



**EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL  
PAN EUROPEAN STRUCTURE  
Standing Committee on Higher Education and Research**

**New developments in the Higher Education and Research Sector:  
Consequences for Academic Staff**

**1st Workshop**

Brussels (Belgium), 26 - 28 September 2005

**REPORT**

The first workshop for the Standing Committee on Higher Education and Research was held in Brussels within the framework of the ETUCE/TRACE project on the "**New developments in the higher education and research: Consequences for the academic staff**". This short report summarises the main points raised at the meeting.

**1. European context**

**1.1 TRACE Project**

Jean Claude le Douairon introduced this new project which main aim is to build capacity within the European trade union movement to respond to situations of economic and industrial change. Trade unions need to:

- Develop their knowledge and skills to anticipate economic and industrial change
- Exchange and develop models for “good practice” in handling restructuring
- Reinforce networking

This project will help exploring major structural changes in the public sector areas such as education, in the framework of the implementation of the Bologna Process.



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## **1.2 Outputs from the Bergen Ministerial Conference (May 2005)**

In Bergen on 19/20 May 2005 at the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Education International Pan European finally achieved its objective of being fully recognised and included as a consultative member of the follow-up group which drives the Bologna process forward. After years of frustration at being left out in the “Prague” and “Berlin” rounds, the academic trade unions have at least been able to take their rightful place alongside the Institutions and students as key players in the Process

The EI Pan European Structure was represented by Paul Bennett and Monique Fouilhoux. The Ministerial Conference in its concluding Communiqué , formally admitted EI as a consultative member, and increased the number of signatory countries to 45. A striking feature of the Conference was the high level of agreement and cohesion around the objectives of Bologna. Ministers noted the significant progress achieved but recognised the need for consolidation and full implementation and underlined in this perspective the “central role of higher education institutions, their staff and students”

For the EI Pan European Structure and its national affiliated organisations , inclusion in the Bologna process means a challenging range of new responsibilities and opportunities. EI will call on its higher education and research affiliates in the Bologna area to work closely with EI Secretariat to further develop its objectives and to promote them at the institutional, national and European levels. In welcoming EI’s inclusion, Paul Bennett, Chair of the Pan European Higher Education and Research Standing Committee (HERSC), said that EI hoped that this would lead to a deeper engagement at the institutional level, as to a closer integration of teachers’ and researchers’ unions at the national level.

## **1.3 The European economic and educational context**

Philippe Pochet Director de l’ Observatoire Social européen” gave a broad overview of the political, economic and social context . He referred in particular to the potential impact of the negative results of the Referendum in France and the Netherlands for the future of Europe. The presentation was followed by a lively debate. Friedrich Wittib, from the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture made a detailed presentation of the Commission consultation on “ *Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy*” . During the debate which followed the presentation participants raised their concerns about the financing of Universities and what they considered to be a very neoliberal orientation of the Commission. They reaffirmed the importance and the role of academic staff for successful reforms concerning higher education in Europe. It was also pointed out that Europe cannot attract skilled workers at the detriment of less developed countries, accelerating brain drain, without looking for at least compensatory measures

## 1.4 The European Research Area

- The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers”:
- The 7<sup>th</sup> framework programme, a tool for mobilising the research community

Following detailed presentations from Sigliende Gruber and Keith Sequeira , European Commission, Directorate Research, the Committee largely discussed the content and potential impact of the Charter analyzing in particular the outcomes of the Conference on Code and Charter held by the UK Presidency at the beginning of September.

After a wide debate the Committee agreed on the following statement:

*“In March 2005 the EU Commission published the “European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment”. The principles of the document is designed to improve the working conditions and careers of researchers in Europe, to enhance mobility, but avoid brain drain and thus contribute to raise the number of qualified researchers working in the EU.*

*Representatives from trade unions for teachers and researchers in higher education and research, assembled in the EI Pan-European Standing Committee for Higher Education and Research in Brussels on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2005 strongly support the Researchers Charter. We welcome the positive outcome of the UK Presidency Conference in London, September 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> 2005. The main conclusions of this event were the need for a cultural change at research institutions in the interest of improving the status of the research profession and the attractiveness of the research profession at all stages of the career.*

*The Researchers Charter is an important step in the acknowledgement of researchers and the work they are doing towards the attainment of the Barcelona goals of investment of at least 3% of GNP in each member-state in research - of which 1% shall be invested by the public.*

*The debate about developing research in Europe has for too long only been focused on giving priority to research. The Charter is the first European attempt also to focus on the people who we represent and who have to be given attractive wage, working conditions and research careers to retain them in the profession and to attract other qualified persons into the research profession.*

*The unions recognize that the Charter is not a binding instrument like a Directive. It is therefore up to each European research institution - private or public - to decide whether or not it will respect the recommendations and principles of the Charter – or develop its own on the basis of these principles. We like the Charter to be the carrot it is meant to be, but we realise that if the implementation on a voluntarily basis fails, it will be necessary to introduce some sort of stick to make the principles of the Charter come into practice. One such stick could be to link funding of research from the EU research*

