

Minutes of the EERA Council Meeting

**University College Dublin
Tuesday 6th September 2005**

Present:

Ingrid Gogolin, President
Margaret Kirkwood, Secretary General
Wim Jochems, Treasurer

Bénédicte Gendron, Edwin Keiner, Elina Lahelma, Martin Lawn, Lisbeth Lundahl,
Lejf Moos, Zoran Pavlovic, Fran Payne, Stefan Wolter.

Apologies: Denis Bates, Kyriaki Doumas.

The meeting was joined by Professor Sheelagh Drudy, Chair of the local organizing committee.

1. Welcome to new members

The President welcomed Lisbeth Lundahl who will take over as Secretary General at the A.G.A. and Bénédicte Gendron who replaces Raymond Bourdoncle as the AECSE representative.

2. Confirmation of minutes of 4th and 5th June 2005 Council Meeting

The minute was approved.

3. Matters arising from minutes of 4th & 5th June 2005 Council Meeting

No matters arising.

4. ECER 2005 Dublin: practical arrangements and announcements:

(i) Thank you to the local organisers

The President expressed the Council's appreciation of the local planning for ECER and asked Sheelagh Drudy to convey their thanks to the committee and host department.

(ii) Local committee report

Sheelagh Drudy reported that the Post-graduate Pre-Conference had proved very successful. The Main Conference Opening Ceremony will take place in O'Reilly Hall and will be followed by coffee. Student helpers will then move delegates out to the first session. The Wednesday evening social event will involve finger food, music and Irish dancing. Due to the complexities of transporting delegates from campus to the venue of

the Thursday State reception, Council were requested to remind Chairs and Convenors to respect the 18:30 close of Session 6 and to encourage people to make their way to the car park to allow buses to depart promptly. It was agreed that Sheelagh, Denis and Ingrid should be present to welcome the Minister before the reception opens. The Publishers' exhibit will be located in the main registration area. Details on how to buy passwords for internet access and how to enable wireless connections are included in the conference bags.

The local committee were fortunate to obtain sufficient sponsorship to close the gap between EERA funds and the cost of the conference. All sponsors have been formally noted in the conference programme. Sponsorship has also been provided by Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI), a division of the Department of Foreign Affairs, which provided free transport to campus for post-graduate students. It may also be possible for DCI to fund a book of proceedings for Network 7, "Social Justice and Intercultural Education", a theme which fits in with an area of DCI's work.

DCI had originally planned to fund the travel expenses of delegates from EU accession countries but, given the large number of these delegates, it was felt this would have limited impact. Instead, they had suggested that the money could be used to sponsor a number of delegates from Africa to attend ECER 2006. Council agreed that this was an excellent idea and asked the Dublin committee to liaise directly with DCI and the Geneva organisers about this matter.

(iii) Chairing of sessions, keynotes and invited roundtable

Sheelagh agreed to chair the first Keynote by Prof. Kathleen Lynch and Ingrid will chair the second Keynote by Prof. Marek Kwiek.

It was noted with regret that the language guidelines for delegates had not been compiled in time for handouts to be included in the conference bags. They would instead be distributed at registration by student helpers. The guidelines encourage native English-speakers to be respectful of their non-native English-speaking colleagues. Council stressed that Chairpersons should be asked to remind presenters to respect both the language policy and the timing of each session. The session evaluation forms will highlight any practical issues regarding language problems, as well as provide general feedback on how well the sessions ran.

(iv) Location of rooms, equipment in rooms, student helpers

Post-graduate student helpers wearing blue ECER t-shirts will be located in each building to assist delegates with room or equipment problems. Two technicians have been hired to deal with more specialised technical problems. It was noted with regret that, despite clear instructions to delegates that computers or laptops would not be provided in the rooms, many Pre-Conference presenters had failed to bring their own laptop.

5. Treasurer's report

(i) Final financial overview 2004 (audited) and actual financial situation

Wim tabled his report which illustrated a positive result of €35,000 at the end of 2004. The positive result is due to the large number of delegates who attended Crete as well as the introduction of the “Glasgow model” which defines the amount of money EERA makes available for ECER, based on the final number of paying delegates. Care still needs to be taken in order to arrive at a targeted balance of €150,000 (50% reserve-to-annual expenses ratio). It was agreed that Wim should present his report to the A.G.A. in order to provide people with more information on EERA’s finances because delegates often ask why the fees are so high when they are not aware that the conference fees finance the association.

(ii) ECER fees proposal 2006

As EERA is an international association of national associations, it wants to promote national educational research associations. The ECER 2006 fee proposal therefore introduces a considerable difference in fee between members and non-members in order to stimulate participation in a national association.

In the case of a European country without a national association, EERA will promote the start of an association by introducing an accession membership, which is possible for a maximum period of two years and at a special introduction fee (half price). Accession membership will allow ECER membership fees.

