

Spring session 2019 Minutes of the working group meeting *Right to Lifelong Learning*

Date: Thursday, 11 April 2019 from 14.30 to 16.30

Place: Palais de l'Europe, room 02

Co-coordinators:

- Farouk ALLOUCHE, The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (EURODOC)
- Rémi LOISON, Federation for Education in Europe (FEDE)

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I. Opening of the working group

The following persons were present:

- Isabel ALONSO, Right to Die Europe (RtDE)
- Catherine BAROSO, European Committee for Home-based Priority Action for the Child and the Family (EUROCEF)
- Michel BERTET, International Office for Catholic Education (OIEC)
- Jean-Louis BURBAN, International Confederation of Professional and Intellectual Workers (CITI)
- Patrick CHINIARD, EUROCEF
- Hedi CONDROYER, European Social Action Network (ESAN)
- Herminio CORREA, European Parents Association (EPA)
- Léon DUJARDIN, ESAN
- **Mr Jean-Louis DURAND-DROUHIN, ESAN – SPEAKER**
- Pierre DUSSERE, OIEC
- Guillaume FROGER, Confederation of European Companions (CEEG)
- Claude-Laurent GENTY, CITI
- Philippe GROLLEAU, Pax Romana

- Laurent GREGOIRE, European Union of Former Students of Catholic Education (UNAEC-EUROPE)
- Beata HILDEBRAND, International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)
- Alkistis KALANTZI, ESAN
- Geneviève LALOY, European Network of Teacher Training Institutes (Comenius)
- Annie LOTTMANN-LIETAR, European Federation of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical School of Strasbourg (FEDEPSY)
- René LEDDERMANN, ESAN
- Patrick LONG, ESAN
- Elisabeth MARIE, Caritas Europa
- Jean-Bernard MARIE, Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions (Justitia Pax)
- **Ms Sophie MARINO**, National School of Fine Arts in Paris (ENSBA) - **SPEAKER**
- Maritchu RALL, European Centre of the International Council of Women (ECICW) / ESAN
- Rinaldo ROSSO, FEDE
- Hélène ROZET, International Movement ATD - Fourth World (ATD)
- Bertrand SENELLE, OIEC
- **Mr Mathieu SCHNEIDER**, Vice-President of the University of Strasbourg and President of the Network "*Migrants in the higher education*" (MEnS) – **SPEAKER**
- Bertrand SCHOENTGEN, CITI
- Marie-Françoise THULL, ESAN
- Gaël VIALA, CCEG
- Claude VIVIER LE GOT, Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee, FEDE

II. Higher education and migration – The social responsibility of French universities by Mathieu SCHNEIDER

Mathieu SCHNEIDER is a lecturer in musicology, Vice-President "Culture, Sciences in Society" at the University of Strasbourg and President of the network "**Migrants dans l'Enseignement Supérieur (MEnS)**".

His research activity focuses mainly on the representation of national identities (Music and the construction of national identities in the 19th century, Baden-Baden, 2010), particularly in the South German and Swiss space (Swiss utopia in romantic music, Paris, 2016) and on cultural transfers between France and Germany. Given his field of research, he has been an expert and rapporteur on cultural music policy and higher music education in France and abroad on several occasions. He has also been called upon since 2008 for various expert missions within the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES).

In 2015, he sets up one of the first specific facilities for the reception of students in exile at the University of Strasbourg and extended it to researchers in 2017. He is the national coordinator of the French host network **MEnS (Migrants dans l'Enseignement Supérieur)**, which he founded in September 2017, supported by the Conference of University Presidents. In this context, he has been invited to many European countries to discuss the role of universities in welcoming and integrating migrant populations.

Over the last few centuries, migratory movements in higher education have been frequent. Research is essentially international and has been for a long time (e. g. Kepler or Galileo). Many researchers had to leave their country because they could no longer practice their vocation freely (Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, Karl Popper or Ernst Gombrich).

These migrations can be explained by political reasons, such as the emergence of a political regime threatening or denying academic freedom, the deterioration of the political climate (war, revolution) or the questioning of individual freedoms (religious or cultural reasons). Personal reasons are sometimes taken into consideration: research environment (infrastructure, human resources management); economic attractiveness (salaries, living conditions); or geographical attractiveness (climate, quality of life).

After this short historical review, one wonders what migration policy for higher education and research should be implemented. Several hypotheses are possible:

- Is it a way to promote cooperation and mutual assistance between richer and poorer countries?
- Is it a question of defending academic freedom as a fundamental right of researchers, students (and free countries)?
- Should diversity (cultural, social, scientific, epistemological) be considered as a richness and should we encourage diverse academic communities?

