

Present:

Paul Bennett, NATFHE, United Kingdom,
President
Jens Vraa-Jensen, DM, Denmark
Björn Fant, FUURT, Finland
Véronique Martin-Jezequel, SNCS, France
Yves Baunay, SNES, France
Gabor Tamas Szabo, FDSZ, Hungary
Daltun O Ceallaigh, IFUT, Ireland
Gerard Siphkema, AOb, The Netherlands

Sigrid Lem, NARW, Norway
Manuel Pereira Dos Santos, FENPROF,
Portugal
Brian Everett, AUT, United Kingdom
Janez Stergar, ESWUS, Slovenia
Bert Fredriksson, SULF, Sweden
Monique Fouilhoux, EI Coordinator
Jörgen Lindholm, ETUCE General Secretary

Excused: Michel Deyme, SGEN-CFDT, France

1. The report of the meeting on 4 - 5 November 1999 was approved with certain changes on, amongst others, to the participants' list.
2. **Follow-up of the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations and preparation of the Prague Conference**

The main topic of discussion was the process guiding the harmonisation of studies at the European level, which was initiated by the 1998 Sorbonne Declaration. A second Declaration was subsequently adopted by more than 20 European countries at the Bologna Conference, which was held in June 1999. In Spring 2001, another conference will be organised in Prague, with a view to furthering the establishment of a "European Space for Higher Education."

After an in depth discussion the Committee:

adopted some recommendations and a **Declaration** "From the Sorbonne and Bologna declarations to Prague 2001" (see appendix). It was agreed that this together with the discussion documents, "European and international perspectives in higher education", should be circulated to EI(E) affiliates in higher education and research.

The Committee recommended that the higher education and research affiliates should:

1. **consider the documents and send comments to EI(E) so that they could be refined and expanded at the next meeting of the HERSC.**
2. **approach their national governments to put EI(E)'s views about the Sorbonne/Bologna/Prague process, and to gain information about their countries' participation in the process.**
3. **promote debates within their organisations as appropriate on the Sorbonne/Bologna/Prague process. These debates might include journal articles, use of websites, or seminars, and should seek to be trans-national in character.**

The Committee recommended that EI(I):

- 4. should facilitate these debates, disseminate information on the activities leading up to the Prague Conference in May 2001, and seek involvement in them as far as possible at the European level.**

The discussions with the Representative of the Confederation of European Rectors' Conferences focused on these issues. She indicated that her Confederation would organise in Lisbon next June a Conference on the « Impact of the Evaluation and Investigation systems on the Academic Institutions », to which ETUCE would be « actively » invited.

3. Results of the survey on Quality in Higher Education

These results will be presented during the next meeting in liaison with the special session on quality in higher education. The organisations which did not return their answer were kindly asked to do so as soon as possible.

4. "Proactive Trade Union Strategy for Professional Development in Higher Education"

Bert Fredriksson's paper was examined. It was decided that the Committee members would send their comments and suggestions of changes to Jens Vraa Jensen, who would then prepare a revised version for discussion and final decision to the next committee meeting in November.

5. Research

The text prepared by Bert Fredriksson will be examined during a future Committee meeting.

6. Follow-up of ILO/UNESCO activities

UNESCO

➤ Follow-up of the Recommendation on the Status of the Higher Education Teaching Personnel

UNESCO will circulate to its Member States the last General Conference Resolution requesting them to draft a report concerning, on the one hand, the Recommendation implementation and, on the other, in accordance with article 75, information on the respect of education personnel academic freedom and individual rights. Furthermore, negotiations are taking place concerning the follow-up process aimed at revising CEART's mandate to entrust it with the Recommendation follow-up.

➤ Follow-up of the World Conference on Higher Education

Participants are informed that the Global Follow-up Committee set up by UNESCO's Director-General, and in which Monique Fouilhoux will represent EI, will meet for the first time by the end of June.

ILO

➤ Joint Meeting on Teaching Personnel

The next meeting will take place in April. The special report on the situation of higher education teaching personnels will be circulated to all member organisations with affiliates in this sector.

7. Pay and Conditions database (GEW Report / Kassel University Conference)

Gerd Köhler indicated that the drafting of the report is in its final phase and that results will be published next May.

8. ETUCE Activities

The Committee welcomed Jorgen Lindholm, General Secretary of ETUCE, who reported on ETUCE activity in the fields of quality, professional development, and teacher education. He answered questions on ETUCE work with regard to research, social dialogue, and the changes to the ETUCE method of working on higher education and research and other specialist areas. These areas would in future be dealt with by small advisory panels comprising one ETUCE Officer and up to four Executive Board members, in cooperation with networks of experts nominated by members unions. The networks could communicate by email, but could also meet with the advisory panel from time to time, subject to resource constraints.

It was made clear in discussion that 95% of the ETUCE member organisations are members of EI (Europe), and that many of the issues were 'pan-European' in character, and therefore the responsibility for policy formulation in these areas lies with EI (Europe). ETUCE's responsibility is for delivery of policy at the EU / EFTA level. However, this division of responsibility is becoming more complex with the prospective enlargement of the EU, the involvement of many non-EU / EFTA countries in EU programmes. And the increased level of inter-governmental activity in higher education decision making outside EU /EFTA structures - notably, the process which had begun with the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations.

In commenting on these developments, **Committee members placed great emphasis on the value they attached to the EI (Europe) Higher Education and Research Standing Committee, as the authoritative body responsible for advising on policy.**

9. EIE Round Table on Quality

Ulf Frederiksson briefed the Committee on EI (Europe) work on quality, including the forthcoming Round Table in May. After lengthy discussion, it was agreed on balance that no attempt should be made to include higher education issues on the agenda of what was essentially a primary and secondary education event. This did not preclude the participation of higher education unions if they wished. However, a separate 'seminar session' should be arranged later, probably associated with a future HERSC meeting, at which EI (Europe) policy on quality in higher education could be reviewed. It would also consider the implications for policy of the responses of the survey of national developments on quality in higher education, which Monique Fouilhoux reported had met with a very good response. Finally, the seminar session would also provide the opportunity to look at the European Commission work on Quality in Higher Education, and the possibilities for cooperation between ETUCE and the Commission, identified at the ETUCE Round Table in Luxembourg in November 1999. Because this would be related to ETUCE's work, the EI (Europe) secretariat would need to liaise with the ETUCE.

In considering these reports, the Committee noted the growing difficulties of coordinating its work and that of the ETUCE, and it was suggested that ETUCE might consider holding meetings of its Higher Education and Research Advisory Panel, at times adjacent to the meetings of the HERSC.

It was noted that this question of relationship and task sharing between ETUCE and EIE is of great concern to the Committee members who have the feeling that higher education and research sector lost visibility and efficiency since the implementation of the new functioning rules.

10. Next meetings

At the invitation of Janez Stergar in the name of ESWUS (Slovenia), the next meeting will take place from 16-18 November 2000 in Bled, Slovenia.