

**University Council**  
**Third Plenary Meeting**  
**Erasmus University Rotterdam**

**Date and Time:** 19/12/2023, 14:00 – 16:00

**Location:** Polak 1-21

**Present in the Meeting:** **Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair)**, Ernst Hulst, Sebastiaan Kamp, Pedro van Gessel, Joseph Ayinla, Albert Wagelmans, Nawin Ramcharan, Aki Negate, Linqendo van der Klooster, Emre Ulusoy, Emese von Bone, Katarzyna Lasak, Aleid Fokkema, Tom van Dijken, Achraf Taouil, Anthony van der Linden, Wesley Hennep, Rosita Boedhai-Jansen, Rami Elorabi, Natascha Kraal, Ellie Cercel (Minutes).

**Absent:** Timo Zandvliet, Cagla Altin, Yasin Demir, Linda Dekker, Max Wagenaar, Roxanne Austin (Clerk).

## **01 Opening**

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

The agenda was set.

### **01.02 Minutes second plenary meeting**

A councillor remarked that the action point regarding *Campus Safety* was removed and asked for an update. The action point is ongoing, and the municipality is involved in setting up a meeting. With this clarification, the minutes and action points were set.

### **1.03 Announcements**

- *Supervisory board meeting (18/12)*

#### **Financial situation of the EUR**

The Supervisory Board is closely involved in the EUR budget through the audit committee. They explained that the EUR has a lot of reserves. The prospect is a negative result, due to inflation costs for employees. Also, the number of students is declining. But given the comfortable financial situation, EUR can handle this, although in the near future, EUR has to make some decisions on cost-effectiveness and become less dependent on the first-money stream.

There will also be investments. For example, Tinbergen, but also a campus in development 3 and 4. In addition, the investments in IT and sustainability. Those are enablers for education and the future of the university. Investment costs are increasing every year. an estimate for Tinbergen is expected in Q1 of 2024. these investments will probably be financed by a combination of treasury banking and own reserves. The multi-year budget plan will also be discussed by the Supervisory Board with the Executive Board.

#### **International students**

The SB explained their view on this topic and mentioned that during the past years, universities have lost their grip on internationalization. Ten years ago, efforts were made to increase internationalization. There are no good control mechanisms in the current system. However, converting back to Dutch is very drastic. the good thing about the current proposal from the minister is that it does not affect master's programs at all, but only bachelors. Internationalization issues mainly affect master's programs. Universities are asked to come up with plans for getting more

control on internationalisation and they are currently working on this. The good thing about the proposal is that it does not affect master's programs at all, but only bachelors. Internationalization issues mainly affect master's programs.

### **Polarisation on campus**

The SB explained that this is not just a development at EUR but it is happening nationally. Neutrality is the position you normally seek, but this is challenged from different sides. They support the Executive Board's stance as expressed in an Executive Board message a few weeks ago, which condemned the violence and expressed the necessity to keep talking and to discuss pain and frustration with each other.

### **Outcome national elections**

The Council's concern is that it is not certain how much more will be invested in higher education with this outcome. So, we have to be careful about investments. There must be a balanced budget in '25. The main points of the budget plan and the task force for financial measures that is currently developing a set of priorities regarding the objectives must also be carefully examined by the UR

### **Island culture and unified University**

We asked if the SB in their visits to faculties also experienced the so-called 'island culture'. The SB has seen less of an island culture in recent years. They also explained that it also occurs in other universities that people 'at the workplace' do not always identify themselves with the University's strategy or mission. They point out that in a way it is part of academic culture that different faculties make their own 'translation' of a central mission/strategy. Faculties are different and that also involves sailing your own course, even though you're still part of the fleet. The diversity of the faculties is therefore also a positive development. And they stressed that they see that it is also striking that faculties are working on the EUR strategy.

The question however remains if there is enough solidarity when hard choices must be made (financially). During the plenary, a member of the TF Finance remarked that they are also tackling the issue of collaboration on shared financial decisions between the faculties.

#### *- UC End of the year event*

This afternoon, the UC is attending the end-of-the-year event at Sugo Pizza in the city. The event starts with drinks at 17.00. The UC Chair apologized for being unable to attend the event.

#### *- Updates HR policymakers from TF Social Safety and Wellbeing*

Recently, the members of the TF Social Safety and Wellbeing had a meeting with the HR policymakers to discuss the topics of *Mindlab* and *Safe@EUR* and shared a summary of it with the UC. A more extensive report of the discussion was shared in the TF Teams channel. Following the *Mindlab*, it has been positively appraised by those in attendance. However, attendance varied highly, with some schools, e.g., ESSB and ESHCC, attending in larger numbers, while other schools, e.g., EUC, not engaging at all. Although ISS did not partake, the HR policymakers believe there are positive prospects for them. EMC was more difficult to tackle, as they have a separate HR department from the rest of the faculties.

*Safe@EUR* also has positive developments and there is a high level of engagement with the instrument. A change in focus was observed from reports about unsafe behavior to worrying behavior.

