

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

Executive Committee of the Alumni Association

Minutes of the General Assembly (2018)
held on Saturday, 12 May 2018 at 2 pm in Badia Fiesolana, Florence

Present:

ARMBRUSTER, Chris (CA)
BINDI, Federiga (FB)
CHIRICO, Alessandra (AC)
MARCO COLINO, Sandra (SM) – remotely via Skype
DI QUIRICO, Roberto (RQ)
(+ 10 attendees)

CHAIR

FB chaired the meeting as the President of the Executive Committee (ExCo) of the Alumni Association (AA). AC and RQ served as verbalising secretaries.

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting.

MGA-1 Presentation of the President's Report

FB presented the President's Report and provided attendees with an overview of the AA's activities and achievements since the ExCo assumed office in 2017. The first achievement was related to the obtainment of legal personality in April 2018. The AA gained autonomous legal status and became entitled to have its own bank account where the EUI transferred most of the AA's funding. The AA nominated a certified accountant, in charge of managing payments and other formal accounting and administrative duties foreseen by the law, on behalf of the AA.

FB also pointed out that, after the election, the ExCo was informed by the EUI management that the EUI itself could no longer manage the association, as the workforce was needed elsewhere and for budgetary reasons. A roadmap was thus to be agreed with the EUI leadership.

FB made clear that the above situation opened many different issues to be discussed and negotiated with the EUI, including the exact definition of the future relationship between the AA and the EUI, and of Alumni's EUI privileges (e.g. access to the Library, email, photocopying, invitation to events like SOTU etc.).

FB declared that the ExCo was considering the opportunity of hiring a Data Protection lawyer to ask for a qualified legal opinion on the transfer of data from the EUI to the AA in compliance with existing legislation (e.g. GDPR).

FB emphasised that it was however up to the AA's members to decide on which role the AA will be playing in the future, both vis-à-vis the Alumni

community and the EUI. There seems to be a consensus on its role in promoting networking, advocacy and information sharing. On such a basis, the ExCo declared that, immediately after the GA, online discussions and fora were to be launched to get additional input from fellow Alumni.

Finally, FB announced the ExCo intention to organise in future events in Brussels, Frankfurt, and Washington.

The Assembly approved the President Report.

MGA-2

EUI President's speech

The Chair welcomed EUI President Renaud Dehousse, who joined the GA, thanked for the invitation received by the AA and presented his vision for the EUI (also concerning the Alumni community as such and the AA).

He emphasised the need for the EUI to be fully inserted in the social fabric as a “network institution”, to better relate to other interlocutors. He also pointed at the opportunity of cultivating a dialogue with the Alumni community, to be seen as Ambassadors of the EUI.

FB illustrates the problems the AA is facing in the actual transition period as the lack of data about our own members and their geographical distribution. Besides she asks the President to depict the EUI plans for promoting the EUI PhD prestige in the USA and his view about the EUI-AA relations in the next future. Finally, she made questions about the role and financing structures of the School of Transnational Governance, with a focus on the diversification of funding sources other than the EUI Budget.

RDQ expressed his concern about the representation of alumni interests in the EUI policy decision-making. He believes that only the AA can democratically represent alumni and that the new EUI alumni policy only offers a unidirectional communication channel from the EUI and the alumni avoiding any form of representation. As for the specific relationship between the EUI and the AA, the ExCo together with Alumni attending the GA suggested to improve communication and synergies and, for the AA, to encourage the formation of formal local chapters.

The President answered to the questions illustrating the philosophy was inspiring the EUI choices and reminded how complex is the process for changing the EUI governance rules and statute.

MGA-3

Questions from the audience

The President received questions and comments from the audience (e.g. Sigfrido Ramirez, Penelopa Gjurgilova, Carlo Spagnolo, Lea Borallevi) on different topics.

Gjurgilova complained about the situation of Non-EU alumni and suggested they have not the same opportunities of the EU alumni. Borallevi stated that alumni are part of the EUI, not just “friends” as implicit in the new EUI alumni policy. Ramirez reminded that in other prestigious academic organisations alumni are represented in the Board. He also proposed the EUI organises a “State of the Union of Civil Society”. Spagnolo defined alumni as the core of the EUI. He also proposed to reinforce the academic dimension of EUI-Alumni

relationship through a multidisciplinary “State of the Science” to be organised every 2/3 years as an EUI-AA common initiative. He also proposed an intra-AA programme for scholar exchanges.

Other interventions from the audience suggested a widespread negative attitude toward the new EUI alumni policy.

MGA-4

Debate with Mr Marco Incerti, head of the Communication Service

After the President left, Mr Incerti discussed with the Assembly some technical aspects of the new EUI alumni policy. Mr Incerti declared that there are no reasons for offering an EUI-alumnus email account to those former students that never defended the PhD at the EUI. He also claimed that the EUI is the depositary of the data surrendered by the alumni in the past and defined those data as an “EUI asset”. Finally, Incerti pointed out that the EUI President demonstrated the EUI care about the AA spending 2 hours participating in this assembly notwithstanding the concomitance of other important events he renounced to join.

RQ and some of the audience contested the Incerti opinion about data and claimed all the data are AA propriety because alumni surrendered data to the EUI as an intermediary with the AA and for the AA use. Incerti contested this view but affirmed he and the EUI legal service were studying a way to solve the problem and combine the EUI and the AA needs.

FB and RQ suggested that excluding those AA members that defended not yet their PhD. Thesis from the email benefits would create serious problems, in particular if these AA members paid their membership fees to the EUI. In fact, the EUI is legally obliged to offer the benefits promised to this group of AA members at least until their membership expiration. RQ reminded to Incerti and the Assembly that excluding this group of AA members from the new email benefits (a free eui-alumnus.eu or eui-friends.eu email account) as planned by the EUI and declared by Incerti, will create the problem of emails accumulated in the EUI servers. That emails are data the excluded alumni own, and the EUI must grant data storage and transmigration.

Finally, RQ suggested that the existing relationship between the EUI and the AA resulted by “gentlemen agreements” between former ExCo and former EUI Presidents. The AA paid for the existent benefits renouncing to the annual contribution (5000-10000 euros) previously granted by the EUI to the AA. So, in RQ views, if the EUI retires the benefits, the money contribution has to be restored. Incerti declared he does not consider the gentlemen agreements with former Presidents as binding for today’s EUI management. Besides, he suggested that the financial problems of the EUI made unfeasible the proposal to pay back money to the AA.

MGA-6

Treasurer Report

CA illustrated the 2017 AA budget and the redrafted 2015 and 2016 budget included in the request for obtaining legal personality. He explained that the new juridical status of the AA imposes new financial and accounting rules in

conformity with the Italian law. Among these rules, there is the yearly balance sheet deposit. RQ intervened to remind that also preliminary budget draft can be approved and deposited. Deposit is not an oblige but having these preliminary budget approved by the ExCo before the start of the new year and by the General Assembly will help to better administration and transparency.

The Assembly approved the 2017 final budget.

Due to the late time, the President decided to skip the presentation of the new AA website project approved by the ExCo in its 11 May 2018 meeting. Both the final budget and the website presentation are attached to these minute.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Confirmed on this _____ of _____ 2018

Chair