

**Minutes from the General Assembly.
2nd September 2006. Helsingør, Denmark.**

Present at the meeting:

John Petersen
Mjellma Mehmeti
Jan-Christoph Napierski
Erik Jentges
Elisabeth Alber
Dasa Bolcina
Conchi Gallego
Lucie Cizkova
Emma Yeoman
Linda Jakobsone
Lars Rasmussen
Francesco Russo
Andrea Penna
Emilie Champliaud
Katy Dillon

1. Election of Chairman and Secretary

After a welcome by John Petersen, J-C Napierski is elected chairman of the meeting and Emma Yeoman secretary.

2. Statement of the ACC

The statement of the ACC's activities over the past year is read by John Petersen including important messages to the members (enclosed as an integrated part of these minutes). A leaflet about the activity of the ACC over the past seven years is distributed.

3. Approval of Accounts

A copy of the accounts is distributed and each item is explained by John Petersen. The accounts were approved by the GA

4. Election of Board Members.

The terms of three board members, Conchi Gallego, Lucie Cizkova and Jan-Christoph Napierski expired. They were re-elected.

Two members had been proposed for the position of substitute board member and both Elisabeth Alber and Erik Jentges were elected.

5. Auditor election.

Following the retirement of Lene Albrechtsen as auditor, Lars Rasmussen was elected as internal auditor of the ACC accounts. This should be a more simple job in the future as there will not be any running cost administration from the EU. The GA expresses its gratefulness for the work done by Lene Albrechtsen since 1999.

6. Proposals received.

There were no proposals received before the meeting.

However Lars Rasmussen, with a colleague from Copenhagen University and a Lithuanian committee proposed a community college on Gender and Sexuality. It is proposed to run over two years, the first in Denmark, the second in Lithuania. A similar seminar has been run in Switzerland already. Lars wants to work on proposal and look into funding before he sends a proposal to the ACC office.

A proposal from Lucie is being worked on by the committee with help from Elisabeth Alber as discussed at the Board Meeting earlier today.

Mjellma wants to comment as a follow up to previous discussions at board meetings about the website. She has been impressed by the updated & easy to access format. She has also received positive feedback on it as an information source. Slowing down of the activities of ACC may lead to the growth of this site as an information source from individual activities and studies, both in and outside of Europe.

John Petersen was asked whether it is possible to make the seminar folder public. He was unsure but stated his desire for information to flow through website and to maintain links to other projects and proposals as well as having a document database.

John Petersen has investigated the possibility of creating a web-community but it has proved too expensive.

John Petersen comments on 2000€ put aside for fundraising-activities requested by the GA2004. Even if members proposed it, they havent made use of it. Linda Jakobsone explains about the regular meetings held by the Latvian committee but accepts the difficulties with meeting in other countries where distances and cultural reasons make it more difficult to meet. She feels one must know these people as friends who can be enthused rather than people you have never met.

Mjellma Mehmeti thinks it is more about ideas and inspiration spiraling from one project and that communication is only one of the problems when getting a project off the ground. She suggests that board can simply be there as support and guidance for those who come up with ideas.

She also believes that ACC has achieved its goal as an organization and now is the time for people to go forward with their own ideas as membership has grown and the personal communication of the senior board members with ACC members has been outgrown.

Lars Rasmussen suggests redefining ACC or setting new goals. He feels there is a gap in the aims of ACC and this may be the difficulty with the activation of members. He sees that

ACC moving into passive mode has been taken as a clear decision but does not find this is in contradiction with activating members.

Linda Jakobsen says that Wallstrøm has the idea but is herself not in the position to run the projects. Now is the time to move in and make FECC a possibility before someone else does as she believes the ACC should be behind this project. The ACC's worth can only be proved if the ACC has activities.

She would also like to make members aware again of their ACC membership to add to their identity in their work and NGO activity.

John Petersen restates the ACC board position as moving towards more lobby work because of the complications of John working for ACC on a very low income. For him it needs to become a spare time activity as it is for the other board members and he invites the possibility of others taking over from him.