However, the road to legal and confidential assistance is not always clearly indicated, which is a difficulty the policymakers are aware of but have difficulty solving.

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

### **02.01 Budgets HeQa Programmes**

The TF HeQa engaged in multiple discussions with policymakers and the various HeQa project leads over the course of several months. Based on their assessments, they concluded that the budgets for CLI, Impact at the Core, and Student Wellbeing should be given consent, however, they strongly suggested against consenting to the Erasmus X budget. Their choice was further elaborated in the draft letter of consent and during the meeting.

In meetings with Erasmus X representatives, the project *Inclusive Education Program* raised several concerns. Overall, it is unclear what the impact of the project will be, as it is lacking concrete outcome indicators and the impact is not stated in the impact definition document; thus, we believe that the proposed budget amount is not proportional to the uncertainty of the possible outcome. In addition, the councillors disagree with the proposed task of Erasmus X in this project of deciding which policies to implement. We disagree with the goal of Erasmus X to influence policy changes around inclusion and diversity, and we failed to see a clear reason as to why it should not fall under strategic funding (e.g., IDEA), instead of HeQa funding. Adding onto that, we have concerns about the setup and methodology of the project. We are not convinced that the team structure, comprised of one experienced staff member and 6 student assistants, has a balanced knowledge base that can sustain the proposed task. We further disagree that the methodology employed for this project, for instance using street data and convenience sampling, is a form of evidence-based practice, as it does not objectively capture the wide range of needs in the EUR community. Finally, the alleged need for commencing this project, described to us by the policymakers as arising from several discussions between IDEA staff members and the Inclusion Education Program lead based on alleged requests from an unknown number of teachers, and not as a request from a strategic need, is not sufficiently and clearly defined. We believe it should be based on more concrete requests that can be objectively identified and strategically grounded. Finally, besides the budget allocated for staff compensation, 45k Euros are intended for event planning for a period of 5 months, however, it was not clearly described why the amount is necessary and what it shall be concretely spent on. In conclusion, the councillors see a need for a more detailed version of the budget for the events.

The UC members understood the concerns of the HeQa members and there was overall agreement on the issues described. Following the discussion, a voting procedure took place, with the majority voting against consenting to the Erasmus X budget at the current moment in time. A discussion followed on how this decision should be tackled. On one hand, it was suggested to postpone the decision to the first or second plenary meetings of the upcoming cycle, which would allow the Erasmus X policymakers to provide answers to our concerns. This choice would allow the HeQa TF to make a more informed decision at a later point in time, and it would align with how previous similar topics were handled in the UC. On the other hand, deciding on not giving consent in the current meeting would allow the policymakers to resubmit a budget proposal in line with the concerns raised by the UC, proving more productive to both the Erasmus X team and the HeQa TF. Although the deadline for topic submissions passed, the council could be accommodating and allow this budget to be submitted for the upcoming cycle.

In conclusion, the majority of the UC members voted in favour of not giving consent on the Erasmus X budget proposal. The UC agreed on sending the draft letter *Budgets HeQa programs* with the additions discussed in the third plenary meeting.

**Action plan:** The HeQa Clerk will adjust the draft letter of consent and advice on *Budgets HeQa programmes* with the additions discussed in the plenary meeting. The UC Clerk will format the letter of consent on *Budgets HeQa programmes* and share it with the EB.

## **02.02 EUR Meerjarenplan 2024-2027**

The letter of consent was shared with the UC. The TF Finance advises the council to give consent to the *EUR Meerjarenplan 2024-2027* with respect to the negative budget forecast of 6M, and with additional points of advice.

Specifically, the advice from the UC recommends that we are kept in close contact with the CPC policymakers and the central financial task force in the development of measurements for preventing a potential unhealthy financial disbalance in the future. This advice was communicated in the CM and in separate discussions with the CPC policymakers and the TF Finance, and it has already been afforded, as a meeting on the matter will be scheduled in January 2024. Another focus area is on the concerns of the UC about the political news and legal changes that are expected to affect educational institutions. Finally, one point of advice relates specifically to the HeQa budgets, as the TF Finance requests an overview of which of the HeQa projects will be discontinued and which will be allocated to regular finance budgets. The HeQa TF members agreed to include this request in the letter of consent, with an addition about projects that are currently fully or partially funded by HeQa money.

The UC agreed to send the letter with the final adjustment made in the meeting.

**Action point:** the TF Finance members will adjust the letter of consent *EUR Meerjarenplan 2024-2027* with the adjustment regarding HeQa investment. The UC Clerk will format the concept letter of consent on *EUR Meerjarenplan 2024-2027* and share it with the Executive Board. ]

## **02.03 Order Regulations for EUR Buildings, Grounds, and Facilities 2024.**

The Task Force assigned to this agenda point was unable to arrive at a common viewpoint and requested more time to prepare their advice. Specifically, there is a lack of agreement on whether the Order Regulations and House rules should highlight a separate procedure for demonstrations compared to the policy for Events with External Speakers.

