

**EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL Pan-European Structure
Higher Education and Research Standing Committee
Brussels, 4 & 5 March 2004**

Present:

DECKERS, Hugo, ACOD, Belgium
VANDAMME, Eric, CGSP, Belgium
VAN RENTERGHEM, Rudy, COC, Belgium
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
BRIQUET, Ferri, UNSA, France
MARIEN, Gérard, UNSA, France
REICH, Romuin, GEW, Germany
Ó CEALLAIGH Daltún, IFUT, Ireland
Ó COCHLÁIN Breandán, IFUT, Ireland
TELLEMAN, Jan, CNV, Netherlands

KJENNDALLEN, Kari, NARW, Norway
LEM, Sigrid, NARW, Norway
MOSAKOWSKI, Ryszard, NSZZ, Poland
DOS SANTOS, Manuel, FENPROF, Portugal
STERGAR, Janez, ESTUS, Slovenia
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

DE LA HAYE, Gaston, WCT General Secretary
RØMER Martin, ETUCE, General Secretary
LENNON, Charlie, EI Secretariat
FOUILHOX Monique, EI Secretariat

Excused:

TRAPENCIERE, Ilze, LIZDA, Latvia
SZABO, Gabor, FDSZ, Hungary
GONZALEZ LOPEZ, Pedro, FECCOO, Spain

Opening of the meeting

The EI European Conference and ETUCE Assembly held in Luxembourg in December 2003 unanimously adopted statutes for a new integrated Pan-European structure. The adoption of provisions for WCT group representation on the European Committee was contingent on WCT adoption of the agreement by August 2004. An enabling resolution stated that EI agreed to treat WCT member organisations in Europe as EI members until that time. Following this decision Monique Fouilhoux pointed out this meeting will deal with a new configuration, and welcomed representatives of new organizations.

She also welcomed Charlie Lennon, new EI-Europe Chief Coordinator.

1. Report of September meeting

Daltún Ó Ceallaigh, in relation to page 3 paragraph 4, recommended replacing “table position” by “raise the problem”. Jens asked about the issue of casualisation in the current agenda, to which Monique answered it will be referred to the problem of casualisation. Paul Bennett reminded all organizations that casualisation should be discussed at some point, for it becomes a serious issue. The report was adopted as amended.

2. Outcomes of the Luxemburg Conference

Charlie Lennon referred to the modifications adopted in Luxemburg to take into account the ongoing process between EI and WCT. He mentioned that the new structure will not have an impact on the current functioning of the Higher Education and Research Committee and mentioned that a budget programme has been adopted for the next three years.

He confirmed that the Committee will elect its Chair and informed that Marjatta Melto, Vice-president of the Pan European structure, was appointed by the Bureau the link between the HERSC and the Bureau.

3. Election of the Chair of the Committee

Daltún Ó Ceallaigh proposed Paul Bennett for the position on behalf of the Irish Federation. The proposition was seconded with 4 votes and adopted unanimously.

Paul Bennett took position and hoped the work line will continue with the new arrangements. The continuity of this Committee has been one of the strings of the EI, whose work is important in the education sector as well as in other sectors. All issues need to be addressed at three levels: national, European and global. The Task Force, set up at the World Congress to study the impact of globalization on Higher Education and Research, will have huge implications in the European work. The electronic network is fundamental for the accomplishment of our tasks. Monique Fouilhoux presented the network for those who are not familiar with it. Documents that are contained in the network had been added to the dossier.

4. Bologna process follow-up

New countries have been admitted in the Bologna Process: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Macedonia. Unions in those countries are asking for information and help. Monique Fouilhoux referred to a recent seminar organized by the Serbian Education Union in the framework of a cooperation programme with AOb Netherlands, and stated how she was impressed by the high interest the Serbians proved in the Bologna process.

The objectives of the Process will suppose a big effort for these countries. She hoped for a closer collaboration with members of these countries. Governments have committed to the Process but are trying to use it to introduce some other aspects. There is a need for strengthening advocacy work to convince the Bologna Follow-up group and the Ministerial Conference in Bergen to recognize ETUCE/EI as a partner.

Concerning relations with the students, progress have been made and EI and ESIB are on the way to conclude an agreement.

Monique Fouilhoux invited all to visit the site about Bologna, www.bologna-bergen2005.no. A lot of useful information is there. Paul Bennett pointed out the need of the academic unions to reinforce their collaboration with student unions and rectors' conferences.

Martin Rømer mentioned the work going on with the DG Research. He also referred to a positive meeting with the EU Director of Education. Talking of Bologna Process, he remembered the work done in the Berlin Conference and hopes that we will be able soon to present the studies and the report of the Conference. The Higher education teachers voice need to be heard and a contribution need to be prepared for the Bergen Conference. An initiative need to be taken in relation with our colleagues from Norway.

