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## Welcome

This year has marked an important milestone for the Utrecht Network, namely the celebration of its 30th anniversary. Rectors met in Hull to celebrate and to discuss topics proposed by the Network, sharing ideas and practices on internationalisation and on new competencies for democratic and civic engagement.

The Utrecht Network celebrations have run parallel to the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus Programme all over Europe. The Utrecht Network has taken the opportunity to reflect on its past and on the future of internationalisation, developing a set of recommendations and ideas for the next generation of EU programmes for Education.

It is my hope that the words shared by the Rectors and the creativity shown by members in shaping the position paper on Erasmus+, will form the basis for reflections on the future of the Utrecht Network, encouraging new forces and projects for the years to come.



## Celebrating 30 years of the Utrecht Network

The Utrecht Network celebrated its 30th anniversary in Hull by inviting the Rectors of its member institutions to exchange views on the theme of global citizenship and employability in an interconnected world.

The celebration started with a presentation of the Network activities and a video highlighting the 30 years of the Network. This was followed by a group discussion on the theme of internationalisation of curricula, new forms of mobility and research management. Suggestions for future activities for the Network arose from these high level working groups. Suggestions included the mandate to explore within the Network opportunities for blended mobility for learners, the connection between research managers and international officers and the synergies between the research and internationalisation programmes of the EU.

The afternoon was dedicated to the main theme of the conference and was opened by the keynote speaker, Tim Macmillan from Area4 Professional. This was followed by a Rectors panel discussion session comprising Prof. Glenn Burgess (University of Hull), Prof. Sari Lindblom (University of Helsinki), Prof. Christa Neuper (University of Graz), Prof. Beate Schücking (Leipzig University) and

Prof. Francesco Ubertini (University of Bologna) and facilitated by the President of the Network, Francesco Girotti. The five Rectors/Vice Rectors presented their views on how internationalisation, as the main focus of the Utrecht Network, is connected with the theme of global citizenship and employability of learners and teachers. Key words such as civic engagement, intercultural competence, service learning and transversal skills were at the centre of the debate, with the shared aim to foster the social responsibility of universities and the common efforts to promote innovation for the sustainability of our society rather than for competitiveness.

The celebration ended with the presentation of the Utrecht Network Award to Patricia De Clopper from the University of Antwerp for her active participation and lively engagement in Utrecht Network activities over the past 30 years.

Thanks are given to the University of Hull for the wonderful organisation of the event and for being a perfect host to our rectors and members.

*Patricia De Clopper receiving the Utrecht Network Award; The Rectors panel.*



## 2017 Annual General Meeting

Following on from the Rectors meeting, the 2017 Utrecht Network AGM was held at the University of Hull, UK on 27 April 2017.

The Utrecht Network was pleased to welcome Livia Reis and Angela Lopes Norte to the meeting from the Network's newest partner network, the REARI-RJ Network in Brazil. The Network's two other partner networks were also represented – the AEN Network (Australia) and MAUI Network (USA) providing a valuable global outlook to the business of the meeting.

The Steering Committee continues to refine the format of the AGM to ensure that members gain maximum benefit from their attendance. As a result a 'round table' discussion session was included on the agenda to encourage members to discuss activities and issues.

Topics for discussion during the meeting included a change in focus for the Researchers Mobility Task Force (which is reflected in the change of name of the Task Force to the Staff Mobility Task Force), the approval of the 2017 – 2020 Strategic Plan and the establishment of a Research Management Task Force. An update on the Network's involvement in the IMPALA project was also given.

The AGM was followed by a walking tour of Hull and a guided tour of the Deep conservation aquarium by the Chief Executive.

*Members with a Cairns sculpture on the University of Hull campus*

*International collaboration – AEN, REARI-RJ, Utrecht Network and MAUI*



## Erasmus+ Position Paper

*In July 2017 the Utrecht Network published its Position Paper on the ERASMUS+ Programme. The paper was the result of consultation across the Network.*

The paper reflects the peculiarity of the Utrecht Network, a Network of experts and practitioners working daily on the internationalisation of higher education. The paper is therefore very structured and highly technical. Input on the existing Programme in terms of suggested improvements as well as ideas for the next generation Programme were provided. This included ideas for new actions such as blended mobility under KA1 and the re-adoption of smaller scale projects such as intensive programmes and accompanying measures within KA2.

