

commUNICAtion

Newsletter of the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe

N° 3 -

JUNE 1999

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Report from the President

UNICA's first semester 1999 was characterised by a very high level of activity. Convening at the Université Libre de Bruxelles from 19 through 21 March, the first meeting of UNICA Universities' Rectors and Presidents gave rise to animated discussions. A document formulating the strategic options of the network for the years to come was drafted and has, since, been widely circulated. Two colleagues from the USA, representing the LINKS Network, were present as observers at the Rectors' meeting. LINKS is an American Network similar to UNICA, active throughout the USA, and the contribution of their representatives during the Rectors' seminar offered some interesting perspectives for UNICA.

This year's spring meeting of the International Relations Officers also took place in Brussels, this time at the Vrije Universiteit. The working sessions concentrated on the topic of relations with the European Union, included a visit to the offices of the Directorate General XXII and a discussion with Mr. Michel Jouve from the Socrates French National Agency, and allowed the participants to hear responses to many questions and problems raised by the exchange programs.

The principal activities of the Steering Committee and of the Secretary General of UNICA during this period included: running the study visit programme of members of the administrative staff of UNICA; publication of the summer course programme and preparation of the seminar on Racism and Xenophobia; the publication of

the new "Mobility" brochure; and the preparation of the 1999 General Assembly (which will be held in Stockholm, from 25 through 27 November). Furthermore UNICA is strongly involved in the preparation of an EC conference on the role of the universities in view of the new generations of European Programmes SOCRATES II and LEONARDO II.

To conclude it should be noted that the election of a new Steering Committee and of a new President (for the term running from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2003) will take place on 26 November in Stockholm. Nominations for candidates can be addressed to the Secretary General from now until 20 September.

*Pierre Ducrey
President, UNICA*

The 1999 International Relations Meeting was very successful

On 7 and 8 May the fifth UNICA International Relations meeting took place, hosted by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. The meeting attracted 26 participants from 20 UNICA universities. 'We had a good time, and we had to work very hard'; '..I learned a lot..'; 'This was a very dynamic, inspiring meeting!' were just a few of the comments participants made afterwards.

We were welcomed by Professor Irina Veretennicoff, Vice-Rector for International Relations and Professor Paul De Knop, Chairman of the Commission for External Relations of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, in the very friendly, open kind of atmosphere typical of the Vrije Universiteit. Frank Gladines and Griet Wijns took excellent care of all the arrangements from the visit to the DG XXII, to the transport, hotel, and the restaurants.

The richly varied programme included an update on SOCRATES II and, in particular, the future role of the National Agencies; exchange of experiences among colleagues; discussions on projects such as a possible Thematic Network for international relations officers and professional academic involvement in internationalizing the university. The visit to the Directorate General XXII for Education Training and Youth was just one of the highlights of the programme and lasted almost two and a half-hours. The general discussion being particularly interesting and open helped contribute to the high quality of dialogue, which developed between the participants and the representative of the DG XXII, Mr. Willibrord Sluyters.

The [minutes of the meeting](#) are available through the UNICA web site. Seminar documentation on SOCRATES II can be requested at the General Secretariat.

Jeanine Hermans

Pedro Solera Garcia

Having just finished my university degree, I have had the opportunity to participate in the creation of the "Student Mobility Guide" allowing me to become more familiar with the working world with which I will have closer contact in the future. The welcome I received in UNICA was unbeatable and my stay in a new country was both of cultural and personal benefit to me. Finally, I want to emphasize how unforgettable this stay has been for me and to say that I hope that these opportunities will be developed further so that, in the future, more people will be able to benefit from them.

Administrators Mobility Programme: Silvia Matache from Bucharest University visits the University of Amsterdam

This May 1999, I had the pleasure of visiting the University of Amsterdam for one week, through the Administrators Exchange Programme initiated by UNICA. The prestigious European academic institution of the University of Amsterdam has been co-operating fruitfully with the University of Bucharest since 1990.

The bilateral agreement signed by our universities created the possibility for student exchanges, particularly in the fields of literature, languages, and mathematics, as well as in social or humanist studies. Another important consequence of our Agreement is the study of Romanian and Dutch languages, two lectorates functioning in both universities, and the periodic organisation of bilateral colloquiums or symposiums. Our relations have been developed and diversified through our joint participation in the European Programmes TEMPUS and SOCRATES.

