

**University Council**  
**Consultation Meeting UC/EB**  
**Erasmus University Rotterdam**

**Date and Time:** 08/12/2022, 15:00 – 17:00h

**Location:** Sanders 0-12

**Present in the Meeting:** Ivonne Cune-Noten (Chair UC), Prof. dr. H. Brinksma (Chair EB), Ellen van Schoten (VP EB), Prof. dr. A. L. Bredenoord (Rector, EB), Ann O'Brein (Secretary of the EB), Sandra Constantinou Juhasz, Sebastiaan Kamp, Max Wagenaar, Nikita Schoemaker, Jaap Cornelese, Natascha Kraal, Patryk Jarmakowicz, Ernst Hulst, Simo Azzarhouni, Irena Boskovic, Emese von Bóné, Tom van Dijken, Erin van Gestel, Luuk van Tol, Nawin Ramcharan, Veerle Bakker, Friso Roos, Aleid Fokkema, Albert Wagelmans, Wincey Randoe, Wesley Hennep, Georgiana Carp, Roxanne Austin (Secretary EB), Erasmus Magazine, Ellie Cercel (Minutes UC).

**Digital:** Lobke van Steenberg (Clerk UC).

**Absent:** Cagla Altin.

## **01 Opening consultation meeting**

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

The topic regarding the Sinterklaas celebration organized at EUR was tabled under AOB. With that, the agenda was set.

### **01.02 Setting of the minutes of the previous meeting / action points**

#### *- Sector plans*

The UC had requested the sector plans from the EB regarding the *Bestuursakkoord*. There was a confusion regarding the right plans, as there are no EUR sector plans, only national sector plans; the EB will share them when they become available.

**Action point:** The EB will share the national sector plans of the *Bestuursakkoord* with the UC.

#### *- LDE budget state of affairs*

The UC requested more information on the changes in the budget, the underlying policies, and the role of the UC in monitoring the budgets of the LDE.

The Board understood the confusion related to the LDE reports and assured the council that the standard budget of the LDE has not changed.

There is a fixed amount of 800k euros for LDE. In the budget of the previous year, there was more money involved which represented a reservation in case of a negative result in the LDE project. Based on a decision from early 2021, an increase of 300k euros will help fund traineeships from a central budget; prior to that, those were partly financed by faculties and partly by the central budget.

There has been an evaluation of the institutes of the LDE, and the report will be available at the beginning of the upcoming year. This will also be shared with the UC.

**Action point:** the EB will share the yearly evaluation reports of LDE with the UC once they are available at the beginning of the upcoming year.

#### *- Compensation participatory bodies*

The EB will provide a state of affairs in the first cycle of the upcoming year.

**Action point:** this point will be tabled for the upcoming cycle.

#### *- Exam monitoring*

The EB researched the issue and found no evidence of a structural problem. E&S is overlooking the issue as well and was willing to increase the staff, if necessary, also by asking administrative staff to fill the role. This has led to 15 extra invigilators. A councillor has experienced a similar issue in exam reviews, which has the potential to become a structural problem. It was agreed that the issue will be monitored and will be tabled again if it becomes a structural issue.

### **01.03 Announcements**

#### *- Convergence*

The Convergence Executive Board was formed in the current week. With that, the commencement of the pilots was officially approved, moving the project into the foundation-building stage. Currently, decisions are being made on the layout of the plans, the timeline, and the working groups that need to be employed.

The Convergence is regarded as a tool for interdisciplinary research, within and between the included institutions (i.e., Erasmus MC and TU Delft). This aligns with EUR's focus on interdisciplinary strategy; the EB expects that the tools within the Convergence will be present in discussions on EUR's learning strategy. There will be specific activities, and the Rector will be responsible for the translation of the Convergence into educational actions.

The related documents are being adjusted; a conference is to take place early next year where the documents will be finalised. Following that, they will be made available to the UC.

The EB shared that the various pillars and programs of the Convergence are already attracting funds and programs (i.e., European, and national); therefore, the investment in the Convergence is giving back.

**Action point:** The EB will share the adjusted reports on the Convergence in the first cycle of the upcoming year.

#### *- Culture & Campus*

The project was successful in extracting European funds as part of the New European Bauhaus Program. The kick-off is scheduled for January 19<sup>th</sup>.

#### *- Arts Institute*

The timeline has been recalibrated; the merger is currently expected on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2024. Also, there is a delay in the documents being shared with the UC, as they are now expected by April/May. This confirms the timeline the UC was also made aware of. But the UC does indicate that it wonders whether the timeline is feasible.

**Action point:** The EB will share documents with the UC as soon as possible and the topic is tabled for the cycle of April/May.

## **02 Agenda items consultation meeting**

### **02.01 BBR-EUR**

There were no updates on behalf of the UC. The EB should expect the consenting documents by the end of the cycle.

