Rotterdam Law Network Meeting  
20 –21 May 2011  
Yeditepe University, Istanbul  

Chairman: Prof. Jaap de Zwaan

Present: Jasna Bachovska (Skopje), Gordana Buzarovska (Skopje), Ingrid Tosdal (Bergen), Michal Radvan (Brno), Josef Bejcek (Brno), Pat Hugg (New Orleans), Bernhard Koch (Innsbruck), Jan Ginter (Tartu), Anthony Chamboredon (Paris), Els Demyttenaere (Ghent), Hans De Wulf (Ghent), Luis Pereira Coutinho (Lisbon), Vasco Pereira da Silva (Lisbon), Regina Valutyte (Vilnius), Luisa Esteve (Girona), Margerite Turhan (Istanbul), Artur Kucs (Riga), Lydia Scholz (Warwick), Tamara Perisin (Zagreb), Gordana Berc (Zagreb), Malene Magaard (Copenhagen), Majken Hjort (Copenhagen), Tiija Isatolo (Helsinki), Christian Strasser-Gackenheimer (Konstanz), Gerard Legier (Aix-Marseille), Vehbi Baysan (Istanbul), John Finlay (Glasgow), Morna Roberts (Glasgow), Augustina Dumitruascu (Bucharest), Maria Patakyova (Bratislava), Ronnie Eklund (Stockholm), Jaap de Zwaan (Rotterdam), Anette van Sandwijk (Rotterdam),

Absent: Reykjavik, Manchester, Salamanca, Sofia, Warsaw (all with notice). Maribor, Milano

Friday 20 May  
1st Session - University Rectorate, Senate Room 3rd floor

Haluk opened the 1st session and welcomed all participants and mentioned the fact that other Yeditepe faculties are also open to starting new agreements with RLN partner universities. He then welcomed the rector Dr Nurcan Bac. Dr Bac indicated that he is also hoping to increase the number of international contacts and that together with the deans he’s pushing forward to promote their education and research.

Haluk then asked attention for the booklets on immigration law and visa policy which were part of the information package and pointed out the inconsistency according to him in the EU-Turkey Customs Union whereby there is free movements of goods, but no free movement of businessmen.

He then introduced Yeditepe Law Faculty a little bit more (65 agreements, 80 exchange students). Then Dr Vehbi Baysan provided information about international matters at Yeditepe University. The majority of their exchange students comes through Erasmus. Erasmus funding is not sufficient for most Turkish students. The university has more than 700 agreements in total and is the biggest foundation (private) university. They very much believe in internationalisation whether by going abroad or with the “international classroom”. Haluk indicated that they are flexible with the student exchange numbers and emphasised that they are open to starting new agreements.

Jaap de Zwaan thanked the rector for his willingness to receive the network and mentioned that this is the first time that the network gathered in Asia! He also thanked Haluk and said it was an honour to be in Istanbul. He was also happy to see such a high number of participants and mentioned how useful the interuniversity cooperation is: people to people contact is very important.

A “tour de table” was made and every member introduced itself to the network. Also this year, the group consisted of a very good mixture of deans, vice deans, Erasmus coordinators, staff responsible for international policy and relations, professors and lecturers.

Round table Rotterdam Law Network  
(Balance in) Incoming and outgoing numbers  
Yeditepe indicated that they do not require a balance in numbers. Rotterdam has some restrictions; the number of incoming students is twice as high as the number of outgoing
students and although this was tolerated by the board for a long time, it is expected that this policy may change in the future.

**Innsbruck** informed us that their Law and Economics programme is being transferred according to the Bachelor Master structure but this should not be a hindrance for exchange. It was also suggested that it would be a good idea to mention language courses on the website.

**Ghent** mentioned that many students cancel because of the administrative burden. Balance in numbers is not required on faculty level, but from university level there is more pressure to have these numbers in balance.

**Copenhagen** informed us that the Ministry requires a balance and unfortunately Copenhagen has more students coming in than going out. They received figures of how many students they are “allowed” to receive. This may affect exchanges within the network.

**Lisbon** wondered whether we should have guidelines for this.

**Innsbruck** has a higher number of outgoing students than incoming students and wonders why. It was suggested that this may have to do with the fact that courses are taught in German.

**Helsinki** has a balance in numbers (numbers are still growing) and agreed that the RLN members should inform each other in advance in case they are forced to cancel an agreement. They still require an English language proficiency test.

**Brno** indicated that the majority of incoming students are from neighboring states and new member states. Their number of courses taught in English is increasing (30 now)

**Zagreb** mentioned that 2 years ago they had no Erasmus agreements and now they have 58 Erasmus agreements. They offer 15 courses in English. They also offer intensive seminars (coast). They realize that courses in English are important to attract international students.

**Vilnius** indicated they have a balance in numbers. They will be reducing the Bachelor phase from 4 years to 3.5 years. They offer 50 courses in English and some courses in French and German. They will start a new programme with China.

**Aix-Marseille** offers some courses taught in English in the Master’s phase (they used to have an international programme about the common law system but the professor has retired). They have a good balance in numbers and also send students to Eastern Europe. They do notice a decrease in the quality of exchange students (remark of the French professors, 45% of students failed).

**Paris** wondered why the same subjects are taught at each university and suggested that double/joint degree programmes would be interesting in this perspective, particularly within the network. We would have to look into the conditions.

