

**Chairman:** Prof. Jaap de Zwaan (Thursday), Anette van Sandwijk (Friday)

**Present:** Bernhard Koch (Innsbruck), Eddy Somers (Gent), Philip Traest (Gent), Mariana Karagyozeva Finkova (Sofia), Eujenie Kotzeva (Sofia), Josip Kregar (Zagreb), Josef Bejcek (Brno), Vera Kalvodova (Brno), Majken Hjort (Copenhagen), Susanne Hansen (Copenhagen), Nuno Ferreira (Manchester), Teija Isotalo (Helsinki), Odile Tokoto (Aix-Marseille), Anthony Chamboredon (Paris), Marcus Merkel (Konstanz), Stella Westmann (Reykjavik), Diana Cerini (Milano), Cinzia Corti (Milano), Audra Dargyte Burokiene (Vilnius), Dalia Vasariene (Vilnius), Giedre Raciene (Vilnius), Saso Georgievski (Skopje), Irena Rajcinovska Pandeva (Skopje), Anette van Sandwijk (Rotterdam), Jaap de Zwaan (Rotterdam), Jan Erik Hatling (Bergen), Jakub Urbanik (Warsaw), Dorota Pudzianowska (Warsaw), Paulo Mendes (Lisbon), Elena Simina Tanasescu (Bucharest), John Brown (Glasgow), Morna Roberts (Glasgow), Francina Esteve (Girona), Pablo Gutierrez Junquera (Salamanca), Vesna Rijavec (Maribor), Marie Brink (Lund), Louise Hultqvist (Lund), Mehmet Sua (Istanbul)

**Absent:** Warwick, Budapest, Stockholm, Bratislava (all with notice)

## **THURSDAY 10 APRIL**

### **1. Opening**

Jaap de Zwaan welcomes the participants to the meeting; a special welcome was extended to the new partners in the network (Skopje and Zagreb) and to John Brown (Glasgow). After the agenda was established, each representative introduced himself shortly.

### **2. Assessment exchanges**

All universities were requested to provide information on student mobility and other discussion points in advance. An overview of this information was presented by Rotterdam (and will be included in the brochure).

#### Student Mobility

It was rather striking that most of the student mobility takes place outside the network and that for some countries the mobility within Europe has decreased<sup>1</sup>. Several reasons were mentioned for this such as:

- the limited number of English taught courses at some universities (although Brno mentioned that they do have many and still do not have many incoming students),
- money problems (Warsaw and Vilnius),
- language (English but also Portuguese, Italian, Spanish); many students underestimate what it is like to take courses in another language,
- some students prefer doing a LL.M./master programme instead of going on an exchange especially because of the low European tuition fees (Rotterdam, Konstanz).
- It was also suggested that the fact that students can take English taught courses at their home university, might also prevent them from going abroad.
- Students choose destinations outside Europe (Australia, USA, Singapore)

Some Eastern European countries experience an increase in student mobility (Bulgaria). Copenhagen has a rather high number of incoming and outgoing student mobility.

#### Teaching staff mobility

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<sup>1</sup> For Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Finland, Sweden, England, Iceland and the Netherlands, there has been a 7% decrease in student mobility within Europe the past year in general – *Transfer, magazine for internationalisation, April 2008*

Teaching staff mobility mainly takes place based on personal contacts between lecturers and numbers are still very low. There are some ways of improving this:

- advise staff to make use of this during their sabbatical (Ghent),
- include it in a programme such as the Common Law programme offered by Paris Descartes (they receive staff from Ireland, Warwick, London within this programme etc)
- or within a course such as Comparative Administrative Law (Rotterdam),
- or choose a topic (which can be done at our meeting), have TS exchange for this topic and organize a seminar (maybe also resulting in a publication) (Rotterdam- EACLE network).

Milano mentioned that TS mobility has a positive effect on student mobility. Warsaw sometimes experiences unwillingness from International Offices in organizing TS mobility.

It is important to communicate about a possible staff exchange long time in advance.

