



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL EUROPE

Meeting of the Higher Education and Research Standing Committee

Paris, 10 & 11 January 2003

Present:

DECKERS, Hugo ACOD, Belgium
VANDAMME, Eric, CGSP, Belgium
RIBIC, Vilim, IURHEEC, Croatia
VRAA-JENSEN, Jens, DM, Denmark
SAJAVAARI, Kari, FUUP, Finland
FANT, Bjorn, FUURT, Finland
MELTO, Marjatta, OAJ, Finland
DEYME, Michel, SGEN-CFDT, France
COHEN, Jean-Hervé, SNES, France
MARTIN-JEZEQUEL, Véronique, SNCS, France
MAILLES, Jean-Pierre, UNSA-Education, France
KÖHLER, Gerd, GEW, Germany
REICH, Romuin, GEW, Germany
SZABO, Gabor, FDSZ, Hungary
BURKE, Pat, IFUT, Ireland
O'CEALLAIGH, Daltun, IFUT, Ireland

TRAPENCIERE, Ilze, LIZDA, Latvia
SIPKEMA, Gerard, Aob, Netherlands
KJENNDALLEN, Kari, NARW, 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
LINDHOLM, Jörgen, ETUCE
VANSWEEVELT, George, ETUCE

Observers:

FLOWER, Ruth, AAUP, United States; SCHEUERMANN, Bill, AFT, United States; HENDRICKSON, Rachel, NEA, United States; STEARNS, Barry, NEA, United States; ALLPORT, Carolyn, NTEU, Australia; HAMALIAN, Arpi, FOPPU, Canada.

Excused:

DIEU, Camille CGSP, Belgique
MARIEN, Gérard, UNSA-Education, France

Speakers :

Stefan Bienefeld, ESIB
Stamenka Uvalic Trumbic, UNESCO (See attached powerpoint presentation)

After welcoming participants and presenting the observers, Paul Bennett proposed some amendments to the agenda, and these were agreed.

1. ETUCE Activities

Jörgen Lindholm put in perspective, to the attention of the non-European observers, the context in which ETUCE works and presented the EU programmes. He stressed that often governments know little about European programmes. For this reason it is useful for the ETUCE affiliates to receive information on the various programmes. It is also important that national organisations report to ETUCE on their national situation.

The **method of coordination** must be reflected by a decision-making process at the trade unions' level, and this constitutes a challenge for ETUCE. During the 2004 Summit meeting, the EU intends to carry out an interim evaluation of progress made to consider the future as regards research. The problem is that there is no consultation, not even with the governments, social partners, or NGOs. It is not a question of supranational decision-making as such. ETUCE wishes to be associated in the process, and on the level of the governments there is a will to improve intergovernmental co-operation in order to limit the power of the European Commission. This phenomenon has been present for several years, the Ministers for education do not want the Commission to make decisions, they only expect it organise co-operation.

The 6th Framework programme

During Autumn 2002, the 6th Framework programme was launched. It constitutes a major initiative in the field of research. Its budget is 1,5 billion Euro. It is a chance which is offered to us to multiply activities and to underline the European dimension of our activities to our members. If a country is not a full member of the European union, it can take part with a financial contribution. The amounts paid are in relation to the GNP. If a country has active researchers, it can obtain funds. Criticisms on this programme are numerous: procedures are long and complex, only large universities have the capacities to take part in this method. A major question arises: how poor countries will obtain their share of research if the other institutes recover the large shares of market.

Convention on the future of Europe

In this convention social partners are invited as observers. ETUCE is represented as an ETUC member, therefore as an industrial confederation. ETUCE is collaborating with trade unions from the public sector and it requested its member organisations to lobby at national level. The objective is to protect public services within the framework of the European Convention.

GATS

The majority of ETUCE members are aware of this danger. Public services are not clearly defined in the EU. ETUCE is lobbying, ETUC accepted the document prepared by the *'Industrial Federation of public services'*. ETUCE tried to have a working group set up. Article 1.3 of the GATS must urgently be clarified, and it will be important to require at national level that public services be kept out of this Agreement.

The GATS is not only related to the EU but EU has a very active part to play in it. Trade is a responsibility of the EU but not formally education. As from the beginning of the GATS process, there were contacts with Vivian Reding as well as the DG Education and Culture. There were talks with governments. At the beginning only Trade Ministers were informed, but there was then no contact between Ministers of Education and Trade. These problems were openly raised and since then the situation has positively evolved.

