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**MINUTE: Expert group on international Credit Transfer Mechanisms and Learning Outcome Systems – Meeting 1st June 2018, Jakarta**

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Attendees

Magalie Soenen (Belgium FL), Yongjun Chen (China - Cdgdc), Saskia Weißenbach (Germany - DAAD), Alam Nasrah Ikhlas (Indonesia), Nada Marsudi (Indonesia), Anita Vahere-Abražune (Latvia), Nongnuch Chunbandhit (Thailand), Nadia Reynders (AES), David Urban (AES), Nitchata Chumjai (SEAMEO-RIHED), Dr. Chantavit Sujatanond (SEAMEO-RIHED).

Introduction

The ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) thanks the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of Indonesia for its collaboration in reserving and financing the location of this meeting, although it is a public holiday in Indonesia. The AES exceptionally hosts this back-to-back meeting because the outcomes of the Expert group (EG) should be presented on Monday 4th June during the ISOM. Moreover, the AES should compile and publish the forthcoming compendium as stated in the Conclusions by Chair of ASEMME6. Thus, a close cooperation between AES and the EG is needed.

The AES thanks all experts who joined this meeting for their commitment. Alexandra Angress (Germany), Marie-Odile Ott (France), Baiba Ramina (Latvia), Marilena-Aura Din (Romania), Cloud Bai Yun (UK) asked to be apologised for not being able to attend this meeting.

A short presentation of all attendees follows.

The agenda is presented by the AES and adopted by the EG.

The minutes of the previous meetings in Ghent (26th-28th April 2017) and Bangkok (29th-30th August 2017) are adopted by the EG.

State of play of the working group

Magalie Soenen presents an overview on what has been done, what is on the agenda and what is still to be done. The first working group took place in March 2016 in Beijing, the second meeting took place in April 2017 in Ghent and the third meeting was conducted end of August 2017 in Bangkok.

Concerning the first meeting, the following topics were put on the agenda: 1. Collaborative research lead by China and supported by experts from Belgium, Brunei, Germany, Estonia, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Thailand and the UK. This initiative welcomes contributions from other ASEM partner countries on topics like credit transfer and learning outcomes. 2. The second plan was to organize in international seminar in collaboration with regional and international organizations to be held in China on the platform of cross border quality assurance network. 3. The third plan was to explore the feasibility of an ASEM study/courses portal on credit transfer and learning outcomes towards student mobility.
As China could not be present in the two previous meetings in Ghent and Bangkok, China is invited to give some feedback on the three topics covered by the first meeting.

Yongjun Chen explains that there has been three concrete activities proposed and formulated in the first working group. In practice, the research team only has been established by Chinese members or professors from several Chinese universities. Unfortunately, the results of the research has not been given to the Cdgdc. The feedback that they have received from their research teams is that it is very complicated for collaborative research. China has in fact very different approaches, understandings and concepts in what are credits or learning outcomes compared to the rest of ASEM member countries. Therefore, concerning the first activity, China still don’t have very fruitful results. Concerning the second activity, which is holding the international conference, it has been done in December 2016 on cross border education in southern China. The topic was credit transfer, learning outcomes, qualification, recognition and quality assurance of cross border education. This was very successful and some members of this EG attended this meeting. For the third activity, the minutes of the second and third meeting have been analyzed and China agrees that to establish the so called “supermarket” is very surreal and also very premature. Therefore, we think that an ASEM study/courses portal should not be a work domain of this Expert group.

A discussion follows on the kind of topics that should take part of this EG. Dr. Chantavit states that the EG should distinguish national and international matters and that national matters shouldn’t be part of the EG.

Alam Nasrah Ikhlas adds some feedback as he was attending the meeting in China. Firstly, in 2016 the EG didn’t talk about research, but about collaborative or joint studies. Also the term of “supermarket” wasn’t really established and terms should have been clarified for further use.

