

Minutes to the ordinary general assembly of the Association for Community Colleges (ACC) 2005

Date: Saturday, September 24th, 2005

Location: Restaurant De Ultieme Hallucinatie, Rue Royale 316, Brussels, Belgium

ACC Members present:

John Petersen, Conchi Gallego, Jan-Christoph Napierski, Linda Jakobsone, Elisabeth Alber, Erik Jentges, Dasa Bolcina, Malene Jepsen, Helena Soares, Helen Frenzel, Naomi Woltring, Jørgen Olsen, Lucie Cizkova

Official welcome by John Petersen

1) Election to the chair of the assembly and of a secretary

Linda Jakobsone elected as the chairperson of the assembly

Lucie Cizkova elected as the secretary of the assembly

2) Statement of the chairperson of the board

See attached handout

The statement was followed up by the following personal remarks by the chairman:

„I have to say that also personally I believe the circle has ended now. I cannot keep up the steam anymore. I feel the ideas are where they should be now, and that was my mission from the beginning. Our ideas are on the desk of Margot Wallström! However, I don't believe I have succeeded in another respect. There is another circle that hasn't ended, because another main ambition was to be able to hand over a vivid organisation. The fact that nobody is challenging my position as a chairman is a symbol that the ACC still cannot live on its own - we still have no certain running income - the position means work rather than prestige. Unfortunately, I cannot afford to continue much more. For example I have no pension.

Working like hell can function in a pioneer time and I feel we in the board have squeezed enough out of each other now and that there has become too much work and too little fun.

I would like to stop the game while the friendship that has carried the board is still intact.

At the same time: of course, whatever transition is needed, it will be carried out in good order. If nobody comes up with ideas, nobody has to be afraid of the ACC being left in a mess. I will make sure we close in good order - if that is the consequence, meaning if nobody has ideas on what could be at the other end of a transition“.

These were the General Assembly's remarks to the statement points:

Ad b)

Possible way forward with one Danish MEP

Mention of competition for European residential school initiatives from Danish civil society organisations and annoyance that initiatives come from a European newcomer like ACC

Questions from Jørgen: i) Proving of our concept - to whom?
ii) Do we cater only for young people?

Ad i) Active people participate, they then spread the word. However, we are targeting those who make decisions influencing future generations.

Question from Naomi: What about Grundtvig Action
To be further developed under point a)

Ad ii) We should do something to get away from the youth image, except for when funding is connected to the participants' age. Parents' CC idea mentioned.

Ad c)

Helen shared her impressions from the Newropeans Think Tank Award event in Paris. A prestigious event (powerful private enterprises represented), Helen was the youngest participant, a network worth keeping in touch with.

Jørgen mentioned the decline of „europeanism“ as challenged by nationalism and globalism.

Ad a)

It is important that the Plan D ideas are moved from the Communication DG to the Education and Culture DG where they belong.

Challenge of partial success of our lobby strategy - what to do next? Further decentralization? Connection with an existing entity (IPC in Elsinore)? Founding of a private firm working parallel to ACC? Important message to board and members, that they have to come up with ideas/opinions, should ACC continue.

Personal strain of work at the ACC office and for the ACC board. Need for a transition period (before the miracle of FECC) comes true.

Discussion:

Jørgen: What are your visions then, John? What can we do for you?

We need money.

Otherwise: for example complete decentralization (all members have the possibility of acting on behalf of ACC).

Hooking up with an existing unit, establishing a private firm... as mentioned above.

Jørgen suggested asking for a meeting with Margot Wallström. A meeting already took place (Mjellma and John) with the EU/Commission office in Copenhagen that was called by the Wallström cabinet. Our message: We should take care that the usual crowd of NGOs in Europe do not just pressure and get a lot of money to be distributed among the same NGOs. John explained the logic (market driven and open to everyone) behind our preference, the Action 6 and the Act on European Community Colleges.

Jørgen stressed the importance of using personal contacts and offered to 'open the doors', both in Denmark and in Brussels. Jan-Christoph and the assembly appreciated the offer and it was concluded that Jørgen should go ahead with his attempts.

Erik suggested that we monitor our pool of contacts and integrate the wide network of people who have over the years taken part in ACC activities.

John: It is time-consuming and most members are busy with their own lives, but still a good idea.

Helen: On the contrary, there might be many members who'd be willing to put some work into ACC if asked and assigned a specific task.

