



Pan EUROPEAN Structure

Higher Education and Research Standing Committee

Brussels, 11-12 October 2007
Report

Part one: Initial Matters

- 1.1 **Presentations:** The HERSC participants introduced themselves briefly.
- 1.2 **Report of the February meeting:** The report was accepted with some minor changes.
- 1.3 **Matters Arising:**
 - 1.3.a Structures:
 - Paul Bennett (UCU, UK) presented the ongoing review of the structure of EI and its cooperation with ETUCE. He outlined the reasons for why there is a need for a more elaborate structure; the importance and scope of the work in the higher education sector. To meet these challenges the work needs to be better structured.
 - Martin Romer (General Secretary, ETUCE) informed about the timeline for the work of the structure group.
 - The HERSC remarked that there will be a continuous need for a group like the HERSC and that the presence of such a group improves the work of EI in this area.
 - 1.3.b Annual Meeting of the Magna Charta:
 - Jens Vraa-Jensen (chair HERSC and DM, Denmark) informed about the annual meeting of the Magna Charta. The theme for the meeting had been academic malpractice; Jens noted how important it is that EI really starts to work focused on this issue.
 - Koen Geven, (chairperson, ESU) underlined that the students find this issue very important; ESU has started work in order to improve the situation.
 - Jens Vraa-Jensen and Koen Geven agreed on the importance for teachers and students to work together to solve problems of academic malpractice.
 - It was pointed out that the problem of corruption might be aggravated by low salaries and increased student fees.
 - Jens concluded that national seminars on the issue would be useful. He also pointed out the importance of reviving the question of research ethics.
 - 1.3.c Visit by Dirk van Damme (Chief of the Cabinet of the Flemish minister of Education)
 - Prof. van Damme informed about the functioning of the higher education system in Flanders especially pointing out the efforts undertaken by the ministry to increase participation and retention rates of students from low socio-economic backgrounds or minorities. A new system for funding of HE is under discussion in Flanders and this system should increase equal opportunities for access to HE.
Prof. van Damme also pointed out that Flanders does not believe that privatisation of higher education is needed in order to be competitive on the international level.
 - Monique Fouilhoux (EI Secretariat) informed that the next ministerial summit in the framework of the Bologna Process will be held in Leuven and hosted by the BENELUX countries. The Flemish ministry of education hosts the secretariat.
 - 1.3.d Future organisation and methods of work of HERSC and election of a Vice-chair/ Vice-chairs
 - The HERSC decided to elect two vice-chairs and to accept all nominated candidates as eligible for election. It was concluded that the length of the mandate will be the same as for other elected positions in EI, namely two, three or four years depending upon what the Pan-European structure decides at its meeting coming June.
 - The four candidates standing for election - Razvan Bobulescu (ALMA MATER, Romania), Miroljub Miliwocevic (TUS, Serbia), Ryzard Mosakowski (KSN Solidarnosc, Poland) and

Dominique Lassarre (UNSA Education, France) were given a few minutes to introduce themselves.

- Razvan Bobulescu (ALMA MATER, Romania) and Dominique Lassarre (UNSA Education, France) were elected as vice-chairs of the HERSC.

Part two: EU - Education and training 2010 – higher education and research

2.1 EU – Education and training 2010 – higher education and research

- Martin Romer and Annemarie Falktoft (ETUCE Prof. Assistant) informed about what is happening in the frame of the Education and training 2010 and other EU work. ETUCE distributed a note on the latest developments to the HERSC before the meeting. The details of the updates can be found there. Only topics that raised some discussion will be reported on here.

2.1.a Green paper on research

- ETUCE has submitted a statement on the Green paper on research based on previous discussions in the HERSC. In the statement ETUCE has highlighted the issue of mobility for researchers.
- Denis Jouan (SNCS, France) noted that it's important that the strive for mobility is not used to worsen employment conditions for researchers and teachers.

