Rotterdam Law Network Meeting  
April 19-22, 2012  
Bucharest, Romania

Chairman: Prof. Jaap de Zwaan, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Friday 20 April 2012

Present:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Names of the participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bergen - Norway</td>
<td>Asbjørn-Strandbakken, Nathalie Gaulier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucharest - Romania</td>
<td>Flavius Biaș, Simina Tanasesc, Adriana Almasan, Augustina Dumitrescu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budapest - Hungary</td>
<td>Robotka Andreának</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gent - Belgium</td>
<td>Els Demyttenaere, Hans De wulf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girona - Spain</td>
<td>Francina Esteve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki - Finland</td>
<td>Teija Isotalo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Embla Thorsdottir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeditepe - Istanbul</td>
<td>Marguerite Turhan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konstanz - Germany</td>
<td>Christian Strasser-Gackenheimer, Jochen Glöckner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Madara Henkele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisboa – Portugal</td>
<td>Vasco Pereira da Silva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lund</td>
<td>Louise Hultqvist</td>
</tr>
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<td>Masaryk Brno – Czech Republic</td>
<td>Jana Jurníková</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm - Sweden</td>
<td>Sandra Fagerlund, Ronnie Eklund</td>
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<td>Tartu – Estonia</td>
<td>Jaan Ginter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vilnius - Lithuania</td>
<td>Valutyte Regina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zagreb - Croatia</td>
<td>Andrea Mišković, Hrvoje Sikirić, Marko Baretić</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Absent:
Aix-Marseille, Bratislava, Copenhagen, Glasgow, Innsbruck, Manchester, Paris, Salamanca, Warwick (all with notice), Maribor, Milano, Warsaw.

Contents
1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Joint and Double Degree Programs
3. The Reform of Civil Law in Romania
4. RLN Issues
5. Closure
1. Welcome and Introduction
Dean Flavius Baias welcomed the chairman professor Jaap de Zwaan and all other participants and said that he was pleased and honoured to host the Rotterdam Law Network at the School of Law of Bucharest University.

Thereafter he introduced the Law School. The School of Law is one of the oldest faculties of the University of Bucharest. Legal scholars as well as active politicians are working as holders of the traditional chairs. The faculty offers programmes for BA and MA degrees, specialized post graduate studies, and PhD studies. The School has developed fruitful co-operation programs, such as the French Romanian Law College. Dean Baias is also very enthusiastic about the cooperation with the universities within RLN.

He concluded with thanks to the organisers for their efforts, and wished all participants success with their deliberations, and he hoped that they would enjoy their stay in their pleasant city, Bucharest.

Jaap de Zwaan thanked the Dean for his willingness to receive the network partners and said that he was pleased to notice that such a young member of the Rotterdam Law Network took the initiative for organising this network meeting. De Zwaan stressed the importance of looking beyond borders for students in the globalized world of today and the role RLN can play therein. Thanks to the activities of RLN all partners, their students and lecturers can participate and integrate in the global academic community.

Furthermore de Zwaan recalled that Anette van Sandwijk, the former RLN coordinator in Rotterdam, had left Erasmus University Rotterdam in February 2012 in order to accept a position as internationalization manager at the Law School of Leyden University. A recruitment procedure has started to find a successor for Anette. In the meantime Nathalie Weber (present at this meeting) and Xenia Hagemeijer look after Anette’s practice on a temporary basis.

A “tour de table” was made and every member introduced itself to the network.

2. Joint and Double Degree Programs
As agreed during last year’s meeting in Istanbul, the main substantive theme of today’s meeting concerned the regulation and practice regarding the "Joint and Double Degrees" with the partner universities. Presentations (followed by discussions) were held by:

- Mr. Wicher Schreuders – assistant-professor, Erasmus University Rotterdam
  Schreuders is the assistant-coordinator of the European Master in Law and Economics programme (EMLE) in Rotterdam and the overall Erasmus Mundus assistant-coordinator of this joint programme. EMLE has up to now been selected by the European Commission twice as an Erasmus Mundus Masters Course, which is open only for joint programmes awarding a joint or a multiple degree. Schreuders discussed joint programmes and joint and double degrees in general (What is it? What is the motivation to start such a programme? What is the structure of such a joint programme? What are
the challenges regarding accreditation and recognition?). Apart from that, he explained the history and background of the EMLE programme, as well as the Erasmus Mundus procedures. Moreover, he presented some more details of the EMLE program, such as the structure of the consortium, the marketing of the program, website, tuition fees, selection procedures concerning students, coordination of the courses, examination regulations etc.) as well as the problems encountered to have the EMLE program internationally recognized and accredited. Finally, Wicher Schreuders discussed the way how to start a joint programme, for which he offered some suggestions. (The slides of his presentation are included in the Annex to this report).

