

**University Council  
Consultation Meeting  
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

**Date and Time:** 29/06/2023, 15:00 – 17:00

**Location:** Langeveld 1.16

**Present in the Meeting:** **Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair)**, **Prof. Ed Brinkma (Chair EB)**, Prof. Annelien Bredenoord (Rector Magnificus), **Dr. Ellen van Schoten (VP EB)**, Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Sebastiaan Kamp, Max Wagenaar, Jaap Cornelese, Natascha Kraal, Patryk Jarmakowicz, Aleid Fokkema, Ernst Hulst, Simo Azzarhouni, Irena Boskovic, Emese von Bóné, Erin van Gestel, Luuk van Tol, Nawin Ramcharan, Wesley Hennepe, Wincey Randoe, Veerle Bakker, Friso Roos, Cagla Altin, Lobke van Steenberg (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

**Absent:** Nikita Schoenmaker, Albert Wagelmans.

## **01 Opening**

### **01.01 Setting of the agenda**

The agenda was set without adjustments.

### **01.02 Minutes previous consultation meeting and action points**

The minutes of the previous meeting and the action points were set without adjustments.

### **01.03 Announcements**

#### **- New UC Clerk**

The UC announced that this is the last CM that Lobke is present as UC Clerk; Roxanne Austin will take over this position following the final/first plenary meetings of the UC September 5<sup>th</sup> at Blijdorp.

## **02 Agenda items plenary meeting UC**

### **02.01 Occupy Evaluation**

The UC prepared several questions on the COT report, provided to us by the EB on June 20<sup>th</sup> that were discussed during the CM.

- 1. Why was the goal of the CTO to facilitate occupiers and what are the reasonable limits within which the CTO aimed to facilitate?*

Regarding the first occupation, the EB received a priori information that the plans of the occupation would be within reasonable limits. Also, the Executive Board had sympathy for the points raised by the occupiers. The EB decided to allow the occupiers to be present in a building on the condition that they would stick to certain rules. Also, they had not yet included a restriction on overnight stays as they believed this was not necessary. Furthermore, the EB wished to allow the occupiers to exercise their democratic rights.

- 2. In section 2.1, it is stated that the decision to proceed with an eviction and the manner in which it was carried out generated significant discontent within the community of students and staff at EUR. On which basis was this conclusion drawn, alleging that, according to the councillor who raised the question, some students were not in favour of the occupation?*

According to the EB, the conclusion stated in section 2.1 was drawn by the COT based on the criticism encountered following the occupation. The report does not imply that there was no support

for the termination of the occupation, but it reflects on the number of people that were critical about the decision.

3. *How does UNL perceive the (upcoming) actions of University Rebellion and how do they handle this movement?*

The EB shared their experiences and opinions within UNL and the Board of Rectors, but this has not led yet to a formal position being taken by these two entities. However, the Board of Rectors wishes to come to a shared sustainable policy, particularly regarding the topics of collaboration with fossil fuel companies, and overnight stays at universities during occupations, as these have to do with academic freedom. In September, there will be a discussion organised with TU Delft and UVA on the collaboration with the fossil fuel industry.

The UC expressed its interest in receiving those documents.

4. *What information jeopardized campus security?*

During the first occupation, the EB received information from the police that a similar activity of a large size (200-300 occupants) was taking place in Amsterdam and there was reason to believe that the whole group, or a large part of it, would come to Rotterdam. The police advised the EB that, were this scenario to happen, it would be difficult to handle given the security resources at EUR. This scenario had not been anticipated by the EB, and they decided to act upon it. The EB hopes this explains the change in viewpoints from before the occupation to during the evacuation.

Furthermore, the EB explained they are against overnight stays, as they are responsible for the safety of the people involved yet they are unable to maintain security overnight. This is both due to financial reasons and the unavailability of security personnel at night.

5. *What is the view of the EB on daytime occupations?*

The EB will reinforce the house rules whenever a new occupation will take place, referring to no disruption of the primary process of the university as well as no overnight stays. For example, the EB was against the disruption that took place during previous occupation, as it took place in the Aula, and it disrupted the examinations taking place nearby.

6. *How was the sample mentioned on p. 1 selected? (14 employees, 1 student member UC)*

This is one of the questions the EB forwarded to COT as they were responsible for the sample selection. The EB will forward the response of COT.

7. *What was the reason for deciding that the CvB partially (occ 1) and wholly (occ 2) joining the CTO 9p. 2, footnote)? With no experience in Crisis, why was it felt the CvB would be a useful addition?*

There is a standard CTO, but the members can vary according to the circumstances.

