



Network of Universities
from the Capitals of Europe

MINUTES – UNICA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2014

University of Stockholm, Sweden, 24 October, 2014

From 09:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

**Venue: Stockholm University - Frescati Campus, Universitetsvägen 10A, Geovetenskapens Hus (House)
- Hus Y, 2nd floor, Svante Arrhenius väg 8-12**

Minutes by Marta BRELIH-WASOWSKA and Giorgio MARINONI (UNICA Secretariat)

1. Welcome address by Hans ADOLFSSON, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Stockholm University

UNICA President welcomes the participants and gives the floor to Hans ADOLFSSON, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Stockholm University.

Hans ADOLFSSON welcomes the UNICA President and the participants and thanks for the opportunity to host the UNICA General Assembly. He shortly presents the history and the present status of the University of Stockholm and the Frescati Campus. He highlights the University's legacy in giving open public lectures and its long-standing role in public debates and legislation committees.

2. Opening of the General Assembly by the President, Prof. Stavros A. Zenios

UNICA President thanks the Pro Vice Chancellor for his welcome and declares the UNICA General Assembly 2014 open. He notes that the meeting has brought 70 participants representing 34 out of 46 UNICA member universities, among them two student delegates who took part in the UNICA Student Conference 2014 at the University of Lausanne.

3. Approval of the agenda

The agenda is approved.

4. Approval of the minutes of the UNICA General Assembly 2013, Sapienza University of Rome, 8 November 2013

Guri VESTAD (University of Oslo) asks for a correction in the minutes ("Students at Risk" instead of "Scholars at Risk" on page 5). The minutes, taking into account the correction, are approved.

5. President's Report - UNICA Activity Report 2013-2014

Power Point presentation and the President's Report document are available on the [UNICA GA 2014 web page](#).

UNICA President presents the UNICA Activity Report 2013-2014. He stresses it has been a positive year for UNICA, marked by many interesting and well-attended events. He mentions the activities of UNICA on the international Higher Education scene, including the collaboration with the EUA and Scholars at Risk, as well as the EU-funded projects. He stresses that the [UNICA policy for projects](#), adopted at the UNICA General Assembly 2011 in Tallinn, has been serving as an important framework for project proposals which the Network engages in, and adds that the vast majority of projects are launched by and on the initiative of UNICA Working Groups: in such projects, UNICA usually assumes the Facilitation and Dissemination role, circulating the project news and outcomes, and assisting in identifying experts.

UNICA President highlights the excellent organisation and content preparation of the UNICA Student Conference 2014, hosted by the University of Lausanne, 8-11 October 2014, and reminds that this year UNICA supported the participation of student delegates of 6 UNICA member universities with funds from the UNICA budget.

UNICA President refers to other key UNICA activities that took place in 2014: He thanks Ankara University for hosting the UNICA IRO meeting 2014 and the University of Luxembourg for hosting the UNICA Rectors Seminar 2014 and for their active involvement since the very beginning of their membership in the Network. He also extends his thanks to Antonio RENDAS (Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee) for chairing the discussion on rethinking the UNICA Mission Statement during the UNICA Rectors Seminar.

With regard to the communication within the Network and to the wider Higher Education community, he points out the increase in visitors of the UNICA website and presents briefly the [IMOTION staff training portal](#) and the [UNICA Summer and Winter Schools Portal](#). He also draws the attention of the participants to UNICA Participation Charts sent each year to all member universities: He encourages the Rectors/Presidents to analyse the document providing an overview of their institution's activity in the Network. He concludes that based on the overview from the Participation Charts, the average participation is very high.

At the end of his presentation, UNICA President reminds the participants of the 25th founding anniversary the Network will celebrate in 2015. He stresses that it is time to reflect on the UNICA Mission Statement, not to reengineer the way UNICA functions, but to update its strategic goals and leave out those that have become obsolete (such as facilitating the integration of universities from Central and Eastern Europe into the European Higher Education Area).