Mrs. Reding requested comments from the Ministers. The EU prepares its reactions to the requests previously formulated. There should be a dialogue between Ministers of Education and Trade. There are many consultations in the countries but the trade unions are not often informed. There is now a recognition of the ETUCE as spokesman of teachers in Europe. In 2002, ETUCE met Commissioner Lamy. And at the beginning of 2003, Jörgen Lindholm, Monique Foulhoux and Elie Jouen met David Coyne as well as the representative of the cabinet, Roger O' Keefe. They had very positive discussions on GATS.

Monique Foulhoux pointed out that a part of the responsibility fell on the trade unions which were not active enough inside the confederation. The EI Executive Board put the GATS question on the agenda. A paper for discussion is being prepared. The higher education sector is playing a leading role because it is the most affected. Monique Foulhoux made a point of stressing that it

was the information from national organisations that made the work carried out by the secretariat more effective.

The Bologna Process

EIE is mainly in charge of these questions, but it is up to ETUCE to maintain contacts with the Commission. At the last ETUCE Executive Board, it was decided to write with the Member States in order to encourage them to take more actively part in the activities. From that point ETUCE has become a recognised protagonist of the Bologna process.

Negotiations with WCT

These negotiations are moving forward and will have an impact on the ETUCE future. If the negotiations of ETUCE integration within EI evolve, it would mean that WCT would also become an EI affiliate, while remaining affiliated to the WCL. The ETUCE General Assembly in December will be preceded in September by the Executive Board, these meetings should allow to prepare the amendments to the ETUCE Constitution.

2. Electronic Network

Monique Fouilhoux presented the network and briefly explained its operation. This higher education and research network is based on a structure implemented by the ETUC and the European trade union college and is coordinated by Monique Fouilhoux. This network allows for close cooperation but may create some initial organisational problems.

Training seminars were organised for members of the network. However Monique Fouilhoux underlined the need for all members to connect themselves to the network, without which the co-operation on this network is impossible. She also insisted on the unique opportunity constituted by this programme (entirely free training as well as 2 years of free technical aid).

Several members of the network who have been using it daily for several months have testified that it was very easy to use once one is familiarised with the electronic tool. They also underlined the need for all Committee members to be trained as soon as possible and connected to the network.

Monique Fouilhoux has also insisted on the need for all Committee members who had already been trained to be registered so that the whole higher education network can work efficiently, and become the normal medium of communication.

3. Berlin Conference - April 2003

- *Ministerial Conference of 2003, by Gerd Köhler*

The ministerial Conference will take place on 18 & 19 September 2003.

Gerd Köhler pointed that an invitation for ETUCE and EI should be sought from the European Union. He indicated that a preparatory group would meet in Athens in February 2003, and that ETUCE would be invited to take part to this meeting.

Trade unions should insist that in the future debate regarding higher education and research policy, the aspect of personnel mobility, and the implications of the master and PHD on the new proposals, should be fully discussed. At the doctorate level, there are young researchers who could be employed on proper contracts of employment, as it is the case in Scandinavia.

Gerd Köhler pointed the heavy programme of meetings in the higher education sector and

underlined the need for a trade-union presence in various meetings.

- *EIE/GEW Forum, 10-13 April 2003*

Gerd Köhler outlined the programme of the conference. At the beginning of the day, political speakers, the German Federal Minister for Education will be present. An invitation also will be made to Viviane Reding, Commissioner for Education as well as to the EUA President.

Monique Fouilhoux pointed out that students, institutional representatives as well as EUA are integrated in the process for a long time. Trade unions of teachers have more difficulties of being integrated into it. The European Community considers teachers' trade unions, through ETUCE, only like social partners, and not like the third pillar beside the students and of the institutions. It is essential for teachers trade unions to break this circle and be recognised as professionals *having right to the chapter*. In October 2002, Jörgen Lindholm and Monique Fouilhoux met David Coyne. They learned on this occasion, in a semi-official way, that ETUCE would receive a financing of 80.000 Euro.

Monique Fouilhoux underlined the need for obtaining as soon as possible two complete lists of researchers from GEW.

Gerd Köhler explained that a major effort had been made to influence the process of Bologna, and that GEW wanted to act as moderator expressing a clear trade-union voice within the framework of the Bologna process. With this intention he explained that it was essential to work out a united trade union point of view based on the two studies:

- Accreditation in the framework of evaluation activities
- International attractiveness of the Academic workplace in Europe

During the first day, essential topics for the future of teachers and researchers will be discussed. The Europeanisation process is the former stage before privatisation, in the context of the global process of commercialisation of public goods. The process should ensure that education in general and particularly higher education remains within the public sector.

