

Meeting of National Coordinators of ASEA-Uninet, Utrecht/Netherlands, 7-8 July, 2003

Protocol

Agenda:

- Report of the Chairman
- Report of the European Coordinator
- Report of the Asian Coordinator
- Future of Asea Uninet
- Policy Guidelines
- Membership applications
- Information Exchange
- Plenary Meeting 2004
- Activities to be performed

- List of participants

Report of the Chairman

As the Chairman Koesmayanto Kadiman was unexpectedly prevented from coming, the Chairmans representative, Dr Edwan Kardena, delivered the report.

Concerning the Asia Link programmes, 6 proposals submitted by Indonesian Asea Uninet members were awarded (3 for the Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB), 2 for the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and 1 for the Institute of Technology Surabaya (ITS). Institut Teknologi is preparing a new Memorandum of Understanding with Rijks Universiteit Groningen, one of the Dutch Asea Uninet members. An MoU with an Italian Asea Uninet member is in preparation.

The chairman will on behalf of Asea Uninet and the Indonesian members attend the Second Meeting on the ASEM Education Hubs - Education and Research Network that will be held in Singapore in November. Aim of this ASEM initiative is to stimulate student exchange between Asia and Europe. The Asea Uninet network could play a facilitating role when it comes to placement of students.

ITB acts as the Indonesian secretary for the Asea Uninet scholarships and has helped organising several interview sessions in Indonesia with eligible candidates. It has also set up a scouting programme to disseminate information about these scholarships in Indonesia in cooperation with the Indonesian Directorate General for Higher Education.

Report of the European Coordinator

The impression is that we have been too optimistic about the possibilities of the Asia Link programme. The tendency seems to be that more applied projects are likely to have a better chance to get awarded than high tech or more research oriented projects.

The administrative burden is quite high while the success rate is 1 out of 5.

As the objectives of the Asea Uninet coincide with those of the Asia Link programme, the European coordinator suggests that a proposal could be drafted covering several Asea Uninet meetings to be funded through Asia Link. Another funding organisation that is worthwhile to be approached is the Asia/Europe Foundation (ASEF).

With regards to the European participants the coordinator voices his concern about the continuity of some of the memberships. Due to changes in the boards of universities or policy changes some of the members are experiencing problems in continuing the membership for this network. Currently the status of Greece and Sweden is not clear, Finland has withdrawn.

The National Coordinators agree certain rules have to be set to ensure that members who are not actively involved in the network can be asked to withdraw. This should be the case if for 2 consecutive times the membership fees have not been paid or for 2 consecutive times no (national) representative has attended the national coordinators and plenary meetings.

Report of the Asian Coordinator

Many of the Asian members have voiced their concern about the heavy administrative requirements set both by Asia Link and the AUNP programme. Some Thai universities have decided to apply through other funding programmes that impose less bureaucratic burden and have a higher success rate. The impression is that the current situation is counterproductive for AUNP. This issue should be addressed during the plenary meeting.

The Asia Link programme does not support the sustainability of linkages. Only 1 application submitted by Thai Asea Uninet members has been awarded by Asia Link and only 1 by AUNP. The distinct impression is that the European Commission on the outset mistrusts any Asian University and has doubt about the quality of the universities, even if they are established and reputable institutions. In this respect the AUNP office in Bangkok might play an important role in representing the interests of the Asian universities by issuing certificates that are acknowledged by the EC.

On a national level things look brighter, the current Thai premier increased the budget for sending scientist abroad. Also the Thai government has instated some academic award programmes like the Royal Jubilee Programme.

Currently 15 Thai Universities are members of the Asea Uninet who within this network have developed several types of cooperation. Great interest is taken in establishing joint masters degree programmes with European universities, preferably members of Asea Uninet. Also the exchange of students at bachelors/undergraduate level is a key focus, especially if European Asea Uninet members can provide support (financial, facilities, tuition fee waivers). If it is within the network of Asea Uninet, bilateral MoU's will not be required.

Future of Asea Uninet

The Asea Uninet is from its origin an Austrian Network that was founded almost 10 years ago. Although in the past few years the network experienced a strong increase in the number of other European memberships it still has a strong Austrian signature (15 Austrian universities are members, scholarships and grants awarded in the name of Asea Uninet are solely funded by the Austrian government). The current structure of the Network cannot be characterised as a body governed by clearly set rules and regulations, but more as informal and diverse group of Asian and European members dedicated to enhance mutual cooperation and understanding through personal commitment. Initially set out to form alliances for tendering on Asia Link projects, this network has proven its success due to the many bi- and multilateral spin off effects it has produced. During the last plenary meeting the Indonesian and Dutch national coordinators made a small inventory of the pro's and con's of the current structure of Asea Uninet.

