

Minutes of the EERA Council Meeting

University College Dublin, 22–23 January 2005

Present: Denis Bates, Raymond Bourdoncle, Donald Christie (substituting for Fran Payne), Kyriaki Doulas, Ingrid Gogolin, Edwin Keiner, Margaret Kirkwood, Elina Lahelma, Martin Lawn, Lejf Moos, Wim Jochems.

Apologies: Tomas Escudero, Palmira Juceviciene, Stefan Wolter, Lesley Morrison, Zoran Pavlovic

The meeting was joined by Professor Sheelagh Drudy and her colleagues Dr Conor Galvin, Dr Marie Clarke and Judith Harford from the local organizing committee.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of 21st and 25th September 2004 Council Meeting
The minute was approved.
3. Matters arising from Minutes of 21st and 25th September 2004
Item 2: Further advice resulted in the matter being dropped.
Item 6(i): MK reported that discussions had now taken place with all three convenors (two face-to-face and one by email).
4. ECER 2004 Crete
 - (i) KD tabled and presented a paper on the Postgraduate Network and Pre-Conference. The main developmental aspects were: creating a more permanent cohort of senior researchers, improving the quality of proposals, the competition for best paper. The paper included information on the size of the pre-conference and the programme and contributors. The pre-conference has grown considerably and evaluations attest to its high quality.
 - (ii) LM had forwarded a paper which MK introduced on the final attendance and income. The main points were:
 - the final number of registered delegates was 1282, of whom 1082 were presenters;
 - the total income was £191, 479, minus £3500 which was refunded for delegates who could not attend due to illness, etc.;
 - there were 1031 submissions of which 52 were rejected and 121 were subsequently cancelled;
 - the main countries represented were UK (489), Greece (274), Finland (166), Sweden (158)
 - (iii) The same paper summarized feedback from chairpersons. The main points were:
 - there was a 68% return;
 - there were 67 'no-shows' (a vast improvement on Hamburg), mostly at the beginning and end of the conference;
 - most sessions averaged an audience of 11- 40;
 - pacing of sessions was mostly satisfactory;

- there were some negative comments but not many, on rooms, seating, signing, quality, complaints about English speakers.

5. ECER 2005 Dublin

(i) – (v) Professor Sheelagh Drudy presented a Powerpoint presentation on planning for ECER 2005. The conference theme will be 'Education and Knowledge Economies'. The contract will be agreed by April. The order of the opening and closing ceremonies was discussed. The LOC will bring forward suggestions for a suitable network in which the keynote address can be discussed. EK would approach the EERA keynote speaker. The outline programme was agreed (to the Crete and not the Hamburg pattern). There will be a list for delegates of restaurants and pubs, an indication of where rambler tickets can be purchased, email addresses will be provided for direct booking of student accommodation, and there will be a bus from Trinity College. There will be email addresses for direct booking of accommodation, and a 'bus route friendly' list. There will be a link to Irish tourism. Publishers will be invited. Proposals for Roundtables were UNESCO and EERJ with OECD (as before). A draft programme for the Pre-conference was tabled by KD and agreed as a sound plan.

Note: IG proposed an alteration to the order of the agenda from this point onwards, which was agreed by Council. For the sake of clarity, this minute maintains the original order of the agenda.

(vi) There has been an earlier submission date for proposals partly to ease the pressure as the conference approaches on the EERA Office which is now dealing with a much higher number of delegates and a larger and more complex programme to compile than in previous years. MK reported that the planning timescale for all subsequent conferences must be brought forward to allow sufficient time for planning and processing of delegate information and moneys.

Concerning the issue of the extent to which EERA should be willing to make adjustments to the programme in response to delegate requests, following lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the following should appear in the email to delegates indicating acceptance of their proposals:

EERA reserves the right to organize the conference programme and timetable. Requests from intending presenters for a change of the time and date of a presentation will not normally be entertained, except under the most compelling of circumstances. (Please contact the EERA Office for further details.)

Concerning reviewing procedures, the Open Network has been re-established, convened by EK and with ML, EL and DB as members. Detailed procedures for reviewing will be agreed between MK and EK. There will be fewer opportunities for redirection to improve efficiency.

(vii) Speed and clarity of presentation are issues that must be addressed by UK and Irish delegates, and those presenting in their own language. A new system for Dublin is proposed in which all delegates can show a card to indicate that they are losing understanding of the presentation. The precise details of how this will work have still to be thought out.

6. ECER 2006 and subsequent venues

[Minuted by DC in MK's absence]

This is the present situation concerning venues:

ECER 2006: Geneva is confirmed.

ECER 2007: the status of Torino remains unclear, since Francesca Gobbo who had made the proposal has now moved to a different university. Ingrid agreed to seek urgent clarification from Italy.

ECER 2008: Göteborg is firm with formal letter received.

Colleagues discussed options to deal with possible problem of 2007. One suggestion was to try to move Göteborg forward to 2007 to allow further exploration of options for 2008.

Looking further ahead, there was a strong expression of interest from Estonian colleagues in hosting ECER 2009. Here there could be a link with colleagues in neighbouring Finland who have more conference experience.

After some discussion, it was agreed that Ingrid would take the following steps to clarify venue for 2007:

- First check with Italy;
- Then explore Eastern European options, e.g. Prague, Warsaw or Krakow;
- If neither (a) nor (b) bears fruit, approach Göteborg to run one year earlier; or
- Explore Estonian option – Tallin.

(i) Conference theme for ECER 2006 in Geneva was still to be confirmed, but the question was raised about whether it was acceptable to have a theme, which is similar to that for Dublin in 2005. ML argued that this was not a problem. What was more important was the question of the relationship between the conference theme and the proceedings of the conference.

