



European Master in Law and Economics (EMLE)

# Programme report

**Transnational European evaluation project (TEEP II)**





ENQA

---

TEEP

II

---

European Master in Law and Economics (EMLE)

# Programme report

**Transnational European evaluation project (TEEP II)**





Education and Culture

## DG Education and Culture

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission in the framework of the Socrates programme. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

ISBN 952-5539-10-5 (PDF)

ISSN 1458-1051

This is one of the three programme reports of the Transnational European Evaluation Project II (TEEP II).

The present report can be downloaded from the ENQA website at <http://www.enqa.eu/pubs.lasso>

© European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education 2006, Helsinki

This publication may be photocopied or otherwise reproduced without permission of the publisher.

Cover design and page layout: Eija Vierimaa

Helsinki, Finland, 2006



# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 TEEP II project.....	4
1.2 TEEP II methodology .....	4
1.3 Methodology used in the evaluation of EMLE .....	5
<b>2. Programme description.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Evaluation .....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	8
3.2 Organisation and management.....	8
3.3 Programme and programme delivery .....	12
3.4 Quality assurance.....	15
<b>4. Conclusions and recommendations .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Annex I – Timetable of site visits.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Annex II – Feedback letter from EMLE .....</b>	<b>21</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 TEEP II project

This report forms part of the second Transnational European Evaluation Project (TEEP II), undertaken by the European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

The project aims to contribute to the development of a method for the external evaluation of joint programmes and to the process of development of joint degrees in the European context. It does so by evaluating the organisation and management, level and content, and quality assurance systems of three Erasmus Mundus Masters<sup>1</sup> programmes:

- Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management (Euro-Aquae)
- European Master of Arts in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies (CoMundus)
- European Master in Law and Economics (EMLE).

The present report deals specifically with the EMLE programme. Ideally, it should be read in conjunction with the programme reports on Euro-Aquae and CoMundus and with the methodological report.

## 1.2. TEEP II methodology

The TEEP II project is based on a peer review methodology that involves:

1. The testing of a common methodology and common criteria;
2. The selection of three joint Masters programmes wishing to participate in the project;
3. A self-evaluation exercise by each of the programme teams;
4. The preparation of a self-evaluation report by each of the programme teams;
5. A visit by an international panel of experts (including both subject area and quality assurance experts and a student) to discuss the self-evaluation report and gather additional information;
6. The preparation of an evaluation report by each of the panels and feedback from each of the programme consortia;
7. The preparation of a summary report on the methodology used and lessons learned;
8. A contribution to the establishment of a methodology shared at the European level.

The project is conducted by six member agencies of ENQA: National Agency for Higher Education (HSV, Sweden), Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, UK), The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), Comité National d'Évaluation (CNÉ, France), Agency for the Quality Assurance in the Catalan

---

<sup>1</sup> The Erasmus Mundus programme is a co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education which promotes the European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world. It supports European top-quality Masters courses and enhances the visibility and attractiveness of European higher education in third countries. It also provides EU-funded scholarships for third country nationals participating in these Masters courses, as well as scholarships for EU-nationals studying in third countries.

University System (AQU, Catalonia) and Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC). HSV coordinates the project assisted by the TEEP II management group and the ENQA secretariat. The project receives financial support from the European Commission.

The agency representatives form pairs, each of which is involved in the evaluation of one programme.

The project management group has developed a framework for the evaluation, based on:

- The criteria used in the preceding TEEP I project;
- The generic reference points for Masters degrees suggested by the Joint Quality Initiative (the so called Dublin descriptors);
- The “Golden Rules” for new joint Masters programmes established by the European University Association;
- The generic competences developed within the TUNING project.
- Criteria and regulations that exist within national contexts.

The criteria can broadly be divided into three categories: organisation and management, programme and programme delivery and quality assurance. These form the basis for the evaluation presented in chapter 3 of this report.