During the first occupation the Executive Board did not participate in the CTO, but the chair escalated to and consulted the other members of the Executive Board. During the second occupation, the Executive Board joined the CTO because it seemed to be wise to do this after the experience with the first occupation.

## **02.02 Extra Projects HeQa EUR-central**

The UC reviewed the documentation of the project proposal and the HeQa TF took part in multiple meetings where the details of these documents were discussed. The UC is overall satisfied with the project proposals, with the exception of the CLI project plans. The UC prepared several questions to be discussed in the CM with the EB

Firstly, the UC remarked that the CLI budget was pre-allocated, leaving the rest of the budget to be allocated among the other project plans; we are interested in understanding why the division of funds ran a different course for the CLI project plan. According to the EB, the process of CLI is different than the other HeQa-funded projects, as it already existed before them. The CLI budget for 2023-2024 is higher due to an investment in online and digital learning, which is a result of the EV. The process of arriving at this decision consisted of monthly meetings with the Deans of Faculties who approved improving the budget for online learning. In reply to this explanation, the UC would like to understand why we were not involved in the monthly discussions on this budget division. According to the EB, we were not deliberately left out of the discussions. The UC remarked that there has not been a dialogue between us and the CLI, especially after we communicated the need for one before consenting to their project plans. The EB agreed that the dialogue should be improved.

Secondly, the UC was critical of the content described in the CLI budget plan. Specifically, when we approved the budget a few cycles ago, we discussed that the focus on online education is not, in the opinion of the members of the council, what the HeQa funds should be used on. We wish to reinforce that opinion, by pointing out that the HeQa funds arrive from the money of students that are currently studying, and it should benefit them in the present or nearby future. In the opinion of the UC, the HeQa money can benefit students and improve the quality of education if used in different areas. The UC agrees that education has digital components to it, but our point of criticism is that improving these will benefit students in the long term. Especially with the CLI project plans, the funds are going to fund areas of online education that are outside of the scope of the needs of current students and are creating education for a different target group instead of catering it to the students we currently have. The UC believes that, if investments are to be made in online education, it should at maximum supplement physical and current education. The EB shared their belief that online and hybrid education will benefit students but agreed that the opinions of the UC should have been better reflected in a dialogue with the CLI and the EB throughout this process.

Thirdly, the UC wishes to substantiate that we do not oppose the investments in developing online and hybrid education per se, but we believe it is a long-term investment that should be supplemented with structural funding, not HeQa funding. The EB shared that the budget is tight and earmarked, and they also believe that current students can benefit from online learning, as education takes place partly online. Furthermore, Erasmus X, another HeQa-funded program, helps students develop online skills.

In conclusion, there was the agreement that there is a need for better dialogue between the UC, the CLI, and the EB, on the topic of the HeQa investments into online and hybrid education as proposed by the CLI. At the advice of the HeQa policymaker, the CLI project leaders can prepare an overview over the summer and present it in a series of dialogues with the new UC, as soon as we reconvene. The HeQa TF re-elections will take place on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Action point:** The UC, EB, and the CLI will organise a series of dialogues on the topic of the HeQa investments in online and hybrid education in the next academic year.

### **02.03 Concept advice Starting and Incentive grants EUR**

The UC would like to discuss the way the grants are spent at the moment, and if the faculties have complete autonomy in spending the money, or if the EB keeps a central overview on how the money is being spent, as well as if this is going according to the agreed guidelines.

Firstly, the UC has received a few changes to the document the evening prior to the CM. The UC deems these changes relevant to their current advice and would like to ask the EB if they should incorporate the new information in their advice; doing so would, however, will increase the workload as the final UC cycle ends next week.

Secondly, in the consent letter, we had stated that it is important to offer clear expectation management to all stakeholders, however, this is not included in the current documentation. The UC would like to reinforce the importance of this being outlined for consent to the documents which will become relevant in the first cycle of the next academic year. The EB took note of this remark.

Thirdly, the document states that decisions on how to spend the budget can be made at the faculty level, however, this process is different than what was previously reflected in the discussions with the EB for the short-term consent.

The EB shared that their approach is different from the Bestuursakkoord as they wish to promote teamwork as opposed to individual work. Also, the EB will hold a meeting with the Deans on Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> of July, and would appreciate the advice of the UC in preparation for this meeting. The UC agreed to prepare their advice for Tuesday which will incorporate a reflection on the new document.

