

Minutes of AA General Assembly (GA) of 4 October 2007

1. The President welcomed all participants and asked them whether they permitted him to give immediately the floor to M. Uvalic to present the Treasurer's Report (point 2 of the agenda) as she was to leave to Rome.
2. M. Uvalic presented the Treasurer's Report.
3. F. Torres gave some additional explanations, namely on the Alumni Research Grant administered directly by the EUI and on the way that the annual transfer of the EUI to the AA was now retained by the EUI, which then pays directly any previously budgeted expenditures. There were no questions or comments on the Treasurer's Report and/or on the accounts and financial situation of the AA.
4. F. Torres presented the President's Report – available and distributed to all participants – on the activities of the AA.
5. Judith Przyrowski, from the Academic Service, gave additional information on the alumni survey launched on 27 April 2007. Lea Campos Boralevi suggested that the EC should implement another questionnaire to ask alumni what type of activities the EC should organise. The effectiveness of having another questionnaire was discussed. For instance, in a previous consultation on which logo to adopt for the AA only two alumni had voiced their opinion. The EC agreed to look at fostering ways of participation, including the possibility of launching a questionnaire on the preferences for future activities as it could be a good basis for attracting fellow alumni to run for the EC in the next election and implement their supported electoral programmes.
6. Lea Campos Boralevi expressed her appreciation for effort and for the quality of the many initiatives of the current EC but was unhappy with the fact that there were too many economists in the EC and that most EC members (exceptions being A. Bongardt and V. Hayaert) had edited conference proceedings and that those publications were mainly about economic topics. She also expressed the opinion that the GA had little influence because it had no influence on the EC and could not propose any initiatives.
7. V. Hayaert contested the criticism of Lea Campos Boralevi. She said that she had never thought to become a member of the EC but that in the last GA upon listening to the very same criticism of Lea Campos Boralevi, which she thought in the meantime to be unfair, she had decided to candidate herself to the EC and she was elected by the Assembly on the basis of her suggestions. Also, she was no economist but an historian, like Carlo Spagnolo who had been an EC member from 2002 to 2006. Therefore, if one wanted, one could participate actively in the life of the AA namely as a member of the EC. Moreover, she said she was most happy with the

openness of the EC and with the opportunity to fully implement what she had stood for and proposed to the Assembly which had elected her for that very reason.

8. P. Della Posta also contested Lea Campos Boralevi's criticism on the grounds that it was not appropriate. He had not been a member of the EC when he proposed in the General Assembly of 2005 to organise a conference on Globalisation. However, the current EC members that were in the previous EC took his proposal very seriously and the conference was organised with great success. He also said that the current EC president had attended and registered the proposal made at the 2005 GA and the EC entrusted him (a non-EC member) with the responsibility of editing the conference proceedings. After the organisation of the conference (one year later) he also became an EC member by having been elected by the GA of 2006. In his opinion that demonstrated that anybody who wanted to participate and influence the activities of the AA could do so. He also mentioned that he was editing the proceedings of the globalisation conference with A. Verdun (former EC member, SPS, who had also edited a previous volume) and M. Uvalic because the proceedings were good and Palgrave wanted to edit them on their own merit – it was not forced to do so nor was it paid to do so. He also added that C. Spagnolo, a former EC member and also an historian, not an economist, was editing the proceeding of a conference he had organised as an EC member with two other non EC members (from SPS and Law) on the topic of Maastricht.
9. F. Torres added that when a conference is a success (and in fact when there were conferences and/or other interesting activities alumni did participate in in large numbers and even the GA was very much participated) it would be a pity to throw away its proceedings. The organisers, not to deceive the many alumni who had suggested, prepared and presented their papers (a rather interesting and productive form of participation in the life of the AA), should edit the proceedings and actively try to find a good publisher. As for the fact that there were too many economists, that was the choice of the GA who could have elected alumni from other departments. He also noted that the Maastricht conference ended up having a strong economics content and many papers on Economic and Monetary Union but that could hardly be attributed to the previous or to the current EC. In fact, C. Spagnolo had proposed a history conference, which he organised with S. Baroncelli (LAW) and S. Talani (SPS), without any interference of the EC.
10. In spite of the criticism on excessive weight given to economics and economists the only suggestion that was voiced by the GA on the organisation of future conferences was the suggestion to organise a conference on “financialisation” by Domenica Tropeano. Its potential interdisciplinarity and interest to a wide audience of alumni from different departments was

questioned. However, as the GA did not put forward any other proposals for conferences, the EC agreed to wait for a more detailed suggestion / draft programme and discuss within the programme for conferences already approved as documented in the minutes of the Berlin EC meeting of 9 June 2007 available online since June 2007.

