



EMA

Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association

EMA Steering Committee

Annual Report 2007-2008

This document contains an overview of the activities of the Steering Committee of the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association, undertaken in the period October 2007 to June 2008, and a preliminary draft of future actions and strategies to be discussed at the 2nd EMA General Assembly, June 6-7, 2008. For comments or clarifications, please contact the Steering Committee at sc@em-a.eu or the President at president@em-a.eu.

Introduction

In this Annual Report, written for the second General Assembly of the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association (EMA), the President of the EMA will detail the activities and strategic approach of the Steering Committee and the EMA as a whole. Summaries of the team reports of the EMA teams are also part of this report; more detailed reports of the EMA teams can be found in the respective team reports and in the budget report prepared by the Service Provider of the EMA, currently ICUnet.

The period that is reported on in this report is relatively short period; it covers seven months, from 12 October 2007 till 5 June 2008. For organisational reasons, the SC has deemed it more feasible to organise the General Assemblies of the EMA in May or June, instead of October. The Steering Committee is extremely content to be able to report the members of the EMA of the progress accomplished in this period.

The Steering Committee of the EMA consists of:

Hanneke A. Luth	President
Taghi Paksima	Vice-President and IT Team Coordinator
Chunyu Liang	Conference Team Coordinator
Jennifer Lenhart	Promotion Team Coordinator
Matthias Herkt	Policy Team Coordinator
Rikke Skovgaard Andersen	Magazine Team Coordinator
Ross Hu Zhongliang	Newsletter Team Coordinator
Sandra Oberhollenzer	Jobs Team Coordinator

In this second “term” of the EMA, the first real term after the launch period running from June 2006, a group of very enthusiastic EMA members has accomplished to build, strengthen and expand the EMA and its activities. In the beginning, great leaps are made. From now on it will be important to hold on to the initial successes. In this period, and in the launch period, the EMA has looked into all activities that might be of interest to the EMA and its members. And that has resulted in many initiatives, ideas and successes. This also comes with risks however. The EMA will need to focus; we cannot do everything, and even the things we should do, we cannot do them all at once. The biggest challenge for the coming period will be how to structure the energy and initiatives that are brought into and come out of the EMA process. What the EMA does, it should do it well. Now that the EMA has explored itself and the arena it finds itself in, it should develop a mission statement to envisage what it aims to become in the next five, ten, and thirty years.

As President of the EMA, I would like to thank all members of the Steering Committee and the EMA active members for all their input, hard work, energy and enthusiasm. We couldn't have done it without you! I hope we can keep up the good work for next year. I'm looking forward to it, and I hope you are too.

Hanneke A. Luth
President of the EMA
president@em-a.eu

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1. Steering Committee activities

Here you can find summaries of the team reports in alphabetical order, and further information on EMA activities carried out throughout the year. It does not portray to be a full overview of everything that has been undertaken in the EMA framework, but should provide a solid overview of the most important EMA activities from October 2007 to June 2008.

1.a Summaries of team reports

Conferences Team

The overarching goal of the Conference Team is to assist the association in constructing a strong community with ever-lasting inter-personal relationships among its members, through the organization of EMA-supported conferences and events. To achieve this goal, the first General Assembly of the EMA has defined threefold roles and responsibilities for the team: first, to create a platform for the communication, and cooperation among the EM students and alumni body, via the implementation of EMA supported conferences and events; second, to promote networking among EMA members and contribute to the establishment of a united community, through providing various means of support for different events; and third, to promote Europe as a centre of excellence in international higher education on all EMA organized conferences and events, in close cooperation with other EMA teams (esp. the promotion team).

During the term of October 2007 - May 2008, the team's main activities have focused on the implementation of the following activities as planned and approved by the 1st GA of EMA in 2007:

- In October 2007 and March 2008 respectively, the first and second EMA National/Regional Alumni Network Events Beijing and Mexico Events were held as planned. As a result, the EM programme as well as the EMA has gained higher publicity and two EMA Regional Chapters have been initiated;
- In November 2007, CAT's proposal as to the team's budget re-distribution was approved by the EMA Steering Committee, paving the way towards the realization of more EMA-supported events;
- In November 2007, the team has officially approved its Internal Policy Document during this term, marking it as the first EMA Service Team that has operationalized its internal management and decision-making procedures.
- In January 2008, the EMA Small Scale Events Funding Scheme became operational. By end of May 2008, one small-scale event has been approved and implemented and three other applications have been received and we are going through the final stage of evaluation. In addition, this scheme has stimulated two EM course proposals submitted for the organization of themed conferences during the next term.