#### (Administrative) Staff Mobility

Helsinki gave a short presentation on the staff exchange (new in the Life Long Learning Programme) that took place between Helsinki and Rotterdam. The University of Helsinki strongly encourages going abroad. Rotterdam was chosen as a destination because of its international programmes and students. A visit to the University of Utrecht was also included in the programme.

Focus of this visit was on benchmarking, best practices etc. The experience has been very positive and can be recommended to all universities. Rotterdam mentioned that they are willing to welcome more people within this framework.

After the assessment of exchanges, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Law at Paris Descartes Anne Laude welcomed everybody on behalf of the faculty and provided information on the Faculty of Law.

#### Bachelor/Master structure

There are still many differences in how each university/Country has implemented the Bologna system (3+1, 3+2, 4+1 etc). In some countries all faculties, except law faculties, have implemented the system. It was concluded that the end result is most important: will the degree give access to the judicial profession?

#### ECTS

The use of ECTS was also a point for discussion. At some universities professors do not recognize the number of ects and they require extra assignments even if the workload is supposed to be equal (Milano). Norway suggested that problems with ECTS should be taken up by the international offices and not by the students themselves. Rotterdam mentioned that when students bring home more ECTS than is assigned to the equivalent course in Rotterdam; students lose the extra number of credits. Most universities supported the idea of being flexible.

However, it is not always possible for receiving universities to accommodate requests from students who need extra credits (besides the number of credits assigned to a course).

### **3. Proposals for a better efficiency of the Erasmus programme**

All participants were split up in small groups and were asked to think about ways of improving the effectiveness of the Erasmus Programme. The results were presented in the afternoon session (please see: New proposals for a better efficiency in Erasmus exchanges)

#### Words of Welcome and introduction to the Conference:

Jaap de Zwaan welcomed all participants to the conference part (moderator for debates was Matthieu Oui, editor at the Monthly magazine L'Etudiant). He argued that the Rotterdam Law Network is very useful when it comes to sharing best practices and benchmarking and also the social function is very important.

After that he gave a short presentation on the European Studies Institute<sup>2</sup> (connected to MGIMO) of which he is member of the Board. This institute offers postgraduate programmes in the fields of law, economics and political science to professionals, civil servants at the central, regional and local level in Russia with a focus on the European dimension. They are looking for an influx of Western lecturers.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://eurocollege.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=78](http://eurocollege.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=78)

### Reforms in the Erasmus Programme – Student/Staff mobility

Then Mr Renato Girelli (Education and Training – European Commission) shared some information on the targets of the EC and the possibilities within the LLL programme. He was happy to hear about our law network and the expansion of it and the fact that different actors within the universities were represented.

He suggested the idea of applying as a thematic network in order to receive funding for our network activities especially because we will be the first law network (deadline Oct 2008). Activities should include academic activities and administrative affairs.

He also had some good news for our Croatian representative: they are admitted to a pilot-project for Erasmus.

After Mr Girelli's presentation, Mrs Rachel Dugui gave a presentation on the national agency in France that deals with the LLL programme on a national level.

Mrs Anne Marie Mallet then presented information about European mobility for Université Paris Descartes in general. She emphasized that having a network like the Rotterdam Law Network is important to development new contacts and develop exchanges.

### New proposals for a better efficiency in Erasmus exchanges

Jakub Urbanik started his presentation by stating that law studies are different: they tend to be more conservative, national and less open to innovations. It is therefore important to spread and propagate best practices on all possible levels.