UNICA President thanks Rectors/Presidents, Vice-Rectors/Vice-Presidents, Members of the UNICA Steering Committee, UNICA IRO Observer and IROs, Members of Working Groups, Students and UNICA trainees and the team of the UNICA Secretariat. UNICA President concludes the meeting by comparing UNICA to a philharmonic orchestra, where everyone has a role to play and works in concert with others producing a pleasant symphony for all.

6. Report on the UNICA working groups and events

- **Situation of Swiss universities after exclusion from Erasmus+ and Horizon2020 programmes** by Dominique ARLETTAZ, Rector, University of Lausanne *Power Point presentation available on the [UNICA GA 2014 web page](#)*

Dominique ARLETTAZ presents briefly the reason behind the exclusion of Switzerland from Erasmus+ and Horizon2020 programmes: In light of the population vote of 9 February 2014 that had put into question the EU principle of free movement of people, Switzerland got rejected from EU research and education programmes. Two months later the Swiss government decided to cover the lack of funds of the Erasmus programme and to pay fellowships for outgoing students and students willing to come to Switzerland. 220 partner universities of the University of Lausanne were asked to keep on sending students in the framework of a new Swiss mobility programme contract and the majority, especially UNICA member universities, responded very positively to the idea. This academic year the number of incoming students is just 10% less than compared to the last year and the outgoing number has even increased.

In Horizon 2020, Swiss universities cannot take part in pillars II and III, and their participation in pillar I (ERC grants) is for the moment valid only for 2015 and 2016. Overall the situation is stabilized until 2016, but may become difficult again in 2017.

Dominique ARLETTAZ thanks UNICA for the support received during this difficult period.

Questions and Answers:

Gregory MAKRIDES (University of Cyprus): *Is Switzerland allowed to participate in Erasmus+ projects as a third country?*

Dominique ARLETTAZ: Yes, we are a third country, not an associate country.

Ursula HANS (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): *Have you received any official statement from the Ministry of Higher Education?*

Dominique ARLETTAZ: The goal of the Ministry is to fully participate again in H2020, but it does not have a clear vision of the future.

Eleni MANTZOURANI (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens): *Is there a united initiative of Swiss universities to lobby at the European Union decision-making bodies?*

Dominique ARLETTAZ: All Swiss universities have exactly the same position; the President of the European Council Herman VAN ROMPUY was at the University of Lausanne last week and said there is a provisional solution for Switzerland for 2 years, but also stated clearly that for the situation to change Switzerland needs to recognize the fundamental concept of the free movement of people.

Eleni MANTZOURANI (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens): *Can the Swiss government also afford to pay for staff mobility?*

Dominique ARLETTAZ answers positively.

Guri VESTAD (University of Oslo): *Reportedly the EU reaction to the Swiss vote was dictated by the fear that other countries will also want to "follow the Swiss path" and have a special arrangement with the European Union.*

Dominique ARLETTAZ: It is true that Switzerland is not a single case, but it is single in having had such a vote.

Ivan ILCHEV (Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski): *Can the decision of the referendum be overturned, especially since the majority that voted in favour was not overwhelming?*

Dominique ARLETTAZ: The problem lies in the fact that the negative impact of such decisions cannot be seen immediately; The Swiss government wants to apply immediately the referendum outcome to show the population the bad consequences. The idea of the Swiss government is to organise a new vote at the end of 2016.

Franck LEPRÉVOST (University of Luxembourg): *What is the education background of foreigners living in Switzerland?*

Dominique ARLETTAZ: We used to have mainly blue-collar workers in the 1950s, now immigrants are often very well-educated people and they form the majority.

Elke LÖSCHHORN (Freie Universität Berlin): *Are universities also subject to the quota system?*

Dominique ARLETTAZ: The law introducing quotas has not been written yet.

