

University Council
Second Plenary Meeting
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Date and Time: 24-06-2025, 14:00-17:00

Location: Polak 2.09

Present in the meeting: Luca Hellings (Chair), Roxanne Austin (Clerk), Floortje Dekker (Minutes), Hugo Speelman, Sebastiaan Kamp, Achraf Taouil, Jaap Cornelese, Aleid Fokkema, Esra Kahramanoglu, Deniz Alican, Linda Dekker, Nawin Ramcharan, Reinier van Woerden, Federica Violi, Timo Zandvliet, Bachar Farousi, Luna Becirspahic, Sara Ouljour, Max Wagenaar, Albert Wagelmans, Clara Egger

Waiver: Katarzyna Lasak,

Absent: Rosita Boedhai, Jasper Klasen, Bachar Farousi, Daan de Boer, Jaron Buitelaar

01 Opening plenary meeting UC

01.01 Setting of the agenda

In the agenda, item 2.16 *Preparation Consultation Meeting* was initially missing. This agenda point has now been added.

01.02 Setting of the minutes of the previous meeting

There were no remarks on the minutes of the second and the second and third plenary meetings.

01.03 Announcements

Farewell dinner

After the Third Plenary (July 8), there will be a farewell dinner for the Council, starting from 18.00. The location will be communicated shortly. Please indicate if you are available.

02 Agenda items

02.01 Erasmus Perspectives 2026–2030

There were no technical questions shared. The Chair asked whether the taskforce had any topics they wished to raise with the EB. A UC member from the TF expressed they want to bring up an issue with the EB. The UC member noted that the document does not clarify how priorities will be determined in the future given the budget cuts. Currently, there are no clear criteria for setting priorities, especially given the challenging circumstances. The UC member formulated the following question:

- *Considering the current context, how will the EB establish criteria for setting priorities in resource allocation?*

There were no objections to raising this question with the EB.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the question regarding '*Erasmus Perspectives 2026–2030*' to the EB

02.02 Consent Strategic Framework Strategy 2025–2030

A UC member remarked there are no questions for the EB regarding this point. However, another UC member commented there was some discussion within the taskforce about academic freedom. A UC member noted that academic freedom is a significant topic in the framework, although it is not explicitly mentioned. Another UC member disagreed, stating that they do not see any specific steps outlined by the EB to improve academic freedom. They argued that the framework only addresses research, while academic freedom is broader. Another UC member pointed out that this is the framework, not the implementation plan, so specific measures are not yet discussed. A different UC member expressed a desire to ask the EB what had been done with earlier input on academic freedom and thought that this input could be better reflected in the strategy.

Another UC member noted that academic freedom is specific to research and distinct from freedom of speech. In response, another member argued that the two are connected if academic freedom declines and so does freedom of speech. One member added that it is important for the framework documents to be more coherent. Another remarked that academic freedom is discussed, just in different wording. In response, a UC member stated that not all of the challenges related to academic freedom are captured in the document.

The following question was formulated:

- *How is the EB's vision and stance on academic freedom reflected in the framework?*

There were no objections to submitting this question.

Another UC member wanted to raise questions related to Goal 1, which mentions having an "eye for impact." The member felt this wording was a step back compared to the previous strategy. They also wanted to ask about 'open innovation networks', which appears to be a new concept. The UC member questioned how such a new initiative could be implemented given current budget constraints, and wanted clarification on its meaning and intended role.

The following questions were formulated:

- *Does this strategic framework, in terms of societally driven activities, signal a shift compared to the previous strategy?*
- *What does the EB mean by 'open innovation networks,' what role do they see it playing, and how would this work?*
- *Is the EB considering drafting a protocol for responsible engagement?*

One UC member suggested rewording the first question to avoid implying that the framework represents a step back. The UC members agreed to rephrase the question to be more neutral. There were no further objections on asking these questions.

A UC member stated there is a shift from impact-driven research to fundamental research and wished to ask how this aligns with the concept of open innovation networks. Another member emphasized the importance of referring to the same document, as the Dutch and English versions contain different wording.

It was also noted that fundamental research and open innovation networks are not mutually exclusive. A UC member stated that the framework does not suggest a preference for one over the other but emphasizes both.

Another UC member indicated a desire to raise a question based on information from the KNAW. However, another member suggested reading the document first before deciding. The Chair proposed that the UC member share the relevant section of the article with others, and that the topic be revisited after the break. Following the break, a UC member commented that after reviewing the report, it does not appear to address academic activism. Ultimately, the UC members decided not to submit a question on this topic.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions regarding '*Consent Strategic Framework Strategy 2025–2030*' to the EB

02.03 EUR campaign budget rules for the student elections of the University Council 2025

There were no questions for the EB at this time.

02.04 Numerus fixus bachelor programs 2026–2027

There were no technical questions shared on this point. A UC member from the taskforce remarked there were no questions for the EB.

02.05 Institutional tuition fees 2026–2027

A UC member from the taskforce noted that there are no questions for the EB and that the taskforce planning to issue a positive letter of advice.

