

**University Council
Consultation meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

Date and Time: 27-05-2025, 14:00-16:00

Location: Polak 2.09

Present in the meeting: Annelien Bredenoord (EB Chair), Jantine Schuit (EB, Rector Magnificus), Ellen van Schoten (EB, Vice-Chair), Ann O'Brien (EB, secretary), Luca Hellings (Chair), Floortje Dekker (Minutes), Jasper Klasen, Sebastiaan Kamp, Achraf Taouil, Jaap Cornelese, Aleid Fokkema, Esra Kahramanoglu, Deniz Alican, Linda Dekker, Rosita Boedhai, Katarzyna Lasak, Jaron Buitelaar, Nawin Ramcharan, Reinier van Woerden, Federica Violi, Timo Zandvliet, Bachar Farousi, Max Wagenaar, Clara Egger, Luna Becirspahic, Sara Ouljour,

Absent: Albert Wagelmans, Daan de Boer, Hugo Speelman

01 Opening

01.01 Setting of the agenda

There were no remarks on the agenda, therefore the agenda was set.

01.02 The setting of the previous minutes

There were no remarks on the minutes, therefore the minutes were set.

01.03 Announcements

Advice collaborations fossil fuel industry

The EB announced that an advice has been issued, to which they have given a formal response. The first step in the framework is a partner test to assess whether an industry partner is harmful to the environment. The second step is to evaluate whether the partner contributes to energy sustainability goals. The advice has largely been adopted, with only slight adjustments, and the content of the framework has been embraced. The EB expressed pride in this achievement and emphasized that the process is formative. They plan to conduct an evaluation in June 2026 to assess whether this new method of working is effective and feasible for EUR, and to understand the experience of third-party partners.

The EB invited the UC to provide input on the document, stating that their advice is very welcome. The advisory committee will remain in place, while the fossil fuel committee was established specifically for this issue. A UC member expressed appreciation that the EB decided to adopt the advice and asked how the EB envisions this progressing in the future. The member noted that the advice reflects the views of the broader EUR community and stated that the policy framework would be ineffective if it were only applied to faculty activities. The EB responded that other types of activities are more difficult to include, but they are open to looking into the broader network of private partners connected to EUR. They emphasized that the document should be seen as a "living" document and expressed interest in having continued conversations with students. However, they do not wish to police students their individual connections.

A UC member acknowledged the complexity of making the framework mandatory for all, but shared concerns about other forms of collaboration. Another member asked how the UC was involved in the decision-making process. The EB replied that a UC member was part of the fossil fuels committee and reiterated that the UC is welcome to provide advice and discuss the topic. The Chair noted that this point will be placed on the agenda in the next cycle. A UC member asked how the EB intends to proactively inform the UC about the advice. The Chair

replied that the two pieces of advice were shared on Teams. The EB added that the formal response (bestuurlijke reactie) will be published within two weeks.

02 Agenda items consultation meeting

02.01 Revision of the recognition regulations for student organisations

The Taskforce formulated some questions after reviewing the documents. The first point concerned the handling of data. Student organisations are required to share student numbers with the EUR. A UC member from the taskforce expressed concerns about the responsibility placed on the boards of student organisations in handling sensitive data. The UC member asked how the EB plans to ensure there are no issues regarding data privacy. The EB responded that this requirement for student numbers has been in place for some time. Furthermore, only names and student numbers are needed, and no additional personal information is required. The purpose of collecting this data is to verify the number of members in an organisation and to prevent fraud.

A UC member remarked that the EB is essentially creating lists that could identify individuals by religion or sexual orientation, as names and numbers can be linked to specific types of organisations. The EB responded that they are legally allowed to request this data and that the procedure complies with current legislation. The EB asked what an alternative would be. A UC member from the taskforce suggested that the EB could consider using an intermediary party. The EB replied that they could look into this. Another UC member stated that even though the procedure has been in place for years, that does not necessarily mean it is a good one. A different UC member asked what the actual difference would be between providing the data to a third party versus the EB. The EB indicated that they would explore this possibility.

