

## > *The importance of university networks in the development of European higher education*



> *Jan Figel, Commissioner for Education, Culture and Multilingualism*

A key feature of higher education in Europe, when compared with other continents, is the intensity of networking between universities. As a result of nearly 20 years of cooperation, and exchanges across Europe, which would not have been possible without strong networks and consortia underpinning them, European universities have built up a unique experience of multilateral collaboration which is a key asset for their future. University networks are the bridges and guarantors of diversity in the Europe of knowledge and in this era of globalisation.

It is nearly impossible to draw up an inventory of university networks in Europe. All have their importance, whether they link whole institutions of a particular type (we have networks of new, old, specialised, innovative, etc. universities), faculties or departments in a specific discipline, international officers, financial agents or librarians, or teachers/researchers sharing a common interest or task (such as revising curricula in light of the Bologna process, offering a joint degree programme, carrying out a common research activity or developing ties with universities on another continent).

In this dense fabric of networks, UNICA has a special role to play, as the main link between the universities of capital cities of European countries. Capital cities often are the mirror of the culture and identity of their country and tend to be particularly accessible and appealing to visitors from other countries, be they tourists, students/graduates, companies or universities. UNICA's membership and activities have grown in parallel with the integration of the Europe of universities, building on the inter-university cooperation promoted by the ERASMUS programme and encompassing exchanges between partner universities in Europe as well as cooperation and mobility schemes with a worldwide dimension. I would therefore like to wish UNICA every success on the occasion of its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## ↘ **A new board for the EUA**

**Georg Winckler**, Rector of the University of Vienna was elected President of the EUA - European University Association - at the 3<sup>rd</sup> EUA Convention in Glasgow from 31 March to 2 April 2005. **Pierre de Maret**, Rector of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, **Peter Gaehtgens**, former Rector of the Freie Universität Berlin, and **Jean-Marc Rapp**, Rector of the University of Lausanne, were elected to the EUA Board.

## > **Message from the President**

*15 years of UNICA:  
historical and developmental perspectives*



*At this year's General Assembly in Rome fifteen years of UNICA history will be looked at from a variety of perspectives: rectors, IROs and students from UNICA universities will sketch what they see as the network's achievements, while views from 'outside' the network will be presented as well. In the following lines I will try to step back myself and will try to point out some features of UNICA making it unique*

*within the circle of European university networks; at the same time, I will try to sketch developmental lines for what I think might be a possible future of UNICA:*

*First, UNICA is composed of universities with comparable institutional profiles, which has so far made the integration of new members into the network relatively easy. Despite different national legal frameworks within which UNICA universities operate there is a clear strategic focus of all institutions on being/becoming a European (if not international) university; moreover, issues of institutional profiling, strategic planning, and optimal governance structures might deserve more attention within UNICA in the future.*

*Second, the degree to which UNICA membership is 'felt' within UNICA universities has increased significantly during the past few years. This is, I think, mainly due to the importance that has been given to all issues around the Bologna process, and the UNICA Bologna Laboratory has widened the scope of colleagues collaborating via UNICA. In the area of future curriculum development UNICA might wish to concentrate on developing "mobility windows" in Bachelor programs, on planning and implementing Joint Master and Joint PhD programs, and on taking up the issue of European and national qualification frameworks.*

*Third, during the past fifteen years a great deal of knowledge of and trust into each other has been built up among UNICA members - this trust should be used in order to strengthen the cooperation within the network so as to form consortia with regard to tapping European sources for the funding of joint research projects. If we follow this avenue this will mean a partial redefinition of the role of IROs (from managers of mobility to managers of a wider scope of activities) and maybe a change in the setup of the UNICA Secretariat. Moreover, this mutual trust should result in an improved recognition of student qualifications among UNICA universities in such a way that vertical mobility within UNICA becomes the rule rather than the exception.*

*Finally, let me stress that the success of UNICA mainly depends on the amount of input that member universities are willing to give. I am convinced that this input will increase and that UNICA therefore may look into a bright future.*

■ Arthur Mettinger  
Vice-Rector, Universität Wien & President of UNICA

# THE UNICA BOLOGNA LABORATORY FROM IDEA TO REALITY

In 2003 the UNICA Bologna Lab was established to optimise the enormous potential created by the confluence of Europe's leading capital universities.

