

commUNICAtion

Newsletter of the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe

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Report from the president

UNICA's First Seminar for Rectors, Presidents and Vice-Chancellors

Since its election in Athens in December 1996, UNICA's Steering Committee has undertaken the task of making a thorough reorganisation of the network. This "reengineering" process has taken two full years. Now the time has come to think about UNICA's future activities and to prepare the network for the 21st century. To this end, the Steering Committee, with full approval of the 1998 General Assembly held in Vienna, Austria, has decided to convene all Rectors, Presidents and Vice-Chancellors of member universities to participate in a seminar, to take place in Brussels on March 19-20, 1999. The goal of this seminar is to examine UNICA's strengths and weaknesses and to formulate a strategic plan of action for the years to come. The seminar will be interactive, allowing all participants to express their expectations and views for the future. Professor John Davies, a world renowned specialist in university management, will come from the Anglia Polytechnic University to moderate the working sessions.

Pierre Ducrey, President.

1998 General Assembly

On November 26-28 1998, the University of Vienna hosted the UNICA General Assembly. The meeting coincided with the conference "Education for Transition. One Europe - One World?" which added an international academic ambience to the General Assembly. One of the highlights of the gathering was the "Fest der Kulturen" on November 25th. International students from around the world organised a multicultural market, and generously shared their regional food and music with the participants of the conference and the UNICA General Assembly.

The Assembly itself took place in the impressive Senate hall of the University of Vienna. With the approval of the new statutes, UNICA was able to submit a request for legal status as an international non-profit organisation, according to Belgian law.

The occasion also marked the Network's farewell to its previous Secretary General,, Chantal Zoller. Chantal worked for UNICA since its early beginnings and played an important role particularly in maintaining the liaison between the European Commission and UNICA's member universities. The establishment of an

ERASMUS student exchange programme within UNICA, and the professional updating of international relations staff in higher education programmes are only two of the Network's major achievements during her term of office. As head of the office for International relations at the Universit, Libre de Bruxelles, Chantal will remain in close contact with UNICA.

Overlapping with the UNICA General Assembly "Education for Transition"

The conference " Education for transition. One Europe - One World?" on Preparation Programmes for International Students in Europe, took place from November 25-27 1998, in Vienna.

The conference was organised by the Vorstudienlehrgang der Wiener Universit,,ten and the TMsterreichischer Akademischer Austauschdienst/ Referat f?r Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. The conference attracted 140 participants from 18 European countries.

During the proceedings, discussions took place on how political changes in Europe have affected the field of education. Alongside these changes, international students have come to play an important role in the following areas:

- As bearers of educational change.
- As contributors to the process of internationalisation within European universities.
- As subjects of the concept of student mobility.
- As providing the momentum towards further development of the principles of intercultural educational studies.

At the sensitive interface between the secondary and tertiary sectors of the different educational systems, cultures and languages, international students needs suitable preparation to be able to meet their academic requirements. There are many types of student preparation programmes in Europe. Until this time, it has hardly been possible to cater to international contacts in the field of student preparation. However, with the increasing possibilities for exchanging experiences within Europe, this aspect is taking on a greater significance. Therefore, and following up on the conference "Education for Transition - Bridging Non-Western Schools and Western Higher Education" held in Amsterdam in 1995, the dialogue on European preparation programmes became one of the main issues at the Vienna conference in November. Several workshops and lectures dealt with professional, linguistic and intercultural issues of study preparation, focussing on their future requirements. The following aspects of student preparation facilities are evident:

Language: foreign language proficiency and academic success; the role of language tests; professional/academic ability.

Academics: University entrance to different educational systems; educational transfer and developmental co-operation.

Intercultural aspects: Intercultural awareness; intercultural competence; transcultural communication.

Members of UNICA were invited to join the last part of the conference programme, which offered a presentation of concluding statements, a keynote speech by Hans Barkowski (Jena), entitled "Student Mobility as a Challenge for Student Preparation Programmes" and a panel discussion "From the World to Europe - from Europe to the World?". Chaired by Georg Winckler (Vienna), panel members Jeanine Hermans (Secretary-General, UNICA), Vittoria Tessitore (Vice-Rector, Roma Tre), Werner V.,th (Vice-President, FU Berlin), and Hans de Wit (Vice-President, Amsterdam) discussed the role and the position of international students at European universities.