- **Mr. Damien Bouvier**, Secrétaire Général, Collège Juridique Franco-Roumain d’études européennes.
Bouvier introduced the French-Romanian Law College, which was founded in 1994 and represents a unique and very successful partnership between the School of Law of the University of Bucharest and University Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne. The college can be seen as the equivalent of the Sorbonne in Bucharest. The College is offering a BA degree program with additional French courses, a MA degree (joint degree with two partners), recognized both in Romania and France, summer internships, cooperation in publications and exchange staff. The college receives funding from the French Embassy and awards 15 scholarships per year.

- **Mrs. Simina Tănăsescu** – vice-dean, professor, Faculty of Law, University of Bucharest.
Vice-dean Tănăsescu outlined a number of concerns of the faculty. Romania is at the moment a country in transition, coming from a planned economy and directing to a market economy. The law system is also in transition. Additional rules and qualifications are not clear, and the codification of the law – as to the number of pages involved - is even thicker than the bible! Other concern is the increasing number of students, which leads to administrative obstacles but also raises the question where to find a position for them on the labor market and how to keep qualified people in Romania. These days approximately 50% of the law graduates leave Romania for a position abroad. Tănăsescu also outlined some of the plans of the faculty, such as bilateral agreements with Spain and cooperation contacts with Switzerland and Canada, a MA-degree in English in Financial Tax Law (60 ECTS), and possibly a MA-degree in Arbitration.

**Round Table Discussion on Joint and Double degrees**

*Jaap de Zwaan* thanked Wicher, Damien and Simina for their informative presentations, asking the audience for their questions and remarks.

He furthermore recalled the study of the Institute of International Education ‘*Joint and Double Degrees Programs in the global Context: Report on an International Survey*’ (2011, see the website [www.iie.org](http://www.iie.org)) as the leading study regarding the topic of today.

*Lisbon* indicated that the faculty takes part in two EU cooperation programs and a national bilateral cooperation program. The Erasmus Mundus LL.M. is named ELPIS (European Legal Practice integrated Studies), and the (present) partners of the consortia are the Law Faculties of the Universities of Hannover, Rouen and Lisbon, as well as the Mykolas Romeries University, from Vilnius. There are also some associated partner Universities, coming from Brazil, India, China, and Thailand. This specific
Erasmus Mundus project is not concentrated on a specific theme. Moreover the project offers a program in several languages and not in only one language. In the curriculum extensive courses are offered in the German language, English and in Portuguese. In which language the student writes his thesis is his/her decision. Consequently the student has two supervisors and an international jury, for reasons of horizontal integration. Lisbon was informed by the Commission that they considered the program to be very interesting also due to the fact that the program is offered in three languages. Lisbon mentioned that a problem for the program is the accreditation, since this has to be achieved on a national basis. A unified accreditation system would be very welcomed by Lisbon.

*Ghent* mentioned that there are different expectations regarding the question what the professional value is of the joint or double degree. Is it for example accepted that the degree gives access to the legal profession? Also it seems that the professional value of the program is not always assessed in the same way.

In addition to the comments made by Ghent and Lisbon, *Bucharest* stated that another problem to deal with is related to the fact that the tuition fee is not the same everywhere. How to deal with this discrimination?

*Wicher Schreuders* explained that different choices can be made regarding the selection of a topic for a program: the European legal practice can be a good example, it is neither broad nor specific. Regarding quality assurance and recognition, Schreuders informed the network that the intention is to simplify the procedure, for instance the national accreditation organizations in the home countries of partners of a multinational consortium accept a mutual accreditation. An important role could be played by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), almost all accreditation organizations are after all member of this organization. A current project of the ECA is the 'Joint programs: Quality Assurance and Recognition of degrees awarded'(JOQAR); which involves the development of a multilateral recognition agreement regarding quality assurance and accreditation results.