The Early-Bird fee will continue because it allows EERA to spread the administration of registrations and banking as well as providing an earlier estimate on the final number of delegates.

The proposal does not allow for reduced conference fees for members of non-European research associations. Martin Lawn noted that many Australian researchers regard ECER as an important conference. While it was agreed that having an international audience at ECER is extremely important, exceptions cannot be made for one country over others. As Ingrid and Wim are due to meet the Australian association President during ECER Dublin, this point will be discussed again at the Saturday Council meeting in the hope of arriving at a mutually agreeable decision.

For both the ECER fees and the membership fees proposal, Spain, Portugal and New Zealand will be upgraded to high GDP status. The only countries to still be entitled to the low GDP reduction for both fees are those in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.

The ECER fees proposal was approved.

(iii) Proposal membership fees

As EERA is an association of national associations, both individual and Institutional memberships will cease from 2006. Edwin noted that German post-graduate students cannot become a member of their national association and they would therefore not be eligible to claim the reduced member fee for ECER. Ingrid and Wim agreed to negotiate with the German association President to find a solution.

From 2006 onwards there will be the option to become a sponsor of EERA at a cost of €300 per year. Sponsorship would not be a basis for claiming reduced conference fees.

The membership fees proposal was approved.

(iv) Insurance cover

Based on an advice from John Queen and the Treasurer, it was decided that an insurance cover would not make sense for EERA.

(v) EERJ report (item added, moved from Saturday's agenda)

Martin Lawn's EERJ report, which had been previously circulated by email, noted that the journal is growing rapidly with a seven fold increase in the number of subscribers in two years. The number of paper downloads has increased from 5801 in 2003 to 34,791 in the first half of 2005. It is estimated that by the end of 2005, the final number of downloaded papers will double the number in 2004, and will be eleven times greater than in 2003. Martin urged Council to encourage good papers to be submitted to the journal.

Council approved the plan to build in a cost of €15 to the ECER fee to give delegates a year's personal access to the journal. EERA will retain €5 for each delegate and pass €10 to the EERJ, together with the delegate's name, postal and email address. The EERJ will then issue a username and password to each delegate to give them free access to the journal for the next year. The archives will remain free of charge. Non-ECER attendees will still be able to subscribe through the publisher's website for an estimated fee of €20. It was agreed that this proposal was a reasonable solution to making the journal more effective in financial terms as well as acting as an incentive for libraries to subscribe.

6. Discussion of the A.G.A.

It was agreed that the A.G.A. would prove an ideal platform for Ingrid to introduce Lisbeth Lundahl as the new Secretary General and also to present the new website. The A.G.A. agenda was approved.

7. Planning for the Joint Council/Convenors' Meeting

The Convenors' meetings during ECER will be chaired by Edwin, while Ingrid will chair the joint Council/Convenors' meeting. Lisbeth will introduce herself to Convenors at the joint meeting.

Edwin tabled the agenda for the meetings. Items to be discussed include: management of the networks and appointment of Convenors, reviewing criteria and Network activities since ECER 2004. How to facilitate the permeation of the Geneva theme in the conference will also be discussed with Convenors.

8. Thank you to the outgoing Secretary General and Post-graduate Network Convenor

Margaret Kirkwood and Kyriaki Doumas were offered sincere thanks for their commitment and contribution to EERA during their successful terms of office as Secretary General and Post-Graduate Network Convenor.

Saturday 10th September 2005

Present:

Ingrid Gogolin, President
Lisbeth Lundahl, Secretary General
Wim Jochems, Treasurer

Denis Bates, Kyriaki Doumas, Edwin Keiner, Elina Lahelma, Lejf Moos, Fran Payne, Stefan Wolter, Elena Zezlina-Phillips.

Apologies: Bénédicte Gendron, Palmira Juceviciene, Martin Lawn, Zoran Pavlovic.

The meeting was joined by Sheelagh Drudy, Chair of the Dublin organising committee and Bernard Schneuwly from the Geneva organising committee.

1. Welcome to the new Secretary General

Council welcomed Lisbeth Lundahl as the new Secretary General. Lisbeth introduced herself as Professor of the Teacher Education Faculty, Umeå University. She is also involved in network 23 “Policy Studies and Politics of Education”.

2. Welcome to new members

No new members. It was noted that Elina Lahelma (FERA) and Palmira Juceviciene (LERA) will hand over to new association representatives from January 2006. The President thanked Elina and Palmira for their cooperation and commitment as Council members.

3. Communications

(v) EERJ

Item discussed at Tuesday meeting.

(vi) Website

There appeared to be no technical problems with the new website which was shown at the A.G.A. Phil Sheffield will be asked if The British Education Index (BEI) and Leeds are willing to host the new site and a contract must be drawn up. It is hoped that the new site can provide space for Convenors and networks to exchange.

