ASEA-UNINET National Coordinators' Meeting 2022

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 25th, 2022
held in Linz at the ASEA-UNINET Plenary Meeting

Johannes Kepler University Linz (Austria TNF Tower Building, Somnium), Altenberger Str. 69, 4040 Linz
Meeting time: Monday, July 25th, 14:00--17:00 GMT+2

PARTICIPANTS
10 Participants

Executives
- Prof. Dr. **Gabriele Kotsis**, ASEA-UNINET President (Austria)
- Prof. Dr. **Wolfgang Obenaus**, ASEA-UNINET Vice President and Regional Coordinator for Europe (Austria)
- Assoc.-Prof. Dr. **Mohamad Farizal bin Rajemi**, ASEA-UNINET Vice President and Regional Coordinator for South-East Asia (Malaysia)
- Prof. **A Min Tjoa**, Coordinator for Technology, Innovation and Sustainability Projects for Europe (Austria)

National Coordinators (in alphabetical order of country)
- Prof. Dr. **Gabriele Kotsis** (Austria)
- Dr. **Muhammad Iqbal Djawad**, MSc, PhD (Indonesia)
- Prof. **Roberto Ranzi** (Italy)
- Asst.-Prof. Dr. **Thakerng Wongsirichot** (Thailand)

Guests (in alphabetical order of country)
- Asst.-Prof. Dr. **Wongkot Phuphumirat** (Prince of Songkla University, Thailand)

ASEA-UNINET Staff (Austria)
- **Barbara Karahan**, BA BA MA (ASEA-UNINET Head Office, Vienna, Austria)
- **Wayu Christoph Niederhauser**, MSc (ASEA-UNINET Head Office, Vienna, Austria)

1.   Opening, Welcome

Kotsis opens the National Coordinators' Meeting (NC Meeting) and welcomes the participants to the Plenary Meeting at the JKU in Linz, Austria. Participant introductions follow.

2.   Membership Conditions for Private Universities

Proposal on basis of previously sent materials to be presented at Plenary Meeting for approval.

General Policy Proposal:

Private Universities (PU) from full member countries may apply to become "Associate Private University Member" of ASEA-UNINET. Rules and conditions defined in the following to be shared within the whole network, but not announced on the public website. **Any additional criteria that may be required by the member country need to be communicated within the network to ensure fairness and transparency**.

Proposal for Application Procedure:

PU needs to contact NC. NC informs the Executives about the application. NC leads a discussion involving all current full members in the country, resulting in either a statement of support for the application or a rejection with a short justification sent to the applicant and the Executives for information. If there is a positive statement, it will be forwarded to the President, who may invite PU to introduce themselves at the next Plenary Meeting. At such time, the Plenum will vote whether or not this PU will be accepted as a new PU candidate member (member in spe). Candidate membership will be evaluated after 2 years (public university candidates will be evaluated after 9 months) and then PU can become Associate PU member.

<u>Proposal for Criteria:</u>

- PU must have a strong orientation in research and must provide evidence of scientific activities meeting international quality standards (e.g., publications, research projects).
- PU needs to operate in accordance with the recognised scientific and ethical standards of the academic community.
- PU must offer curricula at all levels (at least Master and PhD).
- During candidate member status, PU must show active participation in the network during candidate member status.
- Countries may propose additional criteria, as described earlier in the General Policy.

<u>Membership:</u>

Membership status obtained as "Associate Private University Member". Both during candidate membership and after receiving Associate PU member status, PU is entitled to participate in the network's activities. Access to funding, however, depends on the specific rules of the various funding programmes. Membership fee for PUs is charged the triple fee for public universities of respective country – only Asian countries for now (maybe European universities can be discussed at a later point).

Exchange on national discussions concerning the proposal is opened:

Farizal: From Malaysia's standpoint, no need for private members (n.b., may be different for other members), as much research is conducted via public universities in Malaysia. Perhaps best to optimise current members first. In Malaysia, PUs are eligible in Malaysia to receive research funding. Being part of an international network like ASEA-UNINET would be very desirable for PUs to elevate their status. For Malaysia, a project-based listing would be preferred.

Kotsis: Suggestion to change proposal to "PU from the <u>following</u> Asian member countries may apply". NCs agree. This would allow for additional countries to be added in the future.

Wongsirichot: Some PUs have a significantly stronger focus on research, as opposed to just teaching. However, they have much evident talent. Thailand has around 170 public universities and around 70 PUs, of which 4-5 are particularly promising (e.g., AIT).

Obenaus: PUs becoming members would benefit Postdoc research projects in particular, as for the Full PhD EM scholarships, anyone can apply anyways, and with Postdoc it is restricted to member institutions. Acquiring talent could greatly benefit Postdoc projects.

