

Minutes of the EERA Council Meeting

University of Geneva, 14th & 15th January 2006

Present:

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

Denis Bates, Edwin Keiner, Martin Lawn, Daniela Angela Mangione, Lejf Moos,
Lesley Morrison, Fran Payne, Michael Uljens, Stefan Wolter, Elena Zezlina-Phillips.

The meeting was joined by the following members of the Geneva organising committee:
Marcel Crahay, Marc Durand, Monika Gather Thurler, Sandra de Grazia, Erika Hofmann and
Bernard Schneuwly.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome to new members

Apologies were noted from Teresa Romana Blay (SEP), Tomas Escudero (AIDIPE),
John Furlong (BERA), Bénédicte Gendron (AECSE), Christiane Moro (AECSE), and
Zoran Pavlovic (Educational Research Institute, Slovenia).

Michael Uljens was welcomed as the new FERA representative, replacing Elina
Lahelma. Daniela Angela Mangione and Elena Zezlina-Phillips were both welcomed
as the new Post-graduate Network Convenors, replacing Kyriaki Doumas.

2. Confirmation of Minutes of 6th and 10th September 2005 Council Meeting

Correction: 10th September, page 1, list of those present - Zoran Pavlovic did not
attend the meeting.

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising from Minutes of 6th and 10th September 2005 Council Meeting

- 6th September, Item 3, page 3 noted that German post-graduate students can
not claim the reduced “Member” fee for ECER because they cannot become
members of their national association. The President reported that this
problem has now been resolved after a discussion she had with the German
association. Although there is no change to the DGfE regulations, for the
purpose of ECER registration, German PhD students will now be considered
as “exceptional” EERA members.
- 10th September, Item 8, page 4 discussed the cooperation of associations. It
was agreed that Member Associations should be added as a separate item on
today’s and all future agendas.

- 10th September, Item 9, page 5 noted that SERA had offered to contribute to the project proposal “European Educational Research Database”. Fran Payne clarified that although SERA does intend to contribute to the project, it has not yet done so.

4. ECER 2006 Geneva

(i) Local Committee Report

There are eight people in the Main Conference organising committee and the Pre-Conference will be organised by Ingrid de St Georges and Valerie Lussi.

Conference sessions will take place in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. Depending on the number of rooms required one other nearby building may also be used. Around 40 rooms will be available, all with OHPs and beamers. Registration, social events and the publishers’ exhibit will take place on the ground floor. A team of volunteers will act as helpers at registration and will assist with any problems with rooms or equipment. The largest auditorium has a capacity of 550 people and speeches can be transmitted to other rooms should more people wish to listen.

Local sponsorship will be provided by the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, the Swiss National Association, the Academy of Social and Human Sciences and the local Canton. Council thanked the local committee for securing sponsors.

It is the hope of the local committee that ECER 2006 will provide an opportunity for more involvement from French and Spanish colleagues. They felt that national associations should be more active in circulating conference publicity. Council explained that there is no way for EERA to enforce associations to do so. Council saw no reason why the Geneva conference should not attract similar numbers as recent ECERs.

As ECER 2007 (Ghent) and 2008 (Gothenburg) will be in Northern Europe, it was suggested that there may be fewer delegates from the South (Italy, Spain). The local committee felt that EERA should be more active in attracting Southern delegates and, if these delegates will not come to ECER, then ECER needs to be held in the South. Council felt that this is a general problem which can only be solved through discussion with Southern colleagues about starting a national association. It was noted that both Spanish associations (AIDIPE and SEP) had paid their annual membership subscription to EERA but they do not participate in Council or have any other communication with EERA. The need to revive Spanish and Portuguese association memberships was agreed. Unfortunately, Bénédicte Gendron, who had agreed to try to contact both associations, has been unable to do so because of illness. Daniela Angela Mangione and Elena Zezlina-Phillips reported that they are trying to stimulate Italian post-graduates to attend the Pre-Conference.

