

University Council
Consultation Meeting UC/EB
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Date and Time: 16/04/2024, 14:00 – 16:30h

Location: 3.09 Polak

Present in the Meeting: **Ivonne Cune-Noten (chair)**, Ed Brinksma (Chair EB), Ellen van Schoten (Vice-chair EB), Ann O'Brien, Pedro van Gessel, Ernst Hulst, Sebastiaan Kamp, Joseph Ayinla, Timo Zandvliet, Cagla Altin, Esra Kahramanoglu, Nawin Ramcharan, Linqendo van der Klooster, Emre Ulusoy, Linda Dekker, Emese von Bone, Aleid Fokkema, Tom van Dijken, Aki Negate, Achraf Taouil, Katarzyna Lasak, Rosita Boedhai-Jansen, Max Wagenaar, Albert Wagelmans, Roxanne Austin (Clerk), Ellie Cercel (Minutes), Sophie Luck (M&C), Hanna Barkoczi (M&C).

Absent: Natascha Kraal, Anthony van der Linden, Yasin Demir, Wesley Hennep, Annelien Bredenoord (Rector).

01 Opening consultation meeting

01.01 Setting of the agenda

The agenda was set without any adjustments.

01.02 Setting of the minutes and action points

The minutes of the previous meeting were adjusted with the addition that, in response to the council's question "How are student parties funded?", the Executive Board gave the answer "No comment".

01.03 Announcements

- *EB-UC activity after the meeting*

The UC and EB will have a joint event this afternoon from 17.30 – 19.00 at Mooie Boules. We will start with a game of jeu de boules and end the event with some drinks and snacks.

- *Appointment of a Strategic Dean of Impact and Engagement*

The Executive Board announced that, as of April 1st, a Strategic Dean of Impact and Engagement has been appointed. This position will serve as an addition to the Board of Deans, in order to further develop the impact and engagement of the Strategy as well as facilitate collaborations across the EUR faculties, an aspect which has required additional attention in the past. The board expects the Dean to be central in both the devising and the execution of the strategy, however, the responsibility will not fall solely on this role. The EB added that the position is not structural, and it will be evaluated after some time to assess its effectiveness in the strategic process.

- *Absence Rector*

The Executive Board would like to excuse the absence of the Rector, who is currently engaged in a delegation in Brussels.

02 Agenda items consultation meeting

02.01 Compensation participatory bodies (faculty staff) | 02.02 Compensation participatory bodies (program committees)

The University Council discussed the documentation and prepared several points to be addressed to the Executive Board.

Firstly, the University Council would like to point out that there is no mention of the compensation for Service Council members (*dienstraden*). While the policymaker stated that the discussions about their compensation started up later than for staff members and other participatory bodies and that they require more time to arrive at a consensus on viable compensation for the Service Councils, the initial advice of the University Council on the matter of compensation pointed out the service councils. In light of this, the UC would like to inquire what were the hesitations and considerations of the EB when not including the service councils in this policy. In their reply, the Executive Board acknowledged the mention of the service council in the initial UC's advice and went on to explain that this consideration slipped away from the attention of the support staff at the beginning of the process, only to be remembered later throughout the process. Moreover, while consulting the rules of order, the EB remarked that there are differences between regular participatory bodies and the service councils with respect to the compensation framework; also, the members of the councils can assess and determine their own level of engagement, an aspect which should be taken into account when determining the compensation.

In response to the UC's concern that the service councils receive sufficient time to fulfil their duties, the EB agreed, stating it is in their interest to properly identify and satisfy the needs of the service councils. Also, the UC advised sharing more information regarding the role of the service councils with those in management positions, as it appears that this information is not often available. For these reasons, the Executive Board proposed they will be in contact with the service councils, to gain insight into their communication and compensation arrangements.

Secondly, the University Council advised that the wording of point 3 on the cover note gets clarified to ensure it is interpreted as intended. Also, the UC inquired the EB how they plan on communicating the new policy to ensure that the participatory bodies are aware of the change. According to the Executive Board, they will inform the Deans and Vice-Deans of all Faculties, as well as the Faculty Councils' secretaries, to ensure that the regulations are known to all members involved. The EB went on to explain that the policy informs each Faculty that the minimum compensation should be implemented, as well as asking the governance to consider increasing the amount depending on the specific needs of each participatory body.

Action point: the Executive Board will contact the service councils for input regarding their compensation and communication arrangements.

02.03 Request evaluation of institutional ties

The University Council would like to follow up with a discussion on the EB's response letter to the proposal of evaluating institutional ties. Several questions were raised.

- *What does the EB have in mind when they talk about soft diplomacy? How do they see soft diplomacy developing in this conflict? What are they intended to do?*

According to the Executive Board, the term *soft diplomacy* is meant to represent maintaining ties with partners in the areas of science, culture, or sport in situations of heightened political tension. In past experiences, it has been observed that maintaining scientific ties despite difficult governmental

relations has been beneficial in the resolution of some issues. They also shared that allegedly half of the people of Israel are opposed to the governmental decisions, some of which may be part of the scientific community, thus also stating that cutting ties with these communities has to be done with careful consideration.

- *The EB mentions “the state Hamas”. That is not what was stated in the UC letter, as the letter was about “the state of Palestine”. Could the EB explain why they refer to “the state of Hamas” as this seems incorrect?*

The Executive Board clarified that, with the phrasing “the state of Israel and Hamas” they referred to “the state of Israel” as well as to “the Hamas”, thus not recognizing Hamas as a state; in addition, their letter might be a reflection of Palestine not being recognized as a state in the Netherlands but emphasized that the choice of words does not reflect a conscious decision to avoid the term.