Regarding the comments made regarding access to the legal profession Schreuders agreed that this is a serious problem. *De Zwaan* stated that, at least according to European Union Law, this in principle should not be a big problem. Because of the principle of mutual recognition a graduated migrant has to be awarded access to the legal profession in view of his/her degree acquired in another Member State (except, for example, for the UK and Israel, where a BA in law already provides access to the legal professions (qualifying for the labor market)).

Regarding the language of instruction policy, Schreuders said that it is allowed to offer a program in more than one language. However, it may be that, as a consequence, one will receive less applications: because, it is very unlikely that many applicants will be able to understand 3 or 4 different languages of instruction. Apart from the language(s) of instruction, each consortium might offer different language courses to the students.

*Several participants* were of the opinion that the European Commission should harmonize the level of the tuition fee, calculations for a tuition fee to cover costs of 10.000-12.000 euro is way too high. But as some of the participants correctly
mentioned, the level of the tuition fee for NON-EU students is up to the universities to decide (and MA-programs in USA & UK are much higher). 

Schreuders stated that in the context of Erasmus Mundus programs, the European Commission indeed accepts two different levels of tuition fees: one for EU participants and one for non-EU participants. However, in Erasmus Mundus the tuition fees for scholarship holders are maximized by the Commission, whereas the overall tuition fees are more or less maximized, this being one of the requirements in the selection procedure to obtain the Erasmus Mundus status.

Rotterdam informed the meeting that it has recently signed an agreement with the University of Singapore to start a double degree law program.

Ghent informed the group that an interesting discussion is taking place at home regarding receiving two degrees after completing a one year LL.M. program at Ghent. This program is developed in cooperation with an American Law school: JD students spend a year in Ghent to be granted a LL.M. degree whereas they also receive their JD in USA. Until now no decision about whether or not to offer this program has not yet been taken, since some negative comments were made within the faculty, such as: ‘earning’ two degrees (in an easy way) through a one year study by JD students will be unfair to other students who, although they have made the same efforts, will only earn one degree.

Bergen mentioned that they offer a program ‘two degrees for one’ in cooperation with Vilnius and Austria without any negative comments. But Bergen is concerned that future national legislation could become a problem (especially with Austria). Schreuders and De Zwaan wondered whether the Bergen System could be a solution for Ghent.

Girona informed the network that a joint program is in the process of development with Mexico.

Agenda for next year’s meeting
Given the importance of issues like mutual recognition of academic diplomas and the problems encountered with regard to the recognition/accreditation of study programs, Jaap de Zwaan suggested to discuss these –and related- topics at further length at the next annual meeting of RLN. All participants welcomed this suggestion.

For the preparation of this meeting Jaap de Zwaan will prepare a note, in consultation with Augustina Dumitrascu, regarding the implications of EU-law, notably the fundamental free movement principles of the internal market, for the recognition of academic diplomas.

3. The Reform of Civil Law in Romania
Adrinana Almasan, 2nd vice-dean of the Bucharest Faculty of Law, provided an interesting lecture regarding recent reforms of the Rumanian Civil Law System. She discussed the still outstanding problems for judges, policy workers, lawyers and, generally speaking, for the civilians, related to application and interpretation of the results of the work that has been done.
4. RLN Issues
Under this heading a ‘tour de table’ was held regarding different aspects of the assessment of exchanges, social media, network extension, other business and the 2013 annual meeting.

Assessment of Exchanges
Jaap de Zwaan recalled the existence of the traditional Scheme, prepared by his university and distributed a while ago to all partners, regarding elementary RLN information such as numbers of incoming and outgoing students, exchanges in the framework of RLN respectively with other partners, and other comments concerning exchanges (ETCS points, recognition of credit points granted abroad etc.).

Bergen: costs of exchanges of outgoing students are in principle covered for 100 %. The remaining problem is to find people to go abroad. The teaching staff should be demand driven.

Lisbon: costs for guest lecturers are in principle covered for 100 %.

All universities have accepted the Bologna system, only Spain is still involved in a process implementing the Ba-Ma structure.