Next, a UC member inquired about the recognition evaluation period and remarked that they were not convinced by the explanation given by the policy makers. The EB explained that they chose a three-year period to streamline internal processes and ensure sufficient information is available. They stated that a three-year cycle works better from a procedural standpoint. However, the EB did indicate they would evaluate whether this timeframe proves effective. A UC member remarked that it is important to take into account the burden this could place on student associations, especially smaller ones. Another UC member asked how the declining number of members in student organisations is taken into account. The EB responded that they would still maintain the three-year period. Another UC member asked why the EB does not consider a six-year period. The EB replied that they could explore this option.

A UC member also brought up that the special exemptions for student organisations will be removed. The UC member expressed concern that smaller communities which may struggle to meet the required membership threshold could be excluded, although they could still offer value. The EB responded that they are not worried about this outcome, as organisations that are not officially recognised can still exist. The UC member recommended that the EB evaluate this decision as well and suggested that alternative forms of recognition could be considered.

Lastly, a question was raised regarding the Erasmian values outlined in the regulations. The UC expressed a desire for a clearer interpretation, as the understanding of these values could vary depending on who is in charge. The EB replied that Erasmian values include concepts such as being open-minded and socially engaged. While they are open to making the values more concrete, they prefer to leave the definition flexible. Another UC member suggested changing the wording from “adhere to” to “do not conflict with” Erasmian values.

02.02 Year Report 2024 Network Confidential Counsellors

Firstly, the UC member inquired about how the EB views its role in mitigating the effects of impending budget cuts, which may lead to difficult decisions and increased strain on the organization, possibly resulting in more cases of abuse of authority, labour conflicts, bullying, and harassment. The UC member also asked how the EB plans to ensure that the confidentiality counsellors will not be overwhelmed by the increased demand for their services. The EB acknowledged that budget cuts indeed create anxiety and uncertainty within the organization. They emphasized the importance of leadership, especially in challenging times, and noted that different times require different types of leadership. Some managers are better suited to crisis situations, while others perform better in calmer environments. The EB stated that leadership development is high on their agenda and serves as a way to mitigate these challenges. They want to be prepared and highlighted the importance of self-reflection among leaders. In response to a follow-up question on whether leaders are genuinely willing to evaluate themselves, the EB stated that they believe so and that self-evaluation can also be supported by feedback from colleagues.

Another UC member asked whether there are early warning mechanisms in place to detect burnout and stress-related issues. The EB responded that they use the E&E scan, which provides substantial information, and that there are also monthly conversations within teams to monitor well-being. They clarified that the university is not currently in crisis, but acknowledged it is a challenging time. The EB also stated this is also an opportunity to evaluate the current organizational structure.

Secondly, the UC member inquired about the report's observation that some managers are reluctant to take action, which leads to escalation and potentially increased burnout. They asked what steps the EB would take to ensure that managers respond appropriately. The EB responded that this issue has always existed to some extent and is often only brought to their attention when conflicts have already escalated. They are considering making participation in the leadership programme mandatory. This programme is also being redeveloped, but it will take time to train individuals and replace ineffective managers. The UC member then asked whether the EB could be more proactive in conflict management. The EB responded there are 6,000 employees and a system is already in place. Taking direct action in individual cases could mean bypassing responsible figures, such as vice deans. However, the EB emphasized the importance of staying informed and mentioned that the ombudsfunctionaris meets regularly with them. While complaints to the ombudsfunctionaris are usually anonymous, they still provide insight into organizational issues.

A UC member pointed out that confidentiality counsellors currently do not cluster complaints in a structured way, and when clustering does happen, it is mostly through informal channels. The UC member expressed the desire for counsellors to have the opportunity to communicate with each other to better identify patterns. The EB responded that this could be addressed in conversations scheduled for July. The UC member also inquired about how the EB intends to support confidentiality counsellors in distinguishing between labour conflicts and harassment or abuse of power. The EB responded that while they are not directly involved in resolving these conflicts, they offer training to confidentiality counsellors to help them recognize situations where additional steps may be needed. The EB expressed a desire to further professionalize the confidentiality counsellor system and welcomed suggestions on how to set up an early warning system.