Naomi: The circle is not fully closed - Plan D as it is now is not based on the bottom-up approach that we stand for.

Elena: Have the other two possibilities (linking up with an existing entity or establishing a private entity) been further discussed by the board?

Conchi: There have been suggestions and ideas around but nothing has been agreed upon also because none of the possibilities have fitted exactly with the ACC vision and the work carried out so far.

Elena: Is FEEC still the goal?

Jan-Christoph and John: Merging with an existing school would always be a trade-off.

Jørgen: Reaction to Naomi - the Commission is the only pro-European organization. It's better to cooperate with them knowing that we run the risk of being part of the propaganda machine as warned about by Naomi.

Linda: We can offer know-how in terms of feedback, Commission needs us.

John: „Re-nationalist“ panic spreading around Europe after the referenda doesn't help our issue on state-level either.

Jan-Christoph: Maybe on the contrary - the panic is helpful - Wallström is being heard.

Conchi: The Commission gets the feedback in national referenda, it is 49:51. Long-term goal should be that Europeans vote on European issues, are well-informed and don't confuse national and European matters. European public sphere, European NGOs, European debate and confrontation.

Erik: The EU is funding a lot of projects that should help Europe define what Europe is. There are three main streams of thought - the EU stands for efficiency, Christianity and/or same justice system. We should be part of the debate right now.

Elena: Interesting debate, we want to be present but...what can we offer?

John: We have the know-how, a project that has been proved. We can do it bottom-up and then if they want (the Commission), they can perceive it as top-down. We just need continuous funding.

Helen: The money is with the private companies, not the governments.

Jørgen: You can offer know-how and you have to convince Wallström so that she wants to buy it.

Elena: They'll ask concrete questions.

Jørgen: First open the door, then we can start thinking about what we want to say. And we do have something to say.

3) Presentation and adopting of the accounts

John presented the accounts and opened the floor for questions and discussion. Brief clarification of "Our audit has not resulted in any qualification," raised by Erik and provided by John.

Jørgen: Tight budget overall.

John: In-kind work part of the accounts; if not, it would have been even tighter.

Accounts approved.

4) Board Election

Two options of deciding about the one one-year mandate presented. Decision taken to let the board members agree among themselves after the election.

The board elected composed of John Petersen, Mjellma Mehmeti, Dasa Bolcina, Emma Yeoman, Lucie Cizkova.

Substitutes elected - Erik Jentges and Elisabeth Alber.

Thanks to Eva Valvo for her outstanding job as a board member and good luck in the future!

5) Election of auditor

Auditor re-elected - Lene Albrechtsen.

6) Proposals received and general debate

No proposals received. General debate taken under point 2.

7) Site of next year's GA

The board still doesn't have a proposal for a venue of next year's GA.

8) Any other business

Erik: Introduced the research project on European public sphere that he is going to participate in.

9) Adopting the minutes

Minutes were adopted unanimously

Chair of the ACC
John Petersen

Chairing the General Assembly
Linda Jakobsone

Deputy Chair of the ACC
Conchi Gallego

Secretary of the General Assembly
Lucie Cizkova

Structure of STATEMENT = structure of statutes + some future perspectives

(Present Malene Jepsen and greetings to Helle Villekold from the office)

Overall : European public sphere

- a) law/measures supporting ECC
- b) proving the concept of ECC's by practicing / being practitioners
- c) lobby/liase – incl media
- d) network of debate
- e) Rite, partners in CC-GA's

Ad b)

Bridging Community Colleges II

June 2005

Latvia Rite

By ACC Latvia Committee

Exploring Borders of Identity

Terschelling 30.7.-10.8 ?

DK/LV/NL (Fryske Folkshegeskoalle, ACC, ACC Tautskolas Eiropai)

16-18 yrs old.

Representations Community College, Hannover

Good co-operation with Erwachsenenbildungsstätte Stephansstift

Ethics codex

Mid- august 2005, 30 participants

ACC Berlin Committee

Cultures in Dialogue – not really ours

17.7.-30-7.

180 Europeans – three schools

Naomi Woltring/Elisabeth Alber among mandates drafting a resolution on minority protection.

ACC Consultancy – we were allowed presentations

Mjellma made the resolution draft e.g.

European parliament – what does it mean for me?