Besides the above work, extensive efforts of the team have been spent on the preparation of the first Erasmus Mundus Conference on Climate Change. In March end, the team has successfully closed its first external funding negotiation (of approximately 10,000 EUR), with the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), to support the conference. However, due to extreme time and human resource constraints as well as to ensure high quality of the conference, the team has received support from all parties (EMA Steering Committee, the European Commission, ASEF, and the host university, Central European University) on postponing the conference from the planned June 2008 to a suitable timing in the second half of 2008. It is planned that the

conference will be implemented back-to-back with an international forum on three key issues (gender equality, health, and poverty alleviation) relating to the Millenium Development Goals and it is therefore expected to attract very wide international participation and recognition and thus benefiting the attending EMA members at a much extended scale.

The team has actively participated in EMA-related policy and planning discussions, especially on those matters relating to the budget requests for the association's next year operation. The team has initiated and requested budget for the following networking events: Latin American Event in Sao Paolo, South Asian Event in Indonesia, African Event in Europe, Russian Speaking Event in Russia, and an Olympic Cultural Exchange Dialogue in Beijing, all of which are to be held in coincidence with the European Commission activities or other international events. However, subject to fund availability, these events are to be led by the promotions team while receiving extensive support from the Conference Team, as agreed by the two teams.

A large amount of financial resources is under the team's management and the team has successfully kept all its associated expenditures under well control. For detailed budget spending information please refer to the team's annual report. The 2nd EMA GA is requested to review the work undertaken by the team so far as well as the activities planned for the next term and provide guidance and decisions for the team to follow.

IT team

Since the first EMA GA in October 2007, a major task the IT Team has been involved in, has been the planning and the arrangements for the launch of the new EMA Community Website. These activities have included coordination with the Service Provider during the technical requirements, test phase, deployment, and bug reporting. The EMA website is the major service EMA is providing, with the Community portal being the focal interface for interaction with and among members. The EMA public website was launched just before the GA 2007 with many of the features deployed later in the year. The Community Portal was launched in January 2008. There are still outstanding technical issues with the Community Portal that we are following up with the Service Provider.

The team has also been involved in several other tasks and initiatives. The IT Team met during the EMA LG meeting in Brussels in March 2008 to discuss the ongoing activities. A major issue the team has been facing has been the quality and the quantity of the team. The team consists of 6 members, out of which only a few are active members, and just a couple come from a technical background. As the nature of the activities on the IT Team inherently require some prerequisite technical knowledge, in coordination with the Policy Team, a call was launched to recruit new members possessing certain technical skill set. The call was during mid-March till mid-April, and four qualified applicants were selected, who would join the IT Team as non-voting Service Team members.

Service Teams' web presence is another task the team has been working on, although delayed due to the lack of resources, is planned to be implemented before the GA 2008. There will be personal as well as team profiles for all Service Teams and their members, in an aim to provide an informal introduction for the members to know their EMA team members.

An important initiative the IT Team is committed to is the provision of IT Services for EMA chapters and (at a later stage for) EMMC alumni associations. We have been trying to develop a framework under which

EMA would be able to provide an online platform for the chapters' web presence. The framework is under development in the Team, and provisions have been made for the budget required for the next fiscal year.

We've also been working on a few other tasks such as developing an IT Policy for the association, improvements to member profiles on the website, and providing technical support for the requirements of the Steering Committee. More details on any of these activities and initiatives can be found in the IT Team's annual report 2008.