The disagreement continued in the meeting. On one hand, several councillors believe there should be consistency in handling campus events and demonstrations to prevent loopholes arising from the different policies. There is also concern about the lack of regulatory basis of the policy document, as it is missing a link with the House rules. Also, they were of the opinion that, since a similar procedure for demonstrations exists at the municipality level, it should also be developed on campus. On the other hand, several councillors believe that demonstrations and speaker events are fundamentally different and should be regulated differently; also, the proposed procedure would infringe on democratic rights to demonstrate on campus. Also, since it is known that the space outside campus buildings is under the regulation of the Rotterdam municipality, there is no need to develop a procedure separate from that of the municipality. Also, manifestations happen depending on rapidly developing world events, and requesting the right to manifest 6 weeks in advance would not be possible.

Seeing as no consensus was reached in the meeting, it was decided upon the postponement of the topic until the first plenary meeting of the next cycle. If the Task Force continues to face difficulty in

arriving at a shared viewpoint, two different options will be outlined and shared with the UC to be voted upon.

**Action points:** the UC Clerk will table the topic *Order Regulations for EUR Buildings, Grounds, and Facilities 2024* at the first plenary meeting and inform the policymakers of the delay in advice. The Task Force will prepare the content of the agenda point for a voting procedure in the first or second plenary

#### **02.04 Compensation student members participation**

The letter of advice on *Compensation student members participation* was shared on Teams. No remarks were made in the meeting. The UC agreed to send the letter.

**Action point:** the UC Clerk will format the concept letter *Compensation student members participation* and share it with the EB.

#### **02.05 Erasmus MC Bachelor of Medicine Selection Regulations 2024-2025**

The letter of advice on *Erasmus MC Bachelor of Medicine Selection Regulations 2024-2025* was shared on Teams. No remarks were made in the meeting. The UC agreed to send the letter.

**Action point:** the UC Clerk will format the concept letter *Erasmus MC Bachelor of Medicine Selection Regulations 2024-2025* and share it with the EB.

#### **02.06 EUR campaign budget rules for the student elections of the University Council 2024**

The letter of advice was not shared in Teams. However, a proposal was shared by a councillor in Teams and several questions and remarks were gathered in the Task Force and shared with the Central Election Office. As the Task Force is currently waiting on the answers, the discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

**Action points:** the UC Clerk will table the agenda item *EUR campaign budget rules for the student elections of the University Council 2024* at the first plenary meeting and inform the policymakers of the delay in advice. The Task Force will prepare for a discussion during the first or second plenary meeting.

#### **02.07 Financial semi-annual report Investment program CiO**

The UC was sufficiently informed, and no remarks were shared in the meeting.

#### **02.08 Evaluation CM**

The members of the UC reflected on the events at the Consultation Meeting. Specifically, a communication challenge arose, due to confusion in how one of the topics was handled between the Chair and the members of the UC. The UC reflected on this incident and decided to be more explicit in the future when deciding on the expectations and parameters within which discussions can occur.

### **03 Incoming documents**

#### **03.01 ESE – letters regarding Campus Opening Hours**

The ESE requested the UC's attention to the situation around the opening hours of the office buildings at the EUR campus. The UC decided against tackling the request, as it would be more appropriately addressed by the Executive Board. The UC decided, however, to table the topic in the April cycle in order to evaluate the policy, one year after it was implemented.

**Action points:** the UC Clerk will reply to the letter with the request to share the letter directly with the EB, and table it topic for a discussion in the April cycle.

#### **03.02 Response to 38677 Appeal for Enhancing Measures Against Smoking on Campus**

The members of the UC were invited to join a meeting with the Team Lead for Service Management to tackle this topic. Councillors Achraf, Albert, and Anthony will join the meeting. No additional remarks were made to the letter.

**Action point:** the UC Clerk will communicate the attendance to the meeting with the Service Management Team Lead.

### **04 Any other business**

#### **04.01 Tinbergen building renovation meeting**

RE&F invited a group of councillors for a meeting centred around the plans for the Tinbergen renovation, preferably in the week of January 8. The topics covered will be accessibility, safety, and sustainability. Councillors Rami, Achraf, Wesley, Anthony, Sebastiaan, and Tom will join the meeting.

**Action point:** the UC Clerk will share the UC attendance for the Tinbergen building renovation meeting.

#### **04.02 Evaluation Student parties**

A councillor remarked that, when the previous UC decided to switch to a student party system, it was agreed to evaluate this change within 2 years; she invited the UC to think about what the evaluation would look like. The UC agreed to add this to the action points to keep track of the action.

**Action point:** the UC will evaluate the student party system.

#### **04.03 Erasmus Labour Council meeting**

Several UC members participated in a meeting with the Erasmus Labour Council and appraised it positively, encouraging the UC to increase the frequency and commitment of these meetings in the future. It was also suggested to schedule the meetings back-to-back to increase attendance.

**Action point:** the UC Administration will discuss the planning of meetings with ELC.

*Erasmus*