A request from the local committee to extend the proposal submission deadline was rejected by Council. The deadline was announced during ECER in Dublin and everyone was aware of it in advance. Furthermore, the reviewing schedule is already tight with

Networks needing at least 3 weeks to review submissions. To extend the deadline would delay the reviewing process which in turn would delay the compilation of the conference programme and delegate registrations. Since the deadline has been strictly enforced in recent years, to extend it now would be seen as a step backwards. The 1st February deadline will therefore not be extended.

The Geneva conference will be the first ECER announced under a theme. The theme was received positively at the Convenors' meeting in Dublin and some networks will organise a session around the theme. Convenors have also been encouraged to look for good papers which meet both the core network theme and the conference theme and which could be included in a special issue of the EERJ.

Council thanked the local committee for their preparations and cooperation.

(ii) Programme Schedule

The death of Armin Gretler was noted with regret. It was agreed that a one-minute silence dedicated to his memory should take place at the Opening Ceremony of ECER 2006. Stefan Wolter will prepare a brief condolence address for this event.

After discussion, the schedule of main events was agreed as follows:

Wednesday 13th September

08:30-09:00 - Opening Ceremony

09:00-10:00 – Keynotes (two in parallel)

17:15-18:45 - Invited Panel dedicated to the conference theme

Thursday 14th September

13:30-15:00 – EERJ Roundtable (in parallel to Session 6)

17:15-18:45 – A.G.A

Friday 15th September

13:30-14:30 – Keynotes (two in parallel)

18:30-19:00 - Closing Ceremony

A lengthy discussion followed on the inclusion of posters in the programme schedule. The local committee felt that poster presentations should be encouraged. They proposed that two of the eleven conference sessions should be reserved for posters. This proposal was rejected by Council because, with an average of only 25-35 posters received each year, poster presentations are not popular enough to justify such an arrangement. Due to the high volume of papers and other formats, eleven sessions are required to fit the network presentations into the conference programme. It was agreed that incorporating poster presentations into paper sessions, which has been recent practice, is not an appropriate arrangement.

As an alternative, in Geneva all accepted posters will be exhibited in thematic groups all day Thursday and Friday in a central area. The poster presenters will have to be available in the exhibit area at specific times (Thursday and Friday, 12:15-13:15) to answer questions from delegates. By giving posters such a prominent space, they would be more visible to delegates instead of being hidden in the network sessions amongst

papers. The office will inform poster presenters of the new arrangement once the results of the review are known.

After the conference, poster presenters will be asked for feedback so that Council can evaluate how successful this arrangement has been. This will then determine whether posters will be scheduled in this way in future. The post-graduate Convenors will encourage post-graduates to submit a poster to the Main conference.

(iii) Review process

The local committee stressed the importance of having clear scientific criteria for reviewing ECER 2006 proposals because they felt that some poor quality papers were presented in Dublin. Ingrid countered this by noting that she had received a great deal of positive feedback on the improved quality of the Dublin conference. Although the local committee felt that they should have some control over the quality of proposals, Council affirmed that network Convenors are responsible for the review of proposals because they are experts in their field.

It was highlighted that this year's criteria for submission has been revised and proposers have been asked to provide specific information on methodology, conclusions and references and to ensure that they bring a written paper to the conference. The notion of "conditional acceptance", whereby a proposal will only be accepted if the proposer makes certain amendments, was welcomed. This procedure already operates in some networks.

It was agreed that Bernard Schneuwly should represent the local committee on the Open Network review group, led by Edwin Keiner, to review the hard to place proposals which have been redirected by other networks. Lejf Moos, Michael Uljens, Stefan Wolter, Wim Jochems and Denis Bates volunteered to participate in the Open Network review group, depending on their availability at the time of the reviewing process. Edwin Keiner will liaise with colleagues about these arrangements.