Katy is active and says that members need to be aware of the issues on which the ACC is lobbying.

Lucie Cizkova agrees with Katy and suggests that people work on what is closest to the lobby work they already do and the spheres they work in. She would like more to be done with IPC and ACC cooperation. She proposes using IPC more as the international dimension; infrastructure and community college format are already here.

John Petersen accepts this as a way forward but Mjellma Mehmeti makes the General Assembly aware of the complications that have occurred in the past of working with structures and staff already in place. John Petersen states he will not be the one to create these new projects from the office but suggests that Lucie takes the initiative herself.

Lars Rasmussen proposes sorting out the issues within the ACC to enable people to take the ideas forward to different levels. He is unsure about the clarity of the issues involved and the direction of ACC.

John Petersen says that even Danish politicians do not yet understand the ACC and the White Paper issues and that these issues are still being ignored.

Mjellma Mehmeti sees the purpose of ACC as promoting fora for discussion and debate amongst Europeans and that community colleges are simply a tool to facilitate this goals. She states that we have chosen the EU as a field for community colleges because this allows for funding and framework but that the idea is not sustainable by an organization the size of ACC. The idea must be taken by the members back to the national level and individual action. This is why the ACC chose to go centrally first and not work at the grassroots level initially.

Conchi Gallego finds it disappointing that there have not been much new input on the board level but that the original board has done much of the most publicized work. She reminds the GA that this has been an issue for several years now but that no one new has come to take the ACC forward although it has had many successes including the White Paper and

that John should not be expected to carry on struggling forward alone, taking all the workload upon himself and sacrificing his personal and professional life. There are also difficulties of moving away from countries where the Folk High School is a known concept. The decisions taken in Berlin were ones that no one on the Board wanted to take but reality forced upon them.

Linda Jakobsone suggests that a board member take over from John but there is no one who at the moment can take on this responsibility.

Mjellma Mehmeti says an expectation has been created by us that the work should be based in Denmark as the strongest way forward but in hindsight maybe this has not been proved to be the way to best perpetuate the spark of ACC.

John Petersen does not see it as the ACC closing but simply a period of reflection and redefinition of ACC's goals. He states that the level of activity must be lowered for two or three years to see if Wallström's white paper brings new possibilities.

There are no resources to keep going as he cannot keep devoting his life to ACC and taking so much risk.

Elisabeth Alber asks if there is a way forward that does not involve such responsibility upon one person and summarises the possibilities explored in previous board meetings but there is nothing that has so far proven to be workable.

Conchi Gallego says that it is difficult to keep up with EU issues and opinion with jobs in different spheres but that the ACC must keep its finger on the pulse while it assumes a more passive role so as not to lose the contacts in Europe.

Lars Rasmussen suggests less ambitious, short-term goals for a few community colleges a year in addition to the long-term FECC.

Erik Jentges suggests creating a vision and working towards it and that short-term goals need to be directed towards the larger vision. He says it is up to the Commission now and we will have to see what comes from them.

Lucie Cizkova says that whatever decision is reached on ACC activity and role must be made clear to members so as not to lose them since their link to ACC has been through participation in community colleges. It must also be made clear that there is always the opportunity for other members to become more active.

Conchi Gallego clarifies the difference in approach between Lucie and John and states the importance of making sure we have information and a structure for members to use for their own projects when there is less support from John and the ACC office. This has always been the case but it must be stressed to members that this is available for them.

Lars Rasmussen suggests decentralizing ACC to make it more possible for local committees to lead the way forward.

John Petersen responds that it is important for ACC to stay European and not move into national chapters, which would prove that these structures can only work on the national level.

Elisabeth Alber says that she thinks that ACC members are not aware of how they can work for ACC in smaller ways in their everyday lobbying and work and that this is an important tool to use.

Linda Jakobsone suggests a letter to members after the GA to say they can organize community colleges, speak on behalf of ACC etc. She thinks it is important for members to meet for even the small work they do because motivation and inspiration come from working with others.