### **1.3. Methodology used in the evaluation of EMLE**

The evaluation of the EMLE programme was coordinated by HSV and NVAO. A starting point was the putting together of an expert panel consisting of a pool of five subject experts, two students and four quality assurance experts, as follows:

Subject experts:

- Michael Faure, Academic Director, Professor, Maastricht European Institute for Transnational Legal Research
- Eva Jansson, Professor of Economics, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
- Wolfgang Mincke, Professor, Römermann Rechtsanwälte Hannover
- Kalle Määttä, Professor of Law and Economics, University of Joensuu
- Paul Periton, Professor, Head of Centre for Academic Standards and Quality, Nottingham Trent University

Students:

- Vladimir Bastidas, Ph.D. student, Stockholm University
- Stephan Neetens, Ph.D. student, Katholieke Leuven Universiteit

Quality assurance experts:

- Axel Aerden, NVAO
- Mark Frederiks, NVAO
- Sara Karlsson, HSV
- Staffan Wahlén, HSV

Sara Karlsson acted as programme secretary and as such kept an overview of the self-evaluation, site visit and report writing stages of the evaluation.

Most panel members and some EMLE representatives took part in the TEEP II launching conference held in Stockholm in March 2005. This provided an opportunity not only for panel members to communicate the aims of the project, but also for programme representatives to express their expectations of the same. This resulted in agreement that the emphasis in the project would be on the joint delivery of the

programme and the quality assurance system attached to this. Because the EMLE programme had already undergone numerous quality controls, it was deemed not fruitful to look into the detail of content, such as textbooks and syllabi. Rather, the expert panel would explore the goals and targets that the programme had set for itself and the methods used to achieve these goals.

After the conference, a self-evaluation exercise was carried out by a self-evaluation group of the EMLE programme, consisting of representatives from the individual partner institutions. A self-evaluation report was submitted to the programme secretary on 25 May 2005.

Site visits were carried out in June (Rotterdam and Aix-Marseille), September (Gent) and October (Hamburg and Bologna) 2005. The panel chose to visit Rotterdam, the coordinating institution of the Erasmus Mundus consortium, first. The timing of the other site visits was determined by practical considerations.

During the assessment of the programme the entire group of experts was considered as one assessment panel. They had online discussions before each site visit. But for each visit, a selection of the whole group, consisting of two subject experts, one student and two quality assurance experts<sup>2</sup>, made up a site panel<sup>3</sup>. They then shared their conclusions with the whole group in order to preserve the general overview.

In preparation for the Rotterdam visit, the panel compiled a list of questions which formed an interview guide for the various sessions. Modified versions (taking into account the specifics of each partner institution) of this list were used at the other sites. In all cases, the panel interviewed the local coordinator/s, teaching staff and student and/or alumni representatives. In Rotterdam, Aix-Marseille and Bologna, the panel also had meetings with senior management (rector, vice-rector and/or other central function) of the institution.

The main purpose of the site visits was to view the EMLE programme from different angles and thus gain an understanding of the consortium as a whole. The present report is the result of this process. In addition, the panel felt that some matters specific to individual partner institutions merited a separate response. Therefore, it was agreed that individual (1–2 page) feedback letters would be sent to the institutions after each site visit. The letters were addressed to the local coordinator/s, with a recommendation to share it with colleagues within the network and within the university.

A first draft of this report was written by the programme secretary and submitted to the panel members for comments on 1 December. On 15 December, a second draft was circulated within the TEEP II management group for cross reading. Then on 16 January 2006 a third draft was submitted to EMLE representatives for comments. EMLE representatives also had the opportunity, e.g. in connection with the concluding conference held in Stockholm on 4–5 May, to comment on the project at large. Such reflections are included in the methodological report.

---

<sup>2</sup> The panel composition for each site visit can be found in Annex I.

<sup>3</sup> A site secretary from either HSV or NVAO was in charge of logistics and contacts with the re-ceiving institution.

