

Education International Europe

Standing Committee on Higher Education and Research

Strasbourg, 4 - 5 November 1999

Present:

Paul Bennett, NATFHE, United Kingdom,
President
Jens Vraa-Jensen, DM, Denmark
Pedro Gonzalez, CC.OO, Spain
Keto Tellervo, FUURT, Finland
Marc Ollivier, SNCS, France
Véronique Martin-Jezequel, SNCS, France
Michel Goze, SGEN-CFDT, France
Yves Baunay, SNES, France
Gabor Szabo, FDSZ, Hungary
Daltun O Ceallaigh, IFUT, Ireland
Gerard Sipkema, AOb, The Netherlands

Sigrid Lem, NARW, Norway
Trond Eskeland, NARW, Norway
Manuel Pereira Dos Santos, FENPROF, Portugal
Brian Everett, AUT, United Kingdom
Vladimir Pavlikhin, ESEUR, Russia
Nikolay Kolobashkin, ESEUR, Russia
Janez Stergar, ESWUS, Slovenia
Bert Fredriksson, SULF, Sweden
Monique Fouilhoux, Coordinator EI
Alain Mouchoux, General Secretary ETUCE

Excused: Michel Deyme, SGEN-CFDT, France
Gerd Köhler, GEW, Germany

1. The report of the meeting of the 10-11 March 1999 was approved.
2. **ETUCE work**
 - 2.1 **Quality**

Alain Mouchoux mentioned the work carried out earlier, such as the Bruges Colloquium, and provided with information on the 10 & 11 November Luxembourg Conference which would complete the reflection for all higher education and research levels. All the Committee members agreed that it was necessary for higher education voice to be heard. Such would also be the case for the Round Table on Quality to be organised in Spring 2000 by EIE.

Bert Fredriksson's proposal to write a small report on the various trends in the different countries was accepted. The report's title would be "Assessment Process on Quality in Higher Education". It was deemed advisable to prepare a framework to homogenize the report. *A small questionnaire is going to be circulated to all member organisations.*

2.2 Seminar on Professional Development

This seminar was a success and the debate with Inge Knudsen of the European Rector's Confederation was very interesting. Brian Everett will write a report and highlight the conclusions' key elements. This point will be put on the agenda of the next meeting.

It was agreed that Bert Fredriksson and Jens Vraa-Jensen would prepare, for the next Committee, a document entitled *"Proactive trade union strategy for professional development in higher education"*.

2.3 Casualisation

The HERSC meeting on 4/5 November 1999 received reports on the ongoing work within EI on casualisation, with a report of the recent survey to be circulated to affiliates shortly; it also was briefed about the European Commission directive on Fixed Term Contracts, and the possibility of a stronger instrument being developed in the future.

In different member states, staff on fixed term contracts could accumulate rights, although employers often respond by preventing individuals from reaching the threshold where they can achieve these rights. Also, young people including young academics have different expectations about the labour market, including greater flexibility and the need to change jobs more frequently during their careers. The favoured position of people with masters' degrees or doctorates in some countries with more or less guaranteed academic jobs, is now under threat. Unions need their own strategies to respond to those trends.

The process which began with the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations and which will to be continued in Prague, as well as global developments relating to the WTO's approach to education as part of the market in services, also need to be taken into account.

The union response must include the following elements :

- ✦ Challenge precarious employment as a whole, not just fixed term contracts;
- ✦ Work to limit the use of fixed term contracts as a proportion of posts in higher education and research, and develop criteria for their use;
- ✦ Make the link between fixed term contracts and precarious employment and quality of education and research, and academic freedom;
- ✦ Address the problems unions face in recruiting and providing services to short term and casualised workers, as well as the implications for unions' democratic structures;
- ✦ Emphasise the responsibility of employers towards all their employees;
- ✦ Take appropriate action on these issues at institutional, national and European level;
- ✦ At the EU level, ask ETUCE to press the Commission and the Social Partners to extend the scope of Directives and agreements to limit the use of casualised employment to those areas where it is strictly necessary or appropriate.

(This work should be crossed-referenced both with the EI(E) survey outcomes and the work done within the ETUCE on Research, which deals in some detail with casualisation).

The following Recommendation is aimed at the EIE Regional Committee:

" EIE should address a recommendation asking ETUCE "to intensify its work on casualisation and fixed term contracts". "

2.4 Research: ETUCE Publication and Working document prepared by Bert Fredriksson

This document highlights the existing dichotomy between pure research and applied research as well as the role of higher education in modern society. The participants wish this question to be further discussed during the next meeting. Therefore, EI's contribution to the World Conference on Science will be circulated as a working document as well as the ETUCE document for information and consideration at the next meeting.

The Committee's Secretariat was asked, for the next meeting in March 2000, to gather the different themes in response to Bert Fredriksson's paper.

The Committee wished to insist on the excellent work done by Monique Fouilhoux and Bert Fredriksson during the UNESCO World Conference on Science.

2.5 Relations with Rectors and students' organisations

Relations with the Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences
Alain Mouchoux drew the attention on their programme of action.

- ❖ Initial and life-long teachers training
- ❖ Vocational training
- ❖ Gender Equality
- ❖ Role of higher education against racism

He stressed the importance of maintaining relations, especially during the next working meeting.

