

Minutes - National Coordinator Meeting

during the ASEA-UNINET Plenary Meeting at Graz, KUG,
16th of July 2017, 2:00 pm till 4:15 pm

PARTICIPANTS

Executives

- **Univ.-Prof. Dr. DDDDr.h.c. Bernd Michael Rode**, ASEA-UNINET Honorary President (Austria)
- **Prof. Dr. Carla Locatelli**, ASEA-UNINET President (Italy)
- **Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Obenaus**, ASEA-UNINET Vice President and Regional Coordinator for Europe (Austria)
- **Assoc.Prof.-Dr. Ngo Chi Trung**, ASEA-UNINET Vice President and Regional Coordinator for South-East Asia (Vietnam)
- **Prof. Gamantyo Hendrantoro**, ASEA-UNINET Deputy Regional Coordinator for South-East Asia (Indonesia)

National Coordinators

- **Prof. A Min Tjoa** (Austria)
- **Dr. Mohamad Farizal bin Rajemi** (Malaysia)
- Barbara Zacharias (Germany), excused
- **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nitinant Wisaweisuan** (Thailand)
- Prof. Triantafyllos Albanis (Greece), excused
- Prof. Roberto Ranzi (Italy), excused --> **Prof. Memo Maurizio** (substitute)
- Prof. Dr. Nyan Myint Kyaw (Myanmar), excused
- Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary (Pakistan), excused
- Prof. Maria de Fátima Marinho (Portugal), excused
- Prof. Daniela Ostatníková, MD, PhD. (Slovakia) excused
- **Prof. Maria Cynthia Rose Banzon Bautista** (Philippines)

Invited guests

- **Prof. Dr. Gabriele Anderst-Kotsis** (Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria)

ASEA-UNINET Staff (Austria)

- **Andreas Lichtenberger**
- **Barbara Karahan, MA**
- **Martha Eipeldauer**

AGENDA

- 1) Growth Strategy
- 2) Membership fees
- 3) Bernd Rode Award
- 4) Double Degree Programs (PhD)
- 5) Survey of ALL academic activities between Austrian and South-East-Asian ASEA-UNINET members
- 6) Joint Excellence Initiatives
- 7) Sustainability Focus

MINUTES

Locatelli welcomes the participants of the National Coordinator Meeting and opens the meeting.

Topic 1 – Growth Strategy

Locatelli: growth strategy is a very important issue, ASEA-UNINET is growing, but we have to consider how we will go on in the future.

Obenaus: At present we do have 10 candidates applying for a membership at ASEA-UNINET. This is too much and should not happen anymore. We have to think about another procedure in the future.

Locatelli: agrees and mentions that in general participants of the network have to be more active. We have to be more selective by choosing and sometimes we have to say no. It is not an issue of quantity it is an issue of quality.

Tjoa fully agrees. The level of activity has to be increased. One possible way would be to establish a “candidate membership” (working title) for interested universities. At one plenary meeting they should be nominated as a candidate and at the next plenary meeting it will be decided if they will be accepted as a full member.

Obenaus: The new universities expect also financial support but the limits are nearly exhausted.

Locatelli: Some special countries, E. g. Myanmar, will need our help at the beginning, but such exceptions should not be the rule.

Tjoa: Important are equal rights for all, full members and candidate members. If a country will not show up for 2 or 3 times, then we should cancel the membership.

It was proposed to evaluate not only new universities, but also universities which are already members of the network. It was discussed if this should be within 18 months up to five years. Most of the participants agreed for a short period. In how far National Coordinators would be involved in these processes was also discussed.

Gamantyo: We could discuss these issues first at a National Coordinator Meeting and if these candidates do not correspond with our orientations then we would not invite them to the next ASEA-UNINET Plenary Meeting.

→ **This proposal of candidate membership-status was decided upon by full agreement of all national coordinators.**

Topic 2 - Membership fees

Tjoa: there is a problem with the devaluation of the EURO. Therefore, the membership fees are quite low at the moment. He suggests an alignment of the fee of European countries to the fee for Austrian universities, so for both Euro 1.050 p.a. The new fee for member Universities from South-East Asian countries is Euro 700 p.a.

→ **All participants of the National Coordinator Meeting decided that the membership fee for universities from Austria and European countries will be Euro 1.050 p.a. and the membership fee for universities from South-East Asian countries will be Euro 700 p.a.**

Farizal asks if the official invoice of the annual membership fee also can be sent in cc to the belonging National Coordinator.

Topic 3 - Bernd Rode Award (BRA)

Tjoa: 3 categories. For this call there were many applications. The evaluation was done in two or three steps. First step: Prof. Haltrich and Gamantyo evaluated and made a ranking. This was sent (in a second step) to the two Vice Presidents. The Winners are announced at the Plenary.

Locatelli: Some Universities have to improve the promotion of the BRA.

Farizal: The problem in the case of Malaysia is that projects have to be already performed at the time of the application. The reason why Malaysia does not receive Ernst Mach scholarships from ASEA-UNINET – is clarified by the fact that this is a decision of the Austrian Ministry (Tjoa).

