



Network of Universities
from the Capitals of Europe

MINUTES – UNICA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2016

University of Warsaw, 17 November 2016

Venue: Senate Hall, Kazimierzowski Palace, Central Campus

From 09:00 until 13:00

*Minutes by **Dominique MONTAGNESE** (UNICA Secretariat)*

1. Welcome address by Marcin PAŁYS, Rector of the University of Warsaw and Luciano SASO, UNICA President

Marcin PAŁYS welcomes the participants and thanks them for their presence in this year of celebration for the 200th Anniversary of the University. The student population in Warsaw is close to a quarter million. The University of Warsaw is the largest Higher Education Institution in Poland.

The University has been established since the beginning as an important institution in the town and very much welcomes the initiative to link Universities and Cities during the UNICA Seminar.

The UNICA President Professor Luciano SASO welcomes the participants. He reminds that the University of Warsaw has been involved previously in the UNICA Network by organising UNICA events, such as the UNICA Student Conference in 2008. He thanks the University of Warsaw for hosting the UNICA General Assembly and the University Staff for the great work done. He also takes the opportunity to thank the UNICA Secretariat for the important work done in preparation of this General Assembly.

2. Opening of the General Assembly by the UNICA President, Luciano SASO

The UNICA President declares the UNICA General Assembly 2016 open. He notes that the meeting has brought 70 participants representing 33 out of 46 UNICA member universities.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda is approved.

4. Adoption of the Minutes of the UNICA General Assembly 2015 hosted by the Université Libre de Bruxelles

The minutes are approved.

5. President's Report 2015-2016 by the UNICA President, Luciano SASO

The PowerPoint presentation and the President's Report document are available on the [UNICA GA 2016 web page](#).

Questions & Answers, Comments:

No question

6. Report on Working Groups and events

- **EU Research Liaison Officer by Diana PUSTULA, Deputy Head of Research Services Office at University of Warsaw**

The PowerPoint presentation is available on the [UNICA GA 2016 web page](#).

Questions & Answers, Comments:

No question

- **UNICA & Rankings**

Jacques LANARES (University of Lausanne, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee), presents the topic. UNICA is currently having ongoing discussions with other University networks (COIMBRA Group, LERU, EUA, EUROPÆUM) regarding rankings and especially U-Multirank. The Steering Committee of UNICA was asked to present a position to the meeting organised by Charles University in Prague on the 19 October 2016. This paper is attached to the General Assembly minutes for the information of UNICA members.

Lenka ROVNA (Charles University), takes the opportunity to give more information about the initiative from Charles University. Several aspects of U-Multirank were discussed. The main conclusions were:

- Universities don't like rankings but they are here to stay
- U-Multirank: Improve it or stop it!
- A memorandum will be prepared and signed with all networks.

Luciano SASO, UNICA President, reminds everyone that UNICA members will be asked for their opinion before signing anything on behalf of the UNICA Network.

7. UNICA Financial status

Approval of the 2015 accounts and balance, Auditor's Report 2015, and financial situation up to 15 October 2016

Jacques LANARES (University of Lausanne, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee) presents the UNICA accounts and balance of 2015. He states that UNICA has a very sound financial situation. UNICA is doing well in terms of income and expenditures, spending what needs to be spent in order to keep up with all the UNICA activities. He underlines the careful and conservative approach of the UNICA Secretariat in spending money, which leads to a positive balance of 4,962.98€.

He also stresses that the running of the UNICA activities is at the moment very dependent of EU funded projects, which are funding 2 Secretariat employees.

Questions & Answers, Comments:

No question

Voting:

The General Assembly approves unanimously the accounts and balance.

Auditor's Report 2016

Luciano SASO, UNICA President, presents the document. The Auditor expresses positive feedback towards the UNICA finances.

Questions & Answers, Comments:

No question

2016 financial situation (up to October 15, 2016)

Jacques LANARES (University of Lausanne, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee) presents the financial situation of the Network up to October 2016 and the General Assembly takes note of it.

Questions & Answers, Comments:

No question

8. Membership fee 2017

The inflation in the last two years has been very low in Belgium. However, taking into account the calculation as decided by UNICA General Assembly 2007, the UNICA membership fee for 2017 equals €5.700.

The vote takes place and the membership fee 2017 is approved unanimously.

9. Work Programme 2016-2017

The UNICA President presents the Work Programme foreseen for 2016-2017, the different activities planned, different projects and five focal points for the new academic year:

1. **Strengthening links with academic leadership of UNICA Member Universities**
2. **Providing a valuable forum for the members of UNICA community**
3. **Enhancing cooperation with other networks and Higher Education organisations**
4. **Increasing the focus on the University in the City**
5. **Supporting Human Resources management and professionalization of administrative staff at universities**

Questions & Answers, Comments:

Eva OROSZ (Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest): How do students see the innovative teaching and learning, e-learning, online learning? We teachers try to adapt but it would be very useful to know what students think about that. Another topic is the dropout of students. The rate is quite high at Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest.

Luciano SASO, UNICA President: the first topic is usually debated during the EduLab meetings, while discussing Student-Centred Learning and new ways of teaching and learning and digitalisation. It would be interesting to put in touch the groups. For example, by providing the feedback from the Student conference to the EduLab meeting. Or also having one or two representatives of the EduLab group at the Student Conference.