*programmes to the recognition and the implementation of the principles of the Charter at the institutions receiving funding from EU. National governments also have an important role in promoting the Charter and Code through their policies and funding regimes.*

*The assembled representatives from trade unions in higher education and research across Europe support the Charter and Code and will work hard to promote the principles in it at both European and national level in each of our countries. We will be active participants in the monitoring process of the implementation of the Charter.”*

### **1.5 Questionnaire on “New forms of recruitment and career developments : the impact of privatisation and casualisation on the functioning of institutions and career developments”**

A draft questionnaire prepared by the Secretariat was distributed and discussed. After introducing some changes the Committee decided that the questionnaire will be sent out by the end of November to the affiliates through the Network. Dominique Lassarre Professor at the University of Nimes and member of the HERSC will analyse the answers. The analysis will be presented at the next HERSC meeting in March 2006.

## **2. International context**

Monique Fouilhoux reported on different OECD initiatives pointing out the fact that Higher Education is on the top of the agenda of several intergovernmental agencies that now start to inform each other, or even to work more closely together.

- **The Guidelines for quality provision in Cross-border Higher Education** elaborated jointly by OECD and UNESCO in 2005, have now been adopted officially. The next step is to follow up on their dissemination and implementation across and within the UNESCO countries. It will be important for Academic staff unions to collect information and to participate in mechanisms to support an effective dialogue between countries and all stakeholders.
- **Thematic review on Tertiary education: Second workshop January 2006**

As of January 2006, 24 countries confirmed their participation in the analytical Review (Australia, Belgium (Flemish Community), Chile, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) and 13 of them in the country visit strand.

It was a good opportunity to follow up on the work carried out in the different countries and also on the various initiatives regarding Higher Education undertaken by the OECD as well as by the other international agencies. Five thematic sessions were organised with different presentations. EI was invited as such to make a

presentation on the outcomes of the EI Conference in Melbourne (7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December 2005). Monique Fouilhoux presented the results focusing on: conditions of employment and academic freedom, GATS and trade agreements, brain drain and the “security environment” (presentation available upon request).

The third workshop will be held in November 2006. The final Conference to be held in December 2007 to publicise the results from the project

In conclusion Monique Fouilhoux gave an update on GATS and the preparation of the next Hong Kong WTO Conference to be held in December 2005. EI organised a Conference last April in Paris at UNESCO Headquarters in particular to sensitize permanent delegations to the issue of the potential impact of GATS on education. She also indicated that following a resolution adopted in Porto Alegre a Task force on the impact of GATS and Trade on vocational education will be set up soon. EI will pursue its lobbying and will continue to inform its affiliates and to produce materials. (for more information, please see *Tradeducation news* n° 5 and 6).

### **3. Bologna follow-up process**

Paul Bennett, Chair of the Committee, emphasised at the outset that the entry of the EI Pan-European structure into the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) presented new demands and responsibilities for EI (Europe) and its member unions in higher education and research. He pointed out that members of HERSC would need to be more pro-active both in disseminating information arising from the national ministerial Follow-Up Group, developments within their own unions and in engaging relevant colleagues with knowledge and expertise in the work; and in systematically reporting back on key policy areas identified in the work of BFUG and on relevant national developments.

It was also pointed out that much important information appeared on the Bologna process website, and members were urged to check there regularly as well as to make more consistent use of the Electronic Network both for receipt of information and for posting information from one’s own union.

It was agreed that a small working group should be set up to carry forward the ‘Bologna’ work, including the representatives on BFUG and those who are or have been involved on in national level activities relating to ‘Bologna.’(see at the end). The group would have meetings linked where possible to other calendared events and possibly have a dedicated sub-conference on the electronic network. The possibility of an additional budget provision to support this work was noted and welcomed

Among the group's urgent tasks would be planning of an event, 'Making Bologna a reality', in the run-up to the London Inter-ministerial conference in 2007, on the basis of the questionnaire results. A high priority will need to be given to dissemination, completion and analysis of the EI questionnaire. While there were several views on timing, it was agreed that the best time might be early 2007, once the survey findings were known, but in time to have an influence on national delegations of the Ministerial conference in London, May 2007.

The Committee anticipated that a number of policy issues and demands for action by the member unions of HERSC would arise from the forthcoming BFUG meeting in Manchester on 12 / 13 October. These would be communicated as a matter of urgency to the members of HERSC. A key demand was that the national governments now recognise EI affiliated unions as partners in the process, nationally and at the institutional level, as much as EI's Pan-European structure is a partner at the European level; this should be reiterated in our introductory speech to BFUG.