Magalie Soenen reminds the minutes of the Ghent and the Bangkok meetings. It is written in the Ghent report that the ASEM study/courses portal should not be a “supermarket”, but more focused on a useful tool on credit transfer and learning outcomes. And that is what the EG in Bangkok actually did: working on a tool and taking a look on the existing compendium. The EG was working on these different indicators, looking what is exactly needed. The main aim of this compendium is to promote and to facilitate student mobility. So it should be a tool that could easily be used by institutions. Last year, the EG tried to identify these indicators and to give information within the compendium on indicators, describing them very well. The EG mentioned in the Ghent report that further tasks of the EG could be to explore a system of credit transfer and a system of grade conversion.

Review of the terms of reference & working programme 2018-19 (CC §16)

Magalie Soenen drafted the new terms of reference in close collaboration with Frederik De Decker.

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1 Editor’s note: The reports states on page 11 that “The proposed “ASEM Study/Courses Portal” on Credit Transfer and Learning Outcomes to promote student mobility should not be a kind of “supermarket” with the best courses but rather a useful tool with information on the use of credit transfer and learning outcomes i.e. something very concrete, based on the results of this meeting”.

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Follows a joint reading and updating of the terms (Cf.: document “Draft Terms of Reference”).

After discussion, it has been decided that the name of Expert Group is “ASEM Expert Group on Interregional Credit Transfer Mechanisms and Learning Outcome Systems”.

**Chair of the EG:**

The meaning of Chairing and membership wasn’t always clear. Dr. Chantavit Sujatanond insists on the need of experience and continuity to keep track of the EG. It is decided that the EG meeting shall be chaired by Belgium/Flemish Community and co-chaired by the rotating hosting country. The Co-chair shall assist the Chair, and serve as acting Chair when necessary. The AES shall facilitate the work of the expert group and support the chair.

**Composition of the Expert Group:**

**Members:** Attendees of this EG meeting are members of the EG. A discussion about former member who never attended an EG meeting and potential new members follows. It has been decided that the AES will ask countries to join the EG by giving a short description of the mission of this EG, its self-founding character and the necessity to attend EG meetings. It is decided to have one contact point per member of the EG to facilitate communication.

**Membership:** Short debate about the sense of excluding EG members who are not regularly attending the EG meetings. It was agreed that nominated experts should attend the EG meetings and to undertake tasks set by the EG. Therefore, the AES has to remind members to join the meetings and to confirm their adherence to the EG. Members of the EG should be appointed by the “ministry” instead of “government”. The AES should “support” the EG instead of “observe” it.

**Mission**

Some formulations of the paragraph are changed and specified. Questions rises about the terminology of “ASEM members”, “ASEM partners”, and “stakeholders”\(^2\).

**Reference to the CC at ASEMME**

No changes.

**Mechanisms**

Only minor changes.

**Specific tasks**

Only minor changes, formulations taken from the CC.

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\(^2\) Editor’s note: Meanwhile, the AES decided that three official terms should be used in documents: 1) “ASEM partner countries”; 2) “ASEM partners” (ASEM partner countries + EU + ASEAN); 3) ASEM stakeholders.
Other matters

Anita Vahere-Abražune asks if EG meetings could be planned at least 3 months in advance.

Working programme 2018-19

There are 3 activities foreseen in the working programme of the EG for 2018-19.

1. Review the ‘Terms of Reference’ for the future work of the expert group.

2. Revision of the ‘Compendium on Credit Systems and Learning Outcomes in ASEM member countries’
   - Review the existing template;
   - Specify in the introduction the main goal and target group of the compendium;
   - Compile a glossary of all template related terms;
   - Prepare an online tool to gather the input of all ASEM partners;
   - Peer review the individual contributions with the support of the expert group;
   - Discuss the future format and dissemination of the compendium (e.g. online-version);
   - Facilitate grade conversion between Asian and European countries.

3. Facilitate grade conversion between Asia and Europe

The EG discusses the matter of grade conversion. While in Europe, grade conversion is part of the ECTS, different systems exist in Asian countries (e.g. when there is no grade conversion, it is sometimes the task of the HEI and concerns each professor). The goal of the tool should be to share information and to compare HE systems and their grading systems.

Conclusion

The Working programme is approved.