The integration of new conference software into the new site is an important issue. The office has been asked to provide a description of the workflow of each stage of conference organisation. There was debate over how best to find new software. Stefan Wolter proposed that EERA should first look at the software used by other organisations and then adapt this to the specific needs of the office and Convenors. In contrast, Ingrid and Wim argued that as some of EERA's procedures will not fit with other association's software, the office must first outline its workflow before EERA can begin to look for software.

5. EERA Office

Item discussed at Thursday workshop.

5. Review of ECER 2005

(iii) Pre-Conference

The reviewers had sent comments to proposers on how their submissions could be improved according to the main conference criteria. In total, twenty out of sixty-six proposers were asked to amend their submissions. As well as proving a useful learning experience for post-graduates, this resulted in improved presentations on the day.

Between eighty and one hundred people attended the plenary sessions. It was agreed that the Pre-Conference is a good introduction to professional research life in a friendly and supportive environment. Post-graduates also benefit from valuable feedback from senior researchers.

Kyriaki met with the Geneva organising committee in June of this year and preparations for the 2006 Pre-Conference have already begun. Student accommodation will be available at a cost of €200 for the whole week, which may encourage post-graduates to stay for the Main Conference. Council agreed that it would be useful if the Geneva organisers could obtain sponsorship to fund the travel expenses of post-graduates.

Kyriaki will continue to work with the new Post-graduate network Convenors, Elena Zezlina-Phillips and Daniela Angela Mangione, through to ECER 2006. Council thanked Kyriaki for her work and commitment to the Post-graduate Network. Elena was welcomed to Council and invited to attend the January meeting in Geneva.

(iv) Main Conference

Sheelagh Drudy thanked Council for their cooperation and assistance with ECER planning throughout the year. She commented that the local committee's job had been facilitated because they had not been responsible for organising accommodation or delegate registrations. Local sponsorship had allowed the committee to organise things which would otherwise have been impossible to do within the available budget. She recommended that the Geneva organisers consider marking the delegate's names on the conference bags to avoid people picking up someone else's bag and personal

papers. It was suggested that cheaper plastic folders could be provided instead of conference bags. Ingrid requested that Sheelagh send a list of recommendations to the Geneva organisers.

Stefan Wolter commented on the technical delays in some sessions due to the lack of compatibility of delegates' laptops with the data projectors provided in the rooms. To avoid this in future, he suggested that the host university should either provide data projectors and laptops for presenters or else delegates should be informed that they can only use OHPs. Sheelagh commented that it would have cost approximately €20,000 to hire sufficient laptops for ECER.

It was agreed that presenters must be requested to have handouts for the audience and to present an actual paper. It is also important that EERA asks presenters to publish their papers. The Convenors of smaller networks were pleased that all their sessions had been scheduled on the same day because this had encouraged people to stay for the whole day.

The difference between symposia, roundtables, posters and papers must be clarified. A suggestion that posters should be excluded from the normal sessions and displayed in a communal area over a lunch-break was met with concern that they would not receive any attention as delegates would be queuing for lunch. It was agreed that a specific one-hour slot during the day should be allocated for all posters.

It was noted that the half-hour break for lunch had been inadequate due to the time taken to queue for food, resulting in late arrivals for the 13:00 sessions. It was suggested that a one-hour lunch-break should be introduced.

The possibility of scrapping Saturday morning sessions was discussed. To make up for the loss of two Saturday sessions, an earlier start on Wednesday would be required to avoid having to increase the number of parallel sessions, which results in more rooms being required and a lower audience for sessions. It was suggested that the Saturday morning could be used for meetings.

The issue of the conference timetable (an earlier Wednesday start, a one-hour lunch-break, scrapping Saturday sessions) will be re-examined at the January meeting.

It was noted that there had been a marked variation in the quality of papers between networks and some delegates did not present real research. The need to move to a higher level of quality was agreed. Overall, only 35 out of 890 proposals were rejected. In the Open Network alone the rejection rate was almost 50%. It was suggested that some networks accept proposals in order to keep the network going and to use ECER as a meeting place. This results in some poor quality papers during the conference.

Edwin believed that the fundamental issue of reviewing proposals should be quality first, then relevance. Convenors had agreed that the proposal form should include a section on publication details as well as a major section on methodology and details on whether the proposal is an empirical study or small scale/PhD research study.

It was noted that strengthening demands on quality may result in lower acceptance rates from Southern and Eastern Europe which would be disappointing. It was agreed that proposals with no clear method or outcome and no real paper should be rejected.

The issue of how to improve quality will be discussed at the January meeting.