The Higher Education Policy Unit of the European Commission welcomed the paper and has requested discussions with the President to receive further explanations of some of the proposed ideas.

The paper can be downloaded from the Utrecht Network website [www.utrecht-network.org](http://www.utrecht-network.org)

Thanks are given to all members who contributed to the realization of the paper.

## Utrecht Network Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020

The 2017 Utrecht Network AGM approved the Strategic Plan for the period 2017–2020. The Strategic Plan builds on the themes of the previous Strategic Plan (FORCES) – Foster internationalisation of education, Open up to new forms of co-operation, Respond actively to European HE policies, Collaborate effectively within the Network, Enhance internationalisation processes in member institutions and Strengthen the profile and global outlook of the Network.

The themes of the Strategic Plan reflect the Network's position as a European Network with a global outlook. In addition to maintaining and developing traditional areas of Network activity, members and Task Forces are encouraged to develop new activities in line with the themes of the Plan. This is facilitated through the call for new initiatives which takes place three times a year.

For further information about the Strategic Plan or the call for new initiatives please contact Fiona Miller, Utrecht Network Secretariat [info@utrecht-network.org](mailto:info@utrecht-network.org)

# From workshop to Task Force – the development of the Research Management Task Force

*Representatives from thirteen universities from across the Utrecht Network gathered in the Czech Republic's second-largest city, Brno in June, for the third Research Managers Workshop. The workshop was hosted by Masaryk University.*



*Research Managers workshop participants*

A group of 27 research managers from Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom worked together over the three-day event, which was designed to address current issues challenging those working in academic research support.

The programme covered a wide range of issues, from using social media to promote research to capturing research impact and ethics management. The majority of sessions were led by delegates who presented their best practice and shared their current challenges leading to some excellent discussions.

*The workshop received excellent feedback from delegates with a score of 4.8 out of 5 on meeting expectations and comments such as “great initiatives to implement at home”.*

In addition there were two guest speakers: Gill Wells from the University of Oxford, who led a very informative session on ‘Understanding the EU agenda for Research’ and Chrisa Kasioni from the H2020 IPR Helpdesk whose insights on the topic of Open Science were very valuable.

Delegates also celebrated the formation of the new Utrecht Network Research Management Task Force and undertook some action planning which will feed into the Task Force strategy. Further details on this will be shared in due course.

As well as the formal programme of work there was time in the evenings to relax together, and there was a particularly enjoyable walking tour of the city. We all got a photo of the famous local landmark, the suspiciously crocodilian but legendary Brno ‘dragon’!

Thanks are given to the Utrecht Network for providing the funding to enable this event to take place. It was an extremely valuable learning opportunity and a great way to build our professional network with colleagues from across Europe.

The fourth Utrecht Network Research Managers workshop will be taking place at the University of Malta on 8-10 May 2018 – please save the date! If you would like information about this or the Research Management Task Force please contact [pam.jackson@hull.ac.uk](mailto:pam.jackson@hull.ac.uk)

## Change of focus – Staff Mobility Task Force

At the 2017 AGM the Researchers Mobility Task Force changed its name to the Staff Mobility Task Force. The suggestion to change the name was prompted by discussions around the activities and role of the Task Force. The Utrecht Network is an international network of universities that are all versatile but also similar in their activities. All members are international in their activities, both in respect to students, researchers and other staff. Also, all members support many forms of mobility from student and staff exchange to long term research projects abroad. Mobile staff at members institutions also differ in their mobility plans and need for support. Some might venture abroad for a few weeks, others for years. Some might do recurring trips and be used to travelling or working abroad, whilst for others going abroad might be a very special opportunity. All opportunities to gain more international experience are welcome and should be encouraged.

The Task Force wants to serve all Network members as best it can in the diversifying international world of higher education. By including all staff, researchers, teachers, administrators and others in its scope of activities, the Task Force can better support the Network members and for instance answer any new needs more flexibly.

In its current work plan, the Task Force focuses on sharing best practice, supporting Network members and creating more links between other fields with regards to staff mobility. For instance, the business sector has much experience with global mobility, including diverse mobility plans and well functioning support services. It might be interesting and useful to share experiences and do some benchmarking with select companies, NGOs or other organisations.