Masaryk Brno and Stockholm University still have some remaining comments regarding the scheme, prepared by Erasmus University Rotterdam, and will send the correct information concerning the implementation of the Bologna process to EUR.

Shortly after the meeting Stockholm University provided the following additional information to EUR:
The Bologna system is implemented at Stockholm University, but it makes no much difference since the basic degree in other faculties than law was already a third year long education leading up to a bachelor degree. The law degree is still 4,5 years and is unaffected by the Bologna system. There is a possibility for law students to apply for a bachelor of legal science degree after 3 years, but the option was introduced long before the Bologna process started. Very few students take advantage of this possibility. The only effect of the Bologna system is that aspects relating to “learning outcomes” have been implemented. The former grading system is also intact compared to the ECTS grading scale.

Masaryk Brno provided the following additional information to EUR: The main study programme in Law and Legal Science is ONLY a five year Master’s programme. The Czech accreditation commission does not accept any 3+2 programmes in law and legal science. Only graduates from this programme can become judges, prosecutors, attorneys, notaries, etc.

Masaryk University offers as well Bachelor programmes of three years such as 1. international business studies and 2. business law studies.

In addition six programmes in the field of public administration are offered:
• Theory and Practice of Criminal and Administrative Process
• Public Administration - general
• Public Administration specialized on General Public Administration
• Public Administration specialized on Cadastre Administration
• Public Administration specialized on Financial Administration
• Public Administration specialized on Social Securities Administration

Students can continue with a two year Master's programme in Public Administration.

Yeditepe asked attention for the problems Turkish students often encounter as to the duration of visa procedures. It might work faster if there is more pressure on the embassy concerned. Yeditepe will inform the network partners in which countries these problems occur more particularly.

Bucharest welcomes professors from partner universities to give 4 to 6 guest lectures of two hours each.

Zagreb observed that sometimes a lack does exist in the communication regarding language criteria.

Essentially all partners reported that they offer courses in a foreign language. Konstanz added that they offer a ‘mixed’ program: some courses are taught in English, but not the entire program.

Ghent mentioned that many incoming students change their choice of courses after arrival. In the future Ghent will be more strict with handling a deadline for incoming students (two weeks after arrival). Also the rules which apply on resits/take home exams when students have already returned home, will be more strict in future. Ghent is inclined not to accept any more complications as a result of examinations to be organized abroad, because this causes a lot of extra work for the staff. Girona suggested that the resit could take place at the home university with the local supervisor being present during the exam. That supervisor could then send the exams to Ghent for review. Once Ghent has made up his mind about a new regime they will inform all partners. Lisbon and Budapest urged Ghent to be a bit flexible with students.

Social media
All participants agreed that social media could play an important role for the network. Lisbon kindly offered to start a facebook site for the RLN network. The network welcomed this initiative.

Network extension or reduction
Jaap de Zwaan informed the meeting that just recently a request was received from the University of Cork, Ireland to accede to the network. He said to be very happy with this initiative, in view of the fact that an Irish partner so far is lacking in the network. The request of Cork was also welcomed positively by the whole RLN network.

Furthermore De Zwaan recalled the withdrawal, some years ago, of the University of Athens, from the network. He was of the opinion that a new Greek partner would be an
asset to the network. He invited partners to inform him if they happen to know interesting potential partners in Greece.

**Other business**

*Masaryk Brno* has appointed a new Vice-Dean for international cooperation.

*Iceland, Stockholm, Bergen* and *Latvia* have appointed new international office coordinators.

*Zagreb* has installed a new international office.

**2013 annual meeting**

Next year’s -2013- RLN annual meeting will be held in *Sofia, Bulgaria*, in the period **Thursday 18 to Sunday 21 April 2013**. The 2014 conference will be held in *Ghent, Belgium*.

**5. Closure**

*Jaap de Zwaan* thanked all participants for their input and attendance and especially Dean Flavius Baias and organizer Augustina Dumitrascu of the University of Bucharest for their hospitality and smooth organization of the event, and closed the meeting.

Dean *Flavius Baias* also thanked all participants for coming to Bucharest and invited them for an excursion in the Faculty and, later on the day, a dinner in a unique restaurant in the center of Bucharest.

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