2.1.b Cluster on Modernising Higher Education

- Martin Romer pointed out that each country could send two representatives to the peer-learning activities; one of these two persons can be a trade unionist.
- The Portuguese Presidency is organising a conference on modernising the universities on the 29th of October

2.1.c European Institute of Technology

- Martin Romer reported that the EIT is in its closing stage; a final decision on it probably will be taken at the end of 2007.
- Jens Vraa-Jensen remarked that the autonomy of universities in the project seem to be very weak.
- Brian Everett (USU, UK) criticised that four representatives of staff and students in the board are too few; how is it going to be tested that EIT projects are not favoured over other projects in the 7th framework funding and he questioned the concept of “academic and business freedom”. He concluded that the EIT was violating almost all basic principles of a university in relation to collegiality, academic freedom etc. As constructed at present, it ~~is~~ should not be considered as having any function or added value within national or European higher education systems.

2.1.d European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- The EQF proposal will be voted on in the European Parliament in October or November 2007. Since the Parliament and the Council have been working closely together on the proposal ETUCE expects it to be adopted in the first reading before the end of the year.
- Ryzard Mosakowski (KSN Solidarnosc) raised the issue of comparability and differences between the EQF and the Qualifications framework adopted by the ministers in the Bologna Process.

2.1.e Charter on intellectual property rights

- ETUCE reported that they are expecting to be invited to a debate on this Charter before it is finalised. ETUCE believes that the Charter will be outlined the same way as “The European Charter for Researchers” worked out by the Commission; Member States will implement it voluntarily.
- Kari Kjenndalen (NAR, Norway) noted that the Charter is supposed to cover both research undertaken inside universities and in research institutes, but these two types of institutions often have very different traditions regarding property rights. She argued that it is important to clarify which tradition will be the dominating in the Charter.
- Participants noted that open access as well as the right for researchers to retain the property right over their research results is important.

2.1.f 2008 progress report on Education & training 2010

- ETUCE reported that the national reports are being analysed by the Commission; it seems as if half the countries are consulting the teacher organisations before submitting the reports to the Commission. National reports will be sent to the HERSC which will have to control what their country has reported. If there are imbalances HERSC should report to ETUCE so that they can report this to the Commission.

2.1.g Beyond Education & Training 2010

- It was noted that discussions about what will happen after 2010 are going on; ETUCE have planned to have breakout sessions on the topic of Beyond 2010 during their Council, 27-28 November 2007.

2.1.h Efficiency and equity Communication

- The Commission, as a consequence of the communication, is arguing that investment in the beginning of the education system gives more returns than investing at later stages of the system.
- Participants noted that this might very well be the case, but there is still a need to invest more in total. The HERSC noted that we have to be aware of this discussion as it might have very severe consequences.
- Koen Geven noted that this discussion is highly worrying. He pointed out that the equality perspective the Commission is taking is that pre- and primary education is going to define how successful the student can be later on in life. Koen argued that the Commission has made some fundamental mistakes in their analysis in the Communication.

2.1.i Communication on quality and teacher education

ETUCE wants to have views on this communication until the 15th of October. They are going to write a statement that will be sent before the next meeting of the ministers so that the ministers can have it on the table.

2.1.j ETUCE work on the social dialogue

- Since 2004 ETUCE has been working on this issue according to a plan adopted by the Committee Executive board. The aim is to create a formal setting for a sectoral dialogue; ETUCE has the support of the Commission and has noted that employers seem to be ready to join such a dialogue. [I do not know whether or not we should say something about our reservations towards a specific social dialog in HE???] At present there was little sign of activity or interest in the Higher Education and Research sector, not least because of the difficulty of constructing an employer side with whom to have a meaningful dialogue.
- Input from the HERSC is requested on this issue.