Furthermore, the UC member inquired about what should happen if confidentiality counsellors observe a concentration of labour conflicts or cases of abuse of power within a particular team. They asked whether the EB encourages these counsellors to report such trends to the dean or the EB. The EB noted that this issue ties back to internal communication and reiterated their intention to explore how such signals can be shared more effectively without violating confidentiality agreements. The UC member asked about the fact that confidentiality counsellors had been without a coordinator for six months, and asked how the EB would prevent such a situation in the future. The EB assured the UC that they will take steps to avoid this happening again.

Lastly, the UC member inquired about what steps the EB will take to better support PhD candidates who face significant challenges. The EB responded that they are actively working on this issue. They mentioned plans to include a specific track within the leadership programme focused on supervising PhD candidates, acknowledging that this group is particularly vulnerable. The EB clarified that the BKO track and the PhD supervision component within the leadership programme will be separate. They also acknowledged that not all PhD supervisors are necessarily leaders, which needs to be taken into account.

02.03 Brede Rotterdamse studentenraad

Firstly, a UC member inquired about the legitimacy and relevance of receiving advice from the BRS. Considering that only 3 out of 26 students in the council represent the whole EUR student community. The EB responded that many aspects of the BRS remain unclear, as they only became aware of it recently. The BRS is an advisory body to the municipality, not to the university but they can still provide enriching perspectives for the university.

The BRS regulations state that educational institutions must support the conditions for participation, including balanced representation from MBO, HBO, and WO students and being welcome to all students regardless of background, gender, or other personal characteristics. The UC questioned how the EB views the BRS given that it currently lacks proportional representation and does not accommodate non-Dutch-speaking students. The EB responded that they will contact the municipality for further clarification and have not yet formed a definitive stance. Another UC member disagreed with the suggestion that the representation in the BRS is not proportional, stating that this should be reassessed. A different UC member raised concerns about the BRS meetings being conducted in Dutch and asked whether the EB would be willing to provide a translator to ensure inclusivity. The EB responded that the municipality has the autonomy to conduct meetings in Dutch and that the university has no influence over this decision. They noted that providing a translator could be

challenging due to current budget constraints. Also, it is a body from the municipality, so it is their responsibility to ensure inclusivity. Finally, a UC member inquired whether the responsibility for engaging with the BRS lies formally with the UC. The EB clarified that the formal responsibility lies with the EUR as an institution, but acknowledged that this still needs further internal discussion.

02.04 Eur polls

A UC member emphasized the importance of student input and asked whether the EB is open to structurally using polls on MyEUR to increase engagement. The EB responded that polls already exist on MyEUR and suggested that the UC could contact the marketing department to explore adding polls. The EB expressed openness to incorporating polls as a means of engagement. When asked whether the results of such polls could be used in decision-making, the EB replied that they are open to this, but it would depend on the specific poll and context.

02.05 Online library resources

A UC member raised follow-up questions regarding access to library resources for retired staff. The EB reaffirmed their commitment to open science but explained that granting access post-retirement requires an active ERNA account, which presents both security risks and financial implications. Additionally, many publishers restrict access to students and current employees only. The EB emphasized that the primary concern is the security risk associated with continued ERNA access. The UC member responded that they will explore potential alternatives in consultation with the library.

02.06 Dutch language expansions for international students

A UC member gave some context on this initiative. The question for the EB is What is the EB's long term goal or vision for Dutch language courses for internationals considering the strategy and recent developments? The EB responded they are revising their policy on language within the EUR. However this policy is not finished yet. Once this policy is in place they can give a clearer answer. They will come back. A UC member suggested meeting with the policy makers.

Action point:

The EB will get back to the UC once the new EUR language policy is finalized.

02.07 Microwaves on campus

A UC member brought up student complaints regarding the limited availability of facilities to heat up food on campus. They inquired about the EB's general stance on improving this situation. The EB responded that the very limited amount of microwaves or similar facilities on campus is primarily due to fire safety regulations and maintenance concerns. Additionally, the implementation of such facilities is currently not a priority due to limited financial and staffing resources. However, the EB clarified that they are not opposed to the proposal in principle, though they remarked that the implementation may prove difficult.