With regard to accreditation, this topic challenges the majority of European countries because, first of all, it arises from the question of mobility. Another aspect is that if Australian courses should be sold in Indonesia or curricula should be sold on the Internet, the recognition of these courses is a prerequisite. Without this recognition, students would not buy these courses. The accreditation has consequently become a major topic.

If trade unions wish to develop their point of view, they must remain informed of the situation in each European country. Various countries express different interests. Some countries consider it as national field, they do not want any foreign intervention. The ENQAA wants to set up a European accreditation system comparable to the North-American universities.

Trade unions must also know what occurs as regards staff management, status of doctorates, etc. Trade unions must update information with regard to casualisation. We must also take into account the different salary conditions in various countries: there are a number of systems of salaries.

The researchers will submit reports from which EI and GEW will produce a policy.

The results will be presented during the plenary (afternoon of the 2nd day) and will be included in a final resolution. A report should be transmitted to EI before summer. It should be revised for September and reflect EI expectations to the intergovernmental conference.

Several Committee members advised Gerd Köhler that they wished certain parts of the programme to be revised. Gerd Köhler explained that a management committee had been set up, which should meet mid-March 2003 and would be charged to draw the conclusions from the national reports. Gerd Köhler encouraged the committee members to take contact with the national rapporteurs who would provide them with information (names of the persons in charge, dates, etc.)

The Committee members made several comments. The NATFHE representative, Paul Bennett, officially announced the decision of its organisation not to take part in the conference for various reasons (delay in the production of the report announced since last summer, the proposed agenda compared with the original objectives of the meeting, the position of the people which prepared national reports, etc).

Other remarks were made. In the future, the Committee should not to be confronted with such difficulties anymore. A process to organise this type of conference should be defined, and the discussion should even be based on a precise document. All present colleagues agreed to say that the national reports should be communicated to the trade unions well before the beginning of the Conference, so that trade unions have the occasion to amend them.

Gerd Köhler took note of the colleagues' wish to put GATS on the agenda of the intergovernmental meeting.

Monique Fouilhoux evoked the pressure exerted at the European level for more transparency, in particular by the means of trade unions. An on-line consultation was launched at the European level and will end on January 31, 2002. Monique Fouilhoux regretted that although the text from Commissioner Lamy as well as the ETUC circular were distributed at European level, few organisations reacted. It would be useful to know what was said at national level. This information at national level makes it possible to take much stronger decisions.

Regarding globalisation, Monique Fouilhoux also recalled that a Task Force, the composition of which would be decided in February 2003, was going to be set up. It would be possible to organise a first Task force meeting in conjunction with the Berlin Forum.

4. National situations by foreign observers

a. The United States

There is an aspect of the application of the "Patriot Act", which allows from now on, an illegal intrusion in the students' private life. The public authorities were abusing its interpretation. They demanded from faculties documents which they did not have the right to ask. Sensitive documents from the point of view of safety were withdrawn from the Internet. The mobility of foreign students is restricted.

Cuts are taking place in all budgets, and particularly education budgets, and the higher education sector is being made to look outside the public sector for funding.

There were threats of strike action on a campus, and the administration tried to keep the campus open by using part-time work. Political conservatism is getting stronger as well as the attacks against trade-union freedoms. There were draft amendments to the law on the railroads and

aviation aiming at removing the right to strike. The United States is at a crucial moment as regards workers rights.

b. Australia

Nowadays, universities only receive 45% of subsidies instead of 90% in the eighties. Today, the students are responsible for more than 80 % of their study expenses. In 2003 trade unions will have to negotiate conventions.

There was some discussion about separating the institutes of research from the universities, the trade unions reacted strongly and the point was withdrawn but the threat remains present. With regard to the questions of job casualisation, trade unions succeeded to restrict the work based on short-term contract.

The Government has made some attempts to improve relations with the trade unions. The situation has evolved positively in particular as regards social justice, and there is now a united trade union forum.

c. Québec

The key word is innovation: commercialisation and competitiveness. By 2010 Canada must be among the 5 most innovative and competitive countries in the world. In October 2002, there was a national summit on innovation. But the great surprise was that only the industrial world was invited to it.

The higher education sector was a competence of the provinces but for research, the competence is federal. This sector is directed by a ' Minister for Finance, Economy and Research' (there is no tutoring ministry / ministère de tutelle ?). By retaining money on transfers to the provinces, the ministry has constituted a kitty : billion dollars will be allotted to research. They apply a policy of research pulpit in universities of excellence. This creates a phenomenon of two-speed universities. The FQPPU and the CAUT are fighting against it.