Tjoa: The BRA is not open to the field of arts and music. He asks the participants if the BRA should be opened to art and music. (This issue will be discussed at the next National Coordinators Meeting again.)

Topic 4 - Double Degree Programs (PhD)

Tjoa: Double Degree Programs are a long lasting wish of the ASEAN Partners.

Farizal: The different credit transfer systems are the problem plus the agencies which are responsible.

Locatelli: Governments have a lot to say about joint or double degrees. Double degrees are much easier to implement than joint degrees. The minimum time to stay at the partner university should be one semester.

Maurizio: Another possibility is to establish a PhD course between three top universities in different countries. Students move from one university to another. This would be the best for the students. Implementing a double degree program needs very long to approve.

Obenaus: in Austria there is a complete different tradition as a solid master degree program actually takes 2 years (4 semesters) - thus, for a valid double degree program at master level it would actually be necessary to have a program of 4 years. Secondly whereas other universities earn money by having students paying them fees in Austria there are currently no fees for universities to make money so they also have no interest in double or joint degrees.

Maurizio: The point is also what can be expected from certain students. For PhD students there is no point of overemphasizing when and where they go. The rather important question is what can be done for them - thus, we should rather care about getting the right student and finding the best way of guiding them than worrying for the bureaucratic framework.

Farizal: The advantage for students concerning double degrees is given due to (a) a better employability (it looks good in the CV) and (b) shorting studies up at a singular university for students and having lower costs there. To pay two fees (for two universities) is not the problem in Malaysia, advantages still prevail due to the shorter time and as it is cheaper compared to financing two separate studies. To achieve double degree programs, it is necessary to have a consistent credit transfer system in place.

Locatelli: Market based ideas disavowal themselves from within. Chronicles of higher education in the US where mostly non-US citizens are attaining double degrees at top US schools; it is questionable which sense it makes for a certain country.

Farizal: Further issues that should be considered are also the different levels of living costs and tuition fees: In Malaysia for example it is a minimum of money for getting a visa and an admission. Regarding the master thesis, it could be also reasonable to leave it open whether it can be written at home or abroad.

Locatelli: In former times European universities aimed for a flexibility of curricula which exactly should cover the possibility of doing courses elsewhere and acknowledging them at home.

Tjoa: A total flexibility of curricula is not very easy at least at universities in Austria.

Locatelli: To fully accredit a program as a valid one there have to be legitimate institutions behind. An official program needs to be backed by official universities - a group like ASEA-UNINET does not have the legal power of sealing a program as a valid one

Obenaus: Double degree programs are a matter between two universities and not of ASEA-UNINET. The discussion should be followed up by the interested universities

Topic 5 - Survey of ALL academic activities between Austrian and South-East-Asian ASEA-UNINET members

Obenaus: The Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BWF) is keen to have insight about the usage of tax payers' money. It is possible to show them what is done with the money and what happens within our means *but* crucially we do much more than what is reflected in our annual reports.

Tjoa: In discussion with Mrs. Karahan the International offices should be contacted in Austria to report what ASEA-UNINET achieves. In other countries the same should be done. Thus, it would be desirable to have a specification of projects for every country reported by a survey that should be sent out by time. Further information will be passed to the coordinators once there is more clarity about the requirements from the side of the Austrian ministry.

Locatelli: This point is important especially for Austria. In Italy the government doesn't realize the value of networks like ASEA-UNINET - there are nearly no public funds available, thus universities and networks anyhow need to finance themselves by other means. But data about the mobilities of teachers and students are important to highlight the achievements of such networks.

→ **It was decided that all member countries will deliver annual activity reports on their ASEA-UNINET involvement.**

Topic 6 - Joint Excellence Initiatives

Tjoa reports on the Austrian Joint Excellence Initiatives consisting of a) Sustainability focus, b) Joint labs, c) BRA, d) Joint Excellence Initiatives in some areas (e.g. in agricultural areas with regard to water resources)

Topic 7 - Sustainability Focus

Tjoa: The issue about sustainability is crucial as in the near future, governments and public awareness will be directed to the achievements of scientific institutions regarding the sustainable development goals. Clarifying our focus now and declaring projects as sustainable initiatives will help us in the future to underpin our initiatives, legitimizing the funds we have received for undertaking certain projects.

Locatelli: Sustainability is a very complex issue. Thus, it is very good to have a focus which is facilitated by the workshops. Complexity means innovation and needs corporation.

Tjoa: SDG's are mandatory for all countries (and not only for the ones in the Global South). We already have some corporations that could be subsumed within the SDGs. It is important to have a middle-term perspective.

Rode: The most sustainable issue in the history of ASEA-UNINET was the start of the network and its activities. ASEA-UNINET was actually a good example of sustainability itself. Not only due to concluding projects but being conscious that the existence of ASEA-UNINET is already a long lasting-initiative, having itself made an example of sustainability.