UNICA President thanks Dominique ARLETTAZ for the presentation and reminds that the University of Lausanne was one of the founding members of the Network and that it will always have the support of UNICA members. He also endorses the suggestion of Antonio RENDAS (Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee) and invites Rector ARLETTAZ to prepare a case study that could be sent to UNICA member universities.

- **UNICA Student Conference 2014** by UNICA Student Conference 2014 student delegates Étienne KOCHER and Simon WURSTEN *Power Point presentation available on the [UNICA GA 2014 web page](#)*

Dominique ARLETTAZ thanks for the opportunity to host the UNICA Student Conference and introduces the two Student Conference delegates: Étienne KOCHER and Simon WURSTEN. Both students of the University of Lausanne, they have been actively involved in the University Student Union and the university community as a whole, and have been engaged in the organisation of the UNICA Student Conference.

Simon WURSTEN presents the overview of the Conference, which brought together 180 students, 34 universities and 27 countries; the discussions grouped in 10 fora were chaired by 20 chairs from 8 different institutions. He highlights that the topic of the conference was “Make it Happen!”: The idea behind was for the students to take into account what has been already discussed at previous Student Conferences and think of concrete solutions.

Étienne KOCHER points out the student delegates could agree on a lot of points even though they come from different countries and have different backgrounds. He presents a project to the UNICA Steering Committee to create a UNICA Student Action Group, which would have a status of a UNICA working group. He emphasises that the idea behind the special Group is not to create another political student body but a forum where students of UNICA member universities could collaborate and discuss, that could respond to the challenge of continuity and link between the Conferences, and that could serve as means to bring students closer to UNICA and to promote the Network and the opportunities it offers among students. He

adds that the project was accepted by 77% of student delegates during the final vote at the Conference. A more detailed description of the prospective Group will be presented in the declaration of the 2014 UNICA Student Conference.

The students present 4 out of 25 concrete action plans prepared by the students:

- "#FreeYour Uni" – student-teacher communication campaign with posters;
- UNICA Language Platform – online language learning platform available for free for students from UNICA member universities; each UNICA member university could be responsible for its language;
- "Sustainable Partnership Seal of Approval" – promoting good practices in relation to partnerships and private funding agreements without compromising university core values
- Declaration of Student Involvement in Institutional Government to be signed by universities, acknowledging students on as equal partners in university governance at all levels.

The presentation of students ends with the screening of four movies awarded in the UNICA Student Conference 2014. The movies are available online at: <http://www3.unil.ch/wpmu/unica2014/film-competition-2/>

UNICA President thanks the students for their efforts and presentation and asks for a written document that the UNICA Steering Committee could discuss, provide concrete feedback on, and subsequently promote to the leadership of UNICA member universities for their consideration. He also welcomes the student initiative to maintain an active group to link one student conference to the next.

7. Financial Status

Melita KOVAČEVIĆ (University of Zagreb, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee) presents the UNICA **accounts and balance sheet of 2013**. She states that UNICA has a very sound financial situation and explains that for the sustainability of UNICA it is crucial to have sources of income other than the membership fees; in this context, the financing from the European projects has helped to reduce the amount of investments from the UNICA reserve. She explains that the limited use of reserve enables UNICA to be pro-active, to broaden the scope of the Network's activities and take up new ones. With regard to the Auditor's Report, she explains that auditing is not compulsory, but we ask for it to receive feedback and additional check.

Melita KOVAČEVIĆ (University of Zagreb, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee) thanks UNICA Secretary General Kris DEJONCKHEERE and the Secretariat team for being conservative in dealing with the UNICA finances.

Questions and Answers:

Katja CERJAK (University of Ljubljana): *Could we get an elaborated chart with the income from projects?*

UNICA President: Budgets for the European projects are not the same with the "UNICA projects" appearing in the balance sheet (it is a category used by the UNICA accountant for all UNICA working group initiatives). European projects have a budget approved by the funding agent and audited by them.