**Action point:** The TF Finance will create the letter of advice to the *Concept advice Starting and Incentive grants EUR* to be tabled at the Third plenary meeting.

#### **02.04 Numerus fixus bachelor programmes and selection master programmes 24-25**

Last year, the UC gave advice on this topic, with very specific points for several faculties. We would like to know how the advice was followed up on, as it is not clear in the documents shared for advice this year. Regarding the advice at the faculty level, the EB shared that the deans of the faculties were asked for advice and there was enough time for the FCs to give informal advice as well. The EB took note of the concerns of the UC.

#### **02.05 Ties with the fossil fuel industry.**

The UC drafted a letter that was shared with the EB for context; in it, the UC describes the initiative of cutting ties with the fossil fuel industry and several procedural steps to achieve this goal. The UC has discussed this proposal with the help of experts from outside the University and would like to follow in the footsteps of ISS and VUA, by first entering the activity of EUR in a one-year moratorium on collaborations with the fossil industry, during which a committee can be set up to assess whether the companies covered by the moratorium are eligible for restoration under strict conditions or termination or partnerships. Further, the EB is urged to sign an emergency letter to the Dutch parliament asking for an end to all fossil fuel subsidies, while the UC will reach out to other UCs to discuss how other universities are affected by this topic.

In reply to this initiative, the EB welcomes the discussion taking place in the UC but made several remarks.

Firstly, the EB feels that they need to take into consideration the opinion of all students and staff members and understand where the majority stands. For this reason, the EB will organise a series of dialogues with the EUR community in the new academic year and the UC

members will all be invited to participate. However, the UC believes that we are the only representative body the EB can consult as a community and we have reached the conclusion that, the majority believes it is important to act on this matter. The EB agrees but wishes to hear more voices given the sensitivity of the topic.

Secondly, the EB wishes to research the consequences of cutting ties, as they need to understand to what extent cutting the ties will improve the situation on the planet whereas remaining involved and pushing for change might steer even better results. Also, the EB wishes to create an outline of the exact ties our university has, such as job and internship prospects, before deciding to cut ties. For this reason, the EB is in the process of launching the engagement monitor, in Q3 2023. Preliminary results indicate that EUR has rather limited connections to these companies when compared to other Dutch universities. However, the UC criticised the process for being too lengthy, as the results will be presented to the next UC.

Thirdly, the EB believes the process of the VU, who decided to cut all ties, is currently aimed at publicity and not a lot has changed in their policy. The EB has talked to the EB of the VU. At the moment, VU does not have a clear understanding of how to ensure the companies they keep ties with follow in line with the Paris Agreement. Additionally, VU will begin the investigation next academic year. The EB believes that the process followed by EUR is better, wherein we organise a series of dialogues and an investigation prior to making any conclusions or statements. The UC believes that we should start the thinking process of a moratorium, as well as cut ties with companies that are known to not follow the Paris Agreement; also, the UC believes that not making a statement right now depoliticises the issue and makes it less important than it is in reality. The EB shared their concern that they cannot yet rise to the statement and worry that it would be interpreted as greenwashing without installing policy; also, the series of dialogues created by the DIT platform would appear as superficial if they rush into making the statement. However, the UC consulted the DIT colleagues on the proposal and obtained their support, therefore we proposed requesting their help in speeding up the process.

Fourthly, the EB believes that they have been very vocal about being in a climate emergency, and do not see the need for a further announcement at the moment that cannot be backed up by policy. However, the UC is concerned that the process is very long after declaring climate emergency, which is the reason we suggest forming a preliminary definition.

The EB proposed organising a meeting before the end of the academic year with the DIT platform and the UC to discuss the UC proposal. The UC agreed to this suggestion.

**Action point:** the EB will organise a meeting with the UC and DIT on the UC proposal *Ties with the fossil fuel industry*.

## 02.06 Traffic around Woudestein

The members of the UC brought the dangerous traffic incidents around the Woudestein campus to the attention of the EB. The UC is concerned for the wellbeing of the staff and students crossing these areas and would like to urge the EB to take action to improve the safety of the traffic.

The EB shares the opinion of the UC, and they had several conversations with the City of Rotterdam specifically regarding speed limits. The City of Rotterdam has been disapproving of these requests, with the reason that the speed limit depends on the tram activity. However, as tram line 7 will soon be discontinued, the EB hopes that their requests will be approved by the City of Rotterdam. Also,

additional traffic signs will be placed, at the EUR's request, around the pedestrian crossing at the sides of the Burgemeester Oudlaan and Kralingse Zoom.