2.2 Information about Education & Training 2010 from ESU

- Koen Geven informed that students are recognised to some extent in the Modernisation agenda work. ESU is working on a project named “Students and Lisbon” in order to get students voices into the Lisbon agenda. ESU has invited EUA, EI, EURASHE and some other actors with the Commission to talk about what is happening in the Lisbon strategy.
- ESU is doing a survey called “Lisbon with student eyes”. In this survey ESU finds that the discourse for national HE policy has been fundamentally changed by the Lisbon strategy; the priorities in the Lisbon agenda have become the priority areas also in the national agendas.
- ESU is going to have three trainings and EI affiliates will be invited to participate in the trainings in December 2007 and February, April 2008.

Part three: Bologna Process follow-up

Bologna Process follow-up

3.1.a Mobility seminar

- Monique Fouilhoux presented the main outcomes of the Mobility Bologna Seminar EI and ESU organised in London in February 2007. HERSC was given a CD-ROM with the seminar documentation.

3.1.b Bologna Process work-programme 2007-2009

- Monique Fouilhoux gave a detailed overview of the work-programme that has been proposed to the Bologna Follow-up Group by the Bologna Secretariat. The work-programme is based on the London communiqué adopted by the ministers in London in May 2007: Documents can be downloaded from <http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/>
- She noted that EI cannot take part in all the actions in the work-programme; working groups on mobility, the global dimension, employability and data collection will be prioritised.
- Only the topics where any discussion has taken place will be reported on here.

3.1.c Mobility

- The mobility campaign that EI will carry out in cooperation with ESU was introduced. EI and ESU will get a grant from the European Commission to carry out this work. It is important to note that a lot of the work in the campaign will take place at the national level involving EI affiliates and ESU members. The Campaign will be launched during the Malaga conference in November.

3.1.d Employability

- It was noted that this is an area where progress has been very slow. EI will be represented by Brian Everett in the working group on this issue.
- Ryzard Mosakowski (KSN Solidarnosc) asked about the definition of employability used in the Bologna Process.
- Monique Fouilhoux reminded participants that a definition adopted by the ILO in 2004 is the one that EI is working with. The text is available at: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?R195>

3.1.e Qualifications framework

- It was noted by the HERSC that the ministers have adopted the QF worked out in the Bologna Process and that it is a bit inconvenient to have two frameworks in Europe. There will be implementation seminars organised over the two coming years.

3.1.f Lifelong learning

- Slovenia (EU Presidency for the first semester 2008) will organise a conference on the theme in March 2008. The issue of recognition of prior learning is dealt with under this topic and is an important issue for EI.

3.1.g Quality Assurance

- Colin Tück (Project manager responsible for the establishment of the European Register for Quality Assurance Agencies) informed the HERSC about the developments of the Register for Quality Assurance Agencies. The Register aims at listing Agencies that are complying with the European Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance in order to assure that only well functioning and quality agencies carry out work in the EHEA.
The Register will be based on two principles; it will be autonomous regarding which agencies will be allowed to be in the register and it will be based on stakeholder participation.
- EI will be allowed to nominate a representative for the Register Committee.
- The HERSC discussed what impact the Register can have on national accreditation rules. Colin Tück assured that the national level will keep its competence over regulating the accreditation rules in the respective countries.

3.1.h The European Higher Education Area in a global setting

- Monique Fouilhoux reported that there is a great interest outside of Europe for the process and many actors in Europe are also very interested in working in this area. She noted that the consultative members are left a bit outside of this work. The work undertaken is of concern to EI

affiliates outside of Europe. Monique will continue representing EI in this working group. The Chair of the WG has been invited to be part of the panel on the Bologna at the conference in Malaga.

3.1.i Data collection

- There is still a lack of data in the area of the Social dimension, Mobility and Employability. EI want to be represented in the working group.

