

Rotterdam Network Meeting, Copenhagen
5 May 2006
University of Copenhagen

Chairman: Anette van Sandwijk

Present:

Veronique Christophe, Eddy Somers (Gent), Mariana Karagyozyova-Finkova (Sofia), Jan Svaton, Josef Bejcek (Brno), Majken Hjort, Kristina Simonsen, Lene Ebbesen (Copenhagen), Teija Isotalo (Helsinki), Anthony Chamboredon (Paris 5), Sandra Parent (Aix-Marseille), Nikolaus Assfalg (Konstanz), Mariska Boshoven, Anette van Sandwijk (Rotterdam), Andrea Robotka (Budapest), Maria Thejll (Reykjavik), Corti Cinzia, Alberto Maffi (Milan), Oleg Fedosiuk (Vilnius), Jan Erik Hatling (Bergen), Jakub Urbanik (Warsaw), Dana Tofan (Bucharest), Maria Patakyova (Bratislava), Albert Llado (Girona), Maria Brink, Sandra Forsen (Lund), Ronnie Eklund (Stockholm), Haluk Kabaalioglu (Istanbul), John Brown, Jane Mair (Glasgow), Christine Byron (Manchester)

Absent:

Innsbruck, Lisbon, Maribor, Salamanca and Warwick

1. Opening:

Welcome by professor Henning Koch, chairman of the International Committee at the Faculty of Law in Copenhagen. Henning Koch informed us about the numbers of incoming and outgoing exchange students. Copenhagen has noticed a decline in number of students going on an exchange in Europe.

Anette van Sandwijk opens the 11th meeting of the Rotterdam Network Meeting. Anette explains she will act as chairman due to the resignation of Math Noortmann as International Dean last year and the absence of Professor Jaap de Zwaan who was going to join her for this meeting.

2. Assessment exchanges:

After the agenda was established, each representative of the present universities introduced himself/herself, explained his/her role and informed those present regarding the exchanges of students. For most universities the number of incoming and outgoing exchange students is imbalanced and there is a decline in the number of students going to Europe. Other problems indicated were the levels of the students (background) and level of language.

Partneruniversity	Balance/inbalance	Remarks
Manchester	Imbalance incoming>outgoing	Can only send students in their second year
Glasgow	Incoming<outgoing	1/3 of students going abroad
Paris V	Incoming>outgoing	English Law Programme/Common Law
Bucharest	Incoming>outgoing	No English taught classes (do have French/Spanish courses)
Warsaw	Incoming<outgoing	Over 30 courses taught in English.
Milan	Incoming>outgoing	Changed to a 2-semester programme. Will have 1 course taught in English next year.
Budapest	Incoming>outgoing	New international office on university level. Italian/French courses
Aix-Marseille	± balanced	Offers French language course.
Bratislava	Incoming<outgoing	Currently busy with creating International Office. Still have some problems and need to gain more experience. French courses offered due to agreement French university.
Stockholm	± balanced	Offers 5 master programmes in English. Decrease in nrs to Europe
Bergen	± balanced	Made a change in programme, this year increase of outgoing students. Increase on LL.M. programmes due to partner-agreements with universities. Increase on outgoing master programme students. Updates to be found on website. Online applications.
Sofia	Incoming<outgoing	Due to RLN membership English and French taught programmes created. Housing problem.
Gent	Incoming>outgoing	Strict policy in incoming/outgoing student exchange regarding level. Semesters are not matching. Wide choice of courses, few courses canceled due to number students. Also offers LL.M. Programmes. 50 English taught courses.
Brno	Incoming<outgoing	20 English courses, 5 courses in French/German. Housing guarantee.
Lund	± balanced (235-205)	English taught courses on Master level. Housing problems.
Vilnius	Incoming<outgoing	Exchange is increasing. Wide choice of English taught courses. Numbers of ECTS has increased for most subjects (from 4 – 6). Credits are restricted by government
Helsinki	Incoming<outgoing	LL.M. diploma programme. Deadline application 15. May (late applications not accepted). Housing guaranteed. Online applications.
Reykjavik	± balanced	Master programme, 10 courses in English. Having problems with level students
Copenhagen	Incoming>outgoing	50 courses in English
Rotterdam	Incoming>outgoing	Increase in outgoing students (and to universities outside Europe). Introduced Crash Course for Public International Law as most incoming students show lack of knowledge.

3. Socrates applications 2006/2007 and 2007/2008

Problems and reasons for European mobility are discussed. Rotterdam mentions the unfamiliarity with some (Eastern) European countries by Dutch students. Manchester indicates the fear for countries with other spoken languages than English. Paris V points out that the main reasons for the decrease of interest are the lack of information and the lack of means to give information. Paris V organizes meetings with students every year to provide information. Glasgow indicates that you will have to use the exchange students for informing other students: they have been there. Ghent mentions also that the decrease of interest is a development under people and government. Stockholm informs that outgoing students can also promote their home university as well.