03 Any other business

03.01 Smoking on campus

A UC member remarked that it has come to the attention of the UC that there have been situations where individuals felt unsafe due to smoking on campus. The EB responded that they are in discussions with Integral Safety and have already taken several actions. The EB remarked that these actions are the extent of what they can do at this point. Another UC member inquired whether the university is in contact with other institutions regarding this issue. The EB responded that RE&F has its own network within UNL, where this topic has been discussed. They noted that not smoking on in public areas is a difficult issue not only for universities, but more broadly as well.

03.02 PhD related topics

Firstly, the UC member inquired about how policy is typically developed and what the EB thinks about the limited involvement of the UC on these topics. The EB responded that, in general, policy documents are discussed with a range of stakeholders. They also mentioned that the university is in the process of forming a PhD Council, which would be involved in discussing PhD-related matters. However, the EB emphasized they do not want to overwhelm the UC with discussions on every topic. The EB remarked that discussions on PhD policy could be discussed within this newly established PhD Council. In response, the UC member remarked that the PhD Council, while representative, has no formal participation rights. The UC member noted that graduate schools also lack formal participation. The UC member therefore emphasized that it remains important for the UC to be involved in the discussion of PhD-related policies.

Secondly, the UC member inquired whether the EB would be open to exploring how the UC could be more actively involved in future PhD-related policies and developments. The EB responded that they could look into creating an overview of all PhD-related policies and share this with the UC once in a while. However, they added that they still need to look into this.

03.03 Diversity travel

Firstly, a UC member inquired whether the EB could provide an update on the evaluation of Diversity Travel. The EB responded that there is regular contact with the representatives of Diversity Travel. They noted that they are not satisfied with the service but that a contract is currently in place. The EB also mentioned that EMC shares this dissatisfaction. Another UC member pointed out that, within EMC, the use of Diversity Travel is not mandatory. The EB stated that they will make their concerns known to Diversity Travel and, if necessary, consider taking legal action.

Furthermore, a UC member asked whether the UC could receive access to the contract and the tender process documentation. The EB replied that they will look into the possibility of sharing these materials. Another UC member remarked that expertise exists within the faculties, which could be useful to the EB regarding this issue. Additionally, a UC member requested access to the legal advice regarding the Diversity Travel contract. The EB responded that they were unsure which specific document this referred to. The UC member clarified that they could follow up on this point after the meeting and remarked that the taskforce will stay in contact with the EB.

Action point:

- The EB will look into whether they can provide the Tender Process Requirements, legal advice and the contract to the UC.

03.04 Advisory committee sensitive collaborations

Firstly, a UC member inquired about how the EB looks at the recent developments on EUR and at other universities in regards to the new advices from different committees and encampments at different universities including ours. Secondly, the UC member asked whether the EB reached out to the encampment two weeks ago. The Executive Board responded that it is valuable to install advisory committees to support decision-making on complex issues. They emphasized that the university is not a political institution and must carefully consider its role. The EB expressed they are content for having established a committee to advise on these matters.

Regarding the encampments and protests, the EB stated that they respect the right to protest. They confirmed that they had made contact with the protesters and communicated the house rules. The EB also noted a distinction between protests taking place inside university buildings and those outside. As protesters occupying buildings can be reported to the police, whereas protests outside fall under the jurisdiction of the mayor, even if house rules are violated. A UC member commented that the EB has the right to enforce the house rules. The EB clarified that they do not have campus police and can only report violations to the municipality. The decision to act on these reports lies with the municipality.

In response, a UC member remarked that the EB should not remove themselves from the enforcement process, since they are the ones who initiate contact with law enforcement. The EB responded that they are indeed a part of this decision and are not removed from it.

Another UC member asked whether the Executive Board would take into account the advice issued by committees at other universities. The EB responded that they would indeed consider these external recommendations. Lastly, a UC member encouraged the EB to not only listen to the advice by the committees into account but to go further in their response.