He determined external and internal factors to improve the effectiveness:

#### EXTERNAL:

- Programme management:
  1. more money, (less bureaucracy, flexibility) for student grants and tsm for creation and coordination of courses
  2. allowing multiple Erasmus grants during various cycles
  3. individual joint masters
  4. inclusion of postgraduate studies
  5. Erasmus stay abroad – mandatory/ semi-mandatory?
- Quality Management:
  1. Central office at European level
  2. more harmonization (ECTS)
  3. benchmarking, accreditation, quality of learning
  4. compulsory stay for staff/administrative staff
  5. central webpage and database

#### INTERNAL:

- publicity
- flexibility
- trust your partner (monitoring visits): joint selection of courses, ects
- master courses open to exchange students
- language skills
- respecting deadlines
- informing in advance
- help students

What we can do now:

- webpage/data base for Rotterdam Law Network
- Joint semester courses
- Spreading the news

Future:

- Take active part in creation
- Elaboration of standards for law students, defining aims, "tuning dynamics"

Good practices, Trust, More Money

Mrs Helene Lagier from the Ministry of Education in France emphasized that we should address these proposals to the national agencies in the home countries and to the EC/Brussels on behalf of the network.

## FRIDAY 11 APRIL

### 4. Network extension/reduction

Erasmus University Rotterdam visited the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law, and the University of Skopje, Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus in February to see whether these universities would be good partners for participation in the network (as discussed during the network meeting in Vilnius). Our experiences were positive and they were invited to introduce themselves during the network meeting:

#### Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb

Dean Josip Kregar introduced his Faculty of Law/University of Zagreb to us. It was established in 1776. They have implemented Bologna resulting in a 5 year system (used to be 4) and will hopefully be able to offer English taught subjects within a master programme that is jointly organized with many universities in the Balkan region as of Fall 2008.

The faculty of law is trying to reduce the number of students (for example by raising the fees a little) and improve quality (quality assurance systems) and make changes in the methods of teaching. They participate in various Tempus projects.

They have good relations with U.S. universities and are very much interested in improving the European mobility and are happy to be admitted to the network. They do offer student housing.

#### Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus, Skopje

Then Vice-Dean Saso Georgievski of the Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus, Skopje, introduced his faculty of law to us. They share the same tradition as Zagreb. The faculty was founded in 1951 and has introduced the Bologna model (3+2) and use ECTS. They have many cooperation agreements (over 80) although some are more active than others. The Faculty of Law Iustinianus Primus comprises of Law, Journalism and Political Science studies.

They will participate in the same English taught master as of Fall 2008 so will be able to offer English taught subjects. They can arrange housing for students in university apartments. They are very happy to be admitted to the network as well.

#### Network extension

After the break it was concluded that extension of the network is a good thing.

Glasgow made some suggestions for extension. It was decided that we will add a British/Irish partner to the network: (Cork, Trinity, Kingston Law School, King's College, Leicester (contact: Christopher Bisping from Warwick) Kent (Rotterdam, Paris, Copenhagen), Limerick and Sheffield were suggested for extension. It was also decided that we should pay close attention to the quality of the university. (Rotterdam will check British rankings and report back to the network)

### 5. Miscellaneous

#### Language proficiency

It was agreed upon that although the language proficiency has much improved, problems still exist.

Denmark experienced problems with French students, Salamanca as well. Brno has students take language exams before departure. Konstanz advises students to take extra German language courses once they have arrived in Germany. Maribor has an intensive language programme at the beginning of the year (and so does Aix Marseille) and has a student tutorial system. Copenhagen hopes that France, Germany, Italy and Spain will offer English taught courses as the education of foreign languages seem to disappear from Danish high schools. Girona pointed out that they have a language center now. Bologna mentions that seminars in English can be organized for foreign students and Lisbon hopes to offer English taught courses in the future. Bucharest en Sofia organize language tests.

It was concluded that no matter in what language courses are taught; we all have to make sure that we can guarantee good language proficiency for our outgoing students in order to maintain the quality of education.

#### Exams/resits

Rotterdam indicates that due to the high number of incoming students it is difficult to be flexible when it comes to making special arrangements for exchange students. Copenhagen and some other universities also confirmed this.

#### Website

It was also agreed that a website, and marketing of the Rotterdam Law Network is important (Rotterdam will look into the possibilities of the website).

A seminar on a common topic, resulting in the start of more in-depth research, intensive programmes or publications will be a good goal for the network