

The Academic Profession in Europe – Responses to Societal Challenges: The EUROAC Project

**Contribution to the EuroHESC Launch Conference
Brussels, 27-28 October 2009**

**by Ulrich Teichler
Project Leader of EUROAC**

International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel
INCHER-KASSEL
Kassel University
34109 Kassel, Germany
teichler@incher-uni-kassel.de

Two Causes for the Submission of the Project Proposal (I)

- (1) In the predecessor Forward Look project “Higher Education Looking Forward: An Agenda for Future Research, five others themes were in the forefront:
- Higher education and the needs of the knowledge society
 - Higher education and the achievement or prevention of equity and social justice
 - Higher education and its communities: interconnections and interdependences
 - Steering and governance of higher education
 - Differentiation and diversity of institutional forms

But in five analyses, the academic profession played a major role – as the actual key “shop floor actor of the system often expected to “deliver” more for less resources, less influence and a lesser status

Two Causes for the Submission of the Project Proposal (II)

- (2) A second international comparative survey of the academic profession, “The Changing Academic Profession (CAP) has been undertaken in 2007/2008:
- The survey was undertaken in 18 countries, among the only in six European countries: Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom (possibly the Netherlands as a seventh country)
 - Other countries participating are: Canada; U.S., Japan and Australia; Argentina, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia Mexico and South Africa
 - The survey address career, employment and work; teaching and research; views of management and the role of academics in society
 - Survey with more than 25,000 academics responding (return rate about 30% on average)

The EUROAC Project – an Overview

1 October 2009 – 31 March 2012 (30 months)

Six countries participating: Germany, Austria, Croatia, Ireland, Romania and Switzerland

ESF/national agency funding: One full-time researcher per IP as well as costs for surveying, conferences etc.

Still underway: Discussions about possible APs

- Finland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (involved in the proposal of the project)
- Poland and Sweden (exploring the participation)

The EUROAC Team

- IP1 : Germany: Ulrich Teichler (PL and PI),
Barbara B. Kehm (INCHER, Kassel University)
- IP2: Austria: Hans Pechar (PI), David Campbell
(IFF, University of Klagenfurt)
- IP3: Croatia: Jasminka Ledic (PI), N. Roncevic et al.
(University of Rijeka)
- IP4: Ireland : Marie Clarke (PI), Jonathan Drennan
(co-PI) (University College Dublin)
- IP5: Romania: Luminita Moraru (PI)
(University Dunarea de Jos, Galati)
- IP6: Switzerland : Gaele Goastellec (PI),
Benedetto Lepori (University of Lausanne,
University of Lugano)

Objectives and Concepts (I)

Themes of major international predecessor studies of the academic profession

1. The Carnegie Study of the Academic Profession (early 1990s):

Expansion and the academic profession under pressure

- Massification and new challenges for teaching
- Expansion and declining unit-funding
- Expansion and the loosening of ties between teaching and research
- The declining exclusiveness of the academic profession

2. The Changing Academic Profession (CAP) (since 2005)

- Increasing power of management
- Growing pressure for relevance

Objectives and Concepts (II)

The EUROAC Study takes up the themes of the CAP study, but widens the scope

1. Key social developments affecting the academic profession
 - Relevance of knowledge
 - Diversification
 - Internationalisation
2. Key themes of the institutional fabrique of higher education
 - Governance, management and evaluation
 - Academic career settings
 - Professionalisation

Three IPs each will put special emphasis on each of the themes (some IPs address two themes in order to compensate for the loss of three further IPs initially envisaged)

Select Issues

- Management: The university of the academics, the heavy-handed top-down management, the facilitating management, the incentive-steered system??
- The widening or blurring gap between junior and senior staff? The flexibilised or increasingly precarious academic profession? Growing extrinsic motives?
- A professionalization of the academic profession and a growing division of labour between academics and higher education professionals?

Methods (I)

1. Questionnaire survey

- Will be undertaken early in 2010 in five countries (all except for Germany)
- Will comprise about 80% of the CAP questionnaire; specific additions in individual countries
- Minimum: 500 respondents per country
- A CAP/EUROAC survey data set will be established in order to establish comparable information for at least 11 European countries and at least 23 countries worldwide

Methods (II)

2. Interviews

- Will help to get in-depth information on major themes of the questionnaire as well the specific themes of the EUROAC study
- About 100 interviews will be undertaken in each of the six countries in autumn 2010 and spring 2011.
- Interview guidelines will have in part common themes, and in part will be split according to thematic areas

Methods (III)

3. Others

- Trend report about the research and policy literature
- Comparative analysis
- Discussion of policy implications

Cross-cutting Themes of CRPs

Obviously, the EUROAC can benefit from other CRPs, e.g.:

- Issues of knowledge society
- Issues of management

In reverse, possible contribution to other CRPs

The schedule of the project is too tight and the resources are too limited to be actively involved in cooperation across CRPs, but EuroHESC conferences might be helpful to get informed about the other CRPs