6. ECER 2006

Bernard Schneuwly reported that five members of the Geneva organising committee were in attendance in Dublin. He stressed the local committee's wish to give the conference theme more importance.

It was proposed that there would be four Keynotes, two in parallel during two separate sessions. No other sessions would run at the same time as the Keynotes. The Geneva organisers will identify two Keynotes and Council must identify two others. Ingrid stated that one of the Keynotes nominated by Council should be a young female speaker.

As the roundtable following Kathleen Lynch's Keynote had been very successful, it was agreed that there should be a similar session following each of the Geneva Keynotes. These will be described as discussion sessions rather than roundtables and they will be scheduled during the normal session timeslots, parallel to the network sessions. There could be invited roundtables on the EERJ and on Didactics and these would not be scheduled in parallel to the network sessions. The problem of how to fit everything into the conference schedule was discussed. By not having network sessions in parallel to Keynotes, invited roundtables or symposia, it was felt that there is less possibility of skipping the Saturday sessions.

7. Issues arising from formal discussions during ECER 2005

Lejf Moos noted a matter arising from the A.G.A. in which Ingrid had stated that the Nordic association would host the next Summer School. This is incorrect as the Nordic association has not yet discussed this possibility and would need time to plan and arrange funding. Although the Nordic association will discuss this for a future year, another partner must be found to host the 2006 Summer School. Ingrid requested that Council members explore this with their national associations. Details on the cost of organising the 2005 event will be provided by Ingrid.

9. Venues for subsequent ECERs

Wim has received a letter from the University of Ghent, in cooperation with the Flemish Forum for Educational Research, offering to host ECER 2007. Researchers from other universities, such as the Free University of Brussels and the University of Leuven have also offered their support.

An offer from the University of Granada was also received but when Ingrid approached the Spanish associations to enlist their cooperation, there was no response. It was agreed that this was awkward because, despite the eagerness of the university to host ECER, a lack of cooperation from the local association would make conference organisation very problematic. It was also noted that as none of the Spanish representatives had attended recent Council meetings, the associations' interest in EERA was doubtful.

After consideration, Council agreed that the offer from Ghent was more favourable, given the joint support of the University and the Flemish association. The choice of Ghent as the venue for ECER 2007 was therefore approved. Ingrid will formally write to Prof. Martin Valcke at the Department of Education, University of Ghent to accept his offer.

ECER 2008 in Gothenburg has already been fixed. The Convenor of Network 7, Francesca Gobbo, has proposed the University of Turin to host ECER 2010 during the last week of August. It was agreed that Granada could be reconsidered to host ECER 2009. A possible partnership between Finland and Estonia was also proposed for 2009.

10. Meeting with publishers: Project Proposal "European Educational Research Database"

Ingrid reported that the meeting with the publishers had been very effective. It is proposed to start with the product of one of the publishers which is a collection of abstracts on a commercial database. This could be developed to include non-English abstracts. Phil Sheffield and Alexander Botte who have experience from the PERINE project are involved in the proposal and the group will also be joined by Ton Mooij, Convenor of Network 16, "ICT in Education and Training" who will make suggestions on quality control, which was agreed to be an important aspect of the development. In response to Ingrid's letter to the national associations for financial support, offers of contributions from DGfE, SSRE and SERA were warmly welcomed. Lejf Moos and Elina Lahelma will also bring the matter for discussion at the next meeting of the Nordic and Finnish associations. It is estimated that €5000 would pay for the preparation of the proposal to the EC for funding.

11. New members and related issues

Denis Bates reported that Francesca Gobbo would like to start an Italian association and there is the possibility of a Romanian institute joining EERA if they receive the appropriate approval. Denis will follow up both possibilities. It was agreed that EERA should try to activate the Portuguese and two Spanish associations and invite representatives to sit on Council. Ingrid has asked Bénédicte Gendron to try and contact them.

Following their meeting with Prof. Trevor Gale, President of the Australian association, Ingrid and Wim reported that an agreement had been reached to offer reduced fees for Australian delegates at ECER. In return, members of EERA (= members of national Associations which are EERA-members) would receive reduced

fees at the Conferences of the Australian Association. It was also agreed that EERA would be offered a slot at the Australian conferences, and that the possibility of offering a time slot for the Australian Association at ECERs should be explored. The Australian Association was invited by Wim and Ingrid to offer a reception at ECERs for selected delegates; Trevor agreed to discuss this possibility in his Association.

Following a meeting in April with the American association Chair, Lejf Moos reported that EERA could be associated to AERA and have a slot at their conferences. While it was agreed that this would be a good opportunity, the problem of how to choose who would attend was raised. Edwin suggested looking through network papers published in the journal which could be promoted. How to proceed on the American and Australian offers will be discussed at the January meeting.

12. Dates of next meetings

The next Council meeting will take place at the University of Geneva on Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th January 2006.