Studying the Work Programme to be discussed by BFUG in October the HERSC priorities were identified as:

- Gaining membership of the Stocktaking and Communiqué drafting groups.
- Involvement in the 'Doctoral programmes' project
- Promotion of the Support for the ESIB request that the mobility issues and those relating to the social and economic situation of students in the third proposed working group, should be dealt with in two separate working groups and should include portability of social rights for staff as well. Recognition of the breadth of staffing issues (including teachers and researchers, for example) to be covered in the consideration of mobility questions
- Support for the ESIB demand that the issue of portability of student support arrangements is retained in the work programme.
- Involvement in BFUG work on 'the external dimension to Bologna', whether this appears as a working group or seminar in the final programme, bearing in mind EI's global reach and interests and risks connected to further globalisation/commercialisation of higher education.
- Comment if possible on the narrowness of the vision of higher education reflected in the first seminar's focus on preparing students for the labour market.'
- The EI representatives should seek clarification of the working method proposed for the National and Stocktaking Priorities. Within the National and Stocktaking Priorities list, we should prioritise the following issues:

- Removal of obstacles to access from one qualification cycle to the next (particularly Bachelor to Master);
- A supportive approach to ensuring of “necessary institutional autonomy”.
- A supportive but cautious approach to the ‘flexible learning paths’ issue.
- A cautious approach to the issue of “intensified co-operation with business

EI should also seek to put our own transversal issues onto the ‘Bologna’ implementation agenda wherever possible. These issues include support for the public sector ethos in higher education and research; the equality agenda; access; the status and career paths (wage and working conditions) of teachers and researchers in higher education as a requirement for keeping good quality; and academic freedom, governance and management.

Other issues for the EI representatives to note, or for EI to pursue, include the proposal that EI seek membership of ENQA; and the need to ensure that we take account of issues affecting teacher education as a key part of the higher education system in most European countries.

Other non-Bologna issues raised by ESIB where the possibility of joint action and mutual support existed, include the Bolkestein Directive – decisions in the European Parliament; and education issues at the GATS meeting in Hong Kong in December (It was noted that ESIB would be represented at the EI HER Conference in Melbourne).

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the HERSC will be organized in Sesimbra (Portugal) in March 2006

### List of participants:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Union</u></b>	<b><u>Country</u></b>
<b>Deckers Hugo</b>	ACOD	Belgium
<b>Van Renterghem Rudy</b>	COC	Belgium
<b>Vilim Ribic</b>	IURHEEC	Croatia
<b>Vraa-Jensen Jens</b>	DM	Denmark
<b>Matilainen Riku</b>	FUURT	Finland
<b>Arra Olavi</b>	OAJ	Finland
<b>Cohen Jean-Hervé</b>	SNES	France
<b>Brossard Luc</b>	SNCS-FSU	France

<b>Lassarre Dominique</b>	UNSA Education	France	
<b>Köhler Gerd</b>	GEW	Germany	
<b>O Coachlain Breandan</b>	IFUT	Ireland	
<b>Healy Paddy</b>	TUI	Ireland	
<b>Trapenciere Ilze</b>	LIZDA	Latvia	
<b>Auke van Nie</b>	AOB	Netherlands	
<b>Kjenndalen Kari</b>	NARW	Norway	
<b>Lem Sigrid</b>	NARW	Norway	
<b>Hauge Tove</b>	Utdanningsforbundet	Norway	
<b>Mosakowski Ryszard</b>	NSZZ "Solidarnosc"	Poland	
<b>Pereira dos Santos Manuel</b>	FENPROF	Portugal	
<b>Bobulescu Razvan</b>	ALMA MATER	Romania	
		Serbia	and
<b>Milivojcevic Miroljub</b>	TUS	Montenegro	
<b>Vladimir Kovar</b>	OZ PSaV	Slovakia	
<b>Stergar Janez</b>	ESTUS	Slovenia	
<b>Gonzalez Lopez Pedro</b>	FE.CC.OO	Spain	
<b>Ares Gomez Enrique</b>	FETE-UGT	Spain	
<b>Roger Angela</b>	AUT	UK	
<b>Everett Brian</b>	AUT	UK	
<b>Kline Roger</b>	NATFHE	UK	
<b>Bennett Paul Chair</b>	NATFHE	UK	
<b>Guests/Speakers</b>			
<b>Carselid Bo</b>	ETUI-REHS		
<b>Castaldo Laila</b>	ETUI-REHS		
<b>Le Douaron Jean Claude</b>	ETUI-REHS		
<b>Sigi Gruber</b>	EU DG Research		
	The National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB)		
<b>Michael Horig</b>	ESIB		
<b>Vanja Ivosevic</b>	Observatoire Social Européen		
<b>Philippe Pochet</b>	ETUI-REHS		
<b>Valeria Pulignano</b>	ETUI-REHS		
<b>Keith Sequeira</b>	EU DG Research		
<b>Friedrich Wittib</b>	EU DG Education		

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