All these aspects were included in the recent discussions which took place in the Foreign Relations Office of the University of Amsterdam, with Dr. Peter BLOK, director of the Office, Ms. Noortje GERRITSEN, Manager of the Central and East European Desk, and with Mrs. Hilly GOEDHART, responsible for the ERASMUS Programme. I, personally, found the contact with a partner university, the discussions and the exchange of experience and views, all extremely useful and interesting, especially because they took place in a friendly and open atmosphere. We attempted to evaluate frankly both the successful achievements and the shortcomings of our relations as well as the possibility for future broader co-operation on a topic of specific and mutual interest to our professors, researchers and students.

The information I received on the University of Amsterdam and on the activities and the organisation of the office of foreign relations will help me in my work, as I am responsible for international co-operation and programs at the University of Bucharest. It will also help me to contribute and support, as far as I am able, the efforts of my university to develop its European strategy. During my visit, I got a glimpse of student life and conditions of study as well as being able to observe the organisation of the Centre for Information and Documentation of the University of Amsterdam.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my colleagues of the University of Amsterdam, and to the senior executives of UNICA, for this possibility I was given to visit the University of Amsterdam. My visit has been both useful and pleasant, giving me the opportunity to get to know the real life and beauty of such an extraordinary town as Amsterdam.

*Silvia Matache
International Office, University of Bucharest*

Thematic Network Project in the field of Languages

As a direct outcome of the work undertaken by the SIGMA Scientific Committee on Languages, a Thematic Network Project in the field of Languages was accepted for funding by the European Commission (DG XXII) starting September 1996. In a certain sense, UNICA was the cradle in which this Thematic Network Project was born and the project led to the foundation of the European Language Council. The decision to create a

permanent forum in the field of languages was a direct outcome of the June 1995 Stockholm Evaluation Conference, which was jointly organized by the SIGMA Scientific Committee on Languages and the European Commission. Further information on the European Council for Languages (<http://www.fu-berlin.de/elc/index.htm>) can be found at the mentioned web site address.

During the first three years, the thematic network concentrated on academic matters. Academic representatives of UNICA universities were and are active in the Scientific Committee of the Thematic Network and its various project groups. The fourth year will focus on dissemination of the results and the UNICA General Secretariat will be directly involved in this work.

LINKS Conference & Network

The LINKS Conference and Network was created in 1993 by Donald R. Gerth, President of California State University, Sacramento, as a national conference to explore the increasingly important public service partnerships between state governments and state universities located in state capitals. President Gerth argued that a well-travelled bridge between public universities and state governments can extend and enrich the education, research and service missions of public higher education, while providing critically needed scholarly, technical, training and other applied resources to state government. The first LINKS Conference attracted 150 participants representing 31 states, 71 universities and 87 centres, institutes and programs.

Since 1993, LINKS has evolved into a loosely structured network of universities, scholars, state government officials and practitioners who share an interest in forging strong connections between public universities located in state capitals and state governments. Each year, the LINKS network comes together at a national conference to explore and share state government and public university collaborations with the goal of increasing both the quality and quantity of such linkages. The ongoing interest in the annual LINKS Conference and the growing participation of elected officials, agency officials, researchers and scholars, and directors of university-based centers, institutes and programs, has strengthened the belief that state governments and public universities alike expect public universities to do a better job in serving the public interest and providing direct service to their states and communities.

The inaugural conference was followed by conferences hosted by the University of Georgia (1994), the University of Colorado (1995), Michigan State University (1996), University of Illinois at Springfield (1997), and the University of Massachusetts at Boston (1998). The 1999 conference was again hosted by California State University Sacramento while the 8th annual LINKS conference will be held at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, April 13-15, 2000.

A National Program Committee governs LINKS. The committee is chaired by the host university of the current year's conference and is comprised of representatives of the host universities of the three preceding LINKS Conferences and the host university of the next year's conference. In addition to organizing that year's conference, the host university also has the responsibility of maintaining LINKS records and files, organizing meetings of the National Program Committee, and soliciting proposals for hosting future LINKS conferences. The National Program Committee meets at the annual LINKS conference, held in April or May, and again at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.

LINKS is financed through the annual conference. The host university undertakes to finance the conference through registration fees, contributions by private donors (e.g., corporations) and direct subsidies from the

host university. The latter typically includes assigning professional and support staff to the task of organizing the conference.

This informal organization structure has, to date, proved satisfactory. It provides the necessary administrative support and continuity without over burdening any one university. If LINKS were to undertake projects other than the annual conference, it would have to seriously consider creating, and financing, a permanent secretariat.