There is now an institution which is working as an observatory: it acts of an independent organisation analysing the effects of globalisation. The Education Ministry published a strategy on the internationalisation of education, the universities are not very represented.

5. ESIB's opinion on the Bologna Process and the GATS negotiations

Stefan Bienefeld the President of ESIB has made a presentation of his organisation.

ESIB, the national unions of students in Europe has been in existence since 1982 to promote the cultural, social and political interests of students at the European level. As of today, ESIB covers 50 organisations from 37 countries and thus represents more than 11 million students between Iceland and Georgia and Norway and Malta.

ESIB has been and is actively involved in the follow up activities of the Bologna Process. Whereas in Bologna we had to invite ourselves into the meeting, in Prague we had been included in the process, mainly due to a very professionalised work on the different aspects of the process. This work has been kept up and thus ESIB is at present one of the key stakeholders involved in the follow up of the Bologna and Prague meetings and the preparation of the next meeting in Berlin in September. ESIB generally welcomes the Bologna process and sees it as a possibility of fostering a positive reform of HE in Europe. Nevertheless we acknowledge and also point to the

problems with implementation when countries just pick the bits which fit into their national strategy or push negative reforms and label them Bologna, as in Italy and also to a certain extent in Switzerland and other countries. In this context we work with the European University association and other partners and also hope to increase our co-operation with the teachers, namely EI and ETUCE significantly in the coming months and years.

With regards to the GATS negotiations and the issue of commercialisation of education, ESIB has another specialised group working on these questions. ESIB believes that HE is a public good and a human right and is therefore as a matter of principle opposed to handling HE as a commodity. Therefore, we are principally opposed to tuition fees and also to any further commitments under GATS. The ultimate objective, however unrealistic that may be, would be to remove HE and other public services from the treaty altogether. Besides that, we are trying to contribute to UNESCO work to establish an alternative frame for internationalisation of HE and I see a lot in common in our positions with the positions of EI.

As for the links between the processes, ESIB believes that the Bologna process can be used as a counterargument to GATS if, but only if the co-operative character is strengthened and the notion of HE as a public good is enshrined. We are also pushing for a reference to the problems with the GATS in the Berlin communiqué. However, if Bologna is wrongly implemented it can also lead to a further commercialisation of education on the tertiary level in the long term perspective, as similar structures do make HE more marketable.

There is still a lot to do and to achieve and it is of utmost importance that teachers, students and universities act on this together and in co-operation. In this sense ESIB hopes to increase our co-operation with EI in every possible way to create a strong voice of the sectoral stakeholders in the international processes which are currently influencing the higher education sector.

6. Preparation of the NGOS Collective Consultation on Higher Education organised by UNESCO from 13 to 15 January

Monique Fouilhoux put in perspective the context in which will proceed the Collective Consultation, 344 NGOs are represented and gathered in the NGO's International conference which elects every 3 years a NGO Liaison Committee. This constitutes a large opportunity for EI and offers a better visibility.

UNESCO organises consultations on topics or sectors. It is important for IE to be represented by a delegation of a certain importance, as it is the spokesman of 80% of teachers syndicated in the world.

The debates will proceed around three topics:

- Higher education and education for all
- Higher education and sustainable development
- Internationalisation

Monique Fouilhoux consequently advised that the EI delegation be divided into three working groups.

Following the meeting which was held in Brussels with representatives of the ESIB and UNESCO, it would be interesting to put the question of the GATS on the agenda and to initiate a text raising certain questions.

7. Follow-up of the Committee working papers

The *draft declaration* presented is an update of a text already approved in preparation of the intergovernmental conference of Prague in 2001.

Document on transnational work

The committee members agreed to saying that the decision taken in June was a little ambitious. After various contacts since then, Brian Everett addressed to Monique Fouilhoux very interesting but very specific examples of agreement. It would be a question of going towards a type of multilateral agreement with a list of general points. A text can be added as an annex to show which type of agreement was made.

It was suggested that the draft agreement could be presented at the next meeting before continuing the discussion in order to examine it jointly.

8. Resolutions

Three resolutions were adopted and will be submitted to the European regional Committee for approval.

- 1. Draft Resolution on HERSC future work*
- 2. Draft Resolution on the closure of Palestinian Universities*
- 3. Draft Resolution on the Growing Crisis in Employment in Higher Education and Research*

10. Next meeting

The date of the next meeting was set on 25 & 26 September 2003.

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