Con's:

- no charter/statutes, no legal status (cannot act as 'legal body' in EU projects);
- no formal office/secretariat;
- no yearly reports or transparent financial structure (accountability);
- no formalised elections procedures, quality control or selection criteria for new members, limitation on number of members;
- no code of conduct.

Pro's

- informal participation based on commitment;
- Asea Uninet network has surpassed its original goal (tendering Asia-Link) and has developed into a real network with many spin-off results;
- in its structure it is the only network between Asian and European universities of its kind;
- affordable for all members;
- loose network, no obligations, low threshold.

The National Coordinators are invited to comment and make suggestions. According to Mr Rode the informality of the Network should be seen as a plus. To change it into an international organisation or association would require a lot of time and efforts, especially from the legal point of view. But the Mission Statement could be reviewed and amended if necessary to suit the current function and role of the network. A new function could be that the Network acts as a placement agency for funding organisations looking for placement of academia in Europe but also in Asia. For this service a fee could be charged.

Several National Coordinators have experience with other types of networks (Coimbra group, Utrecht Network, Asia Pacific Rim Universities) and give examples about the structure and how they operate. The question is to what extent formalisation of the Asea Uninet is necessary or recommendable without turning it into a too bureaucratic structure. Some degree of professionalisation and formalisation will however be necessary to ensure the effectiveness

of the network, especially with regards to quality and quantity of applications by new members. It is agreed that the name of the network will not be changed.

One of the Austrian scholarship schemes implemented through the Asea Uninet could also be combined with participants from other European members, in particular the so-called short term visiting scholarships for senior researchers. These short visits of up to 2 months can partly take place in other European countries. The European host will only be required to pay for living costs for the person involved during the visit to the host institution (by invitation only), international transportation costs will be covered by the scholarship scheme or the Asian counterparts. European members who are interested in joining this scheme are requested to make this known to the secretariat of Asea Uninet.

The network should make more efforts with regards to lobbying and the exposure of the network to relevant parties (EC, AUNP, ASEF, ASEM, Asia Foundation, and key players in national governments, embassies etc). Other outcomes of the discussion on the future of Asea Uninet can be found under 'Policy Guidelines'.

Policy Guidelines

Based on the discussions the following policy guidelines are agreed upon:

The total number of participants should not exceed 60 to 70 to ensure the effectiveness of the network. A more rigorous policy will be implemented concerning dormant members. Members who do not pay membership fees for 2 consecutive years or do not attend the national coordinators or plenary meeting will be asked to withdraw.

A new type of membership will be introduced for specific institutions in any of the following countries in South Asia: Nepal, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka. For East Asia: China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. For Europe: the new candidate members for the EU: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland, Romania, Estonia, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Latvia, Turkey, Lithuania, but excluding Czech Republic (that is already represented as full member in Asea Uninet). The maximum number of these associate memberships is set at 10. The associate members must pay the same membership fees as the members, however they will not have to pay the entrance fee. Associate members will have no voting rights. They may attend meetings as observers. There should be clear aspect of mutual benefit for all parties concerned. The associate membership is finite, depending of the duration of a specific project or the intended relationship with the Asea Uninet.

Only the National Coordinators Meeting (by majority of present national coordinators) will decide on new (associate) membership applications. New members will be asked to give a presentation at the next plenary meeting. In the evaluation procedure the quality of the candidate member will be screened.

Membership applications

Currently there is one new membership application to be expected, from the University of Cambodia. The University will be asked to send a formal request to the current Chairman. As this University was already presented at the Plenary Meeting in Trento, the application will not have to go through the National Coordinators Meeting for acceptance. Cambodia can become a full member as soon as the formal request is submitted and membership fees have been paid.

It was agreed that Pakistan shall become an Associate Member.