### **02.02 Concept Budget Plan EUR 2023-2026**

The UC had several questions regarding the policy development of the *Bestuursakkoord*; these will be addressed in the UC letter to the EB, alongside advice on the process involving the UC.

The UC shared their main concern with the EB, namely that the UC was not involved in the early development process of the policy, especially relating to the starters and incentives grants, despite this advice being stated in the *Bestuursakkoord*. This meant that the UC is involved in consenting to the financial process with the CPC but would like to have responsibility via co-creation of the policy content.

The EB understood the concern of the UC and will try to reinforce the advice. The EB informed the UC that the process of receiving the funds was difficult and contained unclarities in the distribution process. The information which the EB received from the Ministry was not final, as some of the rules are still under discussion nationally, with various bodies involved; the EB is concerned that involving the UC before the parameters are fixed may create confusion. The UC is aware that instruments need to be developed but wished to be involved in the discussion during the development stage of those instruments.

Also, there was a discussion about the moral right of co-creation and consent. The UC and the EB have different takes on this and this will be further discussed and will be back on the agenda at a later stage.

**Action point:** The EB will share the national sector plans with the UC as soon as they become available.

### **02.03 Project plan “Towards an Erasmian positioning of the EUR Program Committees”**

The project plan consists of two phases, 1) appointing a coordinator at a central level and 2) further development and implementation of the framework for the professionalisation of the program committees. The UC is asked to give consent to part of phase 1, the temporary extra capacity for the central coordinator. Additionally, the UC is invited to co-create during the second phase, which is expected to take place in Q1 and Q2.

The UC informed the EB that we expect to consent, but there were certain questions and remarks regarding the second phase that will be included in the letter of consent.

A council member linked this discussion to the discussion and letter of the UC regarding compensation of the participatory bodies and recommended an increase in the hours compensated for working in the program committees. The UC wishes that EB considers giving better compensation. The EB recognizes the importance of strengthening the program committees and foresees a quality improvement project plan similar to that of the exam committee.

A councillor asked whether the coordinator is expected to complete a role in facilitating the program committees to deal with multi-disciplinary educational programs, which has proved an issue in the Philosophy program committee. The EB recognised this issue as relating to the vision of the Convergence and took note of it.

### **02.04 Midterm Review Strategy 2024**

The UC met with the strategy office and made a few remarks on the review plans. Overall, the UC believed the plans to be generic and found it difficult to give advice. Two questions were shared with the board.

- 1. One of the panel's recommendations is to refine the strategy by focusing more on what can be considered distinctive ambitions of the EUR strategy, the focus on societal impact and sustainability. However, in the management response, the only solution proposed to achieve that is by making sustainability an integral theme for the Impact/ Engagement board. How is this solution going to help us achieve our sustainability ambitions?*

The EB organised the governance according to the focus on societal impact and sustainability, which is part of the deliberation and discussion process they are currently following. Therefore, the two topics are not part of the 7 pillars of the strategy, as they are transversal. It is the wish of the EB to coordinate them effectively across all their activities. The EB believes this approach will reach better results and control than separating the tasks.

The UC was concerned that the strategy struggles to cascade from the governance level, and wished to see it reinforced at lower levels, e.g., schools and services. The EB is recognizing the lack of synchrony between the different EUR schools and explained that setting global rules in the EUR strategy will be helpful in extending them throughout the different schools. There are positive responses in the process of synchronising the plans until now.

2. *Both the recommendations and the management response give weight to governance structures to achieve the various strategic ambitions. However, there seems to be no attention to the importance of aligning the organizational culture with the strategy. Is there a vision for this?*

The EB recognizes that changing the culture is a long-term process based on defining clear focus points and priorities. One important motivator of culture change is making the coordination clear between the different programs and projects at EUR. Other methods of collaboration include dialogue sessions and active engagement.

Besides these action points, the UC was interested in whether there is a vision of how the EUR culture will be shaped by 5-10 years in the future, in terms of managing the development of staff and students. The EB will implement the Leadership Program, which will be part of making the values more expressive at EUR. The EB is also redesigning the educational vision with these values in mind.

## **02.05 Application for macro-efficiency IMARC (ESL)**

The UC is in the process of finalising their advice to the board, which is mostly positive.

## **02.06 Security Issues Occupy EUR**

There was a discussion on the OccupyEUR event. The UC addressed the sustainability-related issues with the Sustainability Office on Tuesday but had several remarks to the EB regarding the security of the evacuation. Several questions were shared with the EB:

- *How does the board look back on the chain of events surrounding the occupation which took place on campus on Monday, November 28th?*

The board looks back on the outcome of the evacuation with feelings of regret. Especially because their policy was founded in showing tolerance and facilitating a discussion with the occupiers; however, the board is aware that the escalation of events that they did not foresee did not align with their values and did not foster an environment for dialogue.