The Task Force is also thinking of ways to promote mobility and encourage further collaboration within Network members. Suggestions on activities and comments on how the Task Force might best support Network members with staff mobility issues are most welcome and can be sent to the Task Force Chair, Kirsi Korhonen at the University of Helsinki  
kirsi.korhonen@helsinki.fi



Staff Mobility Task Force members participating in JJust a Week

## Collaboration in Kraków

*The Jagiellonian University in Kraków hosted a staff training week for its partners in June 2017. The Staff Mobility Task Force members were asked to share their expertise on supporting researcher mobility. Three Task Force member universities, Ruhr-University Bochum, the University of Helsinki and the University of Tartu participated in the programme and shared information on their services for both welcoming international researchers and supporting researcher mobility abroad.*

I had the pleasure of speaking about the services offered at the University of Helsinki. I am always happy to share my experiences and to have a chance to promote my university and country to new potential collaborators. Our Network offers a good opportunity for this type of mutually beneficial activity. Participating in a staff training week is always very fruitful and interesting both because of the networking and the idea swapping opportunities. It is refreshing to be able to fully focus on the topic at hand and share experiences and ideas with colleagues from different countries. In this case the participants came from all corners of the world, including Africa, Asia and Latin America.

During JJust a Week we heard many interesting presentations from the participants and the host university, tried our skills in cross cultural negotiation and visited different sites at the Jagiellonian University. The programme had a clear focus and plenty of professional content while leaving time for other activities and discussion. Despite being a familiar topic for me, the content also provided some new insight. For instance, our visit to the University's Disability Support Services gave us a good

reminder of how different learners and staff members should be taken into account in the daily activities of our universities. The visit gave food for thought for all of us working in HR or student services.

Often business trips to meetings are so short that we do not get a chance to find out much about the host university or city. This time the schedule also allowed time for us to visit different areas in Kraków and learn more of its rich history as well. Now, in addition to having plenty of ideas for service development, we also know a lot more about the participating Utrecht Network member universities, especially Jagiellonian University. This makes it easier for us to tell our mobile students and staff about JU and Kraków, and to encourage others to spend time at the Network universities too. So, in addition to taking this opportunity to thank JU for its hospitality and great organisation, I would like to encourage you all to check the iMotion website (<http://staffmobility.eu/staff-week-search>). There just might be a good training week coming up for you too.

Kirsi Korhonen, Chair, Staff Mobility Task Force (University of Helsinki)

# New ideas, energy and inspiration for our Career Services!

*11 countries, 3 days, a lot of inspiring sessions and discussions, tapas and other food, beer, and of course, a climb of the Dom tower.*



*Careers Summit participants*

*These were the ingredients of a very successful Utrecht University/Utrecht Network Summer Summit organised by the Career Services at Utrecht University. All activities were based on sharing knowledge on the relationship between higher education and the labour market and how to make that transition easier for students. The aim of the summit was to organise an interactive seminar where career services from different countries could come together at an easy accessible event to talk about their experiences and learn from each other.*

The summit took place in July 2017. The event started with everyone introducing themselves and sharing their expectations of the Summit, whilst enjoying some coffee and a typical Dutch 'stroopwafel'. The rest of the day was filled with practical presentations and discussions. First a session working with a student-entrepreneur on optimising the combination of study and entrepreneurship. This was followed by the University of Helsinki sharing their methods for research on employability of their students after graduation. The day ended with a presentation about the 'UU Careers Day', the biggest careers event of the year organised by the Career Services in Utrecht.

The second day focussed on strategic matters. With the Utrecht Dean of Graduate Studies (Professor Marijk van de Wende), an expert on higher education, we discussed how to influence and close the gap between our graduates (of all programmes) and the demands of the labour market (Science, Tech, Engineering and Math). This was followed by a session where KU Leuven and Utrecht University discussed the position and organisation of their career services within their universities. Issues were identified such as collaboration with faculties and student organisations, centralisation, the integration of career

services into programmes and much more. This caused a lively discussion where everyone shared their experiences and best practices. After lunch, trainer Rutger-Jan Scholtens illustrated the customer journey that students and employers can make to facilitate the step from study to work.