02.06 The Procedural Rules for Enrolment, Deregistration & Tuition Fees

A UC member from the taskforce remarked that there are no questions for the EB and that the taskforce intends to issue a positive letter of advice. However, there is a new version of the document, which includes an added legal point. The Clerk had not yet received this updated version but will share it with the UC once they received it

Action point:

- The Clerk will share the updated document regarding '*the Procedural Rules for Enrolment, Deregistration & Tuition Fees*' with the UC

02.07 Vision, mission and roadmap on Services & Operations

There were no questions regarding the content. However, A UC member from the taskforce remarked that they found it odd the document states the EB has already made a decision on this matter, while it is still subject to advice. The Chair responded this is not an unusual way of working. The UC member still wanted to ask a question on this and formulated the following question:

- *The document states that the EB has already decided on this matter. Could the EB clarify the current status, given that this point is still up for advice?*

There were no objections to asking this question.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the question regarding '*Vision, mission and roadmap on Services & Operations*' to the EB

02.08 Social Annual Report 2024

A UC member remarked that they have concerns about the document stating how issues escalate in the workplace due to leadership not acting in a timely manner. The UC member expressed doubt that the current leadership courses are sufficient to address the problem. Another UC member responded that one reason managers may not address conflicts early is that employees often report issues too late after the situation has already escalated. The UC member emphasized that it's important to not make assumptions that it is solely a leadership issue. The following questions were formulated:

- *The report identifies several reasons why conflicts escalate. One reason explicitly mentions that managers fail to address conflicts at an early stage. What is the EB's solution to this, and does the EB believe leadership courses adequately address this issue?*
- *Given your recommendation to scale up various measures, how will these be prioritized, especially given the upcoming budget cuts that could negatively affect employee wellbeing?*

There were objections to asking these questions. Another UC member stated that they did not have a question for the EB at this time but would like the issue to be further discussed within the taskforce. They commented that in the report it is stated that there is insufficient insight into students their feelings of social safety. The UC member expressed a desire to see more action on this matter and proposed that the taskforce discuss it in more depth.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions regarding 'Social Annual Report 2024' to the EB

02.09 Financial semi-annual report

The Chair asked whether the UC feels sufficiently informed on this topic. The UC confirmed that they were.

02.10 End Report Strategy 2024

A UC member remarked that they would like to raise a point with the EB. They noted that the conclusion of the previous strategic period was messy and would like to ask the following question:

- *How does the EB evaluate the previous strategic process, and what lessons learned have been incorporated into the new strategic period?*

There were no objections to asking this question.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the question regarding '*End Report Strategy 2024*' to the EB

02.11 Mandatory Presence of Teachers at Exam Review Sessions

The answers to the technical questions were received via Teams. A UC member from the taskforce expressed disappointment with the responses.

They proposed the following questions for the EB:

- *What is the EB's view on the mandatory presence of teachers at exam review sessions?*
- *In what way could central coordination be made possible?*

Another UC member disagreed with the first question, noting that in their faculty, exam review sessions are held online. They felt the question should be phrased differently. Another UC member mentioned that at ESSB, in-person review sessions were previously held but proved ineffective, as some students would take up a disproportionate amount of time. ESSB now uses a form-based system where students submit their questions, which has worked well.

The UC member who created the initiative suggested that using more supervisors for larger groups could improve the sessions and help students to prepare better. A different UC

member noted that they have not heard complaints from students about the quality of help and questioned the basis for the initiative. They also added that review sessions are not intended as educational instruments. The Chair proposed a vote due to the UC members not being able to come to an agreement on whether to ask these questions. The vote resulted in the following:

- *In favour:* 2
- *Against:* 10
- *Abstaining:* 3

As a result, the questions will not be submitted to the EB.

02.12 Strengthening Faculty Council Democracy through the Introduction of a Party-Based Electoral System

The policy maker was not present at the meeting. A UC member expressed surprise and disappointment at only learning this during the meeting. The Chair apologized, noting they were unaware that the taskforce had not been informed in advance. The following questions were proposed for the EB:

- *How does the EB assess the current voter turnout rates at the faculty level? Does the EB see room for improvement, and if so, in what way?*
- *What is the EB's view on the introduction of the faculty party system?*
- *Is the EB willing to take on a facilitating and coordinating role at the central level to support faculty councils that wish to adopt this system?*
- *How does the EB evaluate the current cooperation between the central election office and the decentralized election offices, is it desired to have it merged in some way?*

A UC member remarked that the first question may be difficult to answer, as the EB likely does not have access to detailed data on faculty-level turnout. They also expressed the view that asking these questions would not contribute meaningfully to the taskforce's work. However, another UC member disagreed, arguing that the questions are important for gathering information to support the taskforce's efforts.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions regarding '*Strengthening Faculty Council Democracy through the Introduction of a Party-Based Electoral System*' to the EB

02.13 Review and assessment framework for collaboration with the fossil fuel sector

A UC member had a question regarding the assessment of "negative." Another UC member responded that this has not yet been discussed and will be addressed during the

implementation stage. A UC member suggested including a clear definition of what “negative” means for academic staff. Another UC member remarked they would like to ask a question about the stakeholder engagement as well. The following questions were formulated:

