



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL EUROPE

Meeting of the Higher Education and Research Standing Committee

Brussels, 25 & 26 September 2003

Present:

DECKERS, Hugo ACOD, Belgium
VANDAMME, Eric, CGSP, Belgium
RIBIC, Vilim, IURHEEC, Croatia
VRAA-JENSEN, Jens, DM, Denmark
HILTUNEN, Risto, FUUP, Finland
MATILAINEN, Riku, FUURT, Finland
MELTO, Marjatta, OAJ, Finland
DEYME, Michel, SGEN-CFDT, France
COHEN, Jean-Hervé, SNES, France
REICH, Romuin, GEW, Germany
KÖHLER, Gerd, GEW Germany
SZABO, Gabor, FDSZ, Hungary
Ó CEALLAIGH Daltún, IFUT, Ireland
Ó COCHLÁIN Breandán, IFUT, Ireland
TRAPENCIERE, Ilze, LIZDA, Latvia

SIPKEMA, Gerard, AOb, Netherlands
VAN NIE, Auke, AOb, Netherlands
LEM, Sigrid, NARW, Norway
HAUGE, Tove, UEN, Norway
MOZAKOWSKI, Ryszard, Solidarnosc-NSZZ, Poland
DOS SANTOS, Manuel, FENPROF, Portugal
STERGAR, Janez, ESTUS, Slovenia
GONZALEZ LOPEZ, Pedro, FECCOO, Spain
ESPINOSA, Concha, FETE-UGT, Spain
MELLE, Mónica, FETE-UGT, Spain
BLOMQVIST, Göran, SULF, Sweden
EVERETT, Brian, AUT, UK
MARGOLIES, David, AUT, UK
BENNETT, Paul, NATFHE, UK, President
RØMER Martin, ETUCE General Secretary
FOUILHOX Monique, EI Secretariat

Excused:

MARIEN, Gérard, UNSA-Education, France

1. Opening of the meeting

Paul Bennett mentioned a change in the agenda, i.e. that the ETUCE General Secretary Martin Rømer would only attend the meeting on the first day.

After the approval of the Paris January meeting report, Monique Fouilhoux drew the attention of the colleagues to the request made by NTEU for EI support concerning the alarming current situation in Australia. It was proposed that this item be put on the agenda for the second day of the meeting.

Gerard Sipkema, who represented AOb for several years in this Committee, announced his resignation from university, and therefore from his post in the trade union. His colleague Auke van Nie will succeed him in the Committee.

2. Berlin Ministerial Conference

Martin Rømer and Gerd Köhler were present. There were national delegations. Agreements had been made that trade unions would not be included in national delegations.

Martin Rømer has been speaking to the Conference. He was invited there as General Secretary of ETUCE in expectation that he would also represent ETUC, therefore as a social partner. UNICE was also invited to attend the conference.

Martin Rømer was invited to speak in parallel workshops, set up for working party degrees structures and employability.

He mentioned to the Committee members his feeling that ETUCE point of view was better prepared than the employers' side. The interesting part was not to address the party but rather to participate and have the opportunity to talk with different participants, ministers, commissioners, etc.

ETUCE tried to advocate that it is becoming more and more embarrassing that teachers are not included in the process.

The discussion was long because countries forwarded amendments in the final phase. Now 40 countries are represented in the table.

The Conference ended up with a document in which ministers reaffirmed their position "that higher education is a public good and a public responsibility. They emphasised that in international academic cooperation and exchanges, academic values should prevail"

Furthermore Ministers declared that "in all appropriate circumstances such fora should include the social and economic partners".

Two major problems arose. From the point of view of certain ministers, trade unions could not represent teachers as they talk about salaries and not quality. Two representatives from institutions were really opposed to teachers' representation.

Martin Rømer had the feeling that universities are not interested in getting teachers involved because of their challenging views. He insisted on the challenge to discuss how to overcome this. Teachers should not be limited to areas like employability, but should also deal with degree structure, accreditation, etc.

