

Meeting of National Coordinators of ASEA-Uninet, Oviedo/Spain, 12-13 September, 2004

Protocol

Agenda:

- Report of the Chairman
- Review of Bali Meeting
- Country Reports
- Network Issues
- Agenda for Plenary Meeting 2005
- List of participants

Report of the Chairman

The Chairman, Norman Revell reviews the agenda and suggests that each coordinator has fifteen minutes for the report about how the network works in their countries. For the afternoon and evening the coordinators will discuss the following items:

- how to address the future
- initiatives, programs, successes, funding
- problems in the new complex of Europe

Hector Rifà welcomes participants and describes the social agenda planned for the meeting.

Participants introduce themselves.

Review of Bali Meeting

Edwan Kardena summarises and comments on the Minutes of the Plenary Meeting in Bali , where the following contents were dealt with:

- issue of membership
- Asian & European projects: each country presented projects to see the reliability of European programmes such as ASIA LINK
- Compatibility of joint/double degree programmes
- Identification of common interest between members

Bernd-Michael Rode introduces Erasmus mundus as a new possibility to be taken into account in the network. Thus, the accreditation system will be an important issue for the next plenary meeting. Proposals could be made about this issue.

Kusmayanto Kadiman mentions the good experience with grants with European countries and he raises the issue of what the role of Asian countries in the network is. Positioning ASEA UNINET is very important. He would like to have the network acknowledged by people. Therefore, he proposes to carry out a small project to publish a book about the real results of the network in its 10-year history. Another possibility is to publish a brochure or design a poster.

Bernd-Michael Rode shows some material published by the Austrian Ministry about Asea Uninet, which can be taken as a starting point.

Norman Revell reminds the participants that the network has been existing successfully all these years with limited resources only and he thinks it should not imitate bureaucratic-style European Union procedures. Bernd-Michael Rode suggests that there should be someone in the rector's conferences of all member countries to document the success and to present the scope of Asea Uninet and its achievements.

The European Coordinator also points out that Asea Uninet has a smaller budget than ASEF (Asian Foundation), and, as it is an efficient network, they should be able to claim more funding.

Country Reports

INDONESIA

The autonomy of universities is a big issue. In Indonesia they want universities to have the capacity to be in the global scene, but autonomy entails commercialisation, which is against educational quality. With the new status universities can spend as much money as they can generate. But a big issue is how to improve the capacity to generate revenue without diminishing the quality.

3 out of 5 universities have been given autonomy. The Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB) is on its 4th year in the new status. The government's commitment has been constant since the beginning, although most universities think that the transition period is too short. In order to improve the situation, there has been an interview with the two political candidates in Indonesia to bring up that issue for discussion, and the Director of Technology Education has recruited experts from other countries.

Edwan Kardena adds that the new trend is determined by the flavour of globalisation. As America and Australia are given less focus than before, there are more possibilities for European universities. There is a need to collaborate between the biggest universities of the region (South-East Asia). In places like ITB rather than viewing others as competitors, they think it is better to establish partnerships.

THAILAND

Higher Education in Thailand is represented by 75 public universities, plus a further 50 private universities. There are 3 main groups: 1) Research-oriented universities: about 20 universities, out of which 15 are members of ASEA UNINET and the leading universities in Thailand . 2) There are about 20 teaching-oriented universities, and the rest are the new universities, oriented to Bachelor-level teaching. Only research-oriented universities are subject to autonomy. All of them are allowed by the government to offer bachelor and master degree courses. For example, Prince of Songkla University (PSU) is allowed to offer programmes for bachelor, master and doctoral degrees.

20 universities have been invited to submit their view on the issue of autonomy and in 2 years they will probably be autonomous. The government provides funding without influencing details if they are already autonomous. PSU is not autonomous yet, so they have to refund money not used.

In Thailand internal linkage on research work is being promoted in order to get autonomy, as the Government's policy is that they do not need international linkage to do research work (to invite professors, send students). But those universities which are autonomous do get funding for that.

PSU is interested in international programmes carried out in English: they offer 5 programmes taught in English and transfer credits and they wish to have more and more graduate accreditation to be recognised within the international sphere.

VIETNAM

In Vietnam there are more than 100 universities, out of which 25% are private. Some of them have found their participation in ASEA UNINET very useful in order to adapt themselves to the European model of Higher Education. In the Hanoi University of Technology (HUT) they are sending more than 40 candidates to Austria , Italy , Holland , etc. and students from France , Finland , Austria are welcomed.