Jobs Team

The Jobs Team has recently been continuing with the selection for the applications for the call for candidates that was launched in March 2008 and has been extended. A package with the applicants information and some EMA details will be sent to the companies in the call. The selection of the EMA country representatives (CR) is also being completed. Each selected CR will be sent an information package to help them in their tasks, which is being procured with the Promotions team. Our yearly report will be available soon, for the general assembly in June in Perugia. Until then, the Jobs Team!! :-)

Magazine Team

Here, the main conclusions of the Magazine report are portrayed. Please refer to the Magazine Team Annual Report for an extensive overview. 2007-2008 has indeed been a busy year for the Magazine Team – and our many efforts have paid off:

- The team has successfully recruited a large number of new, active members
- Judging from the feedback from EMA members and other readers we have published and distributed a high-quality magazine
- We have launched a successful photo competition: Not only did we receive a lot of photos from EMA members, but students and alumni also visited the EMA website to vote for the winner
- We have thoroughly evaluated the first edition and our own work process: An online questionnaire acquainted us with the impressions readers had of the first edition. Further, the team has spent time reflecting upon its routines which will help us improve our teamwork and effectiveness for next term
- The above mentioned achievements have been reached within a very reasonable budget

Newsletter Team

Following the successful launch in year 2006, the Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association (EMA) has been expanding in terms of its number of members and publicity, significantly. As one of the main services provided by EMA, the newsletter service team constantly contributes in gathering, reviewing and editing newsletter content, as well as cooperating with other service teams. The newsletter as a main instrument for distributing internal and external information of Erasmus Mundus master programs, EMA, and European higher education, is a main service provided by EMA. The Newsletter Service Team is responsible for gathering, reviewing, editing and distributing the newsletter issues for the target audiences. This goal is ensured by the active participation of the members and coordinator of the team.

Team building up

To have a proper communication channel is important for members within a service team to exchange ideas and work on a joint project. This is especially true for the newsletter team as one of its main tasks is to edit the news jointly within the team. Within this active team, the building up is almost immediately after the GA.

New features

To increase the attractiveness of the EMA newsletter, the team has brainstormed about the possible new features. A series of new features are proposed and included in the issues. The new features are, 'One issue one program', 'Spot light of EMA members', 'One contact one program' and so on.

Team emails

We have created a 'googlemail group account' for distributing the emails for the team. There were some minor problems at the beginning, but solved by the members.

Wiki Page

The team has been trying to use Wiki page, created by IT team to jointly edit the news articles. Due to the budget limitation, there are not many choices. The idea of wiki is nice though not without flaws.

Representing email

Thanks to IT team and service provider, the team has a representing email address newsletter(at)em-a.eu, which is the official one to communication with the EMA members and other organizations.

Team reorganization proposal

The team is aimed to rename, redefine its vision and missions, and reorganize itself. A detailed proposal is attached at the end of the team report.

Policy Team

EMA is a very young organization and developing rapidly. There is plenty of enthusiasm. New exciting networking opportunities are emerging all the time. Without a reliable and well designed organizational framework however, EMA may fail to live up to its full potential. It may suffer from internal inefficiencies and lose its sense of direction when carrying out external activities.

The mission of the Policy Team is to ensure that EMA has the necessary ideas and abilities to deal with these challenges successfully.

Our most important task this term was to revisit our current Statute and improve it. The Statute contains the "rules of the game" for EMA, so it is both a sensitive and crucial document, especially for a young and dynamic organization such as EMA. We listened to the comments you and your fellow Erasmus Mundus Master Course representatives made back in October 2007 at the last EMA General Assembly. We also considered the latest experiences of the EMA Steering Committee, to which we have an especially close relationship. Finally, we used our own analytical skills and assessed what organizational tools EMA needs to better serve its members and the overall Erasmus Mundus idea. The result is a complete overhaul of the current EMA Statute, which we present to you at the 2nd General Assembly of EMA in Perugia this year.

The second major topic the Policy Team dealt with this term was Erasmus Mundus II. As you may know, the current Erasmus Mundus programme was devised and funded only for the time period 2004 – 2008. Currently, both the European Commission and the European Parliament are working on the final draft for a successor programme covering the time period 2009 – 2013. According to this draft, the funding for Erasmus Mundus II will triple, and the programme will be much wider in thematic and geographical scope. For

instance, it will include Erasmus Mundus PhD fellowships and partner universities in countries outside the EU for Erasmus Mundus Master Courses. EMA was privileged to have been asked by the rapporteur of the European Parliament to provide her with a report on what we think of the current draft of Erasmus Mundus II – what we welcome and wish for, and where we see deficiencies. This report was eventually compiled under the lead of the EMA Steering Committee member Rikke Andersen, but received significant input from the Policy Team. It was sent to the European Parliament rapporteur mid-May 2008.