Further to Martin Rømer's intervention, Monique Fouilhoux stressed a problem arising with AEU, which does not wish teachers to be considered as the third pillar. It is necessary to get out of the vicious circle putting trade unions as social partners; trade unions have to be considered as professionals in education. The only way to do so is to show that trade unions are able to produce work. This argument should be used in the meetings to come, at the next meeting as well as in Bergen. UNESCO CEPES is now part of the follow-up structure.

Monique Fouilhoux invited the new colleagues on the network to be more and more active with this tool.

Brian Everett, from AUT, UK, stressed that a representative from Ms Reding, the EU Commissioner for Education and Culture stated during the Berlin Ministerial conference that they would welcome involvement of teachers.

Gerd Köhler, from GEW, stressed that the issue of the limitation of the trade unions delegates was a crucial point. The recommendation made by the Conference preparatory committee was that there should be a maximum of 4 delegates per country. For the Bergen meeting, this committee

should ask the Norwegians to find a way to increase the delegations. The idea is how to include civil society in such process, maybe through informal talk, by organising workshops. An argument to be used is that higher education means not only rectors and students. This could be a way to influence further development.

Sigrid Lem, from NARW, informed the Committee that the Norwegian ministers organised a group to comment final report. This group was composed with students, rectors, the accreditation agency as well as the NARW. Trade unions got support from ministry that teacher representatives were the 3rd pillar and very important party. The students supported this position. However the rector conference was against teachers. In Bergen, although the contacts are not very easy, Norwegian trade unions hope to be able to have some influence. NARW deems collaboration with students very important.

Manuel Pereira Dos Santos, FENPROF, stressed the important evolution taking place in the relationships with students, maybe trade unions should act like them, be more aggressive, organise parallel conferences. Another important element is the raise in student fees, which nearly doubled in most of European countries. Maybe another solution would be to confront national rectors. He also stressed that rectors were not present in the research sector, so maybe EIE could use this bias. The European research area is a European subject

Daltún Ó Ceallaigh, IFUT, stressed that the national limits had been an excuse to exclude unions. The response should be that certain parties have priorities in the process. Trade unions should lobby to get at least one minister to raise the problem. The rectors are individual response to authorities, whereas trade unions are the representatives of civil society.

Gerd Köhler reminded that the preparatory group was playing a central role. In the Berlin Conference case, no majority had been reached concerning the trade unions representatives to the conference. He also insisted on the need to speak to EUA and the National Rectors' Conference. It is easier to control them on national level than on international level.

Monique Fouilhoux concluded saying that there were lessons to be drawn from this experience: it is time that trade unions have a political meeting with AEU, and particularly with its president Eric Froment. Trade unions had been invited in Salamanca, EIE and ETUCE had invited AEU to the EIE-ETUCE-GEW Berlin Forum, but trade unions were not invited as a structure in Graz: there is some political problem to solve here. Trade unions have to learn how to better work among us, and should redefine strategies now and then repercussion at national level.

She also mentioned that in the dossier for this meeting there is a copy of a letter sent by Martin Rømer to Mr Catenhusen, referring to a document prepared by AEU entitled "Trends III". On page 23 of this document there is a paragraph that reads: "Secondly, it should be pointed out that, although this phase of observing the Bologna Process has already been much more inclusive than the previous one, by reaching out to the institutions and students in order to obtain reliable estimations of progress and remaining challenges, one group of stakeholders has still been left out of the survey: the academics". Moreover in June 2003, during the UNESCO conference + 5, Eric Froment was invited to speak about the Bologna Process and declared that teachers were out of this process.

Ryszard Mosakowski, NSZZ, explained that the Polish Minister had proposed to NSZZ a seat in the delegation but the trade unions did not participate. There was apparently no real policy on the different objectives. For the next conference, it would be useful to prepare a common policy.