HUT wishes to improve cooperation with other Asian universities in the southern region.

THE PHILIPPINES

José M^a Balmaceda describes how primary and elementary schooling is shorter than in other countries, and this has raised a series of problems such as the compatibility of the system to study abroad or the different academic calendar.

Budgets have generally been constant, although sometimes there are cuts. For the past 5 years 80 % of the budget has gone to salaries, and 15% to maintenance. State universities are expecting to raise more money. Tuition fees are quite low but universities can increase them, however, students have to be consulted about this.

On the whole Philippine universities do not want to get 100% from governments: they prefer to obtain 80% from government, and the rest from private funding.

As an urgent issue of debate, he brings up the Bachelors' issue, since this is a real problem for compatibility and accreditation. ERASMUS Mundus will bring to light these problems.

UNITED KINGDOM

Norman Revell presents the situation in the UK . All universities are totally autonomous in the sense they can spend their money as they like. There is almost total academic autonomy although up to a certain extent on some occasions the government can intervene to appoint professors.

20 years of autonomy have meant a reduction of funding in particular academic salaries and the government's new economic policy has contributed to changing education: there is less money for higher education and more for elementary and nursery education. As a result, it is now more difficult to find funding for international students and to have access to university for people without economic resources.

Another problem related to year-by-year funding: each year income is based on the number of students and this is based on projects. Universities have to get the income in whatever way in order to keep autonomy.

The British government wants to increase participation 50% in international programmes. Funding has become the main issue and not academic issues.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

There are 15 universities and all of them are state-owned and dependent on government support. The income of academic employees has decreased in the last 15 years.

Besides financial autonomy, academic autonomy is now better, and universities are allowed to offer bachelor, master and doctoral programmes. University studies are free but students are forced to find some jobs to help cover their expenses. Universities have to find some industrial partners to cover teaching and research activities, thus universities with programmes oriented to business have more income.

Broadly speaking, there are many academic links with universities abroad. There is a programme with the Hanoi University of Technology on a technological subject and the same could be offered to other universities. There is also strong cooperation with industrial partners (Siemens), with activities focusing on applied research and combining teaching and research.

It would be interesting for ASEA UNINET to have links with “new” European members in the first years.

AUSTRIA

As far as funding is concerned, more money is available to research programmes, however not as it used to be in the past, as the distribution of money is evaluation dependent.

Academically the greatest change has to do with the Bologna process, which will change the former kind of diploma under a process of equalisation.

Within the process of money allocation for universities, network funding has a certain advantage, as there is special support for the two networks, ASEA UNINET and Eurasia Pacific Network. This offers the possibility of hiring some staff when required, such as to take care of visits of delegations or organise academic events, e.g. the organisation of the celebrations of the 25 years of collaboration with Thailand .

Austrian universities have started new activities with Pakistan . The new Minister of Education has asked to increase their budget for education (by 250%). They are sending students out for PhD. studies and required ASEA UNINET for collaboration. The result is that 45 students financed by Pakistan went to Austria last year and next year Pakistan will send 100 students to Austria . A good possibility is that other ASEAN universities join this programme. Pakistan has the status of ANET-Associate in the network. Another project has started which establishes institutional links between high standard institutions in Pakistan and high standard institutions in Europe in different areas of science and technology.

SPAIN

Hector Rifà mentions that the University of Barcelona still carries out teaching and cooperation with Thailand and Indonesia , but the professor involved has moved to another institution and the representation in ASEA UNINET needs to be discussed. After some contacts with Barcelona , they would like to start having new activities with Asian countries. A representative from Barcelona will attend the meeting the following day and they plan to have a meeting in April and May 2005, also with Asian representatives.

The Thai, Philippine, Vietnamese and Indonesian ambassadors were invited to the Coordinators' Meeting in Oviedo but could not come.

The Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and the University of Oviedo have carried out one program on Health Science (Psychiatry) with the Cambodian Université de Sciences de la Santé. Madrid organises the basic contents, and Oviedo its methodology. They have obtained small funds from the AECI (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional).

The Spanish Government has given priority to activities with Vietnam , China and the Philippines , but the new Socialist government could modify these priorities according to their policies.

An issue for discussion is whether to increase the number of participant universities from Spain

As Oviedo has incorporated Solidarity and Cooperation to the Vice-Chancellor Office of Students and Mobility, Hector Rifà expresses his concern about this: he regrets that ASEA UNINET has not developed the idea of development cooperation so much. For example Cambodia is not there because they do not have enough money to pay the Asea Uninet fees.