The answer is plural and must ensure inclusive excellence with cohesive and socially responsible universities with strong values.

This general goal must at the same time make it possible to maintain a high level of scientific excellence to defend national or European interests in a highly competitive global economic market, but also to preserve a healthy competition with researchers and students from host countries. The whole question is therefore to find the right balance between these two main objectives.

The case of the French network "Migrants in Higher education (MEs)"

In 2015, the migration crisis linked to the Syrian civil war reached its peak with the arrival in Europe of more than one million people fleeing the conflict. About 3770 refugees perished on the way, often drowned in the Mediterranean. At that time, Angela Merkel dared to welcome many of these people when France was reluctant to take responsibility.

In 2016, Germany registered 745545 asylum applications (440000 were accepted) while France only registered 85000 (25300 were accepted) out of a total of 1323000 registered in Europe. Of these, 15% to 20% are students or about 250000 individuals.

In this situation, the French academic world progressively understood that many refugees would have to be welcomed to continue their studies and training. In autumn 2015, the first university initiatives were launched in Lille, Strasbourg, Grenoble and Paris 1.

In spring 2016, a central point of contact for universities was created at the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) and a meeting of universities involved in the reception of refugees was held. In September 2016, a second meeting with 25 universities involved was organised at MESRI. In January 2017, the PAUSE programme (in French, Programme national d'aide à l'Accueil en Urgence des Scientifiques en Exil - Emergency Reception Program for Scientists in Exile) was launched.

In September 2017, the MEnS network was officially launched, and since early 2018, negotiations have been ongoing between MEnS and MESRI to develop a national refugee plan. In May 2018, an inter-ministerial delegation for the reception and integration of refugees (DIAIR) was created.

On 12 April 2019, Frédérique Vidal (French Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation) was expected to announce a national plan for refugees.

You can find the Minister's announcements here (in French): <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid140994/les-etudiants-refugies-et-beneficiaires-de-la-protection-subsidiaire-auront-acces-aux-bourses-et-aux-logements-du-crous-a-la-rentree-2019.html>

The MEnS network now includes many structures such as 38 French universities, the Francophonie University Association, Campus France, the CROUS, etc. The number of refugee students in specific programmes is currently about 2000 with a budget of €3.3 million for student schemes. This networking has ensured a permanent link with the Minister's office and the DIAIR and has created links and relationships with national associations. Thanks to this institutional work, the MEnS network can more easily defend its values: education as a vehicle of social integration; awareness of societal responsibility; defence of international cooperation and solidarity; defence of academic freedom; and defence of the unconditionality of the refugees' reception.

The general aim is to allow people to rebuild themselves after a complicated and even tragic period, but also to ensure that these same individuals will one day be able to participate in the reconstruction of their country (Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Eritrea).

MEnS network universities have concretely implemented the following measures in the field:

- Creation of a central reception desk for welcoming and accompanying students;
- Exemption from registration fees;
- Accommodation in conjunction with the Regional Centres for University and School Works (CROUS);
- French courses and additional skills (cultural, societal);
- Integration into campus life and French society (associations, civic services);
- Assistance in the orientation and construction of a professional project.

Furthermore, the MEnS network makes it possible to exchange good practices, produce recommendations, negotiate for the implementation of these recommendations, be heard as the universities' spokesperson, and initiate a draft "*European Universities' Union*".

Finally, throughout Europe, 320 European universities are involved in this process of opening up, and between 10000 and 15000 students have already been welcomed. There are also 15 ERASMUS+ programmes for the reception of refugees. Nevertheless, there are wide disparities in the prerogatives granted to universities, and university action is still too uncoordinated and national migration policies are far too heterogeneous.

For further information on the MEnS network, please click on the following link (in French):

<https://www.campusfrance.org/fr/migrants-enseignement-superieur-reseau-etablissements-francais>

To sum up, the French experience of the MEnS network shows:

- The tremendous humanist movement that the 2015 migration crisis has generated;
- The awareness of French universities about their own social responsibility;
- The importance of networks in political decision-making and action;
- The need to increase international cooperation, especially at the European level;
- The need to strengthen cooperation with crisis regions to prevent refugee flows and prepare earlier for the reconstruction of countries at war.

This daily collective commitment has recently been resulted in the support given to **Pinar SELEK** (sociologist, feminist anti-militarist activist and Franco-Turkish writer), sentenced to life imprisonment by Turkey in January 2017 (in French): <https://pinarselek.fr/>

Since the failed coup attempt in July 2016, 6000 Turkish researchers and academics have been dismissed from their posts. Some of them are hosted in European universities to enable them to continue their work.