Ideally, all ASEM partner countries should provide input to the AES. The AES is charged to peer review ASEM partner countries contributions. The EG will support this peer review of the individual contributions. An online version of the new compendium should be available for ASEMME7 in May 2019. Therefore, the next EG meeting should be held in November.

Work on the structure of the Compendium on Credit Systems and Learning Outcomes Compendium (chairs’ conclusions § 16)

Chapter 1: Description of the HE system (Cf. Draft Compendium on Credit Systems and Learning Outcomes in ASEM partner countries)

AES should send out a completed example of the Compendium (one example from Europe and one from Asia, e.g. Flemish example). It is decided that Flanders and China will send a completed matrix as an example to the AES before the end of July.
AES will give an indication on the maximum words / maximum content.

Number of outgoing / incoming students (if available) shouldn’t be expressed in percentages. Outgoing students are students studying abroad and enrolled in a national HEI. It should be recognized that even though every country has some data, these data are not always comparable.

Qualification framework: Yongjun Chen reminds that in China, Japan and Korea no qualification frameworks exists (e.g. China has a degree hierarchy).

CHAPTER 2: Quality assurance in HE

It is specified that the focus lies on external quality assurance. The columns proposed on the section “quality assurance system” are detailed with “study programme, institution, further explanation”. No further significant changes are suggested.

CHAPTER 3: Credit system HE

The number of credits per higher education “cycle” should be clear from the beginning. Students in Asia are using different credit systems and it is important to know how much time in general is need to obtain for example 10 credits. Yongjun Chen explains that requirements for the total number of credits exists in China, but this doesn’t mean that these credits are equally distributed per year. Dr. Chantavit insist that the SEAMEO – RIHED academic credit transfer framework tries to build a framework where national differences became comparable (umbrella). Countries do not have to adopt the same system.

Decisions

Germany will provide an introduction where the purpose of the glossary should be explained. This introduction will be submitted for approval to the EG.

Two country examples of the completed matrix will be provided. One from the Flemish higher education system, and one from the Chinese system.

The AES will prepare a Google format that could be filled out by the ASEM partner countries.

Concerning the format of the online tool, several points are discussed. The idea of an interactive map is presented (a map of countries with a popup box that indicates relevant information about the HE system). Saskia Weißenbach informs that the DAAD have an interactive map for Bologna. Nadia Reynders reminds that it would be easier to start with an concrete example of an online tool that could be presented and explained to the web developer. She also indicates that the tool should also be transferable to the next AES.

The last updated version of the Compendium is from 27th April 2016. Magalie Soenen states that the previous compendium wasn’t updated each year because there was no response from the partner countries. However, this is very important to have a good working tool.

The new online tool should be presented and shared during ASEMME7. Countries should be informed about this in advance by mentioning this in the introduction of the compendium.
Action plan for forthcoming activities

Magalie Soenen presents the draft presentation of the EG for the plenary session on Monday 1st June. The EG agrees to the format and the content.

Timing & tasks to be fulfilled:

- Approval of template at ISOM, 4th June 2018, Jakarta;
- Setup of online tool for data collection by AES, June-July 2018;
- Matrix examples from China and Flanders, June-July 2018;
- Introduction written by Germany also to be used to send out call, July 2018;
- Call to ASEM-countries, June-July 2018;
- Deadline ASEM-countries, end Oct 2018;
- Draft format of the online publication tool by the AES, Sept-Oct 2018;
- Peer review by Expert group CTS, Nov-Dec 2018;
- Development interactive format of publication by AES, Jan-April 2019;
- Publication ready by ASEMME7, Romania, May 2019.

The next meeting of the EG will be held on the second half of November.

A first reminder for country contribution will be sent out during SOM1 and a last reminder end of October.

As it will be difficult to travel for Asian partners to Europe (some are already in Europe at the end of October while there are participating on SOM1 for example), it is suggested to meet in Asia. For Germany, Flanders and Latvia, a meeting in Asia could be attended. In 2019, the EG meeting should be in Europe. The chair thanks everybody for its participation.