How well is your Erasmus Mundus Master Course (EMMC) performing? Are you happy with it? What should be improved – also beyond academics? What should prospective students know before starting your course? What would make life easier for them? These are some of the questions the Policy Team is interested in as well. We have started to collect answers to these questions making use of EMA's unique position to carry out cross-EMMC comparisons. The first aim is to create a pool of knowledge which all EMA members can access via the EMA website; the second aim is to assist course coordinators to create EMMC-specific handbooks for prospective students.

All these activities have kept us quite busy this term. For the future we hope to be able to scale down a bit on Statute revision activities, and instead direct our attention more towards collecting experiences of EMA members, critically monitor the performance of consortia services under Erasmus Mundus II and consult the EMA Steering Committee regarding various networking projects, always focusing on how we can create value for you and all EMA members in the spirit of the Erasmus Mundus.

Promotions Team

The members of the *EMA Promotions Team* can best be described as enthusiastic students and alumni who have enjoyed both the academic and cultural experiences (and often scholarships) provided by EMMCs (via support from the European Commission). We are now eager to build networks amongst students, universities, companies and organisations to help spread information about this exciting new educational opportunity, as well as promote our own emerging network – the EMA. *The Promotions Team aims to promote EM as a programme of excellence in higher education.* It also aims to identify an emerging 'brand' as to what EMA is and should be known for: an enthusiastic network of motivated, globally-adaptable and interdisciplinary students and alumni: members who have a diverse range of academic, national and cultural backgrounds, but a common unifying experience linked by three elements inherent to every member of EMA – *quality, opportunity, and mobility.*

From the fall 2007 General Assembly, the Promotions Team has expanded in number and redefined its goals. It has a larger commitment of active members and a new team coordinator. Undoubtedly, we are learning along the way on how to best organize and where our targets should be. Since fall 2007, we have focused on the following areas:

- **Promotion and interaction with other student organisations** (IFISO, the informal forum of international student organisations) – this has a two-fold benefit for EMA: we can promote the EM option to undergraduate students; and learn from such organisations as to their operations. IFISO contacts have been primarily instigated at the Steering Committee (SC) level, but also by members, in topic-specific organisations.

- **Participation in the European National Structures (NS) Meeting** – EMA is promoting itself as an active and competent organisation, and correspondingly has made partnerships at national level(s), to promote our common interests, promoting EHE.
- **Participation in Action 4 Workshops** – EM Action 4 participation allows the opportunity to build networks amongst various actors working with quality and promotion of European Higher Education (EHE).
- **Participation in European Higher Education Fairs (EHEF)** – by the Promotions Team Coordinator (Europosgrados, Mexico City).
- **Promotion Team members active in setting up Latin American Alumni Chapter** – one of the LA chapter's main goals is promotion of EM and EMA in Latin America.
- **Participation in the Global Promotion Project** – the EMA Promotions Team was representing by a few of its members – both for the website creation and to give the student perspective on promotions and what is relevant for students.
- **Country Representatives** – members of the Promotions Team supported data entry for this joint venture (headed by the Jobs Team) to create an international network of support and promotion around the globe.
- **Creation of EMA promotions material** – this will be complete for the 2008 GA. It includes a Jobs-related brochure, an EMA brochure, a small A4 for course coordinators and a colorful poster to be displayed at events, career fairs and EHEFs.
- **Contact to 'Careers in Europe' Job Fair** – this was attempted by a Promotions Team member, but despite initial efforts pursued by EMA, this partnership was not realized. However, such activities will be a goal also for the future.

It has been an active year, full of hard work and learning, especially for some members. However, following the upcoming GA, the promotions team will follow a slightly different (and less centralized) coordination scheme, as recommended by the other SC members. Three sub-teams will be created, with the following aims: *internal EMA promotions* (to recruit new members from EMMCs), *external EMA promotions* (to promote our organisation) and *promotion of EM* (to attract competitive and eager students and to support the EC from a student/alumni perspective). Further details are described in the 2007/2008 Annual Report.

