

EUA BOARD MEETING

Thursday 12 September 2019
10:30-16:00

EUA office
Avenue de l'Yser 24, 1040 Brussels

PARTICIPANTS

EUA Board

Michael Murphy (President)
Paul Boyle (Vice-President)
Martine Rahier (Vice-President)
Josep M. Garrell
Patrick Lévy
Hana Machková
Marcin Pałys
Mari Sundli Tveit
Francesco Ubertini

EUA Secretariat

Lesley Wilson (Secretary General)
Monika Steinel (Senior Policy Analyst)

MINUTES

1. Welcome and approval of the agenda

The President welcomed the Board.

The agenda was approved without changes.

2. Approval of the minutes of the June 2019 Board meeting

The President recommended some modifications to the minutes, namely to insert a missing name and to clarify the role of the ASEF Rectors' Conference in which he had participated in May.

The minutes were approved with these changes.

3. Report from the President, Vice-Presidents and Secretary General

The President reported that:

- a new venue, the Stanhope Hotel, had been identified for the October Council meeting. The Council meeting would be preceded by a working dinner on 24 October.
- the search for a new Secretary General was ongoing. He would report in more detail under item 4 of the agenda.
- the EUA 'Presidency' had been reactivated. Going forward the President and Vice-Presidents would set agendas for Board meetings, in collaboration with the Secretary General and with input from other Board members.

- he had clarified with J Georis, EUA Finance Manager, and the Secretary General several legal issues pertaining to the work of the Board.¹
- he had been keynote speaker at the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Bologna Declaration, held at the University of Bologna "The Bologna Process goes global: fundamental values of the EHEA beyond 2020" (24-25 June).
- he had reflected on the possibility of setting up a global discussion forum for the university sector on topics of shared strategic importance. This would provide an opportunity for EUA to profile itself. P Boyle noted that such a forum existed for funders in the form of the Global Research Council. It was decided that the President would sound out interest in other world regions (North America, Latin America, Asia etc.) and decide on a further course of action based on the levels of interest shown.

Vice-President P Boyle reported that:

- he would take over as chair of the Research Policy Working Group the next day. He was currently also chairing UUK's research policy network and there might be some thematic convergence or cross-fertilisation in future. Current hot topics in the UK were problems around fixed-term contracts as well as ethical concerns regarding university spin-out companies.

Vice-President M Rahier reported that:

- Lidia Borrell-Damián, Director for Research & Innovation, would be leaving EUA as of 16 September to join Science Europe. For the moment, responsibility for her dossiers would be shared between the Deputy Director V Gaillard, Head of CDE Alexander Hasgall and Senior Policy Coordinator Thomas Jorgensen. It had been decided that the new Secretary General should lead the appointment process for the new R&I Director.
- EUA's finances were healthy. There were sufficient funds to cover both the recruitment procedure for the new Secretary General and the costs of the strategy process. The outlook was also positive, as EUA had applied for several new EU projects.

4. Update on Secretary General appointment process

L Wilson and M Steinel left the room. The chair, on behalf of the Search Committee, briefed the board on the ongoing process to identify a new Secretary General. He outlined the steps taken to choose a recruitment agency (Perrett Laver) in a competitive process, the briefing given to them and the outcome so far. Guided by members of the committee and based on their own research, PL reported making contact with over 200 individual prospective candidates as well as advertising the position in newspapers and on websites. Over 80 applications had been received.

Prior to the Board meeting, the Search Committee had considered the curricula vitae of applicants and had selected seven strong candidates and a further eleven moderately impressive candidates for further evaluation. PL were authorised to engage further with all to establish further details on experience, motivations, expectations and feasibility of career and domicile relocation.

The Committee will meet again on 14 October to select a short-list of candidates who will be interviewed formally on 23 October. The Board welcomed news of the scale of interest in the position and endorsed the course of action being undertaken.

¹ J Georis provided the following summary: EUA, as an association registered in both Belgium and Switzerland, has legal personality in both countries. The legislation governing the functioning of associations in those countries, provides that in exercising their functions the board members of an association act as an organ of the latter. As a result, an association may enter into obligations without the personal liability of its board members. However, the personal liability of a board member may be engaged with regard to the association or with regard to third parties, if the latter has committed an unlawful act (e.g. violating a legal provision or failing to comply with the general duty of diligence 'gestion en bon père de famille'). The 'contractual' liability of the board members towards the association ends when the discharge of the management body is granted by the general assembly. The board member is then considered to have exercised his or her mandate correctly for the past period. To protect itself from the risk that a third party could invoke the liability of a board member, the EUA secretariat has taken out 'directors' liability' insurance covering anyone who holds a director or officer position within the association. It provides two guarantees: damages and legal protection. Finally, the EUA Secretariat ensures that all legal provisions relating to health and safety at work are properly applied and respected. To this end, the EUA is subject to mandatory external controls.

L Wilson and M Steinel were invited to return to the meeting.