Katja CERJAK (University of Ljubljana): *Why only few UNICA member universities are involved in EU-funded projects?*

Melita KOVAČEVIĆ (University of Zagreb, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee): Projects are initiated on the initiative of member universities and UNICA Working Groups, they have different status and different roles; a clear difference should be made between projects coordinated by UNICA, and projects where UNICA is just a partner. UNICA Secretariat does not divide or give tasks to universities, it is up to the institution that initiates the project to distribute work packages and tasks among UNICA and non-UNICA member universities.

Katja CERJAK (University of Ljubljana): *What are the criteria for the UNICA projects?*

UNICA President: They are stated in the [UNICA Policy for projects](#), adopted at the UNICA General Assembly 2011 in Tallinn. The policy document is available on the UNICA website under Publications --> General documents.

Eleni MANTZOURANI (National & Kapodistrian University of Athens): *If we have an increase in the number of member universities, could we reduce the amount of the membership fee?*

UNICA President: A reduction in fees will result in a reduction of activities; the annual adjustments of the UNICA membership are correlated to the inflation rate in Belgium.

Alina GRZIBOVSKA (University of Latvia): *What is the amount of the UNICA reserve?*

UNICA President: UNICA reserve amounts to €566,000 and is composed of two parts: €250,000, which is an operating reserve corresponding to one year of operational expenses that can keep the Network functioning under extreme adverse conditions, and the remaining sum, which serves as guarantee for the EU financed projects coordinated by UNICA.

***UNICA General Assembly takes note of the UNICA Auditor's Report 2013.
The 2013 accounts and balance are unanimously approved.***

8. Membership

- *New Member: Presentation of the University of Belgrade by Dalibor SOLDATIC, Vice-Rector, University of Belgrade*

UNICA President welcomes the University of Belgrade as a new UNICA member university and gives the floor Dalibor SOLDATIĆ, Vice-Rector of the University of Belgrade.

Dalibor SOLDATIĆ, Vice-Rector of the University of Belgrade, presents the University. The University is the largest in the country and the region with 80,000 students and 41 faculties in all scientific fields.

- UNICA President reminds the participants that the University of Iceland has also rejoined the Network following the approval of the UNICA General Assembly 2013, but they were not able to come to Stockholm.

- UNICA President refers to the information about Lomonosov Moscow State University communicated at the UNICA General Assembly 2013: He is pleased to inform that the contact with the University has been reestablished, the LMSU student delegation took part in the UNICA Student Conference, and the bank statements confirming the payment of the membership fees arrears have been sent to the UNICA Secretariat.

Questions & Answers:

Claire MACHERAS (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3): *Is the matter really closed?*

UNICA President: We did receive bank statements indicating that the payments had been made for for 4 outstanding membership fees.

- **Membership fee 2015**

It is explained that following the decision of the UNICA General Assembly, hosted by Lomonosov Moscow State University, 8-11 November 2007, and in accordance with the Progressive Harmonization, the UNICA membership fee 2015 was calculated according to the following scheme:

12-month average inflation rate July 2013-2014 / July 2013 - 2014 in Belgium: 0.9%

Membership fee 2014: € 5,600

Membership fee 2015: € 5.600 + (€ 5.600*0,009) = € 5,650 rounded at €5,700

UNICA President informs the General Assembly that at the SC meeting of 11 October 2014 at the University of Lausanne, the UNICA Steering Committee took the decision **not to round the UNICA membership fee 2015 and maintain the amount of the membership fee at €5,600 for the year 2015**.

It is emphasised that next year the fee will be calculated according to the Progressive Harmonization and rounded if necessary according to the 12-month inflation rate.

The fee is approved unanimously.

9. Work Programme 2014-2015

Power Point presentation and the Work Programme document are available on the [UNICA GA 2014 web page](#)

UNICA President presents 4 focal points for the Network in the academic year 2014/2015 and the planned activities grouped according to 5 clusters.

