

Minutes of N-AERUS General Assembly Meeting on Saturday 17th May, 2003 at the University of Paris

Chairman: Michael Mattingly

Secretary: Deborah Bryceson

Attendance: Serge Allou, Adrian Atkinson, Marcello Balbo, Erhard Berner, Rosana Boulosa, Alison Brown, Christopher Cripps, Forbers Davidson, Emanuela de Menna, Alain Durand-Lasserve, Silva Ferretti, Marc Gosse, Peter Gotsch, Marie Huchzermeyer, Paul Jenkins, Marianne Kjellen, Wilbard Kombe, Volker Kreibich, Amitabh Kundu, Ilda Lourenco-Lindell, Marie-Therese Manchotte, Jurgen Oestereich, Margarita Pacheco, Andrea Parisi, Vittorio Piovesan, Brigida Proto, Carole Rakodi, Jean-Francois Tribillon, Mariken Vaa

1. N-AERUS Publications

Points:

Publication of Leuven Conference Papers – These have not been published as a book but many have been published in various places. Some have appeared on a CD-ROM compiled by DPU.

General Availability of N-AERUS papers - All the conference papers from all the N-AERUS conferences of the past are available on the N-AERUS website. It was argued that in many cases this affords greater accessibility than if they were published in a book that is time-consuming to compile and often of limited circulation.

Discussion

Some people felt that efforts must be made to try to avoid plagiarism by making sure any papers on the website are in a pdf format. It was pointed out that this precaution did not preclude people making copies of it. It was felt that selectivity should be exercised and only the papers of quality relevant to the conference theme should be included on the website. However, there is a problem of retaining of the commitment of the editorial committee if it takes up too much time.

2. N-AERUS Activities 2001-03

Points

1. Liz Riley and Michael Mattingly served as coordinators. Liz Riley maintained the website and notice board every 3 months, but could not handle registration of new members. She has now left DPU and has discontinued with this N-AERUS work. Silva Ferretti has been running the website. So too Michael Mattingly's role as coordinator is ending. Silva Ferretti can no longer carry the burden of maintaining the website. Thus this team is handing over its responsibility.
2. Given its administrative constraints, N-AERUS has had no capacity to keep its membership list up-to-date. It is felt that a membership fee should not be charged because N-AERUS is above all a network. However more effort has to be placed on systematizing and updating the membership list.
3. N-AERUS has been active in an advisory capacity. Carole Rakodi briefed the meeting on N-AERUS's activities related to serving on the Steering Committee for the Campaign for Good Governance. Carole Rakodi produced a draft proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of tools to monitor urban governance that has been presented to UN

Habitat for their consideration. Also there has been discussion of research priorities. The problem that N-AERUS has in participating in the Steering Committee is that it is the only unfunded agency and it represents the global research community (not just Europe) as it is the only research body on the SC.

Decision

1. Resolve to reconstruct the N-AERUS membership list to facilitate future networking and fundraising.
- 2.

Action

1. Carole Rakodi will circulate her draft report to any N-AERUS members who request it.

3. N-AERUS's Professional Status and Funding

Points

1. There was a failure to register N-AERUS under international law in Belgium. It was suggested that an alternative would be to register it in Switzerland.
2. A N-AERUS meeting in November 2002 was aimed at formulating a European Research Group in order to procure in the first instance French funding. Alain Durand-Lasserve took responsibility for this and his efforts are greatly appreciated. There should be greater devolution of responsibility for fundraising.

Discussion

Some criticized that N-AERUS's informal structure and absence of legal recognition is an impediment to the body's influence and ability to attract funds (except for the European Science Foundation). Other felt that the networking function of N-AERUS was sufficient.

4. May 2003 Follow-up

Discussion

1. Some asked if there was any plan for publishing the May 2003 conference papers. It was suggested that volunteer editors were welcome. Jugen Oesterich volunteered to have a special issue of *Triialogue* carry the conference papers but he needed two other volunteer editors. Amitabh Kundu offered to facilitate the publication of an edited collection of the book with a publisher in India, but the distribution would have to be the responsibility of N-AERUS.
2. Marcello Balbo offered to take on coordination of N-AERUS and act as convenor of N-AERUS on the condition that future conferences will take place regularly once a year with or without funded translation facilities. All papers will appear on the website in their original language. This is in view of the difficulties of the past in getting such funding. In response to expressed concerns about language, it was stressed that efforts would be made to get translation funding but if that failed alternative informal translations would be provided so everyone could comprehend the proceedings. Also he wished to operate with a small core group of about 5 people and rejected the need for a larger or geographically representative body between the steering committee and the general membership.
3. Regarding future directions of N-AERUS an array of views, sometimes contradictory, were expressed: N-AERUS should have statutes and be more formalized. N-AERUS

should not let lack of resource availability be a barrier to continued activities. N-AERUS's membership will continue to be open and hopefully expand. There should be avoidance of an elite culture in the group with responsibility and voice limited to the more academically senior members. N-AERUS needs to provide opportunities for its younger members. N-AERUS uses very fragmented space for communication and its thus very flexible and creative and should continue to reach out. The organization needs to look for funding to bring Southern partners to its conferences and N-AERUS members should invite their Southern partners to the next conference.

Action

1. Alain Durand Lasserre will update the list of N-AERUS participants and ensure that he receives the final version of everyone's papers and the reports from Working Group 1 and 2.
2. A selection of conference papers will be published in a special issue of *Dialogue* with Jurgen Oesterich, Christopher Cripps, Marc Gosse, Alain Durand-Lasserre and Volker Krebisch involved as editors.
3. Daniel Vettorato will become N-AERUS's new webmaster based in Venice.
4. Marcello Balbo's offer to become N-AERUS's coordinator/convenor was heartily accepted and he has been given the mandate to organize the administration of the group as he sees fit, including the selection of core group members.
5. Marcello Balbo proposes that the next N-AERUS conference will be in Barcelona in September 2004 at the time of the Second World Urban Forum on the theme of 'Urban Diversity'. The fallback to organizing a conference there would be to have at Housing Development and Management (HDM) Lund University, which promised a significant financial and logistic support for organising the conference.
6. Marcello called on all members for theme proposals for the next N-AERUS conference

5. European Research Group

Good progress was made in attracting funding from various institutions in Europe. The CNRS might possibly contribute up to Euro 10,000 per year during 4 years if the ERG scientific programme was to be approved by the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities. A survey carried out in September 2002 indicated that up to Euro 25,000 counterpart funds could be mobilised yearly from other research institutions in Europe : ISAF-La Cambre-Brussels, ISS-The Hague, DPU-London, IUAV-Venice, TU-Berlin, LDM-Lund, the Universities of Dortmund, Darmstadt, Edinburgh have expressed interest. However in the meantime the CNRS has experienced a 30% cut which jeopardizes the original promise. N-AERUS will have to define a research theme which is broad but not too bland. Alain Durand-Lasserre and Marc Gosse have been mandated to follow up the ERG project on behalf of N-AERUS .

6. Formal Vote of Thanks

A formal vote of thanks of the assembly was extended to Silva Ferrtti, Alain Durand-Lasserre and Michael Mattingly for all their past efforts on behalf of N-AERUS. Marcello Balbo and Daniele Vettorato received the gathering's good wishes and support for the road ahead.

The meeting began at 10:30 am and was concluded at 12:45.