- *How does the board look back on their response to the occupation (including their preparations and contact with police prior to the occupation taking place)?*

The board has issued a statement stating that psychological counselling will be offered to anyone in need of support due to being affected directly or indirectly by the events of the occupation.

A council member was able to host a lecture at 11 o'clock in the same building and was not affected by the occupation; however, the police were already present. The EB will investigate the matters of visibility.

- *Can the board clarify their story on what exactly took place on the day of the occupation (preferably with evidence of communication that took place with the organization of Occupy EUR, the police, and more specifically surrounding the information that led to the involvement of the police at the end)?*

The board will make the timeline available at a certain point. In the course of the afternoon, the CTO (operational team monitoring the occupation) and the police presented them with probable escalation scenarios, which the board had not foreseen, i.e., a significant number of people from outside the University were planning to come to the campus. To be specific, the board considered this statement from the police, based on other similar occupations, a serious threat; the board considered there were insufficient instruments to have control over the possible scenario. It was stressed that the evacuation was not in response to the behaviour of the occupiers present on campus. However, the UC was critical that the police forces acted on the present occupiers and not on the external threat. Also, a council member who was present in the occupation provided a contrasting timeline, whereby an appointment with the board early in the day was cancelled; the EB was not aware of the earlier appointment but ensured their schedules would be cleared to fit the

discussion for 19:00. As a conclusion, in a future similar scenario, the board will not wait for an invitation, and will be present earlier.

– *How was the emotional safety of the occupiers ensured?*

The board is able to provide aftercare to those affected. They believe that the eviction prevented more traumatising events of personal safety from occurring. Additionally, the police were requested by the CTO to ensure enough time is taken for the evacuation (around one hour). However, a councillor also present at the occupation remembers that the police surrounded the occupiers very quickly once the decision to evacuate was made. Only an initial announcement was made in Dutch, and a present member translated it into English. The councillor did not agree that enough care was taken for the evacuation.

– *Does the board think the evacuation was an overreaction, considering it was based on speculation from the police, not physical proof?*

The EB does not think they overreacted to the information of the threat and decided to believe the police as the most trustworthy source and not discriminating against the occupiers. This was criticised by a few councillors who raised the issue that police can be racist, harassing, or act in discriminatory ways; thus, the board could have considered that risk playing out on the occupiers. The EB did not have enough information at the time to know how the evacuation functioned but wished to have avoided the forcible evacuation.

– *Why was the mobile unit called?*

The board members did not personally request the presence of the mobile unit; however, it is understood as standard procedure in evictions.

– *Why was CMT not involved?*

The EB did not see the occupation as a strategic crisis until the evacuation; there were regular CTOs present that reacted on an operational level.

– *How will the EB ensure to avoid a similar event in the future?*

The EB will focus on ensuring individual contact with the interested people in the community, as well as maintaining transparency about their projects and better informing the community. For example, the EB is hosting Dialogues on Erasmian values and is interested in reimplementing monthly discussions on sustainability topics. Also, the board will be present in a bottom-up roundtable on academic freedom taking place on the upcoming Thursday. Also, the EB offered to have tea with the occupiers.

– *If an external threat presents itself in a future situation, how will the EB react toward the internally involved parties?*

The EB is currently discussing ground rules in preparation for future occupations; some of these rules include no violence, destruction, discrimination, and following safety instructions.

– *Will there be support from EUR towards students affected by the evacuation, by missing deadlines?*

The EB will conduct an evaluation if exams were interfered with, however, the decision lies with the exam committee.

Throughout the discussion, the EB refused to speculate on behalf of the police and will address several of the questions and remarks received from the UC in an evaluation meeting with the police forces. The UC will be informed of the outcome of the evaluation.

**Action point:** The EB will share the outcome of the evaluation of OccupyEUR. This will be tabled in an upcoming cycle as soon as it becomes available.

#### **02.07 Accessibility EUR**

Due to time constraints, this topic was taken off the agenda. The UC will discuss internally the exact information they require from the EB; a letter with the remarks will be sent to the EB before the end of the cycle. The EB indicated that the UC could take part within the working groups.

#### **02.08 International students**

Due to time constraints, this topic was taken off the agenda. The Chair reminded the UC that the order of the agenda topics can be changed only if requested at the beginning of each meeting; otherwise, topics of *initiative* are tabled last on the agenda.

#### **02.09 State of affairs advice UC to EB**

Due to time constraints, this topic was taken off the agenda.

### **03 Any other business**

#### **03.01 Sinterklaas celebration 2022**

Due to time constraints, this topic was taken off the agenda.

**Action point:** All topics that were not discussed due to time constraints will be tabled in a following meeting.

### **04 Closing**