



Date

2 July 2020

Subject

Your reply to UC letter 'Proposal on the Roadmap Sustainable Campus'

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ur00038387

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Enclosure

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Dear members of the Executive Board,

Herewith we confirm receiving your letter dated 18 May 2020 as a reaction to our letter ur00038370, dated 6 April 2020. Furthermore, we refer to the presentation of Michiel Scherrenburg in the consultation meeting of 16 June 2020.

First, we want to express our appreciation that you are taking steps to carry out the Strategy 2024 plans, especially concerning the Sustainability pillar. After your letter of 18 May and the presentation in June however, some concerns remain.

Introduction

In our letter ur00038370 we requested as follows:

1. That a Sustainability Office is established where education, research, and campus operations form three pillars. Personnel and funds are to be allocated to this Office for the implementation of the sustainability strategy;
2. To appoint a person to be accountable for the strategy, as well as a project lead from each pillar;
3. To create priorities and measures for an implementation plan, with an immediate call for the 2020 plan of action.

Your reaction was as follows:

1. Our request was declined
"We have taken your first proposal, the creation of a sustainability office, into careful consideration and have decided to accommodate to your concerns in another alternative. Although we endorse the need for dedicated sustainability expertise within our organisation, we choose not to create a sustainability office at this moment in time, as we do not necessarily see the added value of a separate sustainability office within EUR."

2. The EB wants to appoint an interim Sustainability Programme Manager (hereafter *SPM*).

This means our request for a project lead for each pillar was declined.

3. The interim Programme Manager will receive an assignment to make an Implementation plan.

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Reaction

Our concerns have to do with the following topics:

Sustainability office

Appendix C.4.8 of Erasmus Perspective mentions:

"8. Sustainable development

Sustainable Office

The office bundles knowledge from both sustainability in education and the sustainable campus, in order to connect the strategic priorities and work integrally towards the sustainability goals. The office will work closely with other sustainability initiatives at campus and within the faculties, such as the Erasmus Sustainability Hub. The office will share knowledge by organising sustainable trainings, campaigns and events for all staff and students." So, declining our request now is not in accordance with these formulated plans.

At a later stage, Pieter Jellema stated that this Programme Manager must be seen as personification of the Sustainability Office. He stated as follows: *"Purpose of the budget for Sustainable Office: Project leader who ensures that sustainability is incorporated in educational programmes."* As we explained, a Sustainability Office is very much needed. It is very, possibly too complex for the SPM to have to coordinate all actions for the Roadmap, Education and Research on his own. We had the impression that the Rector agreed to this view. At this moment the plans for a Sustainability Office are very confusing: first our request is denied, later it appears that the Office will consist of only one person (the SPM), meant for only Education. The presentation is not clear either: will the Office be expanded with more members, where is the 'research' part, etc. How does this all relate to the allocated budget? There must be, in our opinion, some investment to make the coordination possible, which is why a Sustainability Office as requested is needed. Not having a Sustainability Office will complicate reaching our goals, i.e. a sustainable campus in 2024. We fear that it will make reaching those goals impossible.

Budget

It is still unclear which budget is available for further development of EUR Sustainability. The Rector has mentioned that foremostly *Initiatives* are important and not money (budget). But if the budget is not clear, chances of good Initiatives will be smaller. Every good initiative must be substantiated by some known budget. It is not clear at all in which way (with regard to budget) Sustainability fits in the Strategy 2024 on the one hand and in other (HEQA) projects as Impact at the Core, Erasmus X, Erasmus Design, etc., on the other hand. The presentation in June 2020 did not clarify on this point. As a result, it is not clear to us to what extent the EB really wants to emphasize the importance of sustainability and wants to contribute to the very challenging development with regard to e.g. climate change from a more scientific perspective.

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A lot of initiatives on campus for sustainability already exist. However, we need budget to implement the initiatives at a larger scale and achieve the strategy. If every other part of the strategy views budget as an important aspect, sustainability is no different and should not be viewed as a lower priority.

Plans SPM

We appreciate very much the intended energetic plan as set out in the presentation of our new SPM. In our opinion there should be more emphasis on the following:

- The Research pillar
- Involvement of the HEQA projects in relation to sustainability

Bottom line

Paragraph 2.4 *Trends in research and education* of Erasmus Perspective 2021-2024 starts with the following: *"Building upon the 2020-2023 Erasmus Perspective, there are several continuing trends. Among them is the growing awareness and debate around climate change. Erasmus University continues to take responsibility in creating a sustainable campus and in fulfilling an advisory role on the adoption of sustainable practices, thereby co-creating capacity. Moreover, Erasmus University aims to contribute by incorporating sustainability in her education portfolio, thereby preparing students to be future proof. This is in line with demands from her own students, who are increasingly focused on making a positive societal impact."*

The EB should make it clearer that one takes this statement seriously.

We would like to propose to meet in the near future in order to work together on reaching the goals as formulated in the Strategy 2024 and the promising projects related to making our beautiful EUR more sustainable.

If you need any more information about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



H.B. van den Berg MSc
Chair University Council

A.M. Harmsen MA
Clerk University Council

PS: Please note that this letter includes digital images of the signatures of the UC chair and UC clerk. The current closure of the EUR campus due to the corona virus prevents us from signing with a 'wet signature'. We trust you can accept digital versions instead while the current situation lasts.