Advantages for PUs: Listed on the website; disseminating/receiving information from the network; being part of the network (voting and representation); no funding for Austrian mobilities, however, due to rules by the Austrian Ministry for Education, Science and Research (BMBWF).

Iqbal: There have been requests from PUs in Indonesia to join the network. Indonesia is open to PUs – a progressive university (e.g., a top class university, especially in Computer Science) might be interesting for the network. <u>Internal rule: if no recommendation from ASEA, Indonesia would reject</u>.

Trung (communicated through Kotsis): Majority of Vietnamese coordinators is in favour of PUs joining.

Martinez (communicated through Kotsis): In the Philippines, Public Private Partnerships, so-called PPPs, as a unique structure that funds research and runs research independently as well.

Ranzi: Has no objections against PUs joining network. However, from a European perspective, he values the universal provision of public universities to students and the qualitative calibre of public university professors. Cautions to opening to too many PUs.

Conclusion of discussion: start with Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and add further countries over time.

NCs agree to share this proposal for a vote on Thursday, 28.07.2022, during the Elections programme point.

Kotsis requests if members could collate information on internal rules themselves for the time being (institutional & governmental) and share it with **Niederhauser**.

Decision: All participating NCs agree with these proposals, there are no objections.

3.   Status of Current Projects and Cooperations

Kotsis: Ongoing calls for research projects, even during the pandemic. Recommendation by board (*Vorstand*) to partners: If project could not be done in the past, re-apply again instead of requesting an extension (cannot keep being postponed). Recent year has been a peak in terms of funding (possibly also due to back-log of projects that needed to be postponed due to the pandemic): very positive news for the health of the network.

Wongsirichot: Activity numbers are increasing; not quite at the desired quality point but it is getting better.

Ranzi: More proactive attitude expected from the Italian universities, in part due to new agency similar to Campus France. 80 scholarships in Italy (many of were also for ASEA-UNINET scholarships), with many scholarships being targeted type of scholarships.

Iqbal: Due to pandemic, student and staff exchanges were not able to be maximised. However, Minister of Education and Culture published programme with alumni matching funding scheme. Many universities trying to receive this funding.

Farizal: Malaysia has a few projects for research grants, incl. EM grants. Malaysian International Scholarship programme has been established, but somehow Austria is not included; hope is that with 2 EM ASEA-UNINET mobilities, they can convince the government to include further countries for this mobility, such as Austria.

4.   Report and Feedback on Last Call for Projects and Scholarships

Kotsis: Last call for project was open until end of February; positive uptake of project proposals, and most were eligible from a formal point of view – this is getting better compared to past years. Different categories for projects (e.g., research projects incoming/outgoing, projects for medical work).

Obenaus: Scholarship interest level is currently similar to pre-pandemic levels (50 applications in total with 4 different scholarship categories). Online process was very challenging to set up, but it worked surprisingly well and is a viable alternative if the need requires it. Not only are the numbers positive,

but the quality is also increasing (26 were invited to interviews). Out of a basic budget of 400 annual scholarship months, 618 months – more than 50% of the basic budget – were approved by the BMBWF.

Obenaus: Reflects on role of member universities in ensuring relevance, and quality, of projects and proposals. IASP as positive example for this, where Indonesian government supports measures to raise quality of proposals; could member universities be expected to help improve input the network receives to transfer knowledge and ensure more qualitative proposals? Currently, the quality of proposals is quite high, but with further commitment to support, quality could be even higher.

May 8 – May 14 proposed as date for interviews in upcoming Ernst Mach ASEA-UNINET Call 2023.

5. Recommendation for Approval of Candidate Members

Candidate Members for consideration as Full Members:

- Malaysia: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
    - o **Farizal**: Requests to add with urgency.
- Italy: University of Modena and Reggio Emilia
    - o **Ranzi**: Recommendation for inclusion.
- Italy: University of Padua
    - o **Ranzi**: Recommendation for inclusion.
- Vietnam: Thuyloi University
    - o **Kotsis** (on behalf of Trung): Recommendation for inclusion.

Decision: The NCs suggest to the plenary to approve all candidate member applications for full membership status.

6. Further Topics

Obenaus: Considerations for Presidency known? **Farizal**: nominates Prof. **Narimah Samat** for President, has already contacted coordinators seeking for support.

Kotsis: makes proposal to re-appoint Vice-Presidents and Regional Coordinators.

National Coordinators should be announced to Head Office in the case of changes.

Decision: **Kotsis** will announce nominations accordingly in plenary.

Group Photo

The group photo is available [here](#) for download. *© ASEA-UNINET*

7.   Meeting Closure

Kotsis officially closes the meeting and looks forward to the Plenary Meeting.

Meeting Minutes by Wayu Christoph Niederhauser and Barbara Karahan

APPENDIX:
[NC Meeting Presentation Files](#)