

**Minutes of the XXXVII. ELPIS-Conference
in Bratislava
9./10. May 2008**

Friday, 9th May, 2008

Participants:

Apalagaki, Charoula (University of Thessaloniki); Bartelds, Chris (University of Groningen); Delagneau, Jean-Marc (Université du Havre); Fenge, Hilmar (University of Hanover); Fernandez, Maria João, (University of Lisbon); Fischer, Peter (University of Bratislava); Ebbensen, Lene (University Copenhagen); Girard, Charlotte (University of Rouen); Hähnel, Ingrid (University of Hanover); Hjort, Majken (University Copenhagen); Jonsdottir, Asta Edda (University of Iceland); Lomsdalen, Jens Peder (University of Oslo); Marboe, Irmgard (University of Vienna); Oppermann, Bernd (University of Hanover); Papst, Steffen (University of Leipzig); Quadros Fonseca, Ines (University of Lisbon); Renaut-Couteau, Armelle (University duHavre); Robotka, Andrea (University of Budapest); Rudenko, Slavomir (University of Bratislava); Sadowski, Pawel (University of Lublin); Toullier, Marine (University of Rouen); Weinmann, Ute (Université de Cergy-Pontoise); Zakrezewski, Wojciech (University of Lublin).

All other Elpis members not being present had been excused for different reasons.

1. Opening

The Rector Prof. Klimko and the Dean Prof. Ivor opened the XXXVII. Conference of ELPIS at the Bratislava School of Law. Both gave a warm welcome and presentations about Slovakia's history, its political, social and cultural development within the last years. Last but not least Slovakia's way to Europe and the role of foreign relations of the Law Faculty of Bratislava have been focussed.

Prof. Dr. Peter Fischer, the Vice Rector of International Relations of the Bratislava School of law and the chairman Prof. Oppermann from the Leibniz University in Hannover were introducing the programme.

Prof. Oppermann, the chairman thanked the hosts for their warm introduction and expressed that the ELPIS network is honoured by the partnership of the private Bratislava Law School, which fits excellent into the "ELPIS Club".

TOP 1 Approval of the minutes (XXXVI. ELPIS Conference in Groningen in 2007)

Prof. Armelle Renault-Couteau pointed out a false addressing on page 15 of the Groningen minutes she does not represent the Université Rouen. Insofar the minutes were corrected into "Renaut-Couteau, Armelle (Université du Havre)". Hannover excused for the mistake.

The minutes of the last ELPIS conference in Groningen from April 27./28. 2007 were approved.

TOP 2 Reports and news (Tempus Project, Erasmus Mundus Project and other activities)

The chairman reported about some kind of "reactivation" of teaching staff mobility in the context of our Elpis I network. E.g. immediately before the conference started, Prof. Jessica Uguccioni from the University of Durham attended the Leibniz University, Faculty of law and gave lectures on "Contract and Equity." Prof. Uguccioni is a Cambridge alumnus and the Leibniz University has been very delighted to welcome her. These lectures as well as multiple others lectures within our network have demonstrated that ELPIS I is not "museum network", but very "alive and kicking", which means that our common project Elpis is successfully operating. This good example of teaching staff mobility should encourage other law teachers to attend our partners for giving lectures and seminars.

The chairman informed the participants that the Erasmus Mundus Consortiums' (ELPIS II) progress report on Action 1, 2 for the 4th cycle has been approved by the Commission while we are waiting for the answer from EACEA due to the progress report on Action 3 and the final report on Action 1, 2 for the 2nd cycle. Furthermore it was reported that the Commission adopted the official selection of Action 2 for the Academic Year 2008/2009 concerning the 5th generation (cycle) of students and scholars of the ELPIS II LL.M. programme.

Although, this information concerns the Consortium at first hand, the other ELPIS members take indirect advantage by better infrastructure as there is the common homepage or advanced tutoring of visiting students.