(iv) Pre-Conference

Sponsorship of approximately 20,000 CHF (€12,800) has recently been secured for the Pre-Conference from the Federal State Secretary for Education and Science. Instead of dividing this amongst all post-graduate students, it was suggested that the money could be used to either subsidise post-graduates from low GDP countries or to award a small number of people (€600 each to 20 people) a bonus for excellence to allow them to attend another conference. It was agreed that the bonus for excellence was the better solution as it would be a way of attracting good young researchers. The post-graduate reviewers will send the best 20-25 abstracts to an "excellence group" comprising a member of the local committee, EERA President and Secretary General who will decide who is awarded the sponsorship money. The local committee insisted that the authors should also include a CV with their abstract to support their submission. The money will be awarded after ECER to ensure that the authors attend and present their paper.

It was agreed that the EERA award for best Pre-Conference paper should be kept separate from the local sponsorship award for excellence. The winner will be awarded their prize at the Opening Ceremony of ECER 2006.

Basic university accommodation located 20 minute's walk or a 10 minute bus ride from campus will be available for post-graduates for the week of ECER. Rooms will cost approximately 50 CHF/€30 per person, per night and 65 CHF/€40 for two people sharing a double room.

Ingrid asked the post-graduate Convenors to send Council a list of the Pre-Conference mentors and their area of expertise to identify any areas which are not covered by the existing team of reviewers.

5. Treasurer's Report on financial situation

At present only provisional figures are available until the annual audit is completed. The Treasurer will present a confirmed financial overview at the June Council meeting.

The 2005 result has been positive due to the large number of paying delegates in Dublin and also thanks to the strict financial model which allows the Treasurer to have more control over costs from the start of conference planning.

Certain expenses, such as travel and office costs will increase slightly in 2006. The contract with the University of Strathclyde to host the EERA office has been extended for the period January to December 2006.

Although it is likely that there will be more than 900 delegates at Geneva, a cautious provisional budget has been agreed based on 700-800 delegates. For every additional delegate thereafter, €50 per person will be added to the budget.

At present EERA's financial structure is too complicated and must be streamlined to facilitate the work for John Queen and the auditor. Old accounts will be closed and just one Euro account and one or two sterling accounts will be maintained.

As credit card seems to be the cheapest payment method, the Treasurer has been in discussion with the bank about the possibility of introducing an online credit card payment facility through the new website. Delegates would have to complete specific fields before their registration and payment could be submitted. EERA would receive fees in Euros and therefore avoid conversion costs. Wim hoped that an online payment facility would be available through the website by the beginning of March because delegates will want to register from March onwards, once the review results are issued. Council approved the proposal for online payments and thanked Wim for his endeavours in this respect.

6. Member Associations

All Member Associations have paid their subscription fees for 2005. Invoices will soon be issued for the 2006 subscription, which is based on the size of the association. Denis Bates reported that all new contacts had been followed up but that as yet no new members have joined because many associations require approval from their committee.

It was noted that although Spanish and Portuguese delegates regularly attend ECER, their national Associations are not active in EERA. In August, the President will contact all Italian and Polish delegates registered for Geneva to invite them to attend an informal meeting during ECER to discuss the creation of links with these countries.

Member Associations will be discussed as a separate item on all future agendas to allow Council to keep up to date with any progress.

7. Website

Currently updates to the website are carried out once a month. New information and requests for amendments are sent to the office who forward them to the President and Ingo Mahnke. This is not the final solution because there is no official webmaster. It is proposed that the website maintenance is moved to the Secretary General's department at the University of Umeå, where there are experienced staff in this field. This would ensure that the Secretary General has some control over the website.

The integration of the new website with new conference software was discussed. It was noted that the existing conference database has to be maintained until a new system which works perfectly is available. A detailed description of office procedures is required as a basis for sourcing new software. New software linked to the website would allow Convenors to access and evaluate proposals more quickly. Edwin Keiner will work with the office to document each step of conference organisation and office workflow.