However different the role and the position or status of international students at the various European universities at present may be, one essential conclusion came out of the conference. As Hans-J?rgen Krumm (Vienna) put it:

"International students from all over the world are indispensable resource persons for the process of internationalisation at European universities. They personally contribute to the quality of diversity, and in doing so they are essentially important for academic interchange. Since they represent different languages, and cultural and scientific traditions, they are genuine partners in the international dialogue, and they might

provide authentic settings for learning how to deal with cultural diversity. Cultural awareness and the competence to communicate and work in multicultural contexts will become basic key qualifications in a globalised world. European universities need international students from all over the world in order to develop international and intercultural practices, and means of orientation for students and university teachers alike."

The conference proceedings will be published in April 1999 by the Austrian Foundation for Development Research (TMFSE). If you are interested in obtaining a copy, please contact the conference organisers.

Grete Kernegger / VWU, Gerhard Poppenwimmer /TMAD (Conference Committee)

Grundtvig Action

In Socrates II, the European Commission will initiate an action towards lifelong learning called "Grundtvig". Why the Commission named this action "Grundtvig", why does the Commission want to achieve with it, and how does the Commission intend to proceed?

Nikolai Fredrik Severin Grundtvig was a Danish philosopher, Bishop and poet living from 1783 to 1872. He played a major role in revitalising the Danish church and changing the Danish political system into a democratic constituency. In the late 1830s, Grundtvig wrote his educational programme, he stressed that education should be made available to the whole population and that it should be based on a dialogue between teachers and students. This philosophy inspired the founding of the first voluntary "folk" high schools.

The creation of the "folk" high schools has set the trend for the development of informal adult education outside the domain of formal university education. In the last decade, through a developing "Knowledge Society" as well as a trend, which sees a demand for further education even after entry into the labour market, the private sector has become attracted to investing in higher education in precisely this sphere of informal education. Through its "Grundtvig Action", the Commission intends to stimulate universities to include at least a certain extent of informal education within their educational programmes. According to the Commission, the universities must take part in training programmes, not only for educational, pedagogical and financial reasons, but also principally for quality assurance and accreditation. This will result in a clear positioning of the universities in relation to the private education market.

The basic objective of the "Grundtvig Action" is, from the perspective of life long learning, to encourage the acquisition of new knowledge through the development of more flexible and less formal educational methods. These are better suited to the specific needs of adults wishing to acquire or improve their knowledge, to begin or to resume their formal studies, as well as young people, who have stepped out of the school system with insufficient basic training. Community financial assistance would concentrate on the development of new educational approaches, in particular making use of multi-media, appropriate teaching materials, and accreditation or certification of acquired skills.

The DG XXII has put out a request to UNICA and the other institutional networks to help organise a seminar on the "Grundtvig Action". Using the various institutional networks enables the Commission to reach a wide number of universities at once, and to heighten their awareness on the role academics should play in this Action. A first meeting between the institutional networks and the DG XXII has been planned to take place in March. The action will be launched towards the end of 1999 or in 2000.

We thank Chantal Zoller, Université, Libre de Bruxelles, and Knud-Erik Sabroe, Aarhus University for providing the basic information.

International Relations meeting on May 6-8, hosted by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel

The International Relations meeting will consist of two days of discussion sessions. The actual programme and topics for discussion will be decided upon during a preparation meeting to be held on February 12th at the UNICA General Secretariat. However, a visit to the DG XXII of the European Commission is most likely

envisaged to take place on Friday, May 7th. Prof. G. Engwall, member of the Steering Committee will chair the meeting. The final programme and the registration form will be sent in due time prior to the actual meeting on Friday, May 7th, from 9am to 6pm, and on Saturday, May 8th, from 9am until 3pm. The venue for this meeting is the campus of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan, 2, B-1050 Brussels, Building M, room M 420.

Frank Gladines, Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Rights and conditions of Exchange Students in Europe

From March 10-15 1999, an [international student conference](#) in Aarhus, Denmark, is to be organised by the Erasmus Student Network International in co-operation with the ESIB, the National Union of Students in Europe, and AEGEE Europe, mainly supported by the European Commission (DG XXII). The main aim of this conference is to create a student declaration, which expresses their view on the rights of exchange students in Europe. It is believed that this conference will be an opportunity for some of the major European Student Organisations to discuss these issues and to collectively express their views to the decision-making bodies in Europe. Jeanine Hermans, UNICA's Secretary-General, has been invited to speak on the subject of "Reception and Integration of Exchange Students".

