



EUROPEAN SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN EDUCATION

Working Group: Higher education and research

Meeting 14 December 2015

Minutes

Chair: Jens Vraa-Jensen (ETUCE)

1. Opening of the meeting – Approval of the draft agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted.

2. "Supporting Early Career Researchers in Higher Education in Europe" project

Laurence Hopkins presented the outcomes of the joint SSDC project, highlighting the main challenges for early career researchers (ECR) and possible actions to address these, and pointing to a number of actions that could be undertaken by social partners in this respect (see presentation in [annex](#)).

In the exchange on the draft joint declaration on the issue, points made included the following:

- Importance of striking the right balance to both research and teaching activities and give them equal value/esteem;
- Added value of researchers' skills for the broader labour market and knowledge society to be stressed; building bridges between academia and industry;
- Give due attention to gender issues, as well as to employability and international mobility;
- Give more attention to the issue of (the succession of) fixed-term contracts;
- Importance for social partners to show genuine commitment improving the situation of ECRs, the declaration not to be the end, but rather the starting point for further joint work, including by extending the in-depth (comparative) research to more countries.

The declaration would be further elaborated on this basis.

3. Outcomes of the ET2020 WG on Modernising Higher Education in Europe

Simon Roy (SR) explained the topics covered by and the main outputs¹ of the working group concerned, which concluded its work in October 2015, and presented the mandate of the working group for the next period (see presentation in annex).

He also referred to the review of the Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education that the Commission is undertaking, and the related ongoing open consultation (online questionnaire). A further, more targeted questionnaire would also be addressed to Member States and stakeholders, including social partners.

Responding to delegates' questions/comments, SR added that: social partners will continue to be represented in the working groups, which remain the main forum for structured cooperation; HE should indeed have a larger perspective than only immediate labour market relevance, notably because precisely anticipating future skills needs is virtually impossible; transversal skills, including critical thinking, remain therefore highly relevant.

Social partners wondered whether the Commission truly grasps the potential of their large network, and how this could be put to better use by involving social partners more closely in EU policy making.

4. Follow-up of the Bologna Yerevan Ministerial Communiqué on the reinforcement of the future Bologna Process

Mette Andersen (MA) presented the 4 priorities laid down in the Ministerial Communiqué that was adopted at the conference that took place on 14-15 May 2015² and explained the main elements of the work plan 2015-2018 of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (see presentation in annex).

In the ensuing exchange, points made included the following: lack of participation of Ministers; trade unions stressing the need for a supportive environment and better working conditions for academic staff, which allows them to cater for the needs of an increasingly diverse student population; how to convince professors that their teaching skills may need to be improved; develop a doctoral supplement, in addition to the diploma supplement, the acceptance of which should be promoted among Member States.

5. AGORA – new meeting registration tool

Stefaan Ceuppens explained the main features of the new registration tool, which will also have to be used for reimbursement claims (see presentation in annex).

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups/2014-2015/group-highlights_en.pdf

See also: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups_en.htm

² http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/SubmittedFiles/5_2015/112705.pdf

6. The ERA Roadmap 2015-2020

Anette Bjornsson (AB) gave an overview of the priorities of the ERA Roadmap that was adopted by the Council in May 2015 (see presentation in [annex](#)).

Responding to delegates remarks/questions, AB added that: the Commission is actively promoting open access to scientific publications and data; while the EU cannot intervene in the choice between offering fixed-term or open ended contracts, the Commission does acknowledge the important of longer term career perspectives for researchers; it is for Member States to express their interest in using the Policy Support Facility; national action plans are due by mid-2016; while Horizon 2020 offers financial support, it is for the Member States to decide on their degree of investment in fundamental/blue sky research.

7. How can project results of the European education social partners effectively contribute to ERA policy making? How can they effectively be promoted at national level?

The (European) social partners were not convinced that the Commission is currently taking full advantage of their expertise and their network in the context of the ERA, and call for the Commission to reflect on how this could be improved.

8. EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion on researchers' rights including RESAVER (Retirement Savings Vehicle For European Research Institutions)

Andreas Dahlen (AD) presented the main features of the EURAXESS tool and of RESAVER (see presentation in [annex](#)).

Regarding EURAXESS, AD explained that the portal is currently being revised and that an overhaul of the Charter and Code³ is under preparation.

After AD had responded to technical questions regarding RESAVER, social partners acknowledged the potential positive contribution of this cross-border pension vehicle for mobility of researchers, on the condition that social partners are involved in the management of the vehicle at European and national levels, in accordance with the applicable rules and national traditions.

9. AOB

Social partners will reflect on how to take the activities of this working group further, notably in the context of the future SSDC work programme.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/whatIsAResearcher>

Annexes

- Point 2 – Presentation Supporting Early Career Researchers in Higher Education
- Point 3 – Presentation Highlights from the ET 2020 Working Group on Modernisation of Higher Education
- Point 4 – Presentation Bologna Process
- Point 5 – Presentation AGORA (AGM)
- Point 6 – Presentation European Research Area
- Point 8 – Presentation EURAXESS and RESAVER

List of participants 14/12/2015

<u>Employers</u>	<u>Workers</u>
<p>EFEE</p> <p>Ms Helen FAIRFOUL (UK) Mr Laurence HOPKINS (UK) Ms Sarah KIK (EU) Mr Risto LERSSI (FI) Ms Malin LOOBERGER (SE) Mr Andreas PAPOULAS (CY) Mr David SIMMONDS (UK) Mr Despo SERGIOU (CY) Ms Bianka STEGE (EU)</p> <p>9 employer representatives (4 women, 5 men) (2 EU, 2 EU-13, 5 EU-15)</p>	<p>ETUCE</p> <p>Ms Karin ÅMOSSA (SE) Ms Diletta GASPARO (EU) Mr Riku MATILAINEN (FI) Mr Manuel PEREIRA DOS SANTOS (PT) Mr Igor RADEKA (HR) Ms Agnes ROMAN (EU) Ms Ilze TRAPENCIERE (LV) Mr Jens VRAA-JENSEN (DK)</p> <p>CESI Ms Marcella MIGLIORI (EU)</p> <p>EPSU -</p> <p>9 worker representatives (5 women, 4 men) (3 EU, 2 EU-13, 4 EU-15)</p>
<p><u>European Commission</u></p> <p>Ms Mette Moerk ANDERSEN (EAC.B.1 – Higher education) Ms Anette BJORNSSON (RTD.B.2 – ERA policy) Mr Stefaan CEUPPENS (EMPL.A.2 – Social Dialogue) Mr Andreas DAHLEN (RTD.B.2 – ERA policy) Mr Simon ROY (EAC.B.1 – Higher education)</p>	