Most of the committee members expressed their regret of not being able to participate as trade unions in the Berlin Ministerial Conference.

The Spanish representative from FETE, Concha Espinosa, expressed the concern that social partners were more consulted than professional organisations.

Michel Deyme, SGEN CFDT, stressed the importance of the presence of academics. He mentioned CNESER and the contribution of each of these groups.

As a conclusion for this point on the Berlin conference, it was repeated that trade union organisations should be more aggressive from now, such as the students.

Paul Bennett suggested publishing a short communiqué on the dissatisfaction of teachers for being left out of this conference.

3. Researchers in the European Research Area: Presentation by Sigi Grüber, Strategy and policy aspects Unit, EC- DG Research

After the presentation (see Appendix) a discussion was held. Brian Everett (AUT) raised the issue of the "UK Concordat". This exists in the UK, has just been set up in Ireland and in France on a smaller scale (INSERM).

There is an assessment on the Directive on the 'Fixed term contract'; the secretariat was requested to get hold of this document as soon as possible.

A Year of the Researchers would be welcome, it was suggested to submit this suggestion to commissioner BUSQUIN through the website.

4. Outcomes of the Berlin debate

To conclude the debate the Committee adopted the following recommendations for future work:

- Assert our position as voice of the teachers and researchers, as well as social partners;
- EIE/ETUCE to write to Norwegian Minister, organising Committee, Secretariat and work with Norwegian affiliates;
- Engage in European level dialogue with EUA, ESIB, European Commission ENQA and other relevant parties both to gain access to process and put on substantive views on policy;
- Make links to the European Higher Education/Research Area debate;
- Seek to participate in the "Bergen" preparatory conferences and events, and organise our own activities;
- Develop policy through the HERSC taking account of the Berlin Communiqué;
- The National organisations to report back to EI Secretariat and HERSC to enable coordination to take place;

Monique Fouilhoux reminded regarding the Berlin Conference that there would be no Conference report as such, there are only conference communiqués published. The available documents are put on a website, nothing being specifically published on paper. Regarding the EIE/GEW/ETUCE Berlin Forum report, GEW is responsible for this task. Romuin Reich, GEW, explained, on behalf of Gerd Köhler, that the reports would hopefully be available in October 2003. Once the copyright question solved, two manuscripts would be published.

Jens Vraa Jensen, DM, insisted that trade unions should get prepared on time for the Bergen conference, not as had been the case for the Berlin Forum. The Committee agreed on this point.

5. Australian crisis

NTEU is currently holding its Annual Council. EI was invited to attend but as this was not possible the decision was taken to send a message. NTEU is facing many problems, and especially 2 debates: a change in work relationships and the implementation of a new 'package': people would get individual contracts instead of collective bargaining.

It was decided to send an EI Solidarity letter.

6. GATS/CANCUN

The EI Task Force set up to prepare a policy paper for the Congress met last April and a collective paper has been prepared. The Task force will meet in Dakar prior to the Conference and by the end of January a final draft will be put on the agenda of the March World Executive Board for adoption by the Porto Alegre 2004 Congress.

This document is too long and should be reduced to 4-5 pages to be examined by the EI Executive Board. An important part is still missing: the impact on developing countries, contribution that has to come from the South African colleagues.

The last 2 pages is the Annex drafted by Brian Everett, AUT, on the basis of the Reciprocal Agreement for Partnership, part of the text is in the main document, the whole agreement is attached. The agreement is based on existing agreements between European organisations and organisations from other continents.

Paul Bennett suggested colleagues to send their comments to Monique Fouilhoux. It is important that colleagues outside Europe see how these problems are dealt with within the European region.

It was suggested that the draft guidelines be attached to the GATS document.

Jens Vraa Jensen insisted that the commercialisation of the sector would continue with or without GATS, it is important to stress that the whole problem is not only linked to GATS.