- *Is there a timeline for the evaluation and establishment of the committee? Can we get more information about what the committee will look like? Who will join? How is the committee chosen?*

Two staff members have been appointed to take the lead in the establishment of the committee, and their suggestions will be revised by the EB; more information regarding the members and the advisory criteria will be shared once the committee has been appointed.

- *The EB mentions a lack of a “legal basis”. Universities can take on new ties legally. There is a legal basis, but there is no legal obligation. Can the EB clarify the “lack of a legal basis”?*

According to the Executive Board, the goal is to maximize academic freedom, including ensuring open discussions on difficult issues such as the current one. Therefore, they would only consider reducing this freedom on a certain legal basis, such as when imposed by the Dutch government or a treaty to which the EUR is bound.

- *Can the EB clarify when they will take action in relation to the ICJ ruling? If NL does not follow the ICJ ruling, would the EB still consider the ICJ ruling in the evaluation?*

According to the Executive Board, the ICJ ruling, although very important, imposes obligations on states and not on universities. If there is a ruling, it could be interpreted by the Dutch/European governing bodies, which in turn could have implications for universities. However, as the committee will be established, they could assess the details of the ruling, alongside other factors, when making a decision.

- *The University of Groningen will investigate how it can contribute to the restoration of the bombed knowledge institutes and offer opportunities to fleeing students and researchers. The University of Amsterdam has opened a fund aimed at UvA students from Palestine and Israel who are experiencing mental or financial issues due to the war. Would the EB consider implementing similar (joint) initiatives at EUR?*

An emergency fund exists at EUR that is equipped to deal with issues of EUR students who suffer the consequences of the war, such as in this situation. With regard to the obliteration of the Gaza academic infrastructure, the topic of relief will be discussed within UNL, as it requires coordination with other Dutch academic institutions. As it was unclear what the conditions for the relief fund are at other universities, the EB will inquire about this at the upcoming UNL meeting.

- *Which cases will qualify for the committee to be consulted?*

The Executive Board will discuss with the committee, once established, what the rules of their engagement will be. Currently, it can be imagined the role will be an advisory one, at the request of the board itself or, for instance, the University Council.

Action point: the Executive Board will inquire what the conditions for the relief fund are at other UNL institutions.

Action point: The Executive Board will share with the UC more information regarding the role and the members of the committee (institutional ties).

03 Any other business

03.01 Smoking on campus

As the issue of smoking on campus is becoming more of a challenge at our campus as well as at other Dutch universities, the UC would like to ask the Executive Board whether there are any national-level strategies to combat the issue.

According to the Executive Board, a few measures have been taken, including a campaign (“this is Rosa”) encouraging people not to smoke, and a collaboration with the Behavioural Insight Group Rotterdam specializing in nudging, to figure out ways of encouraging people not to smoke as well as avoid littering the campus. The EB stated, however, that they are not interested in instilling stricter measures, such as fines, to combat the issue of smoking, and any initiatives will be taken in compliance with the national rules and regulations. They are also in close contact with their UNL partners, to identify some collaborative strategies.

The UC members suggested looking into ways of discouraging smoking specifically from building entrances, as it pollutes the lobbies, as well as increasing the authoritative behaviour of security staff. The EB appreciated the suggestions and will follow up with the respective groups.

Action point: the Executive Board will discuss the suggestions of the UC regarding reducing smoking on campus with the Behavioural Insight Group Rotterdam, their UNL partners, and the campus security staff.

03.02 Sleeping pods on campus Woudestein

The UC proposed sleeping pods on the EUR campus to help the wellbeing initiative, such as preventing sleep issues for students. Although the UC is still in contact with RE&F to establish the financial and practical aspects of the proposal, the UC asked the opinion of the EB regarding the idea.

The EB find the idea interesting and they do understand the question, however this is not as simple as providing a space. If such an initiative were to take place on our campus, it is also EUR’s responsibility. There are multiple issues that need to be considered such as: fire plan, building code (Bouwbesluit), infrastructure provisions (electrical, data, ventilation, escape routes), communications (adjusting floor plans, MyEUR), supervision and (cleaning) management of the facilities.

The primary task from EUR is to provide education and research. In this process, RE&F has the task to keep things clean, whole and safe. RE&F will first have to focus on putting and keeping things in order within the given frameworks, such as accessibility, sustainability and the quality of our services. That is where, whilst the idea is indeed interesting and will probably fulfil in a wish, RE&F needs to prioritize on this year.

03.03 Medical assistance on campus

Recently, a student suffered from a dislocated arm; in this case, the first aid was not able to provide enough support, and an ambulance could not be called, resulting in an unpleasant experience for the injured student. The UC inquired how the EB feels about having a medical person on campus permanently. According to the Executive Board, they do not see the possibility of providing full-time medical help on campus, however, they are open to consider ways to improve the communication and training of employees trained in first aid, to prevent similar situations occurring in the future.

Action point: the Executive Board will request an update on the communication and training possibilities of first-aid-trained staff members on campus.

03.04 Cafeteria Mandeville

Following the closing of the Tinbergen building for renovations, including the Tinbergen cafeteria, the Mandeville cafeteria has become overcrowded, with queues in the lunch rush hour leading up to the elevator. The UC would like to discuss with the EB whether they have considered a short-term solution to this issue.

The Executive Board is discussing options for increasing the cafeteria capacity with the campus supplier, Vitam, such as organizing 80 more seats in Mandeville, as well as opening an outlet on the ground floor of the Van der Goot building and extending the outlet in the Theil building. However, due to regulations surrounding procurement for public companies, as established by the European Union, it is not possible to work together with different companies than Vitam to outsource catering options.