On this subject, *Farouk ALLOUCHE*, co-coordinator of the working group, informed the participants about the 2019 Václav HAVEL Human Rights Prize of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The Standing Committee of the Conference of INGOs at the Council of Europe has decided to support the nomination of **Pinar SELEK** for this award and the application file will be sent before the end of April 2019.

This Prize, created in 2013, aims to reward outstanding civil society actions in the defence of human rights in Europe and beyond. It is awarded in memory of Václav HAVEL, one of the main symbols of opposition to despotism, the architect of the 1989 Velvet Revolution who became the Czechoslovak and Czech President in the 1990's. Nominated candidates must have improved the human rights situation of a given group, contributed to the revelation of large-scale structural violations of certain rights, or successfully mobilized public opinion or the international community on a specific cause. The Prize consists of a sum of €60000, a trophy and a diploma. It will be awarded on 30 September 2019 in Strasbourg.

In conclusion, Emmanuel Macron stated in October 2017 that '*Europe must build a common area of protection and solidarity, by creating a European Asylum Office and a common programme for the integration and training of refugees*'. It is to be hoped that this call will be heard soon and above all that it will be implemented more or less in the mid-term on the ground.

The participants thanked *Mr. SCHNEIDER* for his PowerPoint presentation, which will be sent to them at the same time as the minutes of the meeting.

III. Example of a programme for refugees in European higher education: the Herodotus programme by Sophie MARINO

Sophie MARINO taught at the University and the Ecole Supérieure d'Art of Avignon, then became a museographer for large cultural facilities at the Café Programmation agency.

As part of her research, she is interested in the processes of recomposition and transmission of knowledge. Her fields of reflection question the museum enunciation and the exhibition narrative, in particular as a means of fictional production.

At the beginning of the academic year in September 2017, Ms MARINO created the Herodotus programme within the Studies Department of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris (ENSBA).

This programme is a resumption of studies support scheme for refugee or asylum-seeking artists who have undertaken or completed higher education in art in their country of origin.

The course offers intensive French as a foreign language (FLE – French as a foreign language) courses taught by ENSBA teachers, and includes personalised artistic support provided by volunteer students. Non-degree, the program welcomes artists for one academic year. These people follow FLE courses, depending on their level of French, at beginner or correct level, at the rate of three 1 hour and half sessions per week.

This training is a way for these artists to regain an artistic environment, to have access to all ENSBA courses as a free listener and possibly to prepare for entrance examinations to French art schools.

The integration of these people with the other students at the school is based on their background, history and status: Syrians, Ukrainians, Palestinians, Iranians, Turks, Kurds and even a stateless citizen are part of this program.

The students are invited as free listeners and have tutors who help them to organise two small exhibitions (art hangings) during the year. After completing this program, some are preparing entrance examinations to enter French schools.

After the second academic year of the programme (2018-2019), the association '*L'atelier des artistes en exil*' at the ENSBA provides these students with the possibility to access and discover French culture (theatre, opera, museum) and provides them with tools to overcome their administrative difficulties. By creating social ties, this network allows them to be better integrated into the French society.

For the start of the 2019-2020 academic year, it has been considered to make a selection of participants, but Ms MARINO is fundamentally against this idea because she considers that this programme is not a diploma and that aesthetic design is a secondary subject in the particular context of welcoming people who are often hurt by their history and background.

The following discussion during which the participants exchanged, can be summarized as follows.

In the context of the announced fees increases for foreign students in France, and for this program to be financially sustainable, it will be necessary to find additional funding. Better cooperation between rich and developing countries is necessary. Claude VIVIER LE GOT indicates that the tuition fees' increase is already causing major changes with a 26% drop in the number of sub-Saharan students enrolled, who tend to go even more studying in Morocco.

Participants generally felt that this political decision was not going in the right direction as the first language spoken in Africa in 2050 will be French (Canada is now preferred to France). This measure isn't a good signal to Africa, its youth and elites, traditionally trained in France.

In Belgium, there is neither a "Herodotus programme" nor a MEnS network, but the '*La commune hospitalière*' campaign targeting migrants in the broadest sense has made it possible to facilitate their access to education and to raise awareness in the university community about their situation.

The participants thank Ms. MARINO for her speech, the transcript of which will be sent to them in the minutes of the meeting.

IV. Recommendation on poverty and precarity amongst students in Europe by Jean-Louis DURAND-DROUHIN and Rémi LOISON

Rémi LOISON, co-coordinator of the working group, briefly explained to the participants that the issue of students' poverty in Europe has been of concern to the FEDE for several years. With a network of 200000 students or learners, the FEDE is aware of the numerous problems faced by young people in pursuing their studies.