TOP 3 Cooperation report

a) Acknowledgement of grades and credits

Within the Elpis network we have a conversion schedule up to 18 points. This transformation category mentioned below works very well within the network. It is highly recommended to keep the proportional grading transfer scheme of ECTS up to date. This, for example, is the actual Hannover conversion scheme:

Jura-Punktzahlen	ECTS-Bewertung	
13-18 Punkte	A	excellent
10-12 Punkte	B	very good
07-09 Punkte	C	Good
05-06 Punkte	D	satisfactory
04 Punkte	E	pass
01-03 Punkte	F	fail
00 Punkte	FX	fail

b) Statistics

It is a matter of fact that the exchange of students has a major role in our Elpis network. Thus it is really a pity that most of the responsible network-coordinators have not sent their overviews of in- and outgoing students to the coordinator in Hanover. For that reason Hanover had not been in a position to prepare a common schedule. The numerous receipt of exchange data from our partners would be appreciated for the future.

c) Other questions concerning student exchange

Some delegates reported about problems concerning inactive Elpis members, who have not taken part in our meetings for many years or have only an unimportant flow of exchange concerning students and teachers within our network. From time to time it could happen that the missing presence at our conference is caused by missing reimbursement of transfer costs to the meetings, which – despite the possibilities offered by SOKRATES - are not always covered by the home universities. Some delegates i.e. the University of Lublin, Bratislava and Rouen pointed out that they have had a few technical problems with the University of Malta. On being Elpis-membership since 2004, the Law University of Malta allegedly refused to prolong bilateral agreements with some partners or the University cancelled their contracts without giving reasons and the worst thing without answering the emails and letters of the

partners. It goes without saying that there is a negative input towards partners being concerned with that reaction. Other partners, as Hanover, have made better experiences with the University of Malta. Last but not least, it should be mentioned Malta is very favoured by ELPIS/ERASMUS students. It was agreed upon that the co-ordinator of the Elpis network Prof. Oppermann should write a letter to the rector of the Law Faculty in Malta trying to clarify or even resolve the problems analysed.

Prof. Toullier started a discussion about the state of language courses at the ELPIS partner universities. Most of our partners offer special / intensive language courses at their university language centre at a very reasonable price or even for free. It was discussed that each faculty or university coordinator has to put an eye on the right selection of students particularly concerning their academic language abilities in respect of the country visited.

However, the discussion proved a high activity of the three French ELPIS partners especially to improve their offers in foreign languages with some remarkable products.

f) Housing

At present the network did not see any problems concerning accommodation for foreign students or professors.

g) Exchange of students and professors to new EU-memberstates

The activities in staff-exchange have not been very numerous to the fact that not the whole amount of costs is refunded. In contrary to Elpis I exchange, the Erasmus Mundus scholarships are available for academics who are ready to carry out scholarly work outside Europe. For this action the European Commission has awarded a maximum of 4.000 € per month per teacher per one-month-period (maximum for three months) plus a fixed amount of 1000 €. However, there are also other sources of co-financing such exchanges on the side of our ELPIS partner universities. Thus, the partners we encouraged to keep the academic exchange lively.

TOP 4 Cooperation report II, bilateral agreement and policy towards the central administration

The experiences of the partners towards their home administration has been reported and analysed. Some partner universities, as Prof. Apalagaki (University of Thessaloniki) and Prof Hjordt University Copenhagen) explained, actually do have an excellent co-operation with their central administration. It has been executing all necessary formalities for running exchange with students and staff by informing and asking the coordinator at the department. The same positive experience remains true for all other partners, although some inconsistencies have happened. In several cases, bilateral agreements had only been signed between the contact persons of the central administration without informing both coordinators of the Erasmus programme about length of prolongation and number of students and staff. In other cases, the content of contract has been elaborated by the central administration by themselves without asking the faculty and its institutions concerned. Such tendencies are not really acceptable, moreover, the programme (e.g. ELPIS) or at least the persons at charge with the exchange of our students, must be identifiable. The ELPIS group will keep an eye on the development.