## 2. Programme description

The EMLE programme started in 1990 as the Erasmus Programme in Law and Economics at the universities of Rotterdam, Gent, Oxford and Paris IX. Since then, the number of partner universities has increased continually and the network now comprises ten teaching centres within the EU: Rotterdam, Gent, Hamburg, Bologna, Aix-Marseille, Manchester, Madrid, Linköping, Stockholm and Vienna. The programme also has links with universities in Israel and the United States. In 2004, EMLE was selected by the European Commission as an Erasmus Mundus programme. However, for reasons related to differences in national legislation not all partners of the EMLE programme are members of the Erasmus Mundus consortium<sup>4</sup>.

The programme covers one academic year, subdivided into three terms, with courses starting in October and ending in June. In the first term, courses are offered at the universities of Rotterdam, Hamburg and Bologna while in the second term, courses are offered at Gent, Hamburg or Bologna. In the third term there is a range of courses and thesis topics to choose between and courses are offered at the above-mentioned universities and in addition, at Aix-Marseille, Madrid, Manchester, Linköping/Stockholm and Vienna.

The programme is structured so as to give students basic courses in the first term, core courses covering the economic analysis of law in the second term and specialised courses in the third term. In order to make law students more familiar with basic economic reasoning some courses are more economic in orientation. Some courses deal with comparative law in order to internationalise the legal background of the students. Most courses deal directly with the economic analysis of branches of private, public, international and European law. All courses are taught through English. (Theses may also be written in the third term local language provided this is not the student's mother tongue.)

On completion of the programme, students are awarded double or multiple degrees i.e. an official degree from every partner university where they have spent a term. They also receive an informal EMLE certificate, following the standards of the Diploma Supplement.

---

<sup>4</sup> This currently applies to Stockholm, Linköping and Madrid.

## 3. Evaluation

### 3.1 Introduction

This evaluation is divided into three sections: organisation and management, programme and programme delivery and quality assurance. Each section starts with a list of the criteria used, followed by a body of text which includes descriptive as well as evaluative statements. Overall conclusions and recommendations are found in chapter 4.

### 3.2 Organisation and management

#### CRITERIA

- The aims of the programme are clearly defined.
- The processes of developing the aims and choosing partners for the programme are interconnected.
- The management of all participating institutions supports the goals and objectives of the programme. The programme is fully recognised by all participating institutions.
- Academic and administrative aspects of the programme are adequately staffed and funded. A sustainable funding strategy is in place.
- Mechanisms for cooperation, including degree of institutionalisation, role of each partner, financial management, communication system etc, are spelled out and understood by all parties.
- Responsibilities are clearly defined and shared amongst participating institutions. Lead roles and responsibilities are identified.
- Information about the programme is easily accessible to students and others.
- Arrangements for reaching out to and receiving guest students and scholars are in place, e.g. in terms of accommodation, mentor schemes, language courses, activities aiming at social integration, and assistance with visas and social insurance.
- The infrastructure, e.g. library and other information sources, premises and equipment, meets the needs of the programme.
- A language policy is in place.

#### AIMS

According to the self-evaluation report, the aim of the EMLE programme is to provide students with advanced knowledge in Law and Economics. It sets out to give a general legal and economic background to students who already have a first degree in either or both of these disciplines. The main thrust of the programme is scientific/academic. An expected learning outcome is that graduates will be able to perform scientific research in interdisciplinary research teams.

Part of the reason for the establishment of EMLE was to ensure continuity of Law and Economics research into coming generations. It originated from a network called the European Association of Law and Economics and has developed thanks to enthusiastic researchers based in different countries.

The programme also has professional aims to the extent that it seeks to prepare students for taking up posts in e.g. multinational law firms, national governmental bodies and international organisations.