Finally, while it has been hard work, it has also been a lot of fun! On behalf of the promotions team, we are grateful to the European Commission for the implementation of Erasmus Mundus, and to our fellow EMA members (especially the launch committee) who have been active from the start, initiating such a eager and growing organisation in EMA! We look forward to a great future!



1.b Other EMA activities

Steering Committee meetings

The Steering Committee has scheduled monthly online meetings. In these meetings, the Steering Committee discusses progress on all EMA activities. Furthermore, the SC met face-to-face with a representative from the service provider from April 19th to the 20th in Lund, Sweden. Three policy team members were invited to this meeting and formed a parallel session to address statute revisions, the results of the session were later discussed with the SC to follow up on advice and suggestions from the last GA and further improvement of the EMA Statute.

Budget

One of the first actions of the Steering Committee was to organize the funds allocated to the actions of the EMA by the European Commission. A report will be drafted on EMA spending from October 2007 till May 2008, to be available before the EMA GA.

Together with the Service Provider ICUnet, the Steering Committee has drafted a request for the next fiscal year, July 2008-June 2009. This proposal needs to be discussed with the European Commission, out of which we expect results in the beginning of July.

Liaison Group meeting

On March 4th 2008, a Liaison Group meeting was held in Brussels, at the venue of Tour Madou. It was hosted by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture, and chaired by the President of the EMA. The Liaison Group meeting served mainly to inform representatives of all EMA teams of the initiatives that are being undertaken in the framework of EMA, and what role their respective EMA team could fulfil in this framework. The meeting consisted of handing over a great deal of information, followed by team meetings. Also, an agreement was signed with Erasmus Student Network (ESN, see below). The slides used for presentations can be downloaded from the EMA community. The main conclusion from the EMA Liaison Group meeting was that the EMA is doing very well. Vito Borelli, DG Education and Culture and main contact for the EMA, voiced that he had never anticipated an alumni association being to that extent crucial to the Erasmus Mundus programme as the EMA has become. The Steering Committee is very thankful for that recognition. Now it will be of extreme importance to structure EMA activities to make our efforts have great results. This will be the challenge of the next term of the EMA.

EMA regional chapters

As part of an aim to involve more EMA members and stimulate the organizations of more EMA events also outside Europe, the Steering Committee has stimulated two regional chapters to initiate: the EMA Chinese Chapter and the EMA Latin American Chapter. The Steering Committee, Conferences team and the Promotion team were highly involved in setting up these chapters. We would like to congratulate both chapters with their successful first actions. It is through the initiatives of more EMA members that EMA activities can grow; the EMA chapters will provide a platform for more member initiatives, especially outside the EU.

At the General Assembly 2008, special attention will be given to the regional chapters, new chapters and new initiatives to be set up by EMA members. If you have an idea for an EMA chapter, event, action or any other initiative, make sure to let yourself be heard at the EMA GA information market!

Quality assessment of Erasmus Mundus

Since July 2007 the EMA has taken part in an exercise on quality assessment, funded through Action 4 of Erasmus Mundus 2004-2009. The EMA has a representative, currently Steering Committee Member Rikke Skovgaard Andersen, in the Steering Group for the project. The purpose of the project is to assess the 'best practices' of six Erasmus Mundus Masters Course who have, voluntarily, signed up for self-assessment and a series of on-site visits by education experts, the European Commission and representatives of students and alumni. The overarching aim is to define factors of excellence for Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses and to create an online tool which will enable these excellent practices to be shared among universities across Europe. The service provider is the consultancy ECOTEC and the project is steered by a work group which brings together the European Commission, education experts and representatives of stake-holder groups.

This year the EMA Steering Group representative has participated in two meetings: on February 20th and May 16th 2008. Next to providing input and feedback to the work of ECOTEC EMA has also, in collaboration with the European Student Union, provided a number of student representatives for the on-site visits. EMA's main contribution to the project is to emphasize the significance of assessing the experiences of students and to assist in finding ways to achieve this particular goal.

Three EMA representatives have taken part in on-site visits. Judging from the feedback that the EMA Steering Committee has received from these three representatives their part-taking has not only been very valuable to the project as a whole, but also an enriching experience for the representatives themselves. The participation of EMA has provided a unique dimension to the project; the perspective of Erasmus Mundus students. To ensure a satisfactory result of the Quality Assessment Project and that student experiences will be a significant factor for defining best practices, the Steering Committee strongly encourages the active participation of the EMA in the project for the year to come.