Since the traffic situation is fully under the responsibility of the Municipality, the EB mentions that the UC could send a letter to the Municipal Council and the City of Rotterdam to reinforce the need for better traffic regulations around the EUR campus. To help with that action, the UC requested the EB statistical information about the prior traffic incidents.

**Action point:** The EB will provide the UC with statistical information on the traffic incidents around the EUR campus. The UC will discuss the process of addressing the Municipal Council during the Third plenary meeting.

## 02.07 Strategy 2024-2028

At the start of the previous strategic year, the UC was involved in co-creating the plans. However, our involvement was not requested at the start of the new strategy. The UC is interested in understanding what our role could be in the development of the new strategy.

According to the EB, we currently have a good strategy, therefore they do not envision a large change from the current period to the next one. However, there will be new elements, and seeing the benefits of involving different areas of the community in the co-creative process, the EB wishes to involve the UC in this process. The EB is currently busy incorporating the feedback from the mid-term review and will start the procedure of designing the new strategy in September. The UC will be asked for advice during that period. Also, the EB asked the UC to informally evaluate the current strategy, which could help in improving the process.

**Action point:** The topic Strategy 2024-2028 will be tabled for the first cycle of the next academic year.

## 02.08 HOVO

The UC prepared several questions for the EB regarding HOVO education at EUR.

1. *Does the EB have an explanation for the fact that Hogeschool Rotterdam is involved in the relaunch of HOVO Rotterdam, while this was apparently unattractive (or even impossible) for EUR?*
2. *How does the EB view the new initiative from a public relations point of view? Here we note that universities in Amsterdam, Utrecht, Leiden, Tilburg, Eindhoven and Groningen are all involved in HOVO (see <https://hovonederland.nl/>).*
3. *Does the EB think that it is a good idea to see if EUR can join the new initiative?*
4. *What is the current status of lifelong learning at EUR? In particular, are there any plans to offer courses specifically aimed at elderly citizens?*

The EB answered the questions of the UC.

Firstly, the EB does not know why other universities were able to provide HOVO education in comparison to EUR. The EB assured us that they spent a lot of time researching the economic situation and encountered many difficulties with exploiting HOVO education. Specifically, it has to be decided whether HOVO is taxable; that currently is the case, but it can be retracted. The EB shared that the tax issue was a main part of discontinuing HOVO education. Also, the EB shared their unhappiness with the effect of this decision on their public image, especially seeing other universities continuing the HOVO education.



The UC shared that teaching at HOVO used to be very pleasant as the students were most interested in the material; the UC was wondering whether the EB considered organising education with a non-profit foundation since the costs are the issue. The EB replied that the HOVO education was not for profit and that all possible ways to keep HOVO education were explored. However, their conclusion remained that, financially, it is not possible to continue offering it. The EB expressed their hope that, if it becomes financially possible in the future, they can continue offering HOVO education.

### **03 Incoming documents**

#### **03.01 State of affairs – Convergence**

The EB shared an update on the Convergence on June 26<sup>th</sup>. There were no questions or remarks on behalf of the UC.

### **04 Any Other Business**

#### **04.01 Development Dutch language standard Universities**

The UC would like to know the reaction of the EB on the current developments in Dutch language standards in Universities that were reported in news articles in *ScienceGuide* and *NRC*.

The EB shared that they believe this to be a very important topic which, unfortunately, is constantly in flux within the ministry. According to the Minister of Education, if the law is followed, then education should have Dutch as the principal language, with several exceptions being allowed, and there is a trend toward exceptions. The EB believes that the impact of this law falls mostly on BA programs. The Ministry is going to draft a law this summer which will consider a programme “Dutch” if a maximum of 1/3 of the program is taught in English. Earlier, this proposal was misinterpreted by some sources.

Nonetheless, the EB believes that this trend would affect programs that have many international students and English as its main language, although it is too early to draw conclusions. The EB is not in favour of these developments and values the international community at EUR highly. When a potential new law goes into consultation, the EB will be vocal about their opposition to it. Furthermore, the EB is critical on the process of the Ministry leaving these issues pending as it maximises the insecurity of everyone involved.

Furthermore, the UC emphasised the need to consider the staff situation, as there is a risk of significant teaching staff shortages. Also, a member of the UC shared the advice that EUR could increase the availability of Dutch courses to prepare the EUR students and staff for the possibility of such a decision. The EB agreed and sees the developments in the Parliament as a sign they should invest in staff and students being able to familiarise themselves with the Dutch language and culture.