3.1.j Beyond 2010

- It was reported that there is a need to reflect about the work done so far in the Bologna Process and that there is a need to reflect about how the process corresponds to our values regarding higher education.
- Monique Fouilhoux proposed that the HERSC should add another day or half day to one of the coming HERSC meetings in order to have time to reflect on this topic within the HERSC and in cooperation with ESU and EUA. The HERSC agreed on this proposal

3.2 Updates from the national level

- HERSC members updated each other on what is happening at the national level. It can be noted that the EI affiliates are involved in the work at the national level to varying degrees. It was agreed to monitor the development in this area and try to improve the situation for the EI affiliates. EI and its affiliates should strive for being represented in the National Bologna Follow-up groups.
- Andreas Keller (GEW, Germany) submitted a written note on the developments in his country; this could be a good procedure to follow by all members of the HERSC in the future. He raised the issue of the Bologna promoters, underlying that it would be necessary for each union to have at least a Bologna Promoter. It was decided that the Secretariat will investigate about the issue and a note will prepared and sent as soon as possible to HERSC members.
- Noticeable was that reform work is going on in most countries and that this creates both some positive and negative outcomes. The development of new funding systems, accreditation systems and changes in the representation of staff in the governing of higher education institutions needs to be followed carefully.
- Ryszard Mosakowski (KSN Solidarnosc) noted that the official Bologna website does not include links to the EI affiliates and that this needs to be pointed out to the secretariat.
- Denis Jouan (SNCS, France) would like to have an online one-page information paper about what is happening in the different countries.
- HERSC members are requested to prepare, as soon as possible, a short overview of the situation in their country concerning the implementation of the Bologna Process indicating what are the main challenges for them and whether or not they are members of national follow up groups.

Part four: other matters

4.1.b OECD

The last workshop of the OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education¹ took place in Paris in September. The main purpose of the workshop was to discuss the first draft of final synthesis Report from the Review.

- 24 countries are participating in this Review which objective is to provide a comparative analysis on a number of issues. Funding systems and related issues are an essential part of the report . This Report will be publicly released and discussed at an International Conference to be held in Portugal mid-April 2008.
- The HERSC members were asked to read their respective country reports and give feedback to the secretariat.
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¹ www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review

4.1.b PISA for higher education

- Monique Fouilhoux reported that there will be an informal Ministerial meeting in Japan in January with actors who are positive about the project and then the project most probably will be launched.
- She noted that some governments are not agreeing with PISA for higher education and that they might be opposing it. She indicated that the issue is on the agenda of the Malaga Conference next month and a text will be discussed.
- Jens Vraa-Jensen noted that this project runs the risk of leading to an OECD certified ranking of higher education institutions.
- Auke Van Nie (Aob, Netherlands) noted that this PISA exercise might lead to making study programmes throughout Europe uniform.

4.2 Council of Europe

- Monique Fouilhoux confirmed that following a request introduced last May, EI has now been granted a Consultative Status for the Committee on higher education of the Council of Europe (CDESR) and as such participated in the meeting held in September in Strasbourg. A report was posted on the network. In this way EI can strengthen its work in the Bologna Process and with the Council of Europe.
- The Council of Europe is launching a project called "Universities between Market and Humanism". We are invited to be participating in the launching conference of this project.

4.3 WTO/GATS

- It was noted that the general discussion on GATS is not proceeding very well. David Robinson, CAUT and EI Consultant, was in Geneva on the first week of October and participated in the Forum which takes place every year with NGOs. It was emphasised that EI would need to pay attention to the proliferation of bilateral trade agreements and their impact on higher education in particular. It was agreed that EI would need to pay more attention to the TRIPS agreement on intellectual property rights as well.

4.4 Malaga Higher Education Conference

- The conference will be held on 12-14th of November in Malaga. Update and last draft agenda were provided to HERSC members. All information can be found on the EI website.
- Paul Bennett (USU, UK) will be the general rapporteur; the report will include recommendations discussed by the conference; the recommendations will then be put forward to the Executive Board to be held in November .

4.5 Next meeting

- The next meeting will be in Croatia at the end of February.

Note: List of Participants: Attached

Liste of Participants

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