11. C. Spagnolo started saying that he had read all the minutes of all EC meetings on the AA website. He suggested that the EC had been losing representativity because the number of alumni was growing and that a committee of wise men should be created to control the EC. He also suggested that alumni residing in Florence should be given a special status and/or role in the AA, that EUI researchers should be assured several places in the committee and that national chapters should be given more responsibilities and resources.
12. In the opinion of the various members of the EC that the idea of having a wise men committee and/or special rights for particular groups within the AA was not a good idea in terms of democracy. In their opinion, the EC should remain fully accountable to the GA and not to any committee of wise men. Also all alumni, without distinction between where they reside, should have the right to be elected to the EC. F. Torres pointed out that the proposals put forward by C. Spagnolo, who had been a member of the EC between 2002 and 2006 and also a member of the statute revision subcommittee, would require a statute revision for implementation and so that had to be proposed to the GA, not to the EC, at the time of a statute revision.
13. Lea Campos Boralevi and Carlo Spagnolo criticised the AA history booklet. L. Campos Boralevi thought that as someone who had participated in the first committees of the AA and who was specialist in history she could have been asked to participate more actively in its making.
14. P. Della Posta pointed out that he remembered well that at the 2006 GA L. Boralevi had been asked to send any photos and documents she might have for the Booklet and that she had said that she had to look a bit for them but that she would send them to the EC.
15. C. Spagnolo criticised the fact that the AA History booklet had been edited by the current EC committee.
16. F. Torres said that that was a decision of this EC – in his opinion the right decision – and that in any case the EUI would not publish anything in the name of the AA without the EC taking the responsibility for it. That had been made very clear by the EUI administration (Barbara Ciomei, EUI Publications Officer).
17. L. Boralevi and C. Spagnolo also expressed the view that there should be more activities to motivate the participation of both alumni and current researchers and their interaction.

18. F. Torres, P. Della Posta and V. Hayaert said that precisely that had happened during the job event that very day: 10 alumni, including former members of the first Executive Committees and several members of the EC had been talking to the many researchers about what was of utmost interest to them at the moment – their future careers. Judith Przyrowski also gave some more information on the interest and response of EUI researchers to that initiative. F. Torres took the opportunity to publicly thank, on behalf of the EC, the Academic Service and Judith Przyrowski for the realisation of that valuable initiative to which the AA had been associated.
19. When questioned by Lea Campos Boralevi why those alumni participating in the Career event were not participating in the GA, F. Torres said that of course he could not know but that they were certainly doing something very useful (still talking to the researchers after the seminar) on fostering the aims of the AA and the link between researchers and alumni. Participation was very high in the career event and was expected also to be significant in the Chianti walk (social event) and academic participation in the organised conferences had outstripped any expectations. He added that he could understand the fact that alumni in general might like better to participate in a conference or in a social activity and possibly less so in more procedural-type meetings such as a GA.
20. Gianna Giannelli asked whether it was not possible to further strengthen the communication between the EC and the alumni in response to the concerns mentioned in the Assembly.
21. F. Torres said that he thought that it was possible and that the EC was very open to concrete proposals and was already trying to implement different strategies to improve communication and participation. V. Hayaert informed the GA about her initiatives, as member of the EC with that particular task, to that end.
22. L. Boralevi said that in the past there was a lot of participation and only recently people did not participate because they thought it was useless as their opinion was disregarded.
23. V. Hayaert and P. Della Posta strongly contested that idea, giving again their personal examples as proof of the contrary. They made proposals as non EC-members that were implemented by the EC. Also, when they wanted to more actively implement what they thought were good initiatives they stood for election and they were elected by the GA. F. Torres added that in 2002, 2003, 2004 and, to a lesser extent in 2006, with conferences and other initiatives organised, there was a strong participation – as illustrated by some of the group photos of those GA published in the booklet and available on the website.
24. The President thanked all participants for their presence and welcomed all comments, critiques and suggestions made by the Assembly. He told the Assembly that the EC would pursue the implementation of its programme on the basis of which it had been elected. He also added that

the various suggestions by the General Assembly were always discussed within the EC and that all alumni are encouraged to stand for election and participate actively in the life of the AA. Finally, he said that the current EC was already discussing ways of increasing the participation by as many alumni as possible in the next election.