Answering Paul Bennett's question about the preparation of the Bergen Conference, Sigrid Lem stated that NARW is part of the national follow-up group discussing the preparation of the Conference. Kari Kjendallen added that the preparatory group was positive on the initiative of EI to

make a pre-Bergen Seminar, and that the outcomes of this meeting could be taken into account in Bergen.

Paul Bennett stated that lessons have to be learned about the Berlin report, and asked participants for suggestions about the urgent tasks and to report about the implementation of the Bologna process at the national level.

Most participants reported on the implementation of the Bologna Process in their countries and stated in favour of organizing a trade union pre-conference to prepare for the Bergen Ministerial Conference, which should focus on the issues that concern academic staff, particularly the working conditions. After a thorough debate, the Committee agreed on the following points to be reported to the next Pan European Committee meeting:

1. The Committee advised that the proposed conference of Higher Education unions before the Bergen Inter-Ministerial Conference should have a target participation of 100, in order to directly involve as many of the unions as possible from countries signed up to the Bologna Process. The key themes should be the material conditions of higher education staff, and the links to Quality and Academic Freedom; and the assertion that higher education is a public good, challenging the market concept of the sector. The ideal date for the conference should be in February 2005.
2. It was recommended that an appropriate statement acknowledging the value of academic staff and their representative organisations should be sought from the European Commission, to be used by member unions in dialogue with national governments to gain access to the Bologna Process.
3. The possibility of European Commission-supported work on national perceptions of the Bologna Process by academic staff should be explored as a matter of urgency.
4. National unions must seek to gain access to the national and European programmes of meetings in the run-up to the Bergen Conference.
5. National unions must seek contacts at national level with rectors and students organisations in respect of the Bologna-Bergen Process.
6. Where appropriate, national unions should use forthcoming elections to raise the level of political awareness of the Bologna-Bergen Process and its links to the globalisation challenge.

5. Outcomes of the Dakar Conference

The Conference was a success and Paul Bennett, rapporteur of the Conference, gave a brief report and insisted on the issue of Brain Drain which says a lot about the way countries relate to each other. He reminded about the Global Task Force, who is responsible for a substantial work concerning GATS, globalization and higher education. The umbrella of the EI attending the Congress in Porto Alegre will reinforce their opposition to globalization. Strategies regarding the documents are welcome before the Congress.

6. Preparatory work for EI Congress (Porto Alegre)

Monique Fouilhoux announced that there will be simultaneous translation services in four languages during the Caucus and hoped that it will be an opportunity to welcome other unions in Latin America. She recalled that the higher education and research unions prepared tasks and functions very well in Jomtien.

It was mentioned that NTEU (Australia) offered to host the next Conference in Melbourne at the end of 2005.

In response to a question regarding resolutions for the Congress, Paul Bennett informed there are resolutions that still need to be submitted by our unions.

Concerning resolutions Monique Fouilhoux reminded the deadlines (before the 21st March) and the procedures. The participants decided to prepare a resolution on brain drain.

7. Research matters :

Sigi Grüber, from the DG Research, introduced the “code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers” and the draft “European Researcher’s Charter” and indicated the next steps. In particular she proposed to fund a one day meeting with a core group to discuss more in details.

Sigi Grüber explained the two initiatives are targeted to both public and private. The implementation and requirements would be different, as well as accessibility. A lot of private documents are not accessible. There are mixed panels: researchers out of a public university going on contract with a private industry. We would need to include different typology around teachers and teaching in research. The mobility strategy will also have to be promoted in all countries to be added as member states. It is important to define local attitudes. Also, breaks in the curricula are not accepted, and this is counterproductive. We need to change the attitude towards career breaks in research such as maternity or Sabbatical leave, etc.

Participants mentioned that the situation differs from one country to another. As Breandan informed, in Ireland they offer special salaries and conditions of employment to bring people back from America, while in Portugal, according to Manuel, they discuss mobility between studies and employment through project funding, and there is no room for researchers in universities. Crisis in research also affects France. Supplementary education as PhD will provide better positions.

Sigi Grüber calls for a closer and more permanent discussion and feedback. There is the issue of training of researchers that needs further approach. She invited participants to attend the Conference in The Hague next September.

8. OECD, UNESCO

Monique Fouilhoux mentioned the joint UNESCO/OECD Initiative concerning guidelines on « Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education ». A first meeting will be held on April 5/6 in Paris. Two other meetings will take place in the future (October in Japan and January 2005 in Paris). After these sessions the draft guidelines will be discussed by the relevant bodies of UNESCO and OECD. The final adoption by the UNESCO General Conference and the OECD Council is foreseen in the second half of 2005.

Concerns were expressed about TUAC methods of work and elaboration of statements. Participants invite EI to be more active on issues regarding higher education and research.

9. Next meeting

At the invitation of NSZZ (Poland) it is agreed to hold the next meeting on October 21st to 23rd in Gdansk.