In light of the forthcoming IRO Observer elections, UNICA President thanks Tiina MÄE (Tallinn University) for her role as IRO Observer and for bringing an articulate voice of IROs to the Steering Committee. He also reiterates that next year UNICA will celebrate its 25 years and hold both President and Steering Committee elections: All current Steering Committee members are eligible to run for the next term. He invites member universities willing to host the UNICA General Assembly to put forward their proposals.

10. Approval of the Budget 2015

Melita KOVAČEVIĆ (University of Zagreb, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee) presents the UNICA budget 2015.

Comments:

Gregory MAKRIDES (University of Cyprus) suggests increasing the reserves in the future to be on the safe side.

UNICA President points out that last year there was a suggestion not to increase the reserves. He adds that the Network has showed discipline in building the reserve; out of €40,000 provided for in the budget only €20,000 was used.

The budget is unanimously approved.

11. Upcoming Meetings:

UNICA President announces the upcoming meetings:

- UNICA IRO Meeting 2015 and UNICA IRO Observer elections, Vilnius University, 5-6 May 2015
- UNICA Rectors' Seminar 2015, hosting University and dates to be announced
- UNICA General Assembly 2015 and the UNICA President and Steering Committee elections, hosting university and dates to be announced

UNICA President announces that the Steering Committee had decided to invest part of the UNICA budget for the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of UNICA in the framework of the UNICA General Assembly.

12. Open Space on UNICA member initiatives

- **UNICA Green Academic Footprint** by Antoinette CHARON-WAUTERS, Head of International Relations, University of Lausanne *Power Point presentation available on the [UNICA GA 2014 web page](#)*

Antoinette CHARON-WAUTERS presents recent UGAF activities: 4th UGAF workshop, new project on Sustainable Campus Database to be presented at the 5th UGAF Workshop (to be hosted by Freie U. Berlin, 25-27 March 2015), UGAF involvement in the Green Gown Award. She stresses that UGAF is a real UNICA project, launched by a UNICA member university (University of Oslo) on the initiative of student delegates of the Rome UNICA Student Conference 2012, and open to every UNICA member. She explains that university environmental coordinators are exactly in the same position as IROS 20 years ago – they are alone and they face a lot of challenges in their everyday work. She thanks the UNICA Secretariat for the support and encourages the participants to visit the UGAF website www.ugaf.eu.

- **“METU-IREES” for a greener university**, by Ahmet ACAR, President of Middle East Technical University (METU)

METU President speaks about the “METU-IREES” initiative (Renewable Energy, Ecosystem and Sustainability) that started in 2009 and the University tree planting tradition launched in 1961, which continues today with a forestation project and a nation-wide awareness-raising campaign “A Tree for You, a Forest for Us”.

- **IMOTION: Integration and Promotion of Staff Training Courses at Universities across Europe** by Luciano SASO, Deputy Rector for International Mobility, Sapienza University of Rome, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee. *Power Point presentation available on the [UNICA GA 2014 web page](#)*

Luciano SASO presents the IMOTION staff mobility platform www.staffmobility.eu developed in the framework of the IMOTION project, which was funded by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme. He stresses that IMOTION is an example of a project which was carried out by few institutions, but which is beneficial for administrative and technical university staff from all over Europe. He encourages representatives of UNICA member universities not only to post information about their staff weeks but also announce their job shadowing offers. He thanks Giorgio MARINONI (UNICA Project Manager) for his work as IMOTION project coordinator.

Questions & Answers, Comments:

- Guri VESTAD (University of Oslo) announces that the Oslo Staff Week will be organised in the spring of 2015. More information will follow soon.
- Ursula HANS (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): *Do you know the numbers of mobile staff from your University and has your University established a way of measuring the impact of administrative & technical staff mobility?*

Luciano SASO replies: Sapienza has very low numbers in terms of administrative & technical staff mobility (20-30 employees outgoing out of 5,000 and about 60 incoming). The idea behind the organisation of staff training weeks at Sapienza University was to foster the internationalisation at home.

UNICA President closes the UNICA General Assembly and thanks Stockholm University for hosting.

