This should really be talked through so that it becomes clear what the summer schools are entitled to. How do new summer schools fit into the scheme? Don adds that Brno students and teachers have been very pleased with the Utrecht Network summer schools. Markus

agrees: summer schools are, among other things, a good way to balance the exchange. Sabine would like to know if we would like to earmark a fixed sum for the entire Utrecht Network summer school, or if we should earmark a sum per course, and if so, how long for. Svend adds that existing courses should be improved, and that new initiatives of Utrecht Network institutions must be looked into.

Wessel Meijer asks the Task Force, on behalf of the Task Force Degree Mobility, to look into the possibility of offering summer schools on a cost neutral basis, using funds from the Commission, like Erasmus Mundus. The target group would be students from outside Europe. Would the Task Force be so kind to work on that? Don is thinking of preparatory courses for MAUI and AEN students in summer.

Jeroen asks the Task Force Summer School to come up with a proposal for the next three years, in which different models with different target groups are presented. The Task Force should maybe split into two: - a think tank; - a production group, responsible for the organisation of the summer courses. There will be a Task Force meeting in July at which the budget and the plans for the coming three years will be discussed. Svend invites all members to provide the Task Force with feedback and fresh input.

### 13. Elections (expansion of the Network, steering committee, financial auditor)

#### - Expansion of the Utrecht Network

Jeroen reminds the members that the criteria for potential Utrecht Network members are stated in the Proposal for Limited Expansion. The following requirements apply for individual membership:

- High quality standards
- Broad, comprehensive institution
- Existing links with a number of Utrecht Network-partners
- Good infrastructure for international relations
- Willingness to play an active role in the Utrecht Network
- Willingness to pay the membership fee

The steering committee now proposes the following:

Proposal III: The steering committee looks into the higher education system of Romania in general and tries to find out more about the quality of the University of Iași. If the first findings are positive a small delegation will visit the university. Simultaneously, we will look into the possible membership of the University of Tallinn, Estonia. Markus will contact Tallinn anyway, to see if they are interested. If the negotiations with regard to Iași turn out to be positive, a decision will be made via email. A decision on Estonia will wait until the 2006 meeting. Everyone agrees. For the time being we stick to the idea of not wanting more than one member per EU country or acceding country.

#### - Steering committee

The following people are on the steering committee right now: Sabine Pendl, Katja Cerjak, Karitas Kvaran and Jeroen Torenbeek. Since Sabine was elected in 2004 for a one-year-period only, her term officially comes to an end right now. Sabine would like to stand for election again. If she gets re-elected, this would give her another three years on the Steering committee. Everyone is in favour of having Sabine on the steering committee again for another three years.

#### - Financial auditor

Auditors serve for a two-year-period. Gérald Zimmermann is stepping down this year, and someone is needed to succeed him and work with Michele Debay. Miroslaw Klimkiewicz nominates himself and is elected as the next financial auditor.

#### - Technical chair

So far, Utrecht University has always provided the technical chair for the Utrecht Network meetings, the reason being that Utrecht University pays for the TAO. There have been discussions over the past few years that the two might need to be separated.

In the future, an elected and thus political chair would be more desirable. The statutes will need to be changed in order to allow for this new structure. Gianni is asking whether a chair would then emerge from the steering committee. The steering committee is asked to come up with a plan. Patricia would like the steering committee to be expanded to four elected members, one of whom would then have to be the chair.

Proposal IV: The TAO and the presidency of the Utrecht Network are disconnected. Everyone is in favour.

Markus proposes to write a letter to the President of Utrecht University, stating how much it is appreciated that Utrecht University pays for the TAO and that all individual Utrecht Network members value the work that is being done by Utrecht. The TAO will prepare a letter that will then be circulated.

#### 14. Set place and date for meeting next year

The next meeting will most probably be held in Scarborough on the east Yorkshire coast. Meeting dates are 21 and 22 April 2006.

#### 15. Any other business

- Markus informs the members that Finland will be the EU president in 2006. In that light, the University of Helsinki may host a meeting on higher education programmes.<sup>2</sup>
- Patricia would like to have more information on the Utrecht Network summer schools put on the Utrecht Network website. Bettina invites everyone to contribute to the site.
- Mirosław proposes to set up a Special Interest Group for cooperation with eastern Europe, which he is willing to lead. His suggestion is well received by most of the members.
- Markus Laitinen would like to be sent the report of the annual meeting earlier than in the past years. Bettina promises to have the minutes ready shortly after the next EAIE conference.

#### 16. Presentation Degree Mobility Database

Wessel Meijer presents the new Degree Mobility Database, which should become an integral part of the Utrecht Network website later on this year.

Bettina Nelemans, September 2005

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<sup>2</sup> This is still to be confirmed