Information exchange

The notice board on the Asea Uninet web site is still not being used to the fullest extent. All members are again requested to put any relevant information through the notice board. This information can include: new academic programmes in your home institutions, summer courses, exchange programmes for student and staff, scholarship opportunities, planned visits to Asea Uninet countries or member institutions etc. Also internet sites that could be of relevance to all members (e.g. on national scholarship scheme's) should be send to the secretariat of Asea Uninet so it can be put on the 'Links' page of the web site. Every new entry on the notice board will be automatically forwarded to the e-mail addresses of the national coordinators.

Plenary Meeting 2004

The Plenary Meeting will be organised by the Chairman of the Asea Uninet and will be held in Den Pasar (Bali, Indonesia) in February 2004, preferably in week 7 (11-15 February). The Organising Committee will set the agenda, but members who have suggestions concerning topics to be discussed are encouraged to send these by e-mail to the Committee (asea_uninet@itb.ac.id).

In the discussions of the National Coordinators Meeting the following activities for the next plenary meeting are proposed:

Instead of the idea of having poster presentations of all members, an information room or corner should be provided where all members can distribute their brochures with information of their home institution.

Organise into depth workshops on current research between Asea Uninet members, by inviting researchers and specialists to give presentations. In this way the more abstract identification of focus areas will be translated in a much more practical basis for cooperation, if we consider that all cooperation starts with the researchers, not with policy makers. One step further could be to organise 5 workshops according to the focus areas and submit it as a proposal for Asia Link. The contact persons of each of the focus areas as mentioned on the Asea Uninet web site can work this out.

- Organise an information session, especially for the Asian members, on the current change in the European Education system towards Bachelors and Masters. What are the opportunities

and threats for cooperation with Asia? What are the practical consequences with regards to degree recognition, accreditation etc?

- Organise a workshop on the pro's and con's of joint or double degree programmes between European and Asian universities, by presenting a case study.
- Organise an information session on the scholarship schemes on national and institutional level of all Asea Uninet member countries.
- Organise a workshop on student mobility and mobility obstacles between Asia and Europe.
- At the registration desk of the Plenary Meeting all members are to be asked to check their current data as listed by Asea Uninet secretariat and make the necessary changes if appropriate.
- Special attention should be paid to the invitation of relevant key persons with regards to the exposure of the Asea Uninet network, especially in the light of the 10th anniversary of the network.

Activities

There is an additional meeting planned for some national coordinators and the chairman who will attend the EAIE meeting (European Association for International Education) from 10-13 September 2003 in Vienna, in further preparation to the Plenary Meeting in February 2004.

Next national coordinators meeting is set for September 2004, tentative dates are Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 September. It is proposed that this National Coordinators Meeting will be organised by Spain. Place of venue will be Oviedo.

All members are requested to think about the upcoming elections at the plenary meeting. Every Asea Uninet member should elect or re-elect their national coordinator, the Asian and European members should elect their respective Asian and European coordinator. Also a new Chairmen of the network will be elected, which for the next term should be one of the European members. All members are asked to identify possible candidates for these positions prior to the Plenary Meeting.

List of Participants and their Addresses

Attendants:

Dr Edwan Kardena (Representing the Chairman)

Prof.Dr.Dr.h.c.mult.B.M.Rode (European Coordinator)

Assoc.Prof.Dr.Prasert Chitapong (Asian Coordinator)

Drs. Marrik W. Bellen (National Coordinator The Netherlands, Vice European Coordinator)

Dr. Maria Serena I. Diokno (National Coordinator The Philippines)

Prof. Dr. Hector Rifa (National Coordinator Spain)

Prof. Dr. Norman Revell (National Coordinator United Kingdom)

Dr. Ngo Chi Trung (Representing the National Coordinator of Vietnam)

Drs Madeleine Gardeur (Dutch member Asea Uninet)

Absent with notification:

Prof Dr. Kusmayanto Kadiman (Chairman)

Mrs. Hildegard M. Mader (National Coordinator Germany)

Prof. Dr. Ing. R. Zandonini (National Coordinator Italy)

Assist. Prof. Dr. Sören Eriksson (National Coordinator Sweden)

Prof. DrSc. Banh Tien Long (National Coordinator Vietnam, represented by Dr. Ngo Chi Trung)

Absent without notification:

Dr. Frands Voss (National Coordinator Denmark)

Prof.Dr.Vladimír Marík (National Coordinator Czech Republic)

Dr Guy Siat (National Coordinator France)

Prof. Nick Hadjiliadis (National Coordinator Greece)

Dominic Dillane (National Coordinator Ireland)

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