The LINKS conferences over the past seven years have varied in focus and format. Several standard themes, however, have emerged. These include:

The Nature of University - State Government Relations: What is the nature of the relationship between state supported universities and state governments? The legal status of state universities differs significantly but regardless, certain basic questions remain. What if any are the obligations of a tax supported institution to the people and government that support it? How can universities support state governments without compromising their academic independence and objectivity? What criteria should be used to determine what is and what is not appropriate support?

The Mechanics of University - State Government Relations: What are the obstacles, challenges and opportunities of working with state governments? How can the resources of the university, especially its public policy research capacity, be best brought to serve policy makers in state government? How can the language, cultural and structural differences between faculty and government policy makers be bridged to the benefit of both? What are models of successful, and not so successful, partnerships?

Specific Project and Policy Issues: LINKS conferences typically include panels on specific contemporary public policy issues. Recent conferences have; for example, featured panels on how universities could assist state governments in implementing federally mandated reforms of the social welfare. Similarly, nearly all LINKS universities have internship programs that place students in state government offices. The annual meeting provides opportunities to discuss problems and solutions regarding recruitment, selection, placements and supervision.

This year's LINKS Conference added a new theme of civic education. For the past thirty years, the United States has experienced a continuing and serious decline in citizen participation, interest, and confidence in government and politics. The conference, consequently, included a number of panels and sessions devoted to how universities can help foster the values and interest necessary for a representative democracy to prosper.

LINKS continues to grow because its participants realize that the relationship between a state university and a state government can be of significant mutual benefit. Close, co-operative relationships can provide students with unique learning opportunities through internships and research projects. Faculties throughout the university can find an interested audience for their research while gaining new research ideas and support from the needs of state government. The university as a whole can benefit when state policy makers view the university as an interested and willing rather than an isolated and disdainful partner. Policy makers in the state legislature and executive branches can benefit from the independent and objective research and data universities can produce. State governments can also benefit from using university resources rather than duplicating those research resources in the government.

There will always be tensions between governments and universities, between politicians and scholars,

bureaucrats and students. But those tensions do not obviate the opportunities for constructive and positive co-operation and linkages. And that is the raison d'être of LINKS.

*Timothy A. Hodson
California State University Sacramento*

UNICA Elections

On 23 March 1999 an official letter was sent to all member universities inviting them to put forward candidates for the UNICA Presidency and for membership of the Steering Committee. Each university may propose a maximum of one person for the Presidency and a maximum of two persons for membership of the Steering Committee, all candidacies being drawn from another institution. The elected officials are expected to attend the meetings of the Steering Committee in person and would be acting in their personal capacity. Proposals must reach the Secretariat General of the Association before or, at the very latest, on 20 September 1999. One of the aims will be to balance the composition of the Steering Committee, as far as possible, between the different geographical regions of Europe.

Professor Pierre Ducrey has informed the Steering Committee that he does not intend to run for a second term as UNICA president. There will, also, be three vacancies for membership of the UNICA Steering Committee as Professors Johann Gerlach, Dino Guerritore and Hans de Wit are not available for re-election. Both Professor Marie-Christine Adam and Professor Gunnel Engwall have accepted to run for a second term as members of the UNICA Steering Committee.

The General Secretariat was pleased to receive a number of questions related to the elections. For your convenience, the statutes and the internal [rules and regulations related to the procedures for the elections](#) are published on the UNICA web site. Please note that, at present, UNICA has no expense arrangements in the annual budget for the members of the Steering Committee nor for the President.

During the Rectors Seminar held on 20-21 March in Brussels it was recommended that each of the 5 members of the Steering Committee should 'adopt' a few member universities and be responsible for communicating with them.

UNICA Rectors meet during CRE bi-annual conference in May 1999.

During the CRE Bi-Annual Conference in Bordeaux, an informal meeting was held with the representatives of UNICA present, as has been done on several previous occasions. The topics discussed during this meeting concerned the Network's current goals, problems and questions. The discussion centred particularly on the UNICA work programme 1999-2002, which was developed during the Rectors' Seminar in March.

Rights and conditions for exchange students in Europe

In March 1999 a conference took place, organised by [AEGEE](#), [ESIB](#) and [ESN](#) * and primarily sponsored by the European Commission.