She suggests using the 10th anniversary of the minority course as publicity, a reunion or something similar and writing the letter to members tomorrow.

Conchi Gallego proposes a letter to members on the decision on scaling down ACC office activity and possibilities still available to members.

Lucie Cizkova want to formulate membership of the ACC in a more positive way to excite members enough to get them to talk about it.

Jan-Christoph Napierski summarises and speaks for the board by saying he is pleased there are still ideas for ACC to move forward.

The continuing problem the role of the members within the ACC, particularly in light of the board's decision in Berlin were discussed. Both the long and the short-term goals of the ACC must be decided before these are made clear to the members along with suggestions for how they can move the ACC forward and promote the ACC concept of European debate themselves. Suggestions included making people aware of how they can represent ACC on a more individual level in their existing work and lobbying. In addition there are new proposals coming for community colleges from Lars and Emilie but it must be made clear to members that the projects, while carried out with the support of the ACC office, will be the financial responsibility of the people involved, not the ACC. There is also the possibility of making the ACC a forum for information and networking. However this has been tried on a small scale and has not been used as extensively as it might have been hoped and there are not the resources to expand it to a larger scale. For certain it is clear that John cannot continue in his devotion to the aims of ACC but must be allowed to step back from ACC work to focus on his own career and personal life. There is a suggestion of a letter to the members to outline the new direction of the ACC and to make them aware of the resources available to them and to inspire them to run projects for themselves.

7. Site for GA 2007.

The board is unable to point at where and when the next GA will take place.

Lars Rasmussen suggests it should be attached to a community college to enable members to travel there.

8. AOB

John Petersen suggests reminding people of ACC during this CC.

9. Minutes approved.

The minutes are approved by the General Assembly after a small break and Jan-Christoph Napierski declares the General Assembly closed.

Statement 2006

by John Petersen

Organisational

Members - 448 confirmed/paid, 139 did not confirm yet, altogether that is 587 (7 signed off since 1999 and 24 we consider disappeared).

ACC Office

Employed since 2005 GA (John and Malene (Until May 1st) and several helped time and again)

Rites Tautskola - we have still Inese Ardone as the ACC-representative in the board of Rite. She was re-elected at the GA 2006. The Rite Tautskola apparently has some problems with resources, since the level of information does not live up to its own statutes. Last time ACC (ACC Latvia) carried out an event was last year in July - Bridging CC II - out of which came more events.

Printing House, ACCENT 4 plus the European Songbook issued.

29/4 ACCENT no. 4 released

1/4 Naomi Woltring presenting the European Songbook, ACC and EVS at the Nivon General Assembly, Amserfort (NL)

EUCIS: Still members, didn't pay however. EUCIS occupied with social cohesion within Europe and considers the Lisbon Agenda shouldn't forget this part of it. The main focus - knowledge society and education to prepare citizens for the knowledge economy is still valid, but cannot stand alone. Helen Frenzel took part last time for the ACC in Paris.

24-27/11: European Civil Society Platform on Life Long Learning (EUCIS) represented at the Salon de l'Education 2005 in Paris.

6/7 Helen Frenzel at **EUCIS meeting** in Paris

EAEA:

18-20/11, John Petersen and Lucie Cizkova attending **Valuing learning conference and the EAEA General Assembly, Lillehammer (N)**

Board meetings:

25/9 ACC board-meeting, Brussels

26-28/5 ACC Board meeting, Berlin

Activities/Workplan - only the most important

Promoting the ideas... European public sphere/European Community Colleges

Plus, there has been a lot of visitor in office and people working:

6/10 Elisabeth Alber attending conference, EU Civil Society Contact Group on "The future of Europe", Brussels

9-18/10 Demos Community College, Rhodes

7-8/11: Elisabeth Alber at the Stakeholders' Forum on "Bridging the Gap" on the theme of "how to bring Europe and its citizens closer together?", Brussels (B)

2nd - 4th: John Petersen and Erik Jentges at the Network for European Citizenship Education conference, Berlin (D)

