



MINUTES

General Assembly of the EUI Alumni Association

9 May 2015, Teatro, Badia Fiesolana

1) Welcome and Introduction

The Secretary Fabian Breuer opened the General Assembly (GA) of the EUI Alumni Association (AA) and welcomed **all participants**.¹ He introduced the agenda and explained that there are **two issues that the GA has to approve**: The minutes of the September 2014 GA and the Treasurer's report.

2) Approval of the minutes of the September 2014 General Assembly

The **minutes were approved**. The only question raised was about when and why the EUI withdrew its annual financial support to the AA. The AA was asked to follow up on this issue with President Weiler.

3) Treasurer's Report

The **Treasurer's Report was approved**, after answers were given to questions on "travel costs to invited speakers" of the State of the Union alumni session and on travel reimbursements for the EC and for the EUI Alumni Officer for the EC January meeting in Brussels.

4) Preliminary/Interim Report of the Executive Committee

The President briefly **elaborated on what the EC had done** since it took office in October 2014 covering: Convening of the EC allocation of roles, its *modus operandi*, meetings with Institute President Joseph Weiler and EUI administration, EC meeting in Brussels in January 2015, stock-taking and analysis, the decision to hold the GA back-to-back with the State of the Union conference, areas the EC decided to focus on (see 5.), and finally the **replacement of EC Vice-President** Costanza Hermanin with Sacha Garben.

A question was raised on the proceeding of the latter; following explanations by the AA President on the process followed and legal advice received, the GA agreed that the proceeding followed was correct and appropriate.

5) Work programme and future plans: The EC 2015-16 vision

The President and the EC presented their main plans for the short- and medium term future of the AA and solicited the participants' feedback and input. The main elements discussed were the following.

¹ These were: the complete EUI Alumni Association Executive Committee (EC), ca. 25 alumni and Barbara Ciomei (Alumni Officer) and Meredith Gillet (stagiaire) from the EUI Communications Service.

Widening the AA membership

- Possibility of Free membership, for all, automatically (at graduation) → Need for an alternative 'business model' for the AA
- Ending division 'AA-members' and 'non members'
- Advantages
 - No division in 'alumni- members' and 'alumni-non members'
 - Integration of alumni approach to the general objectives of our AA:
 - offer services to its alumni members;
 - ensure a forum for alumni interaction and 'keeping in touch';
 - supporting the EUI by promoting it as a school of excellence globally.

Support was expressed regarding the ideas of widening the membership, by ensuring that no fees are required to be an alumnus/a while finding other ways to add to the AA's income (e.g. different layers in the membership such as basic membership for all for free, more advantages for those who pay extra etc.). Therefore it is important to ensure that alumni get 'something' back in exchange for the money they offer. It was also agreed that it is important to ensure a simplification of automatising the membership of alumni to the AA.

Development and role of local chapters

The EC presented their view on local chapters, underlining that local chapters are crucial to achieving the objectives of the AA - where the alumni are. To further develop chapters, we can build upon previous EC work and past and existing local activities.

A core short-term aim must be to develop **guidelines/aims/mission/objectives** for establishing and running chapters. These will outline conditions of functioning for the local chapters in order for them to be considered as 'formal' for the AA's purposes, and be eligible for its support, and also for exercising the rights conferred to the AA's local chapter representatives by the AA Charter. They should entail a general outline of an AA EC policy setting out criteria for providing funding to local chapters (this will also include a list of more general activities that the AA EC would generally promote/encourage) as well as potentially the following:

- 2-3 responsible people, agenda/work plan and aims to be submitted to EC
- Some criterion to indicate that a certain minimum No of AA members (irrespective of fees) get involved and that this involves a mix of generations and departments.
- Activities: network/attract people to EUI/involve EUI in country/ideas for EUI, promote EUI as a school of excellence, organise events of social and professional character, outreach activities, link to national admin and academia (e.g. seems Bulgaria joining the EUI was also thanks to alumni contacts), and nationally-based EU bodies

In subsequent discussions suggestions and offers were made to establish AA local chapters in, among other places, Strasbourg, Istanbul, Hungary, Tokyo, Macau and/or to regionally group the alumni of other areas (e.g. FYROM/BG).