EMII report

As requested by Mrs. Marielle de Sarnez, Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur on Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013, the EMA has drafted a statement concerning the proposal for the extension of the Erasmus Mundus programme, also referred to as Erasmus Mundus phase II. Several months of discussions among active members of the EMA have produced the insights represented in the EMA Statement on EMII. The EMA highly values the opportunity to comment on the EMII proposal and hopes that its recommendations will provide useful recommendations for the decision-making of the European Parliament and its Committee on Culture and Education. The EMA statement on Erasmus Mundus phase II can be accessed through the EMA website. It has been sent to Mrs. De Sarnez on Friday May 14th, 2008.

Cooperation with other international student organisations

The EMA has joined the Informal Forum of International Student Organisations, IFISO (www.ifiso.org). Through this network, the EMA has access to knowledge about running a student organization, knowledge coming from very experienced partners. Furthermore, we hope that the EMA can set up joint initiatives with the other organisations. The EMA has been represented at several events of IFISO and IFISO member organisations, such as the AEGEE Agora in Eskisehir, Turkey, November 2007; the ESN's Annual General Meeting in Besancon, France and the Annual March Meeting of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA).

The EMA is very proud of its first Partnership Agreement with the Erasmus Student Network. At the EMA Liaison Group meeting on March 4th 2008, the President of the EMA Hanneke Luth signed the agreement together with the President of ESN, Giorgio Marinoni. Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a voluntary, secular, non-profit, not linked to any political party association represented by students in Europe. The mission of ESN is to foster student mobility in Higher Education under the principle of Students Helping Students. The local chapters of ESN organise a wide variety of social activities in cities all across Europe and provide an information point for exchange students and students wanting to study abroad.

The similarity in the structure and the objectives between EMA and ESN leads to the intent to develop mutual cooperation. We hope to be able to involve the members of EMA and all participants to the Erasmus Mundus Master Courses in activities of ESN, and to provide information about the Erasmus Mundus programme to ESN local chapters. As the local chapters of ESN are approached frequently about opportunities for studying abroad, their affinity with the Erasmus Mundus programme will increase the awareness about EM among European students and universities. We look forward to the cooperation with ESN, and are delighted to have signed our first Partnership Agreement with the international student organisation bearing part of the same name.

2. Plans for the future

This section portrays the major plans and challenges in and for the future of the EMA as viewed by the President of the EMA, on the basis of discussions with the Steering Committee and the Liaison Group mainly. All of these are of course subject to input to be received at the General Assembly in Perugia.

2.a Scheduled events for the first half of next term

SC handover weekend

Continuity is a major concern to the Steering Committee of the EMA. It will be of the utmost importance to devise a way to have an effective and high-quality handover of position when “old” SC members leave, and “new” people take their place. To that avail, we have deemed it most useful to plan a SC handover meeting during the summer in which the new SC members will receive all information necessary to fulfil their tasks. Of course, this meeting will also be used for a continuation of setting actions for the SC and the EMA on the basis of the information received in the GA. The attendance of the “new” SC members and the “old” ones is critical; a date will therefore be planned at the GA after election of the new SC members.

Liaison Group meeting

The Liaison Group meeting has proven critical for EMA team development and progress, and mostly for coordination of team initiatives. We therefore plan to hold another LG meeting somewhere in October. Venue and dates are still to be specified. The SC does however expect that, as for the last LG meeting, not all active team members will be able to join the LG meeting, due to financial constraints. Representatives of teams will be chosen to attend the LG meeting and voice the input of the respective team.

Climate Change conference

One of the major EMA events in the next year will be the Climate Change conference, to be organized by the Conference team. For further details, check the Conference team Annual report 2008. Here are also more EMA events listed.