On the last day, Cap Gemini, employer partner of Utrecht University presented their experiences of collaborating, both on a practical and a strategic level. One of the conclusions was that development of skills is, at least, just as important as academic content. After that, it was time to wrap up and draw some conclusions. Everyone agreed that it was a fruitful event, where a lot of insights were shared. These included how to reach out to students, ways to collaborate with both external companies and internal faculties and student organisations, how to organise communication towards students, and keep connected to alumni at the same time. An international network of career services has been created, let's hope for many more of these meetings!

For more information please contact Arjen van Vliet, Head of Career Services Utrecht University, [a.vanvliet@uu.nl](mailto:a.vanvliet@uu.nl).

*After another intense day, it was time to relax; climbing the Dom tower, enjoying the view and ending the day with a nice dinner and some drinks.*

## Focus on MAUI

*Utrecht Network, through its links with the MAUI Network (Mid-America Universities International), offers its students the opportunity to apply for placements in the USA. The arrangement with the MAUI Network is a reciprocal one and in return Utrecht Network member institutions offer study placements to MAUI students. We continue our series, focusing on the members of the MAUI Network with a look at the two newest members: Columbia College Chicago and West Virginia University (Morgantown, West Virginia).*

Columbia College Chicago is a private, non-profit college that educates students for the real world through hands-on training in the arts, media, and communications within the context of a liberal arts education. Course offerings in major subject areas combine conceptual study with practical application, resulting in realistic career preparation. Columbia College Chicago believes that those who are actively engaged in the subjects they teach are uniquely qualified to share their expertise in the classroom, and its faculty comprises industry leaders who bring the most contemporary, innovative thinking to the structure and delivery of our curriculum.

*At Columbia, you'll find talented, diverse educators who share a passion for creative work that reflects, supports and, most importantly, shapes the culture of our times.*

Columbia's campus sits at the heart of Chicago, in the arts and education corridor known as the South Loop. Their front yard is Grant Park, which rests on the shores of beautiful Lake Michigan and is home to many of the city's music and art festivals. Just steps away is Chicago's Museum Campus, featuring the Shedd Aquarium, the Field Museum and the Adler Planetarium. To the west is the Willis Tower (formerly the Sears Tower), and to the north is Millennium Park, the Magnificent Mile, and Navy Pier. Though everything you need is just steps away from Columbia's residence halls and campus buildings,



*West Virginia University, Woodburn Hall River*

Chicago's comprehensive public transportation system, known as the CTA, provides easy access all over the city, and full-time students receive a Ventra U-Pass that provides unlimited rides on the CTA.

West Virginia University is a public, land-grant institution founded in 1867 and now has over 30,000 students. WVU is classified as an R1 institution by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, meaning its research output is among the highest in the US. With 341 majors available, students have a great variety of courses to choose from, and WVU is unique in that it also operates 10 experimental farms and 4 forests throughout the state, in addition to WVU Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp. A member of the Big 12 Conference, WVU competes in 17 intercollegiate varsity sports, contributing the great atmosphere of school spirit on campus.

WVU is located in Morgantown, West Virginia, a small college town of around 30,000 nestled in the Appalachian Mountains. Morgantown is consistently ranked among the best small towns in the US in a variety of publications: Forbes ranked Morgantown the fifth "Best Small Metro" in the US, and Business Insider called it the ninth best college town in the US. Within easy traveling distance of Washington, D.C., to the east, Pittsburgh, Pa., to the north, and Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio, to the northwest, Morgantown also provides easy access for those wishing to visit these other great cities. The state of West Virginia is also a wonderful playground for those interested in outdoor sports and recreation including hiking, whitewater sports, and skiing.

## 2018 Annual General Meeting



The Network's Annual General Meeting will be held on 12–13 April 2018 and will be hosted by Comenius University in Bratislava.

## Young Researchers Grant Scheme

A call for the 2018/19 Young Researchers grant scheme will be circulated to all members in autumn 2017. The scheme actively encourages mobility at postgraduate level between the Network's member institutions.

The period covered by the call will be 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019.

Full details will be available on the Network's website  
<http://www.utrecht-network.org/activities/young-researchers-grant/>

## Contact

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