It was noted that chapters need to be 'pushed' to be activated and need help with their organisation. Further it was suggested that the EUI should better seek to collect data on alumni via local chapters. Finally, there was an agreement that we should seek to identify 'big fish' alumni and build events around them.

Database/Alumni Who's who

The EC underlined that in its view an interactive online database would be a crucial communication and networking tool for easy and fast interaction and information-seeking for the EUI (administration, faculty and current researchers), the AA EC, local chapters and all alumni.

It should entail information on as many alumni as possible, including e.g. graduation details, contact details, current location, employment status and affiliation, interests etc, which would allow to both meet the immediate, practical needs of the AA (such as organising events and activities that are relevant, useful and attractive to the members), but also in terms of longer-term outreach possibilities for both the AA and the EUI.

This approach received full support and the GA's discussion on the issue and the assembly confirmed the need to improve the database to expand the AA network and highlighted a few needs that the database should meet: link for uploading alumni's CV (as faster than having to complete the profile in the style of the d-base- although it should be noted this might limit searchability/functionality of the dbase); using keywords to tag main research interests.

AA relations with EUI and Institute support

Alumni view the AA as 'one of the bodies of the EUI'. Therefore the view is that the EUI should provide human resources to support the AA; the GA requested the AA President to officially raise this issue with the EUI President. Members recognised several times the need for the EUI to provide more support/resources to the AA.

The AA should also seek to 'institutionalise' and anchor its presence in the EUI, e.g by seeking to be invited in the Academic (first) and High Council meetings to improve the collaboration of the EUI with its alumni.

Other suggestion made and elements discussed

Alumni affairs and AA management

- There was a broad agreement that better links should be made with the current researchers (i.e. future alumni), as part of the broader issue of whether the association should become more firmly embedded in the EUI's organisational structure, such as the High Council the SoU Committee. One element should be to carry out mentoring to current researchers.
- Try to involve AA more with *current* research (e.g. current professors, when they organise conferences etc., they should look also into the pool of alumni); seek to also collaborate with EUI departments and involve them in our work. E.g. Global Governance conferences where very few alumni were involved, even where they expressed an interest.

- Catalyse/mobilise all EUI services for alumni (e.g. computing problems) and follow up on the e-access to library so as to ensure, if not full access to the e-library due to licence limitations, at least more favourable conditions for alumni.
- The Assembly stressed the need for more visibility around AA's activities (through social media, email etc.) and a generally stronger use of social media.

State of the Union

- Strive for wider visibility of the AA, e.g. via lunches at Palazzo Vecchio or participation of Alumni in bilateral meetings held with VIPs.
- Request to be in the organising committee.

Other

- Follow the example of e.g. Bruges College of Europe AA who use alumni to organise executive events (and ensure there are some cooperation agreements between Bruges and EUI).
- Using the EUI AA platform for advancing petitions.
- Career event/job fairs to continue but not to have just alumni speaking, have them be more like in the US, with some potential employers meeting prospective candidates.
- Building upon some of the activities that the EC presented as potentially useful services to be offered by the AA/its chapters upon payment, the idea to follow up with career services was supported, as this is the one important thing that is missing from the EUI.
- One alumna raised the issue of extra- EU citizen alumni/ae who cannot be employed by EU institutions and suggested AA proposes an MoU between the EUI and EU institutions for EUI alumni only.
- Continue the EC's efforts to look at other AA and their organisation.
- Possibility of AA scholarships?
- Marina Calloni (Alumna, Law) presented the opportunity for alumni to get involved in the 2015 EXPO in Milan (May 1st- 31st September 2015). This year its theme was centered on the 'Charter of Milan' and the right to food as a fundamental right. 56 States and NGOs have collaborated together with the University of Milan Bicocca. She said that 80 free entries were available for EUI Alumni. It was agreed that she would share more information in writing to share with the alumni community.

Next steps

- Discussions with President Weiler
- Eagerness to strengthen alumni
- Ensure continuity
- Initial support for the EC vision
- Planned meetings to explore various options for strengthened co-operation