5. EUA Strategic Plan – main issues and process

The President provided a short overview of the progress made thus far. He had had an exploratory discussion with A Sursock, senior advisor to EUA, who had drafted the present document. The Board largely welcomed the document and the process proposed therein. Several comments concentrated on the timing of the exercise. EUA members would be consulted on and asked to endorse a 'next-to-final' draft of the strategy at the General Assembly in Gdańsk in April 2020. A final product could then be ready for the June 2020 Board meeting. While this timeline was relatively tight, quick action was necessary to avoid the risk of stasis setting in for the organisation.

Board members endorsed the proposal to appoint A Sursock as the project coordinator for the 2020-2025 strategy. The composition of the steering committee was also discussed. The President and Vice-President Boyle would participate in the SC as Board members. The Board endorsed the President's proposal to invite P-A Alt, President of HRK (DE), and S Prijic-Samaržija, former Board candidate and Rector of the University of Rijeka (HR), to join the SC.

Regarding next steps, it was noted that the strategy steering committee should have its inaugural meeting as soon as possible. The October Council meeting and working dinner should already be used to conduct an initial SWOT analysis. In this context, Council would need to receive a briefing paper, including proposed activities, a rough budget and timeline. A date for a Board 'away day' in December in Geneva would be penciled into Board members' diaries, but this date could be freed up if the strategy discussions could be sufficiently absorbed into the October and January Board meetings.

Some open questions remained, namely the nature of the involvement of the Secretaries General and staff support from the EUA Secretariat. These would be clarified, and the Board informed in due course. Several Board members also commented that the staff questionnaire contained in the strategy document was outdated and required revision.

6. EUA key messages for the President and Board

The Board welcomed the compendium of policy messages compiled by the Secretariat and noted that the document would helpfully inform the strategy process by clarifying interrelationships between issues and enabling a gap analysis. The priorities listed were of course not static, as they would change and shift over time. Board members suggested that the key EUA policy messages be shared more widely, e.g. with the NRCs, other members or policy makers.

7. Exchange with Sijbolt Noorda, President of the Magna Charta Observatory, on the work of the MCO and particularly on the ongoing drafting of a new Magna Charta Universitatum

The President thanked Sijbolt Noorda, the President of the Magna Charta Observatory (MCO), for joining the Board meeting. S Noorda provided a brief overview of the history and current activities of the MCO. The mission of the MCO – promoting common values for European universities – remained as relevant today as it had been in 1988 when the Magna Charta Universitatum (MCU) had first been signed. S Noorda underlined the formative role of EUA in the establishment of the MCU and the Observatory and gave special thanks to F Ubertini for the strong support provided to MCO by the University of Bologna.

The MCO was working on a new strategy to take effect from 2020. It also continued to work on the '[Living Values](#)' project, which aimed to encourage institutions to identify their own values based on their geographical, historical, social or cultural contexts and to support university leadership in operationalising them. S Noorda stated that he would be keen to promote this project at an EUA event.

The MCU was still a successful document, with institutions continuing to sign up to its principles. At the same time, a priority for the MCO was the development of a second Magna Charta – a Magna Charta 2020 – to reflect the fundamental changes affecting both universities and society over the last three decades. This new text should speak to a wider, more diverse set of institutions and be more relevant at a time when universities

engaged far more frequently and intensively with the communities around them. S Noorda pointed out that it was not the intention to replace the old Magna Charta, but to develop a more modern text to complement the existing one. Input from different actors was welcome and would be considered in the work ahead.

Board members expressed some concern over the objective of developing a global Magna Charta 2020, noting that the diversity of traditions across the globe was such that agreement on a meaningful text would likely be extremely difficult. S Noorda recognised that this was a challenge but noted that academic freedom and institutional autonomy remained the cornerstone of the Magna Charta Universitatum. Institutions that were not capable of underwriting these fundamental principles would not be eligible to sign up to the MCU – old or new. The Board also asked whether there were any mechanisms in place to sanction or at least mark violations against academic freedom or institutional autonomy, for instance as a result of political changes in a country. S Noorda responded that, while the MCO had contemplated the introduction of a procedure to suspend membership, it had decided to take a constructive, rather than punitive approach, as manifested in the Living Values project. The Board thanked S Noorda and wished him and the MCO success for their future work. S Noorda left the meeting.

The Board recognised the need to update the Magna Charta Universitatum and, due to EUA's role as an owner of the document, agreed to submit feedback on the text for the MCO's consideration. In particular, EUA would highlight the problems associated with crafting a 'global' text and insist on an adequate consultation process if indeed this path was chosen. In addition, EUA would urge the MCO to adequately reflect the wide variety of university activities and missions and to explicitly acknowledge universities' responsibilities and accountability to society. M Steinel would summarise this feedback and, following final approval by the President, share with S Noorda and the MCO.

8. Discussion of draft programme of the EUA Annual Conference at Gdańsk University of Technology (Poland)

The Board took note of the blurb and draft programme provided. Board members commented that, since the previous rector had passed away, it was essential to ensure buy-in from the new leadership of Gdańsk University of Technology. To that effect, the Secretariat had visited the institution and met with its leadership in July. Regarding the theme, Board members noted that it would be necessary to further clarify what type of impact was meant. The programme should also feature women and students, and NRCs should be encouraged to bring along student representatives to the conference. Finally, the Board noted that the opening plenary sessions should be general enough to allow VIP speakers to shape their own contributions.