NETHERLANDS

There are 70 international degree programmes in English at Dutch universities, 20 of them in Groningen .

There are big debates going on as regards autonomy due to the application of the Bologna Declaration.

There are two kinds of cooperations between Dutch and Asian universities: 1) development cooperation, i.e. bi- and multilateral cooperation through the Ministry and the European Union institutions with China , Vietnam , India , Philippines , Sri Lanka , Bangladesh and Nepal , and 2) academic cooperation with Indonesia , China and Thailand .

Examples of cooperation are the projects between Utrecht University and Thailand for PhD and MSc on Veterinarian Sciences and Media Studies, and between the University of Groningen and Indonesia on Pharmaceutical Sciences, Infrastructure and Environmental Planning, and Biomedical Engineering.

Recently approved by Asia Link is the CASECUBE project.

The main ideas for the future international university cooperation are:

1. ASEA UNINET is an excellent example of international cooperation
2. International networks need to be strongly embedded within partner universities
3. Strategic partnerships between universities should be based on mutual academic interest
4. Strong groups within universities should be involved
5. International networks help escape marginalisation
6. Institutional support = supply of own funding
7. Global access to knowledge demands good networks

Network Issues

Rifà raises the question of collaborating with countries outside the network for specific projects, for example with Laos , Cambodia , as they are in the target groups of the network. We should be aware that in Cambodia a new private and small university is created every month. The government allows many private universities, although there are only 3 public universities.

They agree that having further universities is important but more important is to intensify activities between existing universities in the network. Every partner who would like to join the network should provide at least some modest financial contribution.

Maybe it is necessary to find new ways of funding. There can be an association with a university for a certain project, and then see if the other universities can join.

Next plenary meetings

The next plenary meeting will take place in London 2005. Norman Revell, however, suggests Oxford instead of London because of accommodation, and dates (July). Facilities are easy to obtain if a college is taken over. He proposes Exeter College and the date, in the first two weeks of July depending on availability.

Marrik Bellen brings to discussion some administrative points. He thinks there are certain adjustments to be made in order to make the network more visible and transparent. One thing he misses is a document on the website about the network, and about the protocol. The suggestion is to have such a document adding one more button on the left side of the webpage with their set of rules and regulations. This document will be sent to all the members through the email to have an evaluation of the document.

Héctor Rifà thinks there should be a euro repository fund/account in a European bank to facilitate payments and refunds. The participants agree to have a permanent account for payments.

Another controversial issue is that of voting (presently one member = one vote). It is difficult to establish some criteria and the meeting decides to bring the question to the next Plenary Meeting, proposing to ask for all decisions to be taken by a two-third majority.

As for the organisational part, € 800 is proposed as contribution to the network for the European countries and € 400 for Asian countries. This is something to bring to the plenary meeting. About this, Norman points to the fact that these amounts would give us a surplus for the next financial year.

The notice-board should be promoted. It is essential to post the news from the network.

It is agreed that University coordinators of ASEA-UNINET should be professors active in teaching and research. They can be assisted by representatives of the International Cooperation Units of their Universities in all meeting and programmes.

Agenda for Plenary Meeting 2005

- Participation of countries and new memberships
- Publication of a booklet
- Promotion of ASEA UNINET by each university by conventional and electronic means
- Constitutional Patterns
- Focus areas for projects

List of Participants and their Addresses

Attendants:

Prof. Dr. Norman Revell, Chairman of Asea Uninet

Prof. Dr. Kusmayanto Kadiman, Asian Coordinator

Prof. Dr..Bernd Michael Rode, European Coordinator

Prof. Dr. Prasert Chitapong, Asian Vice-Coordinator and National Coordinator of Thailand

Mr. Marrik W. Bellen (Vice European Coordinator)

Dr. Edwan Kardena, Assistant to National Coordinator of Indonesia

Ms Madeleine Gardeur, National Coordinator of the Netherlands

Prof. Dr. José M^a Balmaceda, representing the National Coordinator of the Philippines

Prof. Dr. Jiri Kubalik, representing the National Coordinator of the Czech Republic

Prof. Dr. Hoang Xuan L, representing the National Coordinator of Vietnam

Prof. Dr. Héctor Rifà, National Coordinator of Spain

Prof. Dr. Cristina Valdés, Observer and Meeting Secretary

Prof. Dr. Javier Mato, Director of the International Relations Office, University of Oviedo
(invited to close the meeting)