TOP 5 Bologna Declaration Successors

The main aim of the Bologna process is to increase the International competitiveness of the European system of higher education by supporting high quality masters courses (joint degrees, diploma supplements, ECTS user guides) and encouraging exchanges between postgraduate students and academics (teaching staff) from all over the world and the European Union. By means of ERASMUS MUNDUS, Europe wants to restore a leading position on the international university scene.

Prof . Bartels from the University Groningen reported that the Bachelor and Master Courses in Groningen – including legal education - have been running very well. Some countries for instance, Greece, Germany and Austria introduce the Bologna very slowly to their law education. Some do not accept bachelors with a runtime of less than 3 years or did not introduce them at all. Some delegates compared their Master-programmes respectively:

Lisbon runs a four years Bologna Master 4 and ½ year, Lublin; 4 years Master, Germany 3 plus 2; Hungary: 3 plus 2. The deadline for completion of European higher education ought to be in 2010.

TOP 6 ELPIS homepage www.elpis.eu

It was recommended to visit the homepage if not done so. The homepage has been brought out in three languages (English, French, German). Some documents are available in Portuguese language, others will follow.

Hanover proposed to link the Elpis I homepage with the homepages of the corresponding homepages of all Elpis I partners, which was appreciated by the participants.

A specialist of data processing at the Leibniz University of Hanover will put the networking into practice within the next weeks.

**TOP 7 Cooperation between Elpis the Erasmus Mundus ELPIS-Group, and
TOP 8 Erasmus Mundus II: Possible role of ELPIS network**

Not before September 2008, the new application forms for Erasmus Mundus II will be available. Erasmus Mundus II ought to be implemented from fall of 2009 up to 2013.

Within the new application round of Erasmus Mundus II there will be a special support by the EU for already existing networks with new third country universities due to a new Action 2. The chairman asked the participants whether they have been interested in participating for such activity? The University of Thessaloniki, represented by Prof. Apalagaki has been interested immediately. Prof. Apalagaki announced to send a concept due to that subject until 15th July 2008 to the coordinator in Hanover. Also other partners declared a possible interest and will answer during the next weeks following the Bratislava conference.

TOP 9 Summer Academies

- a) Lisbon
- b) others

The Portuguese delegates informed the members of the ELPIS network that the Lisbon Summer Academy will take place this year from 14th – 25th at the Universidade Católica School of Law; Lisbon Campus. The Summer Academy will be held in cooperation with the partnership of the Elpis network and the Roger Williams University (Rhode Island, USA). The theme of the Summer School will be focused on "*Legal issues on globalisation*"

The tuition fees and administrative costs are 150 Euro. Travel costs, accommodation and meals are covered by the students. All students and law teachers are granted to have free access to libraries and computer rooms.

The students ought to have excellent English language abilities to take part in the above mentioned summer academy.

The following lectures will be given:

- Prof. Rice, Roger Williams University (USA), *Internet Related Issues*
- Prof. Fischer, Wien, Bratislava Universities, *Globalisation and Public International Law*
- Prof. Oppermann, Leibniz Universität Hannover, *European Competition Law*
- Prof. Papst, University Leipzig, *Hague Convention on Choice of Court agreements*

TOP 10 Other Projects

Beside the abovementioned, no other common projects or programme applications have been announced for the ELPIS group as such. The multilateral discussion due to the frame programme, however, has brought up further remarkable new projects.

TOP 12 Prospective Elpis Conferences

Ms. Jonsdottir announced that the University of Iceland will invite the ELPIS-network for the next meeting in 22./23. May, 2009 in Reykjavik. The participants thanked Ms Jonsdottir for this invitation.

The chairman announced the following ELPIS conference in spring 2010 at Hanover.

Prof. Oppermann, the chairman of this conference in Bratislava thanked the hosting University for inviting and financing this meeting, especially for the excellent coordination and the run-up of the meeting.

The Elpis meeting – Session II – ended at 12.30 h, was followed by a Reception organized by the Bratislava School of Law and by a remarkable frame programme giving room for further bilateral and multilateral discussion.

Hannover, 9th June, 2008

Ingrid Hähnel

Bernd Oppermann