Some Council members proposed that instead of trying to create new software, EERA should look at existing conference software used by other European organisations and see if it could be adjusted to handle EERA's needs. Ingrid requested that Council send her the details of such associations so that they could be approached for information about their software and to see if other systems could fit with EERA's procedures.

It was agreed that Council should simultaneously look at existing software and document EERA's specific procedures. Progress on both will be discussed at the June meeting. In the meantime, the existing software must be used because it is too risky to try and move to a new system for the Geneva conference.

8. EERJ Report

For Geneva ECER 2006, the conference registration fees will include a fee for delegates to gain access to the EERJ (€20). EERA will have a direct additional income of €5000 (based on an expected total of 1000 delegates) in Geneva. Free

access in 2006 is only open to those who attended Dublin ECER 2005. Others can still access the issues if they pay a €15/£20 fee through the publisher's website. The archives remain open.

EERA will be invoiced on 1st January 2007 for the list of "attendee/member" access to the journal (i.e. providing access to the 2007 issues for those at Geneva ECER), and so on. The editor has contacted the journal of the German national association to develop a way of including new sources of book reviews for the EERJ. A similar contact has been made in France.

There will be an EERJ Roundtable in Geneva (Thursday 14th September, 13:30-15:00) which is likely to be on a policy issue related to knowledge and Europeanisation in education. It is organised by Professors Gogolin and Keiner.

9. Reports from Networks

Edwin Keiner and Lisbeth Lundahl have reviewed the network activities. A summary is included in Appendix A. It was proposed that new networks should run for 3 years and then be re-evaluated by Council based on their reporting and number of proposals. If the review is negative then the network would consequently be abandoned by strictly applying the rules for networks. This suggestion was approved and will be adopted from now on. Edwin will hand over the role of Convenor representative to Ian Grosvenor in Geneva.

10. EERA Office

ECER 2005 drew delegates from fifty-one countries. The total number of people who registered to attend was 1162 and there were 1059 paying delegates. The Post-graduate and New Researchers' Pre-Conference received 157 delegates and 95 of these also attended the Main Conference. The last outstanding conference payment was received at the end of December. All conference monies have been receipted and the Dublin registration and financial paperwork has now been prepared for the annual audit. The contract with the University of Strathclyde to host the office has been extended for the period January to December 2006. Diane Coyle replaced Sarah Brown as part-time secretary in January 2006.

11. Medium term plan

(i) Didactics

Following discussions in Dublin about a new network on Didactics, a small working group met in Stockholm in December 2005. The group agreed on a draft description of what the network could take over as its working perspective. It was agreed that this is an important sphere which will cover elements of classroom research. Although the new network will not officially operate in Geneva, it will host a symposium with invited speakers (Brian Hudson, Ingrid Carlgren, Kirsti Klette, and Birgit Pepin). It should then be formally accepted at the Geneva A.G.A and operate as a new network for ECER 2007. It was noted that the current working group only has representatives from the West and Nordic countries and there is a lack of input from the Romance-

speaking world. Bernard Schneuwly agreed to represent the French-speaking world in the provisional Convenors group.

(ii) Project proposal European database

The President reported that unfortunately there has been no real progress with the project as there is no one to take the lead and produce a final text. A proposal to hold a final workshop in Hamburg to discuss whether a proposal can be designed to address the new description of Framework 7 from the European Commission was approved. It was agreed that there should one more attempt because it is important for EERA to make proposals for EU projects. If a proposal can be written then the financial contributions from member Associations will be used. If this is not possible, EERA will reimburse the Associations. Experts in the field such as Phil Sheffield and Alexander Botte should be invited to the workshop.