The invitation to this conference has created an excellent opportunity to follow up on the suggestion of the UNICA General Assembly in Vienna to enhance contact with students and student organisations and to investigate the possibility for student participation at the UNICA General Assembly in Stockholm, November 1999.

Take the opportunity: apply for the Administrators Mobility Programme 1999

At the General Assembly in Vienna, the introduction of an "Administrators Mobility Programme" was announced. Through this grant programme, UNICA wishes to encourage study visits of administrative staffs between member universities. These staff members will preferably be involved in international activities. The individual grants amount to 300 Euro.

The general aim of the study-visit programme is to enhance the participant's knowledge of the host institute, in particular of the education system. It will allow the participant to obtain an inside view of the functioning of a department similar to his/her own and consequently to improve his/her knowledge and skills through a comparative approach.

For more information, contact the UNICA General Secretariat, or have a look at the [web page related to this programme](#).

5th Conference of the League of World Universities

More than a dozen UNICA university Rectors, Vice-Chancellors or Presidents, as well as the UNICA's President participated in the 5th League of World Universities Conference, which took place in New York hosted by the New York University from the 11th to the 13th of February, 1999, under the presidency of prof. L. Jay Oliva, President of New York University. The topic of the conference was "Revenue diversification", and it focused on personal and corporate fundraising, corporate relationships, students fees and continuous education - life long learning as sources of income for the university. The participants, who included representatives from Asian, African, South American as well as European universities, studied the relations of the host university with its economic environment. They were addressed by presidents of some distinguished international, private and corporate Foundations, as well as specialists in the fields of student fees and continuous education.

Some UNICA participants expressed the wish that the network organises an exchange of information on the topic of revenue diversification, and in particular fundraising.

Freie Universität Berlin - 50th Anniversary

Freie Universität Berlin is now fifty years old. Founded by professors and students with massive support from the United States in 1948 at the time of the blockade of Western Sectors of Berlin, its anniversary celebrations have drawn to a successful end.

The special conditions surrounding the foundation of the Freie Universität Berlin have set the stage for the university's international orientation. In total, Freie Universität, now has over 80 formal foreign partnerships on the university level and hundreds of co-operative efforts between departments and institutes in SOCRATES-ERASMUS. Furthermore Freie Universität Berlin is a member in UNICA right from the beginning. All of the departments of Freie Universität took an active role in the celebrations, which includes public lectures and discussions, colloquia, symposia and the CRE-conference (25-30.8.98) On the occasion of the opening of the university's new "Italienzentrum" and the International Week (16-20.11.98) the famous author Umberto Eco was awarded an Honorary doctorate from Freie Universität Berlin. The International Week attracted participation from universities worldwide, including 12 UNICA member universities. The anniversary celebrations finally culminated in the festivities on "Ernst-Reuter-Tag" (December 4), commemorating the actual foundation day in 1948. A large number of rectors, presidents and other representatives from German and international universities attended this gathering, together with German and foreign politicians at the "Grundungsfestakt". The American ambassador also read personal words of congratulations for Freie Universität Berlin made by President Clinton. UNICA was represented by President Pierre Ducrey, who had been invited to speak on the future of universities in the 21st century. The official anniversary celebrations ended on the evening of December 4th with a ceremonial ball for all interested university members and guests.

Dr. Eva Lack, Freie Universität Berlin

News

- The University of Vienna has elected Professor George Winckler as its new Rector. Professor Winckler will enter office in August 1999.
- The European Association for International Education (EAIE) has elected its 1999 Executive Board. Three people from UNICA universities will participate in this Executive Board: Professor Carlos Seoane, Universidad Complutense de Madrid; Dr. Wedigo di Vivanco, Freie Universität Berlin and Antoinette Charon, Université de Lausanne.
- UNICA has not won the contract for the evaluation of the cooperation programmes between EC and the U.S. and Canada.
- UNICA has received a grant of the E.C. DGXXII under the SOCRATES complementary measures to update the UNICA Student Mobility Guide. During February and March 1999, Pedro Solera Garcia, graduate from the Universidad de Complutense de Madrid will work on this project at the General Secretariat in Brussels.

Membership 1999

- * [Université de Paris - Dauphine](#) (Paris IX) has announced its membership.
- * The Technische Universität Berlin cancelled its membership.