27/1-29/1: Diana Kalacinska, Douwe Eekma, Jort Bijleveld, Miranda Tamminga, Lucie Ciskova, John Petersen, Astrid Ranvig, Jonas Ladefoged and Morten Tønning attending prep meeting for the "Dreams for the Future Community College" at IPC, Helsingør (DK)

28/2 Elisabeth Alber attending Liaison Group meeting in the Civil Society Organisations and Networks, Brussels (BE)

2/3 Elisabeth Alber taking part in the EESC liaison meeting with organized civil society, Brussels (BE)

6-8/3 Marzia Pistolesi guiding international students from Nordfyns Folkehøjskole (DK) in Tuscany

9-10/3 John Petersen presenting ACC at delegiertenkonferenze AOb - GEW in Aurich (D)

20-27/3 Active Citizenship Community College (ACCC) at International People's College, Helsingør (DK)

20/4 John Petersen presenting ACC and Rite Tautskola to Foreningen Danmark-Letland, Copenhagen (DK)

25/4 Barna Kovacs attending the "Communication on Adult Learning" reception hosted by Helga Trüpel (vice chair of the European Parliaments' Culture and Education Committee)

27/4 Erik Jentges at the Learning and Living Democracy: they way ahead. Evaluation conference of the European Year of Citizenship through Education, Sinaia (RO)

19/5 ACC represented by Camilla Nielsen-Englyst at hearing with EU-Commissioner Margot Wallström, Copenhagen (DK)

<http://www.acc.eu.org/uploads/WallstoemReplyCph.pdf>

8/7-15/7 Dreams for the Future CC at IPC, Helsingør

Lobby

EU-Commission White Paper on A European Communication Policy:

At a press-conference on February 1st, Margot Wallström presented the EU-Commission 'White Paper on A European Communication Policy'.

As expected and hoped for, the White Paper included good news for the future of our ideas.

"The main purpose of this White Paper is to propose a way forward and to invite all these players [EU, national, regional and local authorities, civil society and political parties, ed] to contribute their ideas on how best we can work together ... The result will be a forward-looking agenda..." (p.2)

Please remark the following quotations:

Describing the EU-Commissions own vision of what an EU-Communication policy should be

and do, we read: "In short, the 'public sphere' within which political life takes place in Europe is largely a national sphere. To the extent that European issues appear on the agenda at all, they are seen by most citizens from a national perspective. The media remain largely national, partly due to language barriers; there are few meeting places where Europeans from different Member States can get to know each other and address issues of common interest.... an inadequate development of a 'European public sphere' where the European debate can unfold." (p.4)

For the forecasted forward-looking agenda, there are five areas for action identified, and within these areas a number of possible action points are mentioned. We remark especially the following:

"New forums for public discussion of European issues are essential for building mutual trust, respect and willingness to work together towards common objectives. While communication technologies are obviously important, **face-to-face meetings remain crucial**. Existing initiatives like Plan D, Youth in Action and Culture have shown how the EU can help set up new meeting places for civic debate.

Adoption of the proposed Citizens for Europe programme would ... **help Europe-wide civil society organisations to run trans-national projects** that promote active citizenship and to hold public debates on Europe". (p.7)

"Member states could cooperate in a joint effort to establish **new meeting places for Europeans, open to citizens of all generations and backgrounds, to host cultural and political events relating to Europe.**" (p.8)

Another interesting suggestion from the White Paper would, if implemented, make it much easier for European narratives, like for example the story of ACC in itself, to become visible and registered. Visibility for ACC and other real European organisations would again make it easier to find sponsors and would in the longer run make it possible for us to operate on the same conditions as nationally defined NGO's and organisations. That is the suggestion to transform libraries into "*digitally connected European libraries*". (p.8)

Many have been inspired throughout Europe by the forward-looking agenda of Mrs Wallström. It should be rather clear, that initiatives have to come from the member-states, when speaking about eventual "meeting places." We have few examples of politicians trying to follow up: the social-liberal party in Denmark is working on proposals and has already come up with one proposal (unfortunately down-voted in the Danish parliament, even by Wallströms social-democrats). The Young Social Democrats in the Netherlands have as well decided a positive resolution as follow up on the "meeting-places"-idea. There are probably more examples.