An integral part of Arthur Mettinger's presidential campaign, the Bologna Laboratory was conceived as an academic playground of ideas. Its task was to create concepts to foster one of the key goals of the presidency: the development of joint educational programmes. In the two years since its creation, the Bologna Laboratory has expanded its focus and issues such as ECTS, or Learning Outcomes have been addressed within the framework of cooperation. Due to the energy and dedication of Vienna University's Kathrin Kordon and Roland Steinacher, who managed to quickly turn the idea into a functional platform, the Bologna Lab acquired its current form.

From the very outset the Laboratory has been conceptualised as both a virtual and face-to-face forum to facilitate and encourage the combination of individual strengths of its members. This was done primarily with regard to curriculum planning and the creation of specifically labelled UNICA joint degrees. The overarching idea of a UNICA Joint Degree as a trademark representing academic excellence, international cooperation, quality assurance and innovative curriculum design still drives the efforts of the Bologna Laboratory. Such ambitions called for the implementation of accompanying and enhancing measures and crucially rely on a clearly defined and positive working context. The installation of the Bologna Lab might thus be seen as a step in this direction: stimulating and monitoring exchange between the diverse UNICA institutions.

The UNICA Bologna Laboratory operates on two levels. It aims at combining the strengths of a moderated web platform with the irreplaceable benefits of face-to-face interaction, traditionally organised as a biannual Coordinators Meeting.



In a first step these Bologna Lab Coordinators were nominated by each UNICA institution so that the Lab's operative reach embraced the entire network. Next, the status quo with regard to Bologna implementation was established across the network and specialised Task Forces were implemented to specifically target relevant issues. Two of these smaller and more mobile groups, the Task Forces *Project Management* and *Criteria*, for example, have been enormously productive in outlining cornerstones and organisational approaches on the road to developing joint master programs.

The *Second UNICA Bologna Lab Coordinators Meeting*, held in Vienna in December 2004, drew on these preparatory efforts and launched the ambitious idea of an *UNICA Manual on Joint Degrees* which should serve as an encompassing pool of information for those interested in setting up a UNICA Joint Degree.

Committed to the idea that the network can profit from the pooling of the respective experiences and best practices, it is currently the Bologna Lab's task to filter the material provided and eventually present it in a user-friendly form. The meeting in Vienna also introduced David Baldinger as Kathrin Kordon's successor in the role of the Lab moderator.

In the past two years the Coordinators have met three times: twice at the University of Vienna, and once at Madrid's Complutense University. With their interactive and work-intensive format, these Coordinators Meetings

continually energise the network: they traditionally launch a variety of new ideas in discussions and debates and thus create a tangible momentum. Part of the Bologna Lab's task could therefore be defined as "management and maintenance" of this momentum.

Currently, and in sync, with the Bologna Process at large, the Bologna Laboratory is engaged in stock-taking. While new initiatives, such as a first questionnaire on the UNICA-wide situation with respect to National Qualifications Frameworks are up and running, it is also a time for reflection.

As a first result the Bologna Lab homepage (<http://www.univie.ac.at/bologna-lab>) will be reorganised, with its intranet section being replaced by the new Bologna Lab Newsletter.

With issues such as closer cooperation in Joint Degrees, the integration of Doctoral Programs, the reverberations of Qualifications Frameworks or potential recognition mechanisms between UNICA institutions already on the agenda, the Bologna Lab continues to strive to be an up-to-date service platform for its member institutions.

True to its laboratory character, the Lab will go on to test and promote new ideas, monitor current trends and act as a communication platform in the interest of the UNICA network.