It was good to see so many students active at an international level. To observe how students develop their potential – in the classroom, of course, but also more especially through this kind of extracurricular activity,

was most stimulating. The three international student organisations had joined forces to organise a conference that was, at the same time, interesting and very dynamic. The programme consisted of such topics as «Co-operation between universities in Europe», «Needs and Expectations of Exchange students», «Obstacles to Mobility and Diploma Recognition», «Reception and Integration of Exchange Students» and «Internationalisation of Higher Education». The discussions varied from high level democratic rights of students and concern about equal access to Higher Education for all the citizens of Europe to the practical obstacles to mobility such as visa requirements and inadequate funding levels.

A panel discussion on « Student Voices» was particularly interesting. It became clear during the discussion about a political statement to promote a 'European Convention on Student Rights', that the needs of students vary throughout the different countries, depending on the development of the Higher Education system and the specific facilities available in each country. The united voices of the student organisations intends to echo that diversity. The attending student organisations expressed a clear point of view on the role of higher education, emphasising the social obligation of universities to 'educate' people in the sense of the German concept 'Bildung'. Universities should not develop into 'degree factories' but, rather, educate students to become responsible citizens. The student organisers themselves felt a responsibility towards this demand. 'Democracy is not given away for free', as one of them commented. The students envisage a strategy of co-operation with official international organisations, such as the European Commission, UNESCO and, of course, with the universities.

The contact between UNICA and the student organisations will be further intensified.

** AEGEE was created in 1985 to defend the principles of democracy, tolerance, transparency and efficiency and works in three domains; European Education, EU enlargement and European Citizenship. AEGEE is present in 42 countries representing 20.000 members. AEGEE does not operate on a national level but brings together 276 local antennae. ESIB International (1982) assembles 35 National Student Unions, from 29 countries, representing 6 million members. ESIB promotes the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students on a European level. Created in 1990 ESN, the ERASMUS Student Network consists of more than 90 sections in 17 European countries. ESN aims at improving the social integration of foreign students in the host institution, at providing more adequate information concerning exchange programmes, and by utilising the different experiences of exchange students, thereby make a permanent contribution to the evaluation of the European exchange programmes.*

News

- Vice-Rector of the University of Athens, Professor Ioannis Drakopoulos passed away on 29 April 1999. Professor George Philokyrou was elected to the post of Vice-Rector until 31 August 2000.
- Professor Christopher Llewellyn Smith has been newly appointed as Provost of University College London.
- Professor Nikolas Papamichael has been elected as new Rector of the University of Cyprus.
- The University of Warsaw has elected Professor Piotr Weglenski as its new Rector. Professor Weglenski was elected on April 12 1999. Dr hab. Włodzimierz Borodziej is the new Vice-Rector in charge of international relations. The new term starts on 1 September 1999.
- On 2 June, the Freie Universität Berlin elected Professor Peter Gaegtens as its new Rector.
- The University of Lausanne has elected Professor Jean-Marc Rapp as its new Rector. He will enter office on 1 September 1999.
- Professor Hugh Gough has been appointed as Dean of International Affairs at the University College

Dublin.

- Professor Dr. Arthur Mettinger has been appointed as UNICA Institutional Co-ordinator at the University of Vienna since Professor Georg Winckler will be taking the position of Rector.
- Professor Rafael Puyol has been reelected as Rector of Universidad Complutense Madrid for the next four years. Rafael Puyol, a professor of Human Geography, has been Rector of Universidad Complutense since 1995.
- On 8 April the Secretary-General of UNICA met with Mr. Francis Deleau, Permanent Delegate and member of the Standing Committee of the Union des Capitales de l'Union Européenne.
- Further information as well as the programme of the [UNICA seminar on Racism and Xenophobia](#) has been published on the UNICA web site.
- The two-day conference on «The new role of universities in education and training in view of the new generation of European Community programs SOCRATES II (Grundtvig) and LEONARDO II» will probably take place in the third week of January 2000. Admission to the conference will be on invitation only. It is expected that the European Commission will invite four to five participants per Institutional Network. More information will be provided as soon as possible.
- The Student Mobility Guide «[A Key to UNICA Universities 1999 –2001](#)» has been published in a hard cover version and on the UNICA web site.
- UNICA's new bank details :
UNICA a.i.b.s.l.,
bank account number: 210-0416759-02
at the Generale de Banque, 16 Avenue du Pesage - B-1050 Brussels - Belgium.
- The UNICA National Number is 465-298-508.

If you wish to contribute to the next issue of '*commUNICAtion*', please send your article before 20 September 1999 to the [General Secretariat in Brussels](#).

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