After discussion, the Committee members suggested that EIE would list three points to work on (among other things harmonisation), and that representatives from the Confederation of the European Union Rectors' Conferences, such as for example its President, be invited to the next Committee, in March 2000.

ESIB

ESIB had taken part to a former Committee meeting and the relations were good during the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education. There was a change in the ESIB team. ETUCE is in regular contact with them.

2.6 Relations with the European Parliament

The Commission in charge of Education asked for an increase in Socrates credits and a major participation of partners, which implies of course ETUCE.

ETUCE wrote to the new Commissioners, Philippe Busquin in charge of research and Viviane Redding in charge of education (General Direction Education and Culture -no longer GD 22-), to express the concern of the education personnel representatives in what concerns the position of education in the new General Direction.

After the debate on the activities in the field of higher education and research carried out by ETUCE, the Committee wished to express its gratitude and pay tribute to the work done during all these years by Alain Mouchoux.

3. The Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations

The initiatives must be seen in context outside the European Union, but within the larger context of the WTO discussions on (higher) education as a service.

The Prague discussions (and the period up to them) might lead to a widening of the debate to deal with the teachers' unions agendas.

- ❖ Access
- ❖ Diversity of institutions and courses
- ❖ Life-long learning (demand likely to increase in the future)
- ❖ Professional development of academic staff
- ❖ Academic freedom balanced with public accountability
- ❖ The central importance of the public sector
- ❖ The links between research and teaching in higher education

- ❖ The importance of teacher education within higher education
- ❖ It was agreed that EI should seek to be present in Prague

It was agreed that EI would try to be represented in Prague and that a preparatory work should be undertaken. As the Confederation of the European Union Rectors' Conference is our partner in the preparation of this Conference, we should provide it with a working document stressing the status of higher education and research personnels.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to know how these two declarations were implemented in all countries to enable EIE to publish its position, especially on the Bologna Declaration.

The weakness of the Declaration on the research aspect was highlighted, this aspect should therefore be stressed in our comments.

It was proposed to organise simultaneously a Committee meeting in Prague in parallel to the Ministers' Meeting.

Paul Bennett will prepare a paper for discussion at the next meeting

4. European regional follow-up to EI World Conference on Higher Education & Research, Budapest

Proposals should be made for the future. The difficulties for adequate participation of developing countries were stressed EI should do whatever possible to assist the concerned organisations, to improve their integration in EI's work, but also to enable new organisations join EI.

5. ILO/UNESCO Activities

UNESCO

⇒ ***Follow-up of the Recommendation concerning the status of higher education teaching personnel***

UNESCO member states should produce reports but none of them did. The UNESCO General Conference was called upon to adopt a resolution reminding States of their obligation to produce this report for the next Conference in 2001. EI raised this issue during the debate and expressed its deep concern on the implementation of the Recommendation. It was reminded that a resolution was adopted during the Budapest Conference. In what refers to the follow-up process, participants were informed that the ILO Administrative Board and the UNESCO Executive Board were in favour of revising the CEART mandate, which would lead to entrust CEART with the follow-up of the 1997 Recommendation.

⇒ ***Follow-up of the World Conference on Higher Education***

The participants were informed that a Follow-up Committee was established by UNESCO's Director-General and that EI would be represented by Monique Fouilhoux. It was also mentioned that EI truly regretted the lack of clear objectives and work calendar for this Committee for the coming months.

ILO

⇒ ***Joint Meeting on lifelong learning in the 21st century : "the changing role of educational personnel"***

The next meeting will be held in April 2000. The Committee wishes the presence of representatives of higher education teaching personnels in the workers' delegation, since, for the first time, the sector's situation will be discussed and a special report is being prepared.

6. Pay and conditions database (Report of the GEW /Kassel University Conference).

There was no update on this particular point due to the excused absence of Mr. Gerd Köhler.

7. Future meetings

The next meeting will be held during the second half of March 2000. Mr. Janez Stergar proposed that the meeting to be held in Autumn 2000 would take place in Slovenia.

8. Any other Business

8.1 Soleil Motion

The participants in the meeting of the Higher education and Research Standing Committee meeting in Strasbourg on 4 & 5 November 1999 adopted the following motion:

They ask EI's Officers, Executive Board and General Secretary

1/ to support the claims and action of the French and British scientists from Orsay and Daresbury and their unions, who demand the renewal of their research tools by the in-site building of the SOLEIL and DIAMOND machines, and refuse the scattering of their working teams and defend their public researcher's status.

2/ to condemn the policy applied by the French government which reduces public research funding and, which, between other consequences, announces its intention to stop the construction of the SOLEIL synchrotron, aimed at playing a key role in the future pure and applied research in Europe, without respecting its former commitments and in an unilateral and authoritarian way.

3/ to demand the respect of transparent and democratic procedures, associating the scientific communities concerned, assessing projects and taking strategic decisions of orientation and structuring of research programmes in the public sector.

8.2 Motion on the situation of researchers in Ukraine

The participants were informed about the situation of Ukrainian researchers convicted with spying. These researchers are well-known and collaborate in international research work. SNCS was asked to transmit any further information.

8.3 Situation in the Balkans

The Committee members wished to receive the last report of the EI Mission on the situation in this region by email.

The problem of the lack of participation from Eastern countries was mentioned, as well as the need for a translation into Russian.