2.b Challenges and plans

Organisational structure and focus

Two major problems that the EMA has been faced with in the last term can be identified:

1. Amount of workload, in SC and in teams
2. Overlapping initiatives, between teams

Both problems can be explained by a lack of focus in the EMA. This lack of focus is very understandable; first, the EMA wanted to see what she could do, which initiatives she could develop, and everything that came on was accepted and stimulated. The result of that has been however, that so many initiatives were set up, and so many useful contacts and connections made, that the workload became quite tough. As the EMA want to continue to be a student and alumni association that is based upon voluntary input, EMA needs to prioritize in what it wants to develop. Every team, president and vice-president should set their priorities in short and long term, and make that very clear to all parties involved, also external parties. A mission should be ambitious, strategies too; but for the future of the EMA, we have to devise a structure that is maintainable

in the long run. One of the main issues on next year's agenda will therefore be to critically look at the structure of the EMA; a revision of team responsibilities, based upon team input of course, is to be undertaken by all teams. The Steering Committee has the responsibility to coordinate the activities of the EMA. It needs to discuss and set a mission for the EMA for the next two, ten, twenty and fifty years. Of course that mission should be reassessed by each Steering Committee, but a vision should be there. The input of EMA members would of course be appreciated. We are envisioning a forum from which we can get ideas on the EMA community.

A connected point is the workload of the President. As this was the first year that the EMA had a President, the precise responsibilities other than facilitating the SC, main representative of EMA for external contacts and keeping an overview of EMA activities were not yet clear in October. The team responsibilities seem rather clear; the President has taken on everything that came up to the EMA, could not be handled by an EMA team, but seemed useful for the EMA and her members. This has proven too much, as too many worthwhile actions, initiatives, contacts and plans were addressed to the EMA. An overview of Presidents activities can be found in the addendum. It is of course clear that this is too much for one person to do while having a fulltime position in her "normal life". For next year, the SC therefore proposed to change the Vice Presidents position to be a full member of the Steering Committee, not a Team Coordinator. The precise proposal will be communicated at the GA. For the future, the SC would like to assess several options for the position of President and Vice President. The content of these options are as yet unclear. What has been mentioned is having several Vice Presidents, who serve a shorter term; President serving full time on the board, not having another position in "normal life"; or restructuring the board totally to include more non-team related positions. A proposal to this avail will be made to the next General Assembly, GA 2009.

Legal status

The Steering Committee will look into attaining a legal status for the EMA. This comes with several benefits: being able to have a bank account, sign legal documents, being able to cooperate with other organisations that require a legal status to do so like other student run organisations and such. As it comes with several requirements and is not so easily set up, we will carefully look into it and request advice from relevant partners.

Funding

One of the main challenges of the future will be how to organise the funding of the EMA. As yet, the EMA is funded by the European Commission as part of Erasmus Mundus Action 4 - Enhancing the Attractiveness of European Higher Education. The second Erasmus Mundus proposal runs till 2013; in EMII, support for EMA has been requested from the European Parliament by the European Commission. After that, no financial support is guaranteed, however, neither negated. As this is a critical point to the development of the EMA, this will feature on the agenda of the Steering Committee for next term. Several options will need to be looked into, including financial contributions by EMA members, either to the association or to events that they attend. This is not to say that the EMA plans to ask contributions from its members on short term. We feel that the EMA should have a bit more time to grow and create visible added value to her members, before we can ask for member contributions. However, as mentioned above, it is the responsibility of the Steering Committee to devise an EMA structure and set up that is maintainable in the future. Member contribution should be considered as one of the options.

Budget has already proven an issue in for instance the Liaison Group meeting, where due to budget constraints a limited amount per participant could be reimbursed so that in effect only participants currently residing in the EU could attend. This point has been taken very seriously by the Steering Committee. EMA is fully aware of the difficulties that a limited budget for EMA events creates for EMA members who reside outside the EU. Fair representation of different nationalities and global regions is of the utmost importance to the EMA. However, as budget constraints also need to be taken into account, those and other aspects will need to be balanced when considering which EMA member can realistically attend EMA events. We are aware that due to budget constraints, EMA members, EU and non-EU nationality, but currently still residing in EU, are more likely to attend EMA activities in Europe than EMA members residing outside EU. Distance will always be a factor that increases travel costs. We therefore would like to support EMA activities outside the EU, and will be supportive to regional chapters being set up in the different regions of the world.

EMMC alumni associations and EMA chapters

The EMA would like to focus for the next year on contacts with and between EMMC alumni associations and EMA chapters, and stimulating the set up of new alumni associations and chapters. The SC hopes that for next year these subgroups of the EMA will develop to be strong elements in the institutional framework of the EMA. The Steering Committee has looked into viable ways of sustaining the efforts of both EMA subgroups; to our greatest regret, budget constraints are quite considerate. However, proposals can be made through the Small Scale events fund of the Conference team, and the Steering Committee hopes to secure some funding for the chapters through the EC.