Therefore, the FEDE wished to address this subject, which has been somewhat forgotten by political decision-makers at the CoE's level, by drafting a set of recommendations addressed to the Organisation's 47 Member States. The Recommendation contains suggestions addressed to governments on these twelve following themes:

- National strategies to reduce poverty and ensure equal opportunities for all;
- The implementation of measures to broaden and simplify access to scholarships;
- Professional missions to prepare students for the world of work;
- The development of apprenticeship and the revaluation of vocational courses;
- The phenomenon of student prostitution;
- Foreign students, refugees and those in migration situations;
- Support and promotion of civil society and INGOs for innovative individual actions;
- The call on the Council of Europe to address the issue of student poverty;
- The implementation of appropriate and equitable regulatory provisions, accompanied by financial incentives;
- Strengthening social action structures and staff as well as the global networking of social stakeholders and NGOs;
- National strategies promoting psychological support for students and better consideration of their mental health;
- Easier access to the ERASMUS programme for the most disadvantaged students.

This partnership between the European Social Action Network (ESAN) and the FEDE follows several exchanges initiated at the beginning of 2019 and a working meeting with ESAN representatives in March 2019. After co-drafting, this institutional document was presented to the plenary session of the Conference of INGOs on Wednesday 10 April and adopted by the 150 INGOs present at the vote (except for three abstentions). This Recommendation won't be legally binding on Member States but enjoys a wide consensus within the Conference of INGOs and will, therefore, have a certain political weight. This text could enable NGOs working with young people and students to use it for their advocacy strategies with national governments.

During the adoption vote on 10 April, two minor amendments were decided by the Conference and formally endorsed by the members of the working group.

For the whole document, the wording '*The European Social Charter of 1961*' is replaced by '*The Revised European Social Charter*'. Besides, at the end of point 6 of the Recommendation, which concerns foreign students, the expression '*to benefit from the same treatment and tuition fees as European students*' is replaced by '*to benefit from the same treatment and tuition fees as national students*'. The

full language versions (English and French) of this Recommendation are available on the Council of Europe website through this link: [https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/texts-adopted#{"10852597":0}](https://www.coe.int/en/web/ingo/texts-adopted#{)

After this contextualisation, *Jean-Louis DURAND-DROUHIN* of the European Social Action Network (ESAN) points out that this Recommendation represents a good opportunity to question the European authorities on this urgent issue young people are facing. Despite very high levels of development and wealth, many people are still unable to pursue higher education and the situation of students' poverty in Europe is not improving.

It is becoming more and more difficult for young people to study in good conditions, and sometimes even to eat enough. The ESAN is particularly sensitive to the issue of food aid, a prerequisite for an individual to be able to study under normal conditions. This assistance on the ground has only increased in recent years. In this context, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) is expected to decrease, and some of the most vulnerable students will be in even greater difficulty. The FEAD, which aims to fight poverty and promote social inclusion, represents only 0.37% of the EU budget: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089&langId=en>

In this context, the ESAN intends to approach the European Commission and broaden the scope of partnerships in order to make progress, particularly in the ERASMUS programme (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students). The goal is to ensure that more disadvantaged European students have access to this great European success story.

After this presentation, the participants discussed, and their exchanges can be summarized as follows.

Mathieu SCHNEIDER believes that a student, whether a foreigner or not, is foremost a student. The university community must continue to play its role as an integrator, as shown by the examples of the "Migrants dans l'Enseignement Supérieur" (MEnS) network and the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED). For more information on the UNIMED network, please click on the following link: <https://www.uni-med.net/en/join-unimed/>

In addition, *Mr SCHNEIDER* said he was ready to support ESAN in any project that would raise the issue of foreign students with the public authorities.

Hélène ROZET (ATD Fourth World) highlighted the even more dramatic situation of people who are unable to attend school because of poverty. She believes that there are too many inequalities and differences between students.

Jean-Louis DURAND-DROUHIN (ESAN) said that strong action was needed and that a solidarity network should be created between high schools, students and apprentices. The ESAN is ready to go further for the most vulnerable young people so that the public authorities become aware of the problem and act accordingly for future generations.

The participants thank *Mr DURAND-DROUHIN* for his intervention.

The next meeting of the working group *Right to Lifelong Learning* will take place between Monday 28th and Thursday 31st October 2019 during the next session of the INGOs Conference.

To conclude the meeting, the Chairwoman of the Education and Culture Committee, *Claude VIVIER LE GOT*, pointed out that the meeting of the working group *Heritage and Creation Shaping Europe* will take place in the same room 2 from 16.30 to 18.30, with the exceptional presence of *Alain LAMASSOURE*, MEP, who will speak about the project of European Observatory for History Teaching.

End of the document - 30/07/2019