Isabelle Duran (University Complutense of Madrid): 10 students are invited per country to attend the UNICA Student Conference but I am not sure how it works practically. Is it also funded?

Luciano SASO, UNICA President: the host institution is funding all expenses on spot. The sending institutions are responsible for the travel of the students. I take the opportunity to also underline the importance of selecting a very good tutor to accompany the students participating to the Student Conference. The preparation prior the conference is key.

Ivan PROSTAKOV (Higher School of Economics Moscow): Is the work of the Working Group "University, Culture and the City" continuing in 2017 and 2018?

Antonio RENDAS, Member of the UNICA Steering Committee: there will be a lunch today gathering the Working Group members and it is open to other participants to join if they want to do so. We want it to be a very open group so feel free to join us.

Vincenzo Mannino (University of Rome "Roma Tre") takes the opportunity to invite participants to the UNICA EduLab in Rome.

Luciano SASO, UNICA President: I take the opportunity to remind everyone that the target group is Vice-rectors for Education, Deans, Experts on innovative education. There will a panel discussion on Student-Centered Learning together with ESU. Another session is

organised with the University of Oslo and Humboldt University Berlin on the recognition of the degrees of refugees. The Higher School of Economics Moscow is also sending three very good speakers on digitalisation.

Judaš MILOS (University of Zagreb): I would like to invite the Steering Committee members to attend the 8th UNICA PhD Master Class and organise the Steering Committee meeting #3 if you don't have any other obligations yet.

Luciano SASO, UNICA President: we thank you for your kind invitation. We will discuss it at our next meeting.

Isabelle Duran (University Complutense of Madrid): where is the Joint PhD Training workshop for Doctoral Education going to take place? And is the funding policy similar to the Student Conference?

Luciano SASO, UNICA President: place and date are still to be decided. Thank you for the question about the funding policy of UNICA events. I take the opportunity to remind participants that UNICA doesn't charge any participation fee to its events. We only ask member Universities to cover their expenses to join the meeting.

Antonio RENDAS invites participants to the Europe-China Rectors' Seminar taking place at the University NOVA of Lisbon 4-5 May 2017.

Luciano SASO emphasises that UNICA is also committed to be a global player by organising Rectors Seminars with other countries in the world (China, Brazil, Canada). The cooperation with IAU goes also in this direction.

Ivan PROSTAKOV (Higher School of Economics): I welcome the possibility of having several Rectors' Seminars during the year as it is difficult for a Rector to be available at one pre-determined time. Regarding the Rectors' Seminar in Rome, is the main topic going to be about the European Union EU funding policies? And about the dates, could you clarify as there are two different dates in the slides and in the calendar?

Luciano SASO, UNICA President: It will be focused on Higher Education and achievements of Higher Education. For example: Bologna Process, Student-Centred Learning, the Erasmus Programme, etc. The dates will 23-25 March 2017.

Damiano PINACCHIO (University of Rome "Tor Vergata"): Should we discuss in UNICA the question of Joint Degree programmes? It could be one of the element that could avoid problems of recognition.

Luciano SASO, UNICA President: This topic could be discussed at the EduLab meeting as well as during the IRO Meeting. It is always difficult to implement a Joint Degree which brings a lot of challenges. But it brings definitely an added value.

Constantinos CONSTANTINOU (University of Cyprus) invites all participants to attend the Rector Seminar organised in Cyprus in October 2017 for the opening of new Learning Center.

Antonio RENDAS: What is the percentage of international students that you have in Cyprus?

Constantinos CONSTANTINOU: at the University of Cyprus, we have around 7% of international students at the moment. This is due to the fact that we were obliged by law until few years ago to teach in Cypriote. This is changing now and we hope to have more international students in the future.

Anastas GERDJIKOV (St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia): the dates of the next conference “University, Culture and the City” might change as we see that there are other meetings to be held in the same timeframe. We will discuss this in the meeting during lunch.

Kris DEJONCKHEERE, UNICA Secretary General: UNICA is an associated member of SAR, which is a network based in New York that supports Academics at risk in their country. A project has recently been approved where UNICA, SAR, University of Oslo and University of Ljubljana are partnering up. The project is called ACADEMIC REFUGE and is on the topic of welcoming refugees, recognise their diploma and prior learning. A MOOC will also be created.

Guri VESTAD (University of Oslo): a staff training week will also take place throughout the project timeframe. We invite you all to send representatives.

Elke LÖSCHHORN (Freie University of Berlin): we have funded a German section of SAR at the national level. Humboldt University of Berlin also supports SAR.

The Work programme 2016-2017 is approved by the Assembly.

10. Approval of the Budget 2017

Jacques LANARES presents the Budget proposal for 2017. He explains that part of the UNICA funded activities are covered by projects. EU Projects are more and more difficult to get and less and less money is allocated to them.

He reminds also that the UNICA membership fee is very low compared to other University networks.

The Budget 2017 is approved unanimously.

The UNICA President closes the UNICA General Assembly and thanks the University of Warsaw for hosting it.