(iii) Summer School

The 2005 Summer School had a positive evaluation. The German association (DGfE) will organise another Summer School in 2006. It will be held in September (the week before ECER) at the same venue as the 2005 event (near Berlin). Unfortunately the dates clash with the BERA conference but this could not be avoided due to the availability of the venue. The programme structure will remain the same as last year, with a workshop format rather than lectures. Unfortunately, due to the date clash with BERA, Chris Taylor from Cardiff will not be available, but hopefully Stephen Baron, TLRP will. Ingrid requested suggestions from Council for other contributors. Due to the success of the 2005 event, the DGfE are again willing to contribute substantially to the financing of this year's event, but it would be very helpful to get support from other national organisations. It will be advertised in German and English. Stefan Wolter requested that the event is advertised early to allow applicants sufficient time to obtain funding to attend. Stefan Wolter said that the Swiss association would be interested in hosting a future event and Lejf Moos will investigate whether the Nordic association would do likewise. The best 2005 Summer School applicant was awarded €500 by the German journal *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft* and their paper will be published. Ingrid asked Martin to consider whether the EERJ could contribute to an award.

The Marie Curie programme will not fund single activities but only a series of activities. In order to obtain funding from the programme a series of Summer Schools would therefore have to be designed. Council agreed that this was a good idea because there is a need for activities for young researchers. The President asked Martin Lawn to work with Chris Taylor and a representative from DGfE to prepare a proposal for a series of Summer Schools.

An official request must come from the President to the national Associations requesting their involvement in the Summer School. Ingrid will send information on the 2006 Summer School to Council so that national Associations can support applicants.

(iv) Links to other associations

Ingrid asked for suggestions as to which associations EERA should approach with the offer of a slot at ECER. Stefan Wolter proposed AEA Europe Association for Educational Assessment (<http://www.aea-europe.net/>) which he felt would be complementary to EERA's networks. As it is a relatively small association, ECER could also prove a relevant platform for them to promote their association. Michael Uljens suggested the International Network for Philosophers of Education and will forward further details to the President. Earlier unsuccessful attempts to try to connect with EARLI were noted with regret. It was agreed that a final attempt at contact should be made. The President will write to these associations to see if any progress can be made.

12. Possible EERA slot at the AARE conference

During ECER Dublin, the President and Treasurer met with the President of the Australian Association, Trevor Gale, to discuss whether AARE would like to have a slot at ECER 2006. Ingrid will contact him to see if there is any definite interest in participating. If so, the contributors will be asked to identify their topic and Council will decide which network should host the presentation. If there is no obvious network, then the Open Network will host the session. This contribution will not be subject to standard review but will be automatically accepted into the programme.

It is now too late for EERA to participate in the American Association conference. The President has twice emailed an AARE contact but received no reply. She asked Lejf Moos to approach his contact again to try to establish a link.

13. Communications

The President and Treasurer will meet with Prof. Martin Valcke from Ghent University at the end of March to discuss the schedule and preparations for ECER 2007. The President wrote to the University of Granada to explain that EERA had chosen Ghent over Granada as the 2007 venue due to the lack of support from the Spanish Associations. The letter was copied to both Association Presidents but no reply has been received.

The President and Secretary General will meet with the Gothenburg organisers on the 16th March to plan for ECER 2008. Rooms have already been booked for the conference and the date has been fixed for Wednesday 10th - Friday 12th September.

14. EERA Constitution

Fran Payne has worked with John Queen to review EERA's Constitution. In line with new Scottish charities legislation, EERA is now listed on the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR) register under the "advancement of education" category. As part of the new charities act, EERA will have to complete an annual return because it has an annual income of more than £25, 000 (€36, 500). Under the UK "Freedom of Information Act", the public will also have the right to access EERA's financial reports.

At the Dublin A.G.A it was decided that EERA would not accept future individual and Institute memberships. The Constitution must therefore be revised to incorporate this change. Fran will investigate whether there are any legal requirements regarding amendments to the Constitution and will also draft a revised text for discussion at the June meeting. If approved by Council in June, the revised Constitution will be presented for approval at the A.G.A in Geneva.

15. Dates of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at the Danish University of Education, Copenhagen on Saturday 10th June (11:00 – 18:00) and Sunday 11th June 2006 (09:00 – 12:30).