Manuel Pereira Dos Santos described the current situation in Portugal. He advised not to stop watching higher education commercialisation even if Cancun was not a success. This was foreseeable, as the European calendar was different from the WTO Calendar. He then shifted to the situation in Portugal where they have a very bad minister of education, which is not enough independent from the finance minister. There is a new form of commercialisation: the next terminology is 'a public service network' in which even the private institutions are considered as public service. They are trying to vote a framework law for education as they did for the health sector managed by private managers.

David Margolies, AUT, insisted on the current trend of drive for profit. There is much pressure from corporations, as the private sector is shaping plans of the public sector. They are trying to change scheme of curricula, which was previously determined by academics.

Monique Fouilhoux reminded that the education issues were not even on the Cancun meeting Agenda. The United States have launched a bilateral agreement even more damaging for a various countries. The EI and ICFTU Executive Board are going to put this question on their agendas. GATS did not create commercialisation, it boosted it. This is the reason why this Committee has

been working on the guidelines since the 2001 Jomtien Congress. In this document there are proposals for a new international instrument. If GATS should disappear, the commercialisation process would still continue.

7. Guidelines - Code of Research Ethics

Jens Vraa Jensen indicated that the draft had not been updated as requested since the colleagues involved in this process had not had the possibility to give their contribution.

It was agreed that Véronique Martin's document could be posted on the network and that Jens Vraa Jensen could supervise the debate.

Monique Fouilhoux reminded that she had circulated a document concerning a "conscience clause" elaborated under the lead of a Swiss organisation. The idea is to get to an ILO convention on this issue, but seems not to be very realistic.

Paul Bennett suggested that the colleagues try and make use of this document in their national organisation and then give some feedback at the next committee meeting.

8. CEART Meeting

Monique Fouilhoux reminded the role of the CEART Committee: it gathers every 3 years to make a follow-up on the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation on Higher Education Teaching Personnel, its advantage is that it is an independent committee, its work is not too formal.

Our Australian colleagues were requested to make a study on academic freedom, an overview of the situation in the Asian region. This document was highly appreciated at CEART and will be presented in Dakar.

Monique Fouilhoux thanked the organisations that send useful information regarding the contribution to be given to CEART for its follow-up meeting. This contribution has been posted on the network and on the Internet website.

In 2000, EI had managed that a half-day of the CEART meeting should be dedicated to the teachers and professional organisations were invited to address the committee. This year the same informal session was organised and led to more than 2 hours of debate with the experts. There will soon be an agreement to ensure that there will be even more collaboration between EI and CEART.

9. Academic Freedom

In European countries there are no direct attacks against academic freedom, but the working conditions are an indirect way of reducing academic freedom.

Jens Vraa Jensen drafted a note on precarious and casualisation; it is a one-page paper posted on the network over the consequences of 2 EU directives on part time contract. In Denmark, there is for the moment a case running in court against government. The legal case content is the negotiations to have part time in collective agreement. It would be very interesting to hear how directive was implemented in other countries. For example in the UK, preparation time is not paid for part timers. Jens Vraa Jensen asked for examples on how directives are implemented in other countries (good practice that could be caught in court).

Paul Bennett suggested this item to be put on the next meeting agenda; hopefully 16-17 national reports could be compared by then.

10. Dakar – World Congress Porto Alegre

- Dakar

The updated agenda was presented

- 4th EI Congress, Porto Alegre, Brazil

There might be a change in the dates that had been arranged previously; the EI Executive Board members will take a decision on this next month. A higher education caucus will be held in with the Congress. Monique Fouilhoux drew the attention of the Committee Members to the fact that the higher education sector was the only sector for which activities are organised at the international level. The 2005 Conference is already planned in the programme.

Paul Bennett underlined that, although EI is small in terms of staffing, the higher education sector has the chance to have a committee at the European level (with biannual meetings) as well as an international conference every 2 years. Dakar will be a great opportunity to share experience with the other regions.