- *The term “negative” in relation to impact is very vague. How does the EB intend to articulate this in the implementation protocol?*
- *If such committees are established in the future, could the EB consider reserving a seat for a student?*
- *How did the EB involve stakeholders from the student community in the process?*

There were no objections to asking these questions. A UC member inquired about the UC’s involvement in this committee. Another UC member replied that they had been involved and that this had been stated several times during plenary meetings. Additionally, there were two informational sessions with the committee, but no students were members of the committee.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions regarding ‘*Review and assessment framework for collaboration with the fossil fuel sector*’ to the EB

02.14 Recognition for full-time board positions in Study Associations

A member of the taskforce would like to ask five questions to the EB, following a recent conversation with policy makers. The UC member stated they want to ask the the following questions:

- *Does the Executive Board acknowledge the role study associations play in students’ academic, social and professional development thereby enriching their academic path?*
- *Is the EB aware that many study associations are currently struggling to fill their full-time board positions, which is endangering the continuity and future of these associations?*
- *Is the Executive Board aware that the University of Twente and Leiden University already structurally award ECTS credits to students who undertake a board year? If so, is there a reason why Erasmus University has not (hopefully not yet) implemented a similar system?*
- *Does the Executive Board consider it part of its responsibility to actively encourage faculties to take measures that ensure the continuity of student associations?*
- *In response to the concerns raised in the recent letter from the study associations, what concrete steps will the Executive Board take to address the urgency of next year’s board recruitment challenges?*

A UC member noted that the EB may not be able to do much regarding the fifth question. However, the taskforce member responded that they would still like to raise the question to see whether it is possible and whether the EB recognizes the urgency of the matter. There were no objections to asking these questions to the EB.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the questions regarding '*Recognition for full-time board positions in Study Associations*' to the EB

02.15 Diversity Travel

A UC member from the taskforce remarked that they would like to request an update from the EB. As the EB stated they would explore possible actions during the last consultation meeting. The member also noted that the taskforce received documents only yesterday and has not yet had the opportunity to review them.

The following question was formulated:

- *Given that the EB stated they would look into taking action, could the EB provide an update?*

There were no objections to asking this question.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the question regarding '*Diversity Travel*' to the EB

02.16 Preparation consultation meeting (AOB)

Letter all gender toilettes

A UC member commented that they want to ask the EB why they do not want to all gender toilettes change the policy. Another UC member responded that the reasoning had already been explained and that the UC will receive a revised policy at a later stage.

Another UC member suggested that the UC member could instead write a response letter. The UC member pointed out that the previous response letter did not adequately address the reasoning behind the decision not to make any adjustments. They emphasized that the issue is not about agreeing or disagreeing with the implementation of all-gender toilets, but about

receiving a proper and thorough response to the letters sent by the UC. As UC members could not come to an agreement on whether to raise this topic with the EB, the Chair proposed a vote. The results were as follows:

- *In favour: 5*
- *Against: 9*
- *Abstaining: 2*

As a result, this question will not be submitted to the EB.

Sports facilities

Following recent news that the Minister intends to keep exploring possibilities regarding sports facilities in higher education, a UC member expressed interest in understanding the EB's position on this matter. The Chair added that the director of Erasmus Sport has invited the taskforce for a discussion and is available to answer any questions they may have. This invitation remains open.

The UC member would still like to ask the following question:

- *What is the stance of the EB on this topic?*

There were no objections to asking this question.

Action point:

- The Clerk will send the question regarding 'Preparation Consultation Meeting' to the EB

03 Incoming documents

03.01 Response to 38844 Diversity Travel

There were no remarks.

03.02 Response to 38839 Including important religious holidays in examination scheduling guidelines

There were no remarks.

03.03 Response to 38845 request to review collaborations with US universities

There were no remarks.

03.04 Call EUR – board recruitment

A UC member remarked that if the current trend continues, the quality of study associations may significantly decline. They urged UC members who will remain on the council next year to continue working on this issue, emphasizing its importance.

03.05 Response to 38889 Letter of Consent – Financial Support Fund Regulations

There were no remarks.

04 Any other business

04.01 Letter Planetary Health Diet

Unfortunately, a factually incorrect letter was shared with the EB. As a result, rectification is necessary. It is proposed that the Chair of the UC contacts the EB to address this matter. A UC member inquired what the two points were. The first error was that the letter stated there was no Dutch representation in the committee, while this was in fact the case. Secondly, it was stated that the EUR approach differs from the EAT-Lancet approach.

04.02 Attendance and Taskforces

There were no remarks.

05 Any Other Business

Discussing all gender toilets with the supervisory board

A UC member inquired whether the topic of all-gender toilets had been specifically discussed with the Supervisory Board. The Chair responded that while the issue of all-gender toilets was not addressed directly, the general dissatisfaction with the EB's responses was raised during the meeting with the Supervisory Board. The UC member expressed disagreement, stating that they had expected this topic to be discussed as a separate point. The Chair clarified that this was not the case.

06 Closing