

Dear all,

It is with great pleasure that we introduce you to the activities of the outgoing EUI AA Executive Committee, composed by Simona, Pompeo, Sigfrido and Nanette.

Your outgoing EC has worked very hard and under difficult circumstances, not least the fact that the nominated President decided to leave beforehand. We decided not to nominate a new President to respect the will of the voters. This is why the vice President has been the acting President. The most tangible results of this outgoing committee were the organisation of a conference on the consequences for Europe on the recent financial and economic crisis, the “Career days”, the Alumni Prize and the traditional Chianti and Florence walks. But in addition, much energy of this EC has gone into discussing ways of how best to improve the working of the AA itself.

The EUI AA Conference on the impact of the financial crisis on Europe was a great success. A huge cohort of AA intervened and this allowed for a thoughtful and interdisciplinary discussion of the causes and consequences of the financial and economic crisis on Europe. The proceedings of the conference have partly been selected by Palgrave (those more political and economic in nature) for a book edited by Pompeo and Simona which will be out in April. The rest of the contributions, those more legal and historical, will be published in the newly established AA working paper series.

The next two years are important in terms of opportunities, not least because our Institute is changing. In recent times a substantial additional number

of postdoctoral researchers are being welcomed to the Institute, particularly in the prestigious Robert Schuman Centre, in the context of programmes bearing the equally prestigious names of Max Weber or Marie Curie. The figures of the 2010 Presidential Report provide the current picture of the situation. The number of post-docs and similar positions, registered at the EUI for more than one year now equals the number of doctoral students in all four departments taken together (some 150). This reflects both a marked turn towards interdisciplinary research and towards a downward shift in the proportion of student-researchers as compared to career academics.

This is causing a change in the “clientele” of the AA itself. Research students who have been enrolled at the EUI for at least one academic year may become full members of the AA. However, in recognition of the growing number of people who attend the EUI in a capacity other than research student, it was decided already in 2005 to allow also post-doctoral fellows to become *full members* of the AA. Meanwhile professors, personnel and research assistants under contract with the EUI may, according to our Statutes, be *associate members* (that is, they can benefit from all advantages of membership apart from voting in the General Assembly and serving in the EC), the outgoing EC has proposed to the Assembly to give a similar status to those visiting fellows who have spent at least six months at the EUI, so that they can participate in the activities organised by the EC.

This being said, the most important cohort of AA members are the recent EUI graduates, and consequently the question becomes imperative of what can the Institute, and the AA do for jobseekers? Truth is that despite the prestige of the

EUI, its alumni are in no special position when it comes to the effects of the crisis, the increasing precariousness of careers or circumstances of difficult working conditions. Hard times are, therefore, the occasion to strengthening even more the cooperation an exchange of experiences between Alumni. Thankfully, the EUI has established a career development service, which has organized, jointly with the AA, the Career days, in which former alumni of different disciplines and working in different fields come to talk, inform and advice younger researchers about their career perspectives in both public and private institutions. This year we decided to experiment and arrange for the Career days to coincide with the June Ball days and many researchers participated actively in the meetings with EUI alumni now working with the ECB, the European Commission, the EIB, ILO, UNCTAD, several Law firms, and so on.

Another issue at the heart of the outgoing executive is the question whether the EUI new website can allow for on-line training, conferences or courses for and by Alumni (for free, or in exchange of a special fee). If this option were chosen we would be following the example of other prestigious Alumni Associations in order to raise funding for their association and to increase the benefits of membership. As these are questions yet to be fully explored, the EC agreed to start working in this direction with the creation of an EUI AA Working Paper Series (AA WPS) to be electronically managed with the purpose of facilitating mutual exchange and discussion between Alumni. It is our hope that this decision will be implemented by the incoming executive committee. The series will be fed initially by some of the papers presented at the 2010 AA Conference and subsequently be opened up to all alumni who wish to include a paper in progress for comment especially by

other alumni in a closed electronic environment. But it also will serve to have recent PhDs presenting the results of their dissertations or masters, in such a way that there is an awareness of the whole AA community of the on-going fresh research at the EUI.

In addition, the outgoing EC has discussed the creation of a modern system of information, personal contacts and exchange of information allowing Alumni to easily network for personal or professional purposes. As the number of researchers has increased, the ideal key-instrument is the elaboration of an AA database in the context of the new web 2.0 system of the EUI, even when we are aware that the publication of a traditional paper “Who’s who” is a pending request from junior and senior Alumni. On the debate of which of the most popular e-network may be adopted (Linked-in, Facebook or Academia.edu), it must be fully evaluated from the viewpoint of the options to best protect the confidentiality of data. Data protection is one of the issues that need to be addressed in connection with any developments in the creation of a safe environment for the exchange of social and professional experiences among alumni.

If you have not been able so far to participate in the discussions and activities of the AA, please be aware that you can still do so! We are sure that next year there will be many other opportunities for meeting with other alumni, either in Florence, Brussels or in one of the many cities with the potential to develop local chapters of the EUI AA (London, Frankfurt, Madrid, Barcelona, etc). Another issue at the heart of the outgoing executive is the question whether the EUI site can allow for on-line training, conferences or courses for and by Alumni (for free, or in

exchange of a special fee). If these options were chosen we would be following the example of Alumni Associations of prestigious European business schools who manage in this way to raise funding and to increase the benefits of membership.

In the meanwhile we encourage all Alumni to schedule their participation in our two traditional activities, which never fail to prolong the blissful momentum of the graduation ceremony: the customary walk in the Chianti hills on Saturday, and the guided tour to Florence's marvels on Sunday. Both provide researchers, professors and the personnel of the EUI as well as their family and friends the opportunity of sharing a coveted moment of happiness, confidence and special gratitude.

Please do not forget that it is important for all alumni to obtain their AA card of the association as soon as they effectively terminate their official relationship with the EUI. You will need it for continuing to be able to make photocopies and to use other important services at the EUI, and to receive correspondence about and stay in touch with the EUI and its members on an email address that is immediately available and stable. The address may also play a role in the running of the working paper series and future services discussed above. Since the AA is a voluntary association you will need to fill in a form indicating the wish to adhere for the incoming year and to pay a moderate yearly fee. This then triggers the issuing of an Alumni card, the emission of a yearly sticker and the entitlement to an email address (eui.eu), which are all indications and instruments of membership (for more information, please refer to the EUI website: <http://www.eui.eu> or write to Alumni@eui.eu).

In our view, this corresponds rather closely to what the registered statutes of our Association states about its aims: “ 4a. To promote and reinforce contacts, mutual assistance and information exchange between its Members in the spirit of the Convention setting up the European University Institute: b. To maintain close links to the European University Institute in the furtherance of the above objectives and to participate, when appropriate, in the activities of this Institute”.

*A presto e cari saluti a tutti!*

The Executive Committee of the Alumni Association