Eric Vandamme, CGSP, stressed that Europe is on the verge of teacher shortage and that there is temptation to rely upon African teachers, this is one of the perverse effects of the shortage and should be stressed during such a conference. He also mentioned the fact that in Belgium, 60% of the higher education students are in non university institutions, he asked whether the terminology 'universities' as well as 'higher education institutions' could not be more frequently used (for example, in the document on the "role of universities").

The FECCOO representative, Pedro González López, stressed the lack of representation from the Latin America region and underlined the problem of the absence of Spanish interpretation.

Monique Fouilhoux agreed on this problem. She underlined that this conference was the opportunity to concentrate on another developing region. She mentioned for the information of the colleagues that ASPROFU was the only trade union really representative of the higher education sector. The Mexicans have so far expressed their wish to attend the conference. This conference is for the first time organised outside Europe or the North American region; this opportunity could be taken to raise this issue.

Paul Bennett raised the issue of inviting non-EI member organisations to these meetings. As observers in a caucus, for instance.

Monique Fouilhoux made the suggestion that a Dakar recommendation be made for the Executive Board, mentioning the opportunity of EI presence in Latin America for the Congress to invite organisations from this region to the next higher education conference. This opportunity could be taken to invite non-member organisations as observers, as we did for ICUTO members at the Washington Congress.

Monique Fouilhoux mentioned that there was a new Korean affiliate from the higher education sector.

The problem in Latin America is that there is no real driving force organisation, but Brazil could become a driving force.

Monique Fouilhoux mentioned that a world education forum would be linked to the EI Porto Alegre Congress. At the European level EI is going to organise some activity within the "St Denis social forum". The European committee had mandated EI to organise an activity within the European social forum.

Regarding the preparation of the 4th EI World Congress, PB asked Committee members to bear in mind these issues:

- complex debate of globalisation – higher education authority increases in EI because other sectors realise their expertise
- develop solidarity agenda, towards Colombia and Palestine
- In Jomtien in 2001, Grahame McCulloch had a very powerful strategy through the Congress, He ran to the EI Executive Board as a member of the higher education sector
- Does the EI programme reflect higher education priorities?

Further to a request by Jens Vraa Jensen, Monique Fouilhoux reminded the procedure for the presentation of resolutions. The Executive Board is going to mandate the secretariat to prepare by March 2004 a certain number of resolutions. The Executive Board will give his advice, the draft resolutions will be circulated to member organisations 4 months prior to the congress.

Monique Fouilhoux reminded the EI rules: amendments can be proposed until the end of the Congress opening session, which leads to a hardly manageable workload. The request has been made that they should be presented only one month before to enable the secretariat to translate in reasonable deadlines. The resolution committee is responsible for sorting the resolutions. The plenary debate was much appreciated in Jomtien since it is much more democratic.

11. Miscellaneous

Gabor Szabo, FDSZ, submitted an item on the Hungarian situation. A decision was made to privatise higher education institutions, non-professional investors came, and later employees lost their status of civil servant. New modifications of the codex of higher education are being prepared. The higher education trade union opposed these changes and negotiations started. Paul Bennett suggested that Gabor Szabo should send an official document communicating these facts to EI so that EI can start protest action to the Hungarian Ministry.

Janez Stergar, ESTUS, mentioned that assistance to Central European organisations should be provided within the framework of the EIE HERSC committee. This question could be raised to the regional committee.

Monique Fouilhoux reacted to this mentioning that, in the European Committee meeting on 22-23 September, an agreement was reached on the need to facilitate means for acceding countries. Monique Fouilhoux insisted that ESTUS General Secretary is member of the European Committee and could therefore protest about this to the committee, which is the body within EI entitled to take such decisions. The protest should be made and repeated at the ETUCE General assemblies, EIE Regional conference, etc.

Brian Everett, AUT Manchester, requested that an item on the Middle East issues be put on next meeting agenda.

Janez Stergar requested information on membership rates/levels.

12. Next meeting

The dates of 4 - 5 March 2004.
