

EUA BOARD MEETING

Thursday 24 October 2019
09:00 – 18:00

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

EUA Secretariat

Lesley Wilson (Secretary General)
Monika Steinel (Transition Manager)

MINUTES

1. Welcome and approval of the agenda

Point 8 of the agenda was brought forward to after the approval of the minutes. The agenda was approved with this change.

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

The minutes of the 12 September meeting were approved.

The President recalled that Board minutes would be published both in the shared statutory documents folder (Dropbox) and on the EUA website with immediate effect. Any 'reserved' parts of the minutes would be clearly indicated as such during the Board discussion. In addition, approval of the Board minutes would be conducted via email as soon as feasible after meetings, with publication to follow shortly after.

Board members asked for the processing and presentation of documents for Board and Council to be streamlined. Every document should be accompanied with a cover page clarifying its status, summarising key points and detailing the action required from Board and/or Council.

The secretariat was also asked to provide a calendar of key EUA and external (EC, NRCs etc.) events in order to facilitate the planning of Board members' participation. This overview, once compiled, should also be shared with Council on a regular basis.

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

The President reported:

- on meetings with Commissioner-Designate Innovation & Youth Mariya Gabriel and Director General for Education, Youth, Sport & Culture, Themis Christophidou (15 October). The Commissioner-

Designate had been dynamic and well-briefed. The main objective of the meeting had been to raise awareness of EUA's role as a comprehensive organisation able to represent the whole university sector and to highlight ways in which EUA could advance her agenda and vice-versa. The European Universities initiative and the Horizon Europe had featured prominently. A note summarising the main discussion points would be shared with Board and Council.

Regarding the European Universities, EUA should insist on the need for a more explicit statement on the desired (and likely) outcomes of the networks. While the Commission held that these would emerge during the pilot phase, EUA should proactively shape and push its own ideas and agenda in this respect. The planned EUA survey on the European Universities and other forms of cross-border university collaboration would provide crucial data for this purpose. It was also noted that EUA would host a CPU reception on 6 November for participants of the European Universities launch event (7 November).

Vice-President M Rahier reported:

- that she had taken over as interim chair of the EUA-CDE Steering Committee in the absence of Professor Luke Georghiou, which was due to health issues.

Vice-President P Boyle reported:

- on the first meeting of the Research Policy Working Group (RPWG) he had attended as chair (13 September, Brussels). Discussions had been constructive and RPWG had welcomed moving towards a 'task and finish' approach with a reduced focus on long-term activities.
- on the first Energy & Environment Clustering Event at Durham University on the topic of "Energy, environment and us – circular economy and the role of citizens" (23-24 September). The event had been interesting, with a diverse audience. As EUA moves towards more task and finish groups the role of thematic platforms and their funding will need review.
- on the European Research & Innovation Days (24-26 September, Brussels), which had been well-attended. In his speech, he had stressed the need for adequate financing of Horizon Europe, the importance of curiosity-driven research as well as the social sciences, arts and humanities and the key role of universities in bridging teaching, research and innovation. He had been pleased to see the emphasis placed by Commissioner Moedas on opening up the next research programme.
- on the 17th Gender Summit (3-4- October, Amsterdam), which had featured interesting presentations with some stark data on the low number of women in university leadership positions in many European countries.
- on Brexit and the Smith-Reid review into science and research funding post-Brexit. While some novel ideas had been developed as part of the review, UUK remained strongly in favour of continued association with European higher education and research programmes.

4. Latest from Brussels

The Board welcomed the overview of EU policy developments provided and reiterated that that this should be complemented by an agenda for more regular meetings with high-level EU policy makers (cf. item 2), thus creating more opportunities for EUA to proactively shape the EU policy agenda. Board members noted that EUA should formulate and push 'big ideas' for the new Commission, such as a more explicit vision for the desired outcomes of the European Universities initiative (cf. item 3) or for linking the ERA and EHEA in a European Knowledge Area.

The Board also recommended that EUA explore possibilities for more intensive engagement with national ministries of relevance for EUA policies (research, foreign affairs, finance etc.) through Board members and the national rectors' conferences. On a related point, the secretariat was asked to produce a short overview of current EUA engagement with permanent representations in Brussels.

5. Overview of recent and upcoming EUA events and publications

The Board welcomed the overview of events provided, noting that it should be translated into a calendar of key EUA and external events (cf. item 2).

6. Preparation of Council meeting, based on draft agenda

The Board endorsed the agenda proposed for the Council meeting the following day.

7. Board members portfolio update

J Garrell reported that he had had productive discussions with the Governance & Funding unit. Among other things, he had encouraged a reflection on ways of integrating different types of institutions, notably private ones, into the work of the unit.