The panel is convinced that generally the academic aims of the programme are clear to, and supported by, coordinators and teaching staff at all partner institutions. From the outset, the development of Law and Economics as a research discipline has been seen as an important cause by the teachers, who try to instil the same enthusiasm in the students. The network was, indeed, first established as a cooperative undertaking

of scholars and partners were chosen on the basis of research capacity. This strategy seems to have rendered some success. Many of the students whom the panel met expressed an interest in pursuing an academic career in Law and Economics and in the course of the programme, they also appeared to have developed a strong sense of group identity rooted in this field. Indeed, some students have applied and been admitted to Ph.D. programmes in Law and Economics.

In terms of the professional aims, the panel notes that some partner institutions have introduced features such as guest lectures and study visits to law firms, which are highly appreciated by the students. However, there appears to be no systematic programme-wide approach to the integration of theory and practice. The panel urges the programme to develop contacts with stakeholders.

## **RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT**

The self-evaluation report indicates that the programme enjoys the institutional approval of the participating universities, all being recognised institutions under national law. In several countries, universities have full autonomy to organise Masters courses, provided that they follow the applicable national rules and guidelines. In countries where specific approval by a public authority is required, the necessary authorisations have been obtained.

Nonetheless, the consortium has come across some obstacles with regard to recognition. One example is the ambition to issue a joint degree rather than double or multiple ones, which has, so far, proved impossible due to national regulations. Further, the fact that there is no mutual recognition of accreditation systems in Europe has meant that EMLE has had to deal with different, sometimes contradictory, standards in different countries. The rules of the European Commission concerning Erasmus Mundus (e.g. relating to joint admission) are thought to complicate matters further.

The panel notes that the consortium has been proactive in ensuring that the programme is recognised in all countries where courses are provided. Students appear to be well informed about the award/degree system. Interestingly, many students seem to appreciate receiving multiple degrees, not the least the Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree which is held in high esteem in many European countries. Introducing a joint degree is therefore likely to be not just a matter of overcoming legal obstacles.

The panel concurs with the view that differences in legal systems and accreditation standards are obstacles to the running of a programme of this type. Rather than specific to EMLE, these are issues common to all joint degrees and as such are discussed at some length in the methodological report.

Further, the panel observes that the level of internal support for the programme varies from one partner institution to another. Because Erasmus Mundus is well known within university administrations, EMLE receiving this grant seems to have had a positive effect. The representatives from senior managements that the panel met expressed much interest and pride in the programme. In some locations this verbal commitment has been transformed into concrete investments at the local level. In others, this has not happened. The panel is concerned that in the latter cases, the absence of firm agreements on e.g. administrative support and teacher contributions, too much comes down to the enthusiasm of individual teachers. This in turn may be an obstacle to the sustainability of the programme.

## **MECHANISMS FOR CO-OPERATION**

The importance of maintaining effective coordination within the network is emphasised in the self-evaluation report. This includes frequent communication and meetings to discuss teaching matters. Professors from the different teaching centres meet at least three times per year in order to exchange views on course content. One of these meetings is primarily devoted to course coordination and allows in-depth coordination e.g. on lectures. If necessary, extra meetings are organised.

The consortium has a board consisting of local coordinators from the partner universities. One board member is appointed director of the EMLE programme and another is appointed Erasmus Mundus coordinator. The director is responsible for the internal affairs of the programme while the Erasmus Mundus coordinator is responsible for all matters to do with the Erasmus Mundus status of the programme e.g. contacts with the European Commission and with non-European universities, students and scholars. At present, the former task lies with the University of Hamburg and the latter with the University of Rotterdam. The role of the local coordinators, then, is to ensure that local course delivery is in line with decisions taken by the board. Minutes of board meetings provide detailed specification of tasks to be carried out by each partner institution.

The panel is pleased with the mechanisms for cooperation within the network. Clearly, the respective roles and responsibilities of the EMLE director, Erasmus Mundus coordinator and local coordinators are spelled out and understood by all parties. Each partner institution adheres to its commitments and does its share of the work, which indicates a high level of trust. There is a commitment to the joint running of the programme, manifested e.g. in the efforts to develop course content. Frequent communication and meetings appear to be effective means towards developing the visions as well as the quality of the programme.