■ **David Baldinger**  
*Bologna Laboratory coordinator*  
*Universität Wien*

## UNICA FOUNDERS REMEMBER BEGINNINGS



Four of UNICA's founding members- Mr. George Verhaegen, the first president of UNICA and former Rector of ULB; Mr. Pierre de Maret, the Rector of ULB, Mr. Claude Truffin, Director of Research, ULB; and Mme. Chantal Zoller, International Relations

Officer, ULB- met on August 22 at a dinner at the University Foundation in Brussels. Here are some highlights of a very lively discussion.

"In 1988," said Truffin, "we realized the tremendous importance of common European research programs. Erasmus was the catalyst, although other exchange programs existed at the time. Nevertheless the Erasmus program marked the first steps towards a structured mobility among universities." At the time, the European Union did not yet have as many formal relationship structures between countries and institutions as it does today. "What's more, most universities didn't have International Relations Offices, and they certainly did not have the money needed to sustain them," said Truffin. "In fact, at that time you have to realize that the Internet was in its infancy, and there were certainly no mobile phones like today unless you wanted to carry around a heavy apparatus about the size of a small suitcase-not very mobile". "Why there weren't even any "Post-Its" then! About the only thing computers were used for was to write letters." Added Pierre de Maret.

"As far as I can remember," said de Maret, "the first time the idea of UNICA came to me was in 1989. At the time I was the Counselor for Research and International Relations at ULB, and I was on a mission for the European Commission to assess the integration of Portuguese universities in the context of the Erasmus

program. On the flight back, I remember thinking that it would be very useful and very beneficial to create a network between the universities of the capital cities of Europe."

Verhaegen continued, "We mustn't forget that towards the end of the 80s, we felt the need to contribute to the integration of European projects and European identity by creating a network of universities in the European capitals. I would like to stress that for the first two years, we kept this project at arm's length."

"Allow me to give my input as a historian," said Zoller. "I did some research and came across the document dated 1988 in which you reached the conclusion, my dear Pierre, that-and I quote-'we have to increase the European identity of our university, highlight the Institute of European Studies, and enhance our relationships with other universities with which we share common values-and why not?-located in European capitals."

Thus, the first steps towards the creation of UNICA were improvised, and so was the first list of potential members. At a EUA (European University Association, formerly CREE) meeting towards the end of 1989, Rector Verhaegen began recruiting in earnest and together with Mrs. Zoller and Prof. Truffin personally contacted many other rectors around Europe.

Amazingly, everything was finalized within two months, and the first

meeting of UNICA was held on January 25, 1990. From that time on, the major research aims were clearly defined-in particular, the unique problems of universities situated in capital cities and now commonly known as *Urban Studies*.

The first years were characterized by pragmatism versus political expertise-notably the political expertise required in the context of the European Commission. The initial focus was on consolidation through the Rectors' Conference, as well as the recruitment of International Relations Officers. In addition to the need to concentrate on students' needs, administrative staff mobility became necessary as well. Later UNICA embraced the need for research on the influence of universities on European educational policies, with emphasis on bottom-up action in the academic field.

The group agreed that goals for the future are to promote the basic values of UNICA, which rely on strong participation among the different players and in forging and reinforcing sustainable relationships. "Our aim is not necessarily to grow in number, but to grow in quality," said Verhaegen. "After all, small is beautiful." ■

# HOLDING THE UNICA CHAIR IN LAUSANNE

City of Lausanne, UNICA Chair 2005 was given to the faculty of "Social and Political Sciences." Professor Kris DESCHOUWER (Vrij Universiteit Brussel) lectured on "Con-sociational aspects of the European political system" and Professor Paul MAGNETTE (Université Libre de Bruxelles) gave a class on "Institutional aspects of the European union."

"I was invited by the Faculty of Social Sciences (Department of Political Science) to hold the UNICA chair during the Winter Semester of 2004. I stayed in Lausanne from October 2004 to February 2005. The topic of my lectures was "Les aspects con-sociatifs de l'Union Européenne" (The con-sociational aspects of the European Union). In these lectures I combined two goals: explaining the European Union to students

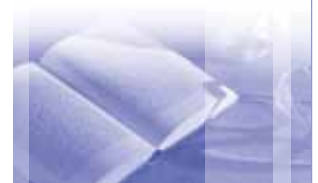
who are - since Switzerland is not a member state - not very familiar with the institutions. The second goal was to show that one can analyse and understand the EU by comparing it to existing (national) political systems. I also gave one special lecture and one staff seminar on "Political parties as multilevel organisations". And I was invited by the Belgian Consul in Genève to give a talk to the Belgian community there.