(ii) Postponed until June Council.

(iii) Proposal for a new “History Educators International Research Network” under EERA was considered. EK strongly argued that the aspirations of this group could and should be accommodated within the existing History Network, possibly as a subgroup, if necessary. ML pointed out that the proposal was highly UK-centred, coming from an English “Teachers of History” group. It was agreed that the proposal does not comply with expectations of new EERA networks and should be rejected. ML offered to provide MK with some text to include in her letter to the proposers.

(iv) It was confirmed that the procedure for formal submission of offers to host the ECER Conference required a formal letter from the relevant national association/local organisers.

7. EERA Finances

(i) & (iii) Financial situation: WJ presented a provisional financial report covering income and expenses for 2004 and a budget for 2005. For 2004 the estimated net result was a deficit of 1, 304 Euros. Earmarked costs amounted to 22, 971 Euros. The estimated balance at December 2004 was 104, 000 Euros, with a targeted balance of 150, 000 Euros. The budget for 2005 contains 200,100 Euros of Income, 202, 500 Euros of expenditure and a net deficit of 2, 400 Euros. Earmarked posts amount to 17, 400 Euros. Council members must pay for their own expenses other than for agreed exceptions: president, SG (both beyond initial term); chair convenors, chair pre-conference.

(ii) Financial organization: the treasurer provides the overview to be implemented in January 2005 with Lesley Morrison and John Queen, consisting of: Euro conference account, £ Sterling conference account, £ Sterling Council account, £ Sterling office account for 'petty cash'. A switch to online payments for delegates is proposed for Geneva . The early bird payment will be continued.

(iv) Membership subscriptions: an improvement is needed in their administration. [WJ to action].

8. Communications

(i) EERJ: [minuted by DC]

Access to EERJ.

ML gave an update on the question of accessing EERJ. Publishers were keen to move to payment for access to papers in issues of EERJ published in the current year. All other articles would be available free. To date, libraries have not been pursued strenuously for income. We have not been strict about the link between access to the journal and membership, because we simply do not have the information necessary to identify who our members are. ML is expecting the publisher to provide a paper outlining a proposal for payment for access to contents for current year and that this will be available for discussion by Council at its June meeting.

Content of EERJ

The quality of articles is good and in many ways developing well, but ML argued that more quality work is needed coming through from the ECER conferences. It would be interesting to explore where colleagues publish their work following on from their ECER papers. In reply IG blamed the predominance of the ISI Journals, e.g. among academic researchers from Holland, because their universities insist on publication in such 'high status' peer-reviewed journals. ML pointed out that there is a clear statement on the website pointing out that EERJ is indeed blind, peer-reviewed.

EK confirmed that, while this was particularly a Netherlands problem, it was also a reflection of the fact that only 30% of presenters at ECER conferences produce a written paper. Perhaps more could be done to encourage convenors to assemble papers from symposia. ML pointed out that while EERJ tends to take a thematic approach for each issue, it is able to take more individual papers. This possibility might be made a little more explicit in the advice for authors.

ML reminded Council that EERJ is not just for European Researchers; it is for European Research framing arguments in a European way adopting a European perspective.

EK suggested that Special Issues of EERJ linking the work of Networks might be a good idea to explore.

(ii) Website: [minuted by MK]

Much dissatisfaction was expressed about the delay in the 'new' website going live (this had been scheduled to happen by December 2004). Material was being systematically transferred and updated from the old website to the new, using protocols agreed between the SG, EERA Office and Educationline, following an earlier meeting in Glasgow. However the pace of this work was regarded as too slow. Assuming that the technical performance of the site has been properly tested previously in Birmingham, it was agreed that it should be possible for the new site to go live by February.

9. New EERA developments [minuted by DC]

(i) New Developments in Research Management in Europe

ML reported that BERA is developing a web-based research space which could be extended to link with EERA and its networks.

Discussions with Taylor and Francis which controls 400 journals relevant to educational researchers are continuing regarding the creation of a European education index to counter the undue influence of ISI. The publishers' association are interested in partnering EERA and other relevant organisations to work on such an index. Taylor and Francis propose to host a meeting in Oxford to take this forward in the near future. Questions as to the organising principles of such an index, how it will define quality and how it will be used will clearly need to be addressed. Such discussions could establish foundations from which a European index might evolve.

It was proposed that 3 or 4 colleagues should be identified to represent EERA in this meeting which could take place in March or April. (ACTION: ML/MK/IG/EK)

EK drew colleagues' attention to the problem of the funding of journal subscriptions with institutional rate for some top journals now exceeding £800 per annum.

RB warned against the use of a pure metric approach such as in ISI, in which there is no real consideration of *quality*.

IG clarified the situation by indicating that the intention is not to produce a citation index, which would be the European equivalent of ISI. Rather, this would be a structured repository of research publications which would be a powerful tool for the research community. This clarification was warmly accepted by Council.

(ii) Summer School

KD was keen to clarify the status of the Summer School and its relationship with the Postgraduate Network, in the light of experiences last year and in anticipation of future events.

AOCB:

Next SG

MK was requested to set out in writing the role and responsibilities of the SG. IG would accept suggestions of suitable persons from amongst the members of the Council.

Retiral

Raymond's term on the Council has now ended and the Council thanked him warmly for his contribution to EERA and wished him well in his retirement.

Additional functions within Council

Recruitment of and liaison with potential new members: DB agreed to investigate possibilities for new associations joining EERA and to bring a paper to the next meeting of Council

Securing EU funding: it was proposed that IG should approach SW with a request that he might prepare some suggestions as to possible strategies.