**Ghent** agreed and definitely stimulates these things. Develop a “mobility window” where students have a special package of course.

**Lisbon** agreed and suggested that we should encourage students to take “domestic” law courses. Another idea is to establish intensive courses (1 week by foreign professors).

**Rotterdam** indicated that because students have a limited number of years to study, for most students there is no time to take domestic courses when on exchange as these cannot be transferred back to their Rotterdam curriculum.

In **Vilnius** the constitutional courts require that the content of diplomas is Lithuanian.

In **Lisbon** they are very flexible and would accept for example Lithuanian family law.
All agreed that joint/double degrees should be on next year’s agenda. An introductory document about joint/double degree will be sent to the network members to prepare for next year.

Paris has a Master’s Degree that takes 2 years. A discussion followed whether exchange should be made compulsory in 3rd year Bachelor or in the Master.

Zagreb mentioned that in the past students used to like to do an LL.M., Now with the 5+0 systems there is no incentive to do another degree.

Yeditepe mentioned that only national courses taught in the national language will allow students to take the bar exam.

Both Copenhagen and Helsinki agreed that mobility is an asset to a student’s curriculum when it comes to applying for a job.

Copenhagen mentioned their students tend to choose for countries where courses are taught in English as students study less different languages in high school.

Yeditepe suggested creating a possibility within the curriculum to receive guest lecturers. Ghent mentioned that staff exchange sometimes also is a cost issue as the sending institution has to pay. Copenhagen mentioned that staff can get an Erasmus grant. In Zagreb staff exchange is very successful.

Erasmus Grants
Ghent informed us that in Belgium uncertainty exists about the budget available for Erasmus grants. Expected is that the funds per student will be less than before. On EU level, the number of Erasmus scholarships will be reduced.

At Yeditepe there are discussions about allotment.

Network extension/reduction
Paris mentioned that Trinity College is not interested in RLN cooperation.

Copenhagen suggested that Cork could be invited.

Rotterdam mentioned that the previous contact with had with the University of Athens could be reactivated. Otherwise we should look for a new partner. Innsbruck indicated that they have good contacts with Athens.

Yeditepe suggested that for next year’s meeting professors should be invited as well and points out the ELFA meeting

Miscellaneous
The 2012 meeting will be held in Bucharest, suggested period: end of April (19-21 or 26-29)

Ghent mentioned that a lot of paperwork is involved between the home and receiving universities.

Yeditepe suggested harmonization of forms.

Girona indicated that there are regional differences within Spain with regards to the required forms.

All agreed that we should check with the international offices whether the paperwork could be diminished.
2nd Second session

Feroz Ahmad gave a very interesting lecture on Turkey and the Republican Era. A discussion on the upcoming elections (12 June) and the feelings of Turkish people towards accession to the EU followed.

3rd Session

Budget cuts

Rotterdam then gave a presentation on Budget Cuts in the Netherlands.

In Sweden non EU students will be charged fees (10.000). Swedish students do not pay tuition fees, EU students are free riders.

Glasgow mentioned that the government is committed to having new tuition fees.

Copenhagen indicated that visiting students now also have to pay (and they have a decrease in Erasmus grants).

Ghent mentioned that Erasmus funding is under pressure. Also a new measure will be imposed for postgraduate programmes: no subsidies will be provided unless the programme is in English or involves international cooperation.

Career

In Lisbon students provide career services to other students.

In Skopje the students make contact with the employers themselves.

In Ghent students can replace one subject with an internship (1-2 months). Students want to do internships with international organizations but the demand for these internships is very high. They cannot place exchange students.

Zagreb's careers services started a year ago when a Fulbright professor pointed out that they should have such a service. Internships are very popular and they can offer internships in Zagreb to international students.

Bratislava is participating in the Leonardo da Vinci internship programme. However, students can only do an internship during the summer.

In Vilnius an internship is mandatory and is therefore included in the curriculum (no less than 2 months). They also organise job fairs.

In Innsbruck they have special staff for alumni. They keep track of their alumni, -> also for fundraising. Their student body does career counseling. Studies do not allow internships.

Yeditepe mentions that in the US, ranking systems also check the salaries (within how many months a particular income). In Turkey an internship is not part of the curriculum, but is part of the bar. They also offer Career Days.

Then Patrick Hugg presented SEALS (South East Association of Law Schools) to us which functions as a platform where jurists can come together and share/exchange ideas (promote scholarship and the academy). 50 Universities are represented in this association. He urges us to sign agreements (faculty or student) or participate in conferences or video conferences. He invited us to join the conference (the fee will be waived)

Careers services are part of American Law Schools (over 200) because they're profitable. However, recession restricts the market. Also, the numbers for job placement are not always correct. Public schools are under financial restrictions.
The Yeditepe International Office then provided some more information about their internationalisation plans and policies. They offer Turkish foreign language courses (students will better understand the culture by learning the language). Turkey has a centralized university entry exam for students. There are many students and not enough places. However, in 10 years a decrease in numbers is expected and therefore it is important to internationalize universities and attract international students. Next to the Middle East, Turkey is now also focusing about the (career) possibilities in the Gulf States.

The 2012 meeting will be held in April in Bucharest.

Jaap thanked all participants for their input and attendance and closed the meeting.