According to the cabinet of Mrs Wallström, they do not have money for supporting initiatives, so it is very theoretical so far.

We are in contact with Mrs Wallströms administration just as we were called for a hearing in Copenhagen where ideas were supposed to be pooled. In our written contribution we have made our position clear. See website.

The Wallström initiatives are peak when seen in the context of our lobby-efforts. There are signs that nothing concrete will come out of it, but at least it means that the debate about a necessary future public sphere will be kept alive.

It is our impression – confirmed in letters from Wallström, phone-conversations, words of the whitepaper – that our ideas are appreciated very, very much. However, it is our impression as well, that the commission cannot do much for neither us nor the ideas. The states need to intervene, and some division between national endeavors (national organizations and purposes) and transnational/European endeavors has to emerge

sometime – this in order to make it possible for European organizations to compete and operate with the national units.

Future:

Regions Community College - group around Malene, Perrine, Rhisiart, Emilie.
Nothing more is planned from the office

In continuity and within the context of messages at last years GA, and repeating the last board-meeting, the board has the following message to the GA and to the members:

Until new financial certainty emerges we cannot take the responsibility of handing over activities to ACC Committees as before.

The following factors contribute to this extraordinary situation and conclusion:

This meeting (the board-meeting as well as now the GA) is taking place on the background of the immense success ACC has had since it formulated its ideas and strategy six years ago. The concept and the ideas of ACC, lobbying for making visible a way to let emerge a European public sphere by the help of the residential school format, have made their way to the top level of European politics.

This has been hard work, and there are four reasons that the board take into consideration for the decision that we should stop the high level of decentralized activities (Community Colleges where ACC Committees hold the budget of the event behalf of ACC), as we have known it up until now:

a) The original idea of proving that the model of European Community College Courses function has succeeded and made it to the highest political level. We have made it! Where the idea is now, we don't believe we can affect it much more. There is not the same necessity in proving it anymore.

b) It has been very important, that ACC Committees had to take the full economic responsibility of administering money in accordance with sponsors' demands and the ACC statutes. In the last years organizers had to sign a contract with the ACC to ensure that ACC does not have to cover eventual deficits caused by ACC Committees. Even this new system doesn't work proper, as we have faced economical troubles in the context of ACC Committees duties - one time it was rather serious.

c) MM and JP have been working very closely together on ACC matters and in private. The uncertain financing of ACC left MM and JP in a situation in which future perspectives became unrealistic - both in Denmark with its policy towards non-wealthy immigrants and in Macedonia with its difficult conditions. They have both paid a too high price for the ACC-idealism.

d) It is good that our ideas have made their way to the top. However, we have to remember that when we (Eily) left Youth 2002 in protest it was because of discontinuity, top-down-arrangements and intransparency. Unfortunately there are some signs that the Youth2002-"culture" will influence whatever the Wallström-

administration come up with from now on. Anyway, we do not believe in influencing it where it is now.

The consequence may be that we do not apply for new EU-running-cost-money for next year. As we will not present a substantial activity programme under the common budget it is not realistic. Moreover, the administration that follows the EU-money has for a long time been out of proportion with the amounts given. If we operated with "normal" prices for administration, it would cost more money to administer the amount from EU than we actually get.

This means that ACC will have to lower its activity profile significantly in 2007 if no big changes happen. We do search for possibilities to finance the ACC in the future.

This is why the main statement of this years GA is, that we might now enter into a rather hibernate period - waiting for a miracle.

In this context I would like to send best greetings from Jørgen Olsen, Nordic Academy / member. He is still doing good things for us in Bruxelles.

Thanks to members, board and committees and volunteers

Chairman of ACC
John Petersen

Chairing the General Assembly
Jan-Christoph Napierski

Secretary of the General Assembly
Emma Yeoman