Holding three meetings per year, regarded by the consortium as the absolute minimum, the panel would in fact describe as ambitious. By adding travel and accommodation costs to the regular administrative budget, it is also rather costly. The self-evaluation report indicates that the programme depends not only on partner institutions guaranteeing the costs of coordination but also on private sponsors providing financial assistance. The panel supports the consortium's efforts to come up with a sustainable funding strategy. Funding cannot be based on student fees alone. While future fee increases may provide greater incomes, the projected expansion may lead to greater costs too.

Another current challenge is the establishment of a joint admission structure, which is a requirement within the Erasmus Mundus structure. This is a difficult issue e.g. because different countries have different views on prior degrees. The panel is convinced that this and similar issues will be resolved through the cooperation framework.

## **INFORMATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

According to the self-evaluation report, the website is the main tool for informing prospective students about EMLE. The website contains information on courses and lecturers as well as links to all partner universities and to specialised Law and Economics websites. The programme is also advertised in newspapers and scholarly journals and through posters and a brochure.

From the site visits, the panel has gained the impression that most of the marketing of the programme is done informally, e.g. through alumni and teachers spreading the word. Students' reasons for taking up the programme seem to vary quite a lot. Many appear to be attracted by the European dimension. For students from non-EU countries, the fact that the programme has Erasmus Mundus status may in future become a determining factor, but this is not yet apparent.

Some students, upon starting, do not seem to have a clear understanding of the aims of the programme or the purpose of Law and Economics. Their choices in terms of specialisation etc. may therefore be somewhat arbitrary. The panel is of the view that more effort could usefully be spent on developing the information and marketing system. With increased fees, this will probably become a necessity.

In terms of student support services, the self-evaluation report identifies accommodation as a particular problem. The site visits confirm this and the panel notes that many students have difficulties finding accommodation for the short period of three months, in some locations especially. Normally the problem is solved but students may have to make do with temporary, and therefore more expensive, accommodation. The accommodation situation varies quite a bit from one location to another. In some places, it poses no major problem.

The panel also finds that administrative support structures vary from one partner institution to another, much depending on the level of support that the programme receives from the university as a whole. In some instances, administrative services are impressive. Students receive handbooks, brochures and information sheets well in advance of arriving and are thus able to organise accommodation, visas etc. in their own time. In other cases, partner institutions have not invested the necessary administrative resources (such as secretarial back up). As a consequence the local coordinator may end up spending a lot of time attending to last-minute administrative matters, which also take up valuable study time for the students.

The self-evaluation report furthermore points out that the EMLE programme is quite expensive. Private means are normally required. While the Erasmus Mundus programme provides generous grants to non-European students, no support at all is given to European students. There is a real worry that this may lead to inequalities within the student groups and also that it may prevent some students, notably from the new member states and the accession countries, from participating. The panel shares this concern. Judging from the site visits, there are no signs so far that the atmosphere within the student group has been affected, but this may still change. As this dilemma is common to all Erasmus Mundus programmes, it is discussed in more detail in the methodological report.

In terms of infrastructure, the self-evaluation report indicates that all teaching centres have at their disposal modern classrooms including necessary equipment. Students have access to restaurants and computer rooms. According to the self-evaluation report, all libraries are well equipped with scientific books and journals on Law and Economics. Students can also access the library catalogue online and order books or articles online.

For practical reasons, the panel did not have an opportunity to do a tour of the learning resources at each partner institution. The general impression, however, is that the infrastructure is satisfactory. Those universities that hold special library collections in Law and Economics seem to offer particularly good services.

According to the self-evaluation report, many teaching centres provide optional language courses, in order to promote the use of European languages and the knowledge of European culture. All EMLE courses, however, are taught through English. The thesis has to be written in either English or the third term local language, provided that the latter is not the student's mother tongue. The vast majority of theses are written in English.

