Minutes of the 9th meeting of the Rotterdam Law Network, held in Brno on
Friday 14th May 2004

Present: Josef Bejcek (Brno), John Brown, Maria Fletcher (Glasgow), John Murphy (Manchester), Christopher Bisping (Warwick), Alberto Maffi (Milano), Laura Nyman (Helsinki), Mona Astrand (Stockholm), Birgitta Edebalk, Kristine Lindborn (Lund), Gerard Legier, Odile Tokoto (Aix), Veronique Christophe (Ghent), Nikolaus Asfalg (Konstanz), Majken Hjort (Kopenhagen), Marta Deszo, Andrea Robotka (Budapest), Laura Ripoll, Mariona Illamola (Girona), Jakub Urbanik (Warsaw), Dana Tofan (Bucharest), Math Noortmann, Anette van Sandwijk (Rotterdam), Maria Patakyova, Kristina Hemela (Bratislava), Audra Darbyte-Burokiene (Vilnius)
Absent: Pilar Garcia (Salamanca), Eduardo Pinto (Lisboa), Reykjavik, Innsbruck
Absent without notice: Maribor, Sofia

Morning session (10:00)

The Dean of Masaryk University welcomed the participants to the meeting after which Josef Bejcek welcomed all partners and explained a few practical arrangements. Professor Noortmann (Chairman) then opened the meeting by establishing the agenda:

- Assessment exchanges
- Socrates applications 2004/5 and 2005/6
- Aims for student and teaching staff mobility
- Network extension/reduction
- Student selection criteria

Assessment Exchange/Socrates applications
The Chairman invited all partners to give a summary of the situation at their particular institution. We compared experiences in terms of the balance of incoming and outgoing students, provision of accommodation, and any new or improved facilities offered to students.

The Chairman suggested some other points to be discussed as well:
1. Recognition of courses and credits
2. Language – increase number of English taught courses
3. TS mobility

Coffee break (12:00)

Recognition of Subjects
After the break the delegate for Milan, Professor Maffi, had some questions about the recognition of subjects taken abroad. Although all partners have their own rules regarding recognition of subjects taken abroad, it was agreed that the Learning Agreement is most important in this matter. Once this form has been signed and sent to the partner institution, students should receive recognition of these subjects and credits from their home university for subjects taken abroad.

Most partners were of the opinion that a multicultural learning environment is more important than knowing everything about one particular law system. Students come back with a broader outlook on law. It was also decided that all partners should have both ECTS and local grade on the certificate (partners who would like to make
adjustments to the ECTS grading table in the RLN brochure should contact Anette van Sandwijk – EUR).

**Afternoon session (15:00)**

Discussion Student selection criteria.

Language: it is the responsibility of the home university to check the language skills. Students need to have good language skills in a foreign learning environment. In case a student fails to meet the language requirements of a partner institution, please notify the partner. It appeared that each university has its own way of verifying the language skills of a student.

Academics: A discussion followed about the academic level of the exchange students, as students sometimes do not meet the required level for a course. Each partner then described the educational system in their university and when students are encouraged to go abroad. As the educational structure differs per country, it was difficult to come to a consensus on when students should go abroad. It was agreed that it depends on the basic knowledge that students have whether they can go abroad or not (it does not make sense sending a student abroad for International Private Law when he/she has studied civil law for 2 years).

All partners should provide clear course presentations (plus pre-requisites) to determine if the student has the required knowledge.

Teaching staff mobility
The network mainly focuses on student mobility. Teaching Staff mobility happens on an ad-hoc basis, aim is to have teaching staff mobility on a structural basis. TS mobility should be facilitated: what is available, what is asked? Option of dual teaching and crash courses were suggested. Practical questions were raised such as ‘who will replace the absent teacher?’ and ‘what are the financial consequences?’ It was suggested that lecturers travel all around Europe for business, why not combine these trips with a lecture at a partner university?

TS It is necessary to have input from outside to restore education back to academics.

Network extension/reduction
Athens will be no longer part of the network (they have been informed about this). Salamanca, Sofia, Reykjavik, Maribor, Innsbruck and Lisbon were absent. They will be sent a letter that about this. It was agreed by all partners that when a partner misses three consecutive meetings they would be no longer part of the network. A letter to inform these partners will be sent to the Dean.

Should the network be extended? Aim is to have partners in all European countries. It was agreed that Turkey should not be invited to join the network. It is better to focus on the Baltic States and maybe Ireland first.

The quality of future partners should be checked (language etc.)

Meeting was concluded at 17:30.

The 2005 Annual Meeting (10 year anniversary) will take place in Rotterdam. The proposed dates for the meeting are 13, 14 and 15 May 2005. In 2006 the meeting will be held in Copenhagen, in 2007 in Vilnius.