M Palys reported that he would attend meetings of the Innovation Ecosystems expert group, which was in the process of developing its remit, and a conference on “Universities as drivers of European innovation ecosystems”, hosted by the Committee of the Regions (5-6 November, Brussels).

The President noted that several EUA dossiers (e.g. Bologna Process) had not been assigned to a particular Board member. He would cover these for the time being. The Board again emphasised that it was not the role of Board ‘champions’ to interfere, but to act as ambassadors and liaise between Board and Secretariat in their area of responsibility. The allocation of Board dossiers would likely change upon finalisation of the strategic process and the subsequent prioritisation of EUA topics and activities.

8. Update on Secretary General appointment process

L Wilson and M Steinel left the room.

The President briefed the board on the deliberations of the Secretary General Search Committee. He related the extensive nature of the search (over 200 potential applicants contacted as well as open advertising and over 100 formal applications). The process followed at both long- and shortlisting was set out as well as adherence to good practice in addressing conflicts of interest, and the chairman reiterated the key attributes sought among candidates.

The curriculum vitae of the candidate recommended, Ms. Amanda Crowfoot, was circulated to the Board and was considered in depth. Impressed by the fit between the experiences exhibited by Ms. Crowfoot and those sought in an ideal candidate, the Board approved her appointment unanimously and empowered the President to take all steps necessary to finalise a contract. The President indicated that the Presidency would be consulted on the final version to be offered.

The Board conveyed its sincere gratitude to all who had worked so diligently on the search, admiration for the professionalism of Perrett Laver, the recruitment agency employed, and thanks to M Kratzborn, EUA HR Manager, for her excellent administrative assistance. All expressed satisfaction that the process had been concluded in compliance with a very tight timeframe.

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

9. Approval of Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee guiding EUA’s strategic review

The Terms of Reference for the strategy steering committee were approved. Board members emphasised that the new Secretary General would need to be involved fully in the strategy process.

10. 2020 Annual Conference programme and proposal for future organising committee

The draft 2020 Annual Conference programme was approved. Speaker invitations and call for contributions would be launched immediately. The Board stressed again the need for the role of students to be strengthened in EUA annual conferences by encouraging NRCs to include students in their delegations and potentially organising targeted student sessions during future conferences.

The Terms of Reference for a future programme committee were approved. The Board again emphasised that the new Secretary General would need to have ownership of the process. The composition of the committee would be further discussed at the January Board meeting and the group would start operating in

preparation for the 2021 Annual Conference. It was noted that the outcomes of the strategy process would provide guidance on themes to be addressed in future conferences.

11. Future of Bologna Process: discussion of EUA statement and preparation of Council discussion

The Board took note of the results of EUA's member consultation on the future of the Bologna Process, conducted ahead of the next round of Bologna meetings, including the ministerial meeting to take place in June 2020 in Rome.

12. Proposal for EUA approach to addressing digital developments that impact higher education institutions

The Board took note of the paper on universities and the digital transformation. The Board cautioned that any EUA activities in what was already a crowded field would need to be specific and targeted. In addition, due to its transversal nature, digitalisation should be addressed in all EUA activities, rather than as a separate topic.

The Board decided that the establishment of the Pathfinder Group, as proposed in the paper, should be put on hold until the arrival of new Secretary General and the conclusion of the strategy process.

13. Information items

- i. Background document on EUA membership

Board members welcomed the background document on EUA's membership evolution and noted that a number of questions, such as a visible membership decline in countries such as France and the UK, the absence of collective full members, i.e. NRCs, from several countries and different strategies for membership development and growth, necessitated further discussion. The Board recommended analysing operational national university associations that were not members of EUA in countries where EUA had individual university members. Obstacles to their EUA membership, including their potentially small size and budget, should be gauged and appropriate solutions, such as case-by-case adjustments of EUA fees, proposed. A revised version of the EUA membership document should be fed into the strategy process at a more advanced stage.

14. AOB

- The Board decided that a letter from the Czech rectors' conference concerning Uyghur scholar Tashpolat Tiyip, former President of Xinjiang University, should be shared with Council, who could pass it on to their national governments who may consider responding. It was felt that it is not generally appropriate for EUA to intervene in such situations outside of Europe. When similar letters of support are requested in relation to European issues, EUA should consider seeking European Commission or Parliament support, as appropriate. The Secretariat was tasked with producing general guidelines for responding to future requests for support for threatened scholars or institutions.
- It was confirmed that the proposed 13 December meeting in Geneva would not take place.

15. Introduction to EUA's strategic review

Notes on this part of the meeting will be compiled by A Sursock.

8 November 2019