Because of the short duration of each term and because the language of tuition and communication is English, the panel believes that it will be hard to achieve a link between the language courses and the EMLE programme. Nevertheless, e.g. for the sake of being able to integrate with other students at the host university, it is important that language courses are available. The panel notes that in locations where administrative support is a general problem, students do not appear to receive information about the possibility of attending language courses.

The panel would finally like to suggest exploring ways of setting up an integrated programme wide electronic learning platform. Students entering the programme and moving round in Europe would gain an important educational tool. It could furthermore serve a way to disseminate information to the student body as a whole. Although spread across Europe, the programme would thus be able to achieve a programme wide community of learners.

### 3.3. Programme and programme delivery

#### CRITERIA

- The programme, through its joint delivery, provides an added value as compared to similar programmes delivered at national level.
- Teacher qualifications are sufficient and appropriate to the aims of the programme. Opportunities for staff development are provided. The programme is linked to research activities and/or recognised professional standards.
- The learning environment, including teaching and learning methods and assessment methods, favours the aims of the programme. Assessment methods are common to all parts of the programme or, at a minimum, agreed by all partner institutions.
- The programme ensures that all of its expected competences/learning outcomes are achieved.

#### ADDED VALUE

The self-evaluation report identifies the international environment as the factor that gives added value to EMLE, as compared to similar programmes delivered at national level. The main advantage is one of comparative analysis. Rather than viewing their respective national legal systems in isolation, students taking part in the programme are able to compare different rules and evaluate alternative legal solutions using an economic methodology. Such comparisons are thought to contribute to a better understanding of the economic foundations of law, which may, according to the self-evaluation, ultimately form the basis of a common European law. This way, the programme forms part of a research agenda. The other added value of the programme, from a student's perspective, is believed to be cultural i.e. the opportunity to familiarise oneself with other cultures and languages in different legal and economic environments in Europe.

The panel certainly agrees with the notion that an international study environment contributes to personal development. Many of the students whom the panel met, spoke

with enthusiasm of the social and cultural advantages of studying in different countries. At the same time, the panel is conscious that the short study period of three months in each location makes interaction and exchanges with local students difficult.

As the panel has not looked into the detailed content of EMLE, it is difficult to assess the academic added value of the programme. Generally speaking, the panel sees merit in taking a comparative approach to the study of Law and Economics and believes that the number of partner institutions involved in EMLE as well as the variation in student backgrounds, work in favour of such comparisons. In the panel's opinion, however, the ambition to make sure that students get the same points of reference in both of the major fields in the course of one trimester remains a challenge.

Perhaps more important a rationale for an international programme is that it offers better and more wide-ranging prospects for specialisation than a national programme. In the case of EMLE, such specialisation primarily takes place in the third and final term. Once there, students appear to appreciate the chance to acquire new and advanced knowledge as well as analyse and reflect upon knowledge obtained in previous terms. Not all students, however, seem to make informed choices regarding their field of specialisation. While realising that students may have all sorts of, sometimes personal, reasons for opting for a particular location, the panel feels that more could be done to draw their attention to the specialisations on offer. Developing and highlighting specialisation in terms of content is not, in the view of the panel, in conflict with striving to harmonise other aspects of the programme such as course evaluation systems or assessment methods.

### **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND LINKS TO RESEARCH**

The self-evaluation report and appended CVs outline the qualifications and research activities of the teachers contributing to EMLE from the various partner institutions. The teachers who deliver core parts of the programme are experts in the Economic Analysis of Law and have relevant teaching experience. Many are also well-known scholars and have written textbooks in Law and Economics and regularly publish articles in scientific journals. Invited non-European scholars, too, have track records as Law and Economics researchers and teachers. Some partner institutions have research centres for Law and Economics and some have Ph.D. programmes. Recently, the universities of Bologna, Hamburg and Rotterdam agreed to establish a European Doctorate Programme in Law and Economics.

Within the programme, conscious efforts are made to ensure that students get acquainted