The Board proposed to set up an organising committee (consisting of a couple of Board members and Secretariat staff) for future annual conferences. This committee would be entrusted with issues such as programme structure, sessions titles and speakers, whereas the Board would provide input on the strategic direction and big lines of the event.

9. Further discussion of Board portfolios

Board members reported on progress with their respective portfolios:

- M Pałys (Smart Specialisation/innovation) reported on initial discussions with V Gaillard (Deputy Director for Research & Innovation) and T Jorgensen (Senior Policy Coordinator). The first milestone would be an event dedicated to 'Universities as drivers of innovation ecosystems', to take place at the Committee of the Regions on 6 November.
- H Machková & P Lévy (Communications & lobbying) underlined the need to improve communications with EUA members and promote the association's work, for example by circulating the policy overview document discussed under item 6. They proposed the development of a detailed communications and lobbying strategy to engage with the new political leadership. Although initial contacts had been established, a real strategy should go further and include a reflection on messaging and on EUA's position among other bodies influencing policy in Brussels. This would be closely linked to or part of the strategy process.
- J Garrell (Autonomy, funding & organisational development) reported that he had received a first brief from T Estermann and E Pruvot, Director and Deputy Director, respectively, of the Governance, Autonomy and Funding unit.

- F Ubertini (Big data/European University networks) had held initial discussions with T Jorgensen and Anna-Lena Claeys-Kulik from the Policy Coordination team. The objective pursued with regard to the European Universities was to establish EUA as a platform for exchange that was not filtered by the European Commission (cf. item 10.i). The team was also planning a survey on strategic partnerships between universities in Europe.
- P Lévy (Open Science) had further engaged in a first exchange with the relevant staff. In future, he also intended to coordinate with M Palys, who was responsible for the research assessment dossier.
- P Boyle would be chairing the meeting of the Research Policy Working Group the next day. One of his priorities would be to demonstrate more clearly the impact of RPWG and related activities and groups.
- M Tveit (Energy and Environmental Research and Policy/business partnerships) reported that discussions on EUA's work on energy and environment would be taken further during the event on "Energy, environment and us: circular economy and the role of citizens" at Durham University on 23-24 September. She put forward that EUA's work in this area might shift in future to encompass sustainable development and the SDGs. Concrete next steps would build on the results of the strategic review and follow the stabilisation of the Secretariat's Research & Innovation unit following L Borrell-Damián's departure. M Tveit also stressed the importance of developing closer ties with business organisations and, given her new role at the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), noted that she would be able to assist in this endeavor (cf. item 11).
- M Rahier (Treasurer, finance & income generation) proposed that opportunities might be sought to secure funding from foundations interested in supporting certain types of EUA projects. Since she would soon be taking up a seat on the Council of the Magna Charta Observatory, she offered to take on the academic freedom/values dossier from J Garrell. The latter accepted this proposal.

10. Information items

- i. Briefing note on European Universities initiative

Board members took note of the document on next steps for EUA activities on European Universities and endorsed it with some comments. The Board welcomed the European Universities initiative and the new opportunities for transnational cooperation opened by it. Board members also highlighted links with the Bologna Process and the potential of the initiative to support and speed up implementation of Bologna reforms and goals. Board members stressed that, in moving forward, EUA would need to state clearly that despite the significant focus on research in the strategic networks envisaged by the European Commission, the vast majority of research cooperation in Europe would continue to be bottom-up and take place outside of the European Universities networks. They also asked for the reference to 'mergers' to be removed from the document.

11. AOB

Several other topics were addressed and proposals made:

- M Tveit stressed the importance of developing or maintaining close and productive relationships with other organisations, such as Business Europe and ESU. She could certainly liaise with the former on EUA's behalf. Another exchange between the ESU leadership and the EUA Board could also be envisaged. A systematic reflection on EUA's role and relationships with other organisations should be undertaken as part of the strategy process.
- The Board proposed that upon completion of the strategy process, which should clarify the 'offer' of EUA to potential new members, a membership campaign might be launched to engage those HEIs that were part of NRCs but not of EUA.
- The Board proposed to include the following standing items in future Board agendas:
 - latest news from the Commission, developments in relation to EU policies
 - draft agenda for the Council meeting following the Board meeting
 - update from Board members on their portfolios (tour de table)
 - risk register (financial situation, membership development, staffing situation etc.)
 - list of main events and publications since the last Board meeting

- The Board proposed to move towards smaller, more targeted 'task and finish' groups to address and deliver specific issues or projects that disband upon completion of their task.
- The Board decided to open up Board documents to Council and other members unless confidentiality was required, in order to increase the transparency of the Board's affairs. M Steinel would discuss technical solutions with the IT team and report back at the Board's October meeting.

27 September 2019