For chapters, the SC is looking into offering the following support, with the caveat that this depends on the support of the EC and funding, and that this proposal is still a draft:

- Space on the internet, part of the EMA website
- Email accounts for board members, possibly extended to active members
- The funding of events via the EMA would be only on reimbursements of costs. A request for funding should be put forward to the President of the EMA, who in discussion with the Steering Committee will decide on the proposal. Each chapter can request a maximum amount of 1000 euro per fiscal year (July to June), without a guarantee that chapters will be granted 1000 euro per year. Allocations depend on the quality and feasibility of proposals.

Note: the funding depends on funding for the EMA by the EC, which has not come through yet.

Note 2: the Steering Committee is discussing to fund a maximum of 70% per proposal, to stimulate initiators to look for other funds too.

- The proposal needs to stipulate the character of the event/meeting/etc, the added value to the EMA and regional chapter and an estimation of costs including 10% extra for flexibility.
- Chapters can also put in requests through the Small Scale Events fund under EMA Conferences.
- Contact person for regional chapters is the President or the Vice President, depending on the adjustment of the latter position.

For EMMC alumni associations, for next year only IT support is envisioned, but the possibilities of an extension of support will be looked into. The Steering Committee hopes that several EMMC alumni associations can find each other through the EMA Community and set up joint initiatives like conferences or other events. Those events would possibly qualify for funding under the Small Scale Events fund.

Contacts with EMA members

The Steering Committee would also like to focus on contacts with members. The active members of the EMA, including the Steering Committee, should be more visible on the EMA community. The Country Representatives initiative should also provide a valuable instrument to reach out to EMA members. More on the Country Representatives can be found in the Jobs team report and the Promotions team report.

A second point is the transparency of Steering Committee work to EMA members. A special section on the EMA community will be opened where minutes of all SC meetings can be found. Second, EMA members are allowed to request items to be put on the agenda by making a request to the president; these items will be treated with preference.

IFISO network

The Steering Committee hopes to intensify their relations with the other International Student Organisations through the IFISO network (www.ifiso.org). The first contacts are very promising, and a further development of these contacts will be very beneficial to the members of the EMA. We especially look forward to setting up initiatives with our first Partner Organisation, Erasmus Student Network (ESN).

Policy and quality assessment involvement

The EMA would like to continue to contribute to the development of the Erasmus Mundus programme and the conditions of Erasmus Mundus students and graduates. We have already taken part in the Commission's Quality Assessment Exercise and given our input to the European Parliament's deliberation of the Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 proposal (see above on page 9, and the EMA EMII proposal). We hope to take part in more such initiatives in the future and will therefore actively seek such possibilities.

To further elaborate the initiatives that the Steering Committee is considering to undertake: the EMA will work to have a representative in the selection board of masters and doctoral programmes for Erasmus Mundus 2009-2013 and we will follow the process of the proposed European 'blue card' for skilled immigrants very closely.



Addendum: President's activities

Overview of activities of EMA president, to be shared with the Vice President

- SC meetings (planning, agenda, minutes)
- SC handover weekend (same)
- Liaison Group meeting (same)
- Coordination of General Assembly, together with Service Provider
- External policy issues (as for instance EMII)
- Be informed of other EMA activities, as for instance Quality Assessment EM
- Focus on general EMA issues: mission statement, future of EMA, legal status
- Addressing member queries
- Keeping an overview of EMA activities
- Signaling overlapping initiatives
- Budget overview, together with Service Provider
- Contacts with European Commission
- Contacts with European Parliament
- Other external contacts (IFISO, other)
- Main liaison with Service Provider
- Representation at several events
- Helping out any other SC member that needs an extra informed hand (as for instance Statute, internal policies, promotion, and a little with jobs, country reps)
- In general, providing feedback to all EMA activities when requested, proofread drafts, give advice, attend meetings, etc.
- Writing for the Magazine
- Writing for the Newsletter
- Contacts with EMA Chapters
- Contacts with EMMC Alumni associations