I truly enjoyed doing this. Teaching at another university, in another language (I am more used to Dutch and English) and with other students, is always an enriching experience."

■ **Kris Deschouwer**  
*Vrij Universiteit Brussel*

## BEYOND THE LIBRARY WALLS

In 2002 and in 2004 two successful UNICA library seminars were organised, respectively in Madrid and in Vienna. Since then, it has become a biennial UNICA event, and the next seminar will take place in Helsinki, on 18-19 May 2006. You can be sure I will be there!



### *Why are the library seminars so attractive?*

Their purpose is to raise awareness on library-related issues in the UNICA network, such as access to scientific journals, scholarly communication, information literacy, information search skills... They provide a think tank on the evolution of the role of libraries in the universities, and more globally in the research community, in the educational process and academic programmes, and in the changing technological environment.

As they bring together head librarians and academic decision makers of the UNICA universities, the seminars allow important issues to be raised beyond the library walls and allow all the parties concerned to be involved in the discussion.

Thanks to the topics, their size and the European scope, the UNICA seminars are complementary to existing national, European and international conferences of library associations. They bring a cross-European perspective and gather university cross-departmental participants, while remaining a reasonable size to manage fruitful discussions (around 40 participants).

**A balanced programme** The seminars typically consist of conference sessions followed by discussions. The two previous

library seminars focused on the future of scholarly communication. Prestigious speakers were invited such as Sir Brian Follett, who insisted on the provision of a national research infrastructure as a key element for the scientific information dissemination and for advances in research; Georg Winckler, Rector of the University of Vienna, underlined the impact of publications on the career of individuals, on the development of scientific field research, and on the distribution of funding; and Sijbolt Noorda, President of the University of Amsterdam, addressed copyright issues and advocated balanced rights to be allotted to all stakeholders in the scholarly communication process in order to maximise access on an international basis and at a fair price.

Following the thought-provoking presentations, participants discuss in working groups and can share experiences, examples of best practice, raise questions and contribute ideas on the topics addressed by the speakers. Such a programme structure is very successful and definitely meets the participants' expectations.

At the end of the seminar, the participants are invited to issue conclusions and recommendations<sup>1</sup> that are disseminated by the UNICA network organisation towards the academic authorities of the UNICA univer-

sities and towards the European Union Commission<sup>2</sup>.

This is essential and a major output of the seminar in order to raise awareness, outside the library world, about the issues at stake regarding the future of scholarly communication.

**Social gathering** Besides the attractive conference programmes and fruitful discussions, the social activities clearly contribute to consolidating the UNICA librarians' network. The hosting universities' hospitality, the visits organised in the city, the conference dinner and gatherings in the evening have built up friendly relationships among participants who will remain privileged professional partners across the network.

Hope you will join us in Helsinki next year.

<http://www.ulb.ac.be/unica/agenda.html#libsem2006>

■ **Françoise Vandooren**  
*Libraries Head Office*  
*Université Libre de Bruxelles*

1:: Conclusions and recommendations of the previous UNICA library seminars are available at [www.ulb.ac.be/unica/sem-scholar.html](http://www.ulb.ac.be/unica/sem-scholar.html)

2:: Note that EU DG Research has since launched a study on the economic and technical evolution of the scientific publication markets in Europe. Results are expected for Winter 2005.

The UNICA universities are firmly committed to non-discriminatory practices and the principle of equal opportunities for all. As basic as these assumptions may be to most people, it is still of great importance that they are made very explicit and put down in writing to underline their unalienable nature.