28-31/10 2004

Latvia, Rite

Publishing:

European Songbook – compiled by Naomi Woltring

ACCENT – on the stairs since a long time, ACC Good Will Committee

Learning for European Co-Citizenship – thesis Lucie Cizkova

Thesis by Alf Christensen – A European Folk High School

FECC/ European Citizenship Education project – Helle Villekold, three web-seminars; methods, contents, tools, for future European Citizenship Education + made us a new revised FECC-description

See the NECE-conference in the context as well.

Leaflet printed

Recent meeting in EU-parliament + network of supporters

Ad c)

A number of representations from India to Chisinau to Tallinn to ...

Media presence many places – Hungarian paper the most prominent this time I guess (by Szilvia Malik)

CoE Year of Citizenship through Education

Launching: 13-14/12 Sofia

Inter-institutional meeting Strasbourg, 2-3-/6

+ another meeting around now, but we didn't have a candidate for participating

Mjellma Mehmeti has been following it.

Policy: remind of the European level, remind of the resources within the NGO-sector

Trying to prepare an input for this “year” was also the **NECE-conference**, Santiago d.C. “Networking European Citizenship Education” sounds promising, just as the leaflet mentioned necessity of a European public sphere.

Maybe re-baptizing would be appropriate: Networking Citizenship Education in Europe.

Policy: the same

Very potent network

Organised by BpB m.fl.

Membership of EAEA – approved

Does policy advocacy for lifelong learning at a European level, develops practice through projects, publications and training and provides information and services for members.

EUCIS-network membership

European-wide organizations network

The "European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning" is an independent non-governmental and non-profit organisation.

- 2.1. Conceived as a venue for exchanges, encounters, debates and a resource for proposals, the platform can also become a tool allowing citizens and the public at large to appropriate the notion of education and lifelong learning.

Partner of the Commission and particularly of the General Direction of Education and Culture, the European Civil Society Platform on lifelong learning will pay particular attention that Education **will not be subordinated to aims conceived exclusively in terms of employment rates and growth**, but that it should also be approached as a means of personal fulfilment, intellectual and civic emancipation for all European citizens.

The Platform is open to all European NGOs who are active in formal, non-formal and informal education of children and adults and vocational education and training.

Outstanding global work award- we got it.

Newropeans Think Tank Award – only nomination, we didn't get it.

Ad d)

Network of debate

At least I benefit from personal information, I hope all members do.
London and Budapest e.g.

Ad e)

Rites Tautskola – the board is waiting improve of the situation and considering withdrawing from the unit.

Ad a)

Citizens for Europe programme 2007-2013 - NEW

- Active citizens for Europe
- Active civil society for Europe

Transnational – we took part in the consultation forum, feb.2005

Grundtvig programme 2007-13 includes “residential seminars”. I hope we have helped provoke it coming into being. It is what we worked for at least – and not only young people!

For the ACC as an organisation this new situation leaves us with a positive identity-challenge. Seemingly there is no longer need to prove the validity of our ideas.

“European Public sphere” in the Council discussions!

Wallströms launching of her so-called plan D

“EU should and could support the building up of a pearl-chain of forums leading through Europe – a sort of Peoples Universitites or Folk High Schools” (Dagens Nyheter, Sweden)

Ad future perspectives)

Cornwall, Demos, SECC III, Countrysides CC, another DK/LV/NL, Representations CC..?
ACCC.

Last: last years GA suggestions: team of fundraisers + Aarhus business school cooperation on website. The last suggestion has become real, while no members responded on the call for a team of fundraisers – even if it was paid. We will spend the money elsewhere.

Around 100 new members this year as well + more to come

One circle has ended now... our idea is where it should be. No matter who takes the credit for the work... strategy of many years ago.

Does it still need proof?

Centralised parts of ACC **may not need to be that centralized.** We don't have the need anymore to keep on presenting our project/idea as one and coming from a huge European organization.

When I am interested in considering a more loose structure it is because keeping up the organization **is too much and constant work.**

When we started: I hoped after some years of proof there would be queue's of supporters and economical permanent income. **There are queues of people to take our ideas, but NOT to support us.** It is too much work. Old structures and powers are not likely to allow new players on the field. We have seen it many times.

What do we do then?

Either we lower the speed and decentralize (everybody can act for ACC) **OR** we keep up the speed and we find an income and a structure probably after some transition into something.....

Private firm next to ACC... ?

Closer link to IPC or another education institution?

Closing down...?