Rotterdam suggests the idea of organizing visits to universities of the network in order to promote the RLN partner universities with the students (the study trips to international organizations in Europe, organized every year, are always very popular. Turkey mentions that the months July/August are available for visits due to accommodation. France does not foresee any problems after April for visits. Slovakia is interested in 2009 due to network meeting and points out that visits are also interesting during academic year (see students and classes). Warsaw is also interested in the idea.

No promotional visits to partner universities take place now.

As suggested last year, exchange numbers will not be put in the RLN brochure anymore (every university has its own agreements with the partners). Instead of the numbers all partners are asked to sign an agreement that they are participating in the network. As for the ECTS scale and other information, all universities were requested to update their information as was indicated in the notes of the last meeting of last year.

4. Aims for student and teachers mobility

Experiences regarding TS mobility were discussed. Copenhagen had 2 teachers last year and explains it is hard to organize TS mobility due administration (changes of contracts, time and finances). For Manchester it is difficult to arrange ts mobility because of the schedule. Warsaw has a lot of flexibility here and mentions that early notice is easier for organizing things. With late notices Warsaw will try to fit the visit of the teacher in existing classes. Warsaw had 5 teachers this year.

Stockholm tries to encourage its lecturers to teach abroad. Stockholm also mentions the loads of work, the high costs and also that going abroad is not really supported by the university and government due to other priorities.

Paris V thinks it is better to fit the teacher in courses. The means are poor and they do not cover the costs. Therefore TS mobility is not easy to organize. Paris V points out that going abroad can be very interesting for the teacher. Paris V had 12 teachers abroad.

The question was raised if there will be a sanction if teacher mobility is in agreement but not carried out by the university. A sanction will only be given by an extreme imbalance of exchange numbers.

Ghent mentions that the teacher's mobility will be a lot easier if the policy of the university will be changed and makes mobility compulsory. The university should promote mobility more as it will upgrade the level of teaching, knowledge and experience. Ghent has plans to make the ts mobility more compulsory.

Rotterdam informs that the lecturers have to do research as well and it is hard to find a balance in teaching, research and mobility.

5. Network extension or reduction?

Innsbruck has been absent at the network meetings for 3 years in a row now. The chairman indicates that a letter will be sent to Innsbruck about this.

6. Yeditepe is introduced

The Netherlands, Finland and Denmark already have agreements with Yeditepe University. Professor Haluk Kabaalioglu introduces Yeditepe University: the university is 10 years old and is a non-profit university. The university offers all kind of studies. The programmes are all taught in English (some also in French and German). The bachelor of law programme is a 5-year programme. The first year is an introduction year. Besides master programmes the university also offers LL.M. programmes and PhD. These programmes are offered in the evenings as most students are practicing lawyers. Visiting students have the chance to participate in day and evening courses. The ranking of the university is rank 10 out of 80 universities in Turkey. The university uses a semester system. Housing is a problem; therefore timely arrangements are needed (before August).

(at the end of the day it was decided to welcome Yeditepe University to the Rotterdam Law Network as a new partner)

7. Student selection criteria

Rotterdam has problems with the language skills and the backgrounds of the exchange students. Outgoing students will have to do a TOEFL test and have the possibility to follow language courses before they will go abroad.

Copenhagen started with language tests if the exchange student does not pass the test the agreement will be canceled.

Students from southern Europe lack the necessary English language skills. According to the Bologna declaration, universities cannot make language tests for incoming students mandatory.

Milan indicates a certain level of language knowledge. A test is required (B1). Warsaw has a standard agreement with tests.

Stockholm sent 2 Italian students home a couple of years ago. Now incoming students are doing well.

Ghent has no tests. They have no problems with exchanging students to French/English speaking countries. For other countries courses are advised.

8. Examinations/re-sits for foreign students

How do universities deal with exams and re-sits for exchange students? After discussion, it becomes clear that each university (and even each professor) has their own rules about this.

9. Plagiarism/fraud – common guidelines within the network?

Rotterdam mentions that it experienced a recent case of plagiarism. Will sanctions be transferred to the sending university? It is agreed that the receiving university will have to inform the home university when a student has committed plagiarism/fraud and the sanction that has been imposed on the student. However, it is up to the sending university to decide if they adopt this sanction. It is important to inform the exchange students about plagiarism and the consequences.

10. 2007 Annual Meeting

The meeting of 2007 will be hosted by Vilnius in the second week of May (10-13th May 2007).

Paris V will host the meeting in 2008. Bratislava will host the meeting in 2009.

11. Miscellaneous

Copenhagen indicates difficulties to find rankings of the European universities within a same ranking/level. Some countries have national rankings; other countries do not have/use rankings. Norway mentions that in September 2006 the government will introduce new rankings. Copenhagen uses students (home based and foreign) to evaluate the university.

The chairman closes the meeting.