**“Universities by their very nature should be the embodiment of such universal values...”**

**For precisely this reason, five years ago - at the occasion of the network's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary - all UNICA members signed up to the Mission Statement on Equal Opportunities. Even though meanwhile European legislation (article 13 of the European Treaty) has come into existence that very explicitly prohibits discrimination, it remains very relevant that universities keep demonstrating their explicit commitment. Universities by their very nature should be the embodiment of such universal values and be unmoved by political winds. But there are also more mundane reasons why they should do so.**

One of the main characteristics capital cities in Europe, and elsewhere, have in common is that they are magnets to immigrants; at first for people from many parts of their own countries, and sooner or later also for international migrants. Their universities are important elements within this magnetic sphere. Young people leave their towns and villages to study in the countries' capital cities, and young people from further afield aspire to have their share in the cutting-edge knowledge concentrated there. This is an age-old mechanism that has proven itself to be beneficial to all parties involved: the universities, the students, the teachers and the population of the capital cities in general.

Under ideal conditions, the brightest students end up studying at the best universities under the supervision of the most competent teachers. However, we have reasons to believe conditions are often far from ideal. Talent is not always recognised, either within the university or earlier in the educational chain. This may happen to any young person, which is a reason for concern in itself. However, young people from abroad or who are children of immigrants or members of ethnic minority groups face additional challenges: cultural differences may hinder the full appraisal of a student's capacities or there may even be xenophobia or outright racism that builds a barrier against the full development of a student's intellectual and personal potential. Also educational institutions, including universities, may not be sufficiently equipped and adapted to receive these students adequately.

The same holds true if we look at those who have finished their university education, be it abroad or, if coming from an immigrant family within the country, hoping to pursue a career in academia. Barriers that have nothing to do with people's objective capacities mean a waste of intellectual capital and all forms of irrational discrimination simply make an employer less competitive.

Obviously, it is never a sufficient remedy to these problems to sign up to a charter, just as discriminatory practices are unlikely to disappear by a change in a nation's constitution or the adoption of article 13 of the European Treaty. On the one hand, it is clear that much more is needed to that end. But on the other hand much would be achieved by a general shift in awareness. The gender equality which today is taken for granted by many, arguably was at least as much the result of shifting mindsets than of laws as such. Therefore, even though it can never be the guarantor of factual equality, the symbolic value of having such a charter as part of the UNICA mission statement should not be underestimated either, and UNICA should proudly continue to celebrate itself as a network of equal opportunities.

■ **Jeroen Doornik,**  
*Universiteit van Amsterdam*



## ECHOES FROM THE STUDENT CONFERENCES

The UNICA Conference in Amsterdam dealt with a very significant theme that enlivens current public, political, scientific and political discussions:

European identity, and more precisely, not merely talk around its existence or nonexistence, but rather values that sustain and help maintain such a daring project.

As a participant in the conference, I can say that it was a real success, not only by the quality of its "formal" activities, but also by the atmosphere created by our hosts. It was also a very good occasion to become aware of the plurality of viewpoints on major European issues from those who, in full right, consider themselves all Europeans.

■ **Andreea Enache**

*Student from University of Bucarest, Delegation to the "Unity and Diversity in Europe : the question of identity" Conference Amsterdam October 27-30, 2004*

I was lucky enough to be chosen as a member of Roma Tre's delegation to the European Student Conference

"The Future of Europe", which took place at University College London from 10 to 13 April 2002. However, much time has elapsed since the London conference, and in the meantime, many portentous events have dramatically changed the EU from many points of view.

I still believe the European Student Conference was a valuable and intellectually enriching experience for at least three reasons.

First of all, the European Student Conference was a unique example of "democracy in action": a "live" experience of the complexity inherent in the EU decision-making process that we hitherto could only read about in the newspapers.

Secondly, the Student Conference was an opportunity for us to exchange views

and experiences with other students in a truly European environment, thus enabling us to understand the similarities and differences between the various cultural traditions of the EU-25 countries: a splendid working example of the idea of "unity within diversity".

The third aspect that I believe should be underlined, refers to the contribution made by the conference towards the creation of bonds between participants and the consequent exchange of ideas and proposals long after the conference was over.

■ **Riccardo Crescenzi**

*Member of the "Roma TRE". Delegation to the "Future of Europe" Conference London 10-13 April 2002*

## UNICA'S RECTORS' SEMINAR

> **THE FUTURE OF DOCTORAL STUDIES AFTER BERGEN**

**"Doctoral Studies in Europe: Consequences of Bergen 2005" Brussels, May 31, 2005**

The Rectors' Seminar took place at the EUA foundation in Brussels, on May 31, 2005. The meeting was chaired by UNICA's President Arthur Mettinger as well as by the EUA President and Rector of the Vienna University, Georg Winckler.

During this seminar, many issues were debated in a serene atmosphere. The main subjects were related to the Bergen Ministerial meeting that took place the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of the same month. The discussion centered on a few main points related to the increasing number of private universities and the will of the EU to invest in the Europe of knowledge. The issues that most caught the Rectors' attention were the implementation of European doctoral studies programs, the linkage of this third cycle of studies with Research and Higher Education,

the lack of autonomy for universities, the quality issue and finally the issue of university funding.

The participants concluded that the universities should enhance the dialogue with the European Ministers of Education in order to add value to the autonomy of academic leadership.

The UNICA network could play a major role in linking Research and Higher Education. ■

## THANK YOU for your hospitality

We had the pleasure of being welcomed by the University of Bratislava (General Assembly 2004), Universiteit van Amsterdam (Student

Conference October 2004), University of Vienna (Scholarly Communication Seminar 2004 and Bologna Lab meeting December 2004), Tallinn Technical University (IRO meeting & BEPIQUA project meeting April 2005), and Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Bologna Lab meeting July 2005). Many thanks for the excellent organisation, genuine hospitality and for having contributed to create the highly appreciated UNICA team spirit. ■



> Tallinn

## A WORD FROM THE IROS

In the framework of UNICA's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we have asked the members of the IRO network to contribute to this newsletter by answering a series of questions.

Here is a sample of their perceptions and expectations of our network

### 1 :: What are your concrete expectations towards UNICA?

- To belong to a family that represents "the window to Europe". We would not have succeeded without UNICA, and its ideas, help and encouragement.
- For me, the most important asset that we can develop further is the "weight" we represent on a European level. Collaboration on internationalisation seems evident.
- Transfer of knowledge & experience.

### 2 :: In one sentence, what is the most striking of UNICA's assets/experiences/initiatives?

- You can get help in a minute or most expert information when you call or contact any UNICA colleagues.
- The power of having so many of the top European universities working together.
- We are on the same wavelength!
- UNICA differs from any other network as long as co-operation among members is not limited to International Relations but also includes other fields of activity such as Libraries, Disability Offices, Student Conferences or the Bologna Process.
- Regular meetings for IROs have been a good sounding board for me.

### 3 :: In which way/by which initiative could UNICA cooperation be improved?

- By wider awareness in the member universities of the activities of UNICA that go outside the International Offices, and the benefits of such co-operation.
- It seems that UNICA could discuss the reports / presentations of leading universities on perspectives of contemporary education.

- Fundraising to support specific Unica actions in the future (e.g. programmes of fellowships, chairs), and a plan for official contacts with political, industrial, cultural actors.

### 4 :: In what way do you feel supported by you academic leadership (President or Rector/Vice-Rector) within your UNICA work?

- Understanding the long-term aims and short-term support in creativity.
- I was given the opportunity to be mobile with UNICA and the added value of this experience is huge.

### 5 :: What do you remember from your first UNICA meeting?

- A lot of debate and discussion at the meeting and a good relaxed atmosphere
- Markus asking about favorite desserts. ;-)
- Friendly people ! And thinking how little I knew... !

### 6 :: Comments? Suggestions? Anecdotes?

- To those who have been administrating UNICA... carry on as you have done until now!
- When will UNICA visit Tallinn again?
- Staff from UNICA network can and should be more mobile.
- I wish for all of us, patience, interest in what happens and good health.



> **Dr. Eva Lack**, Associate Director  
Foreign Affairs, Freie Universität Berlin

Chantal Zoller, the first Secretary General of UNICA, and I, Eva Lack, who joined the "UNICA club" quite soon after it had been founded, have been asked to give a short personal résumé of the role of the IROs in the past 15 years of UNICA's existence and to assess their possible role in the future. In short, these are my conclusions:

The IROs have always provided an element of activity and continuity in the structure of UNICA. They are the institutional memory of our network, and - as every pyramid needs a stable foundation to rest and rely on -

the IROs have proved to be, and will remain, the stable foundation of the UNICA pyramid.

The IROs consider their universities and themselves privileged to be members of

a well organized, well established and successful network like UNICA and I am sure my fellow IROs join me in wishing UNICA a bright and successful future and I can assure you they are all ready to make their important contribution. ■



**UNICA**  
mission  
statement



UNICA is a network of over 39 universities from the capital cities of Europe, with a combined strength of over 130,000 staff and 1,500,000 students. Its role is to promote academic excellence, integration and co-operation between member universities throughout Europe. It seeks also to be a driving force in the development of the Bologna process and to facilitate the integration of universities from Central and Eastern Europe into the European Higher Education Area.

*To achieve its aims, UNICA articulates the views of member universities to European institutions and to national, regional and municipal governments. It provides members with information on European initiatives and programmes, and supports them in co-operation projects. It also provides a forum in which universities can reflect on the demands of strategic change in university research, education and administration.*

→ FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE GO TO [www.ulb.ac.be/unica](http://www.ulb.ac.be/unica)

## IN YOUR AGENDA FOR 2006

### > Seminars and Working groups

#### Trends in Education and Research: Developing Skills and Communication across Europe

**Themes:**

- The Bologna Process: the role for libraries in the strategic outreach of European universities
- Current trends in scholarly communication

**Target audience:** Vice-Rectors, research, educational affairs, external relations, Deans of Faculty, Bologna Process coordinators, senior academic librarians

**Date:** 18 - 19 May, 2006

**Venue:** University of Helsinki

**Contributions:** Jean-Pierre DEVROEY (Head Librarian and Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Université Libre de Bruxelles), Michael WORTON (Vice-Provost International, University College London), Arthur METTINGER (Vice-Rector University of Vienna and UNICA President), Hannele NIEMI (Vice-Rector, University of Helsinki) David PROSSER (SPARC Europe), Professor Antonio FANTONI (University of Rome "La Sapienza"), Yves DUMONT (EC DG Research)

#### Equal opportunities

The disability officers group chaired by Pawel WDOWIK (Warsaw University) will prepare a proposal of minimum standards for UNICA universities. This proposal is meant to be the beginning of discussion on the minimum standards of accessibility common for all UNICA members. The standards of accessibility are based on the assumption that persons with disabilities have the same right to receive higher education as their non-disabled peers. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the universities to equalize the chances of each person with disabilities by compensating the effects of disabilities in the academic life.

For more information on this issue:

<http://www.ulb.ac.be/unica/wg-disability.html>

### > Student conference

The Université Pierre et Marie Curie (UPMC) will host the fourth edition of the UNICA network Students Conference in October 2006, from **25 to 28 October** inclusive, in Paris. The theme of the conference will be **"The University in the City"**.

A sponsorship committee was set up comprising around twenty eminent figures from the French and

European political, institutional, economic, sporting and associative worlds. These include the President of the French Republic, the President of the Senate, the President of the National Assembly, the Mayor of Paris, the first President of the European Parliament Simone Veil, the EU Commissioner Jan Figel and the President of the EUA Georg Winckler.

A web site will be opened in January 2006.

### > Workshops

#### Credential and Admission evaluation (Lausanne)

A workshop will be hosted by the University of Lausanne and chaired by Professor Wendy Davies (from UCL) on March 31 and April 1. Three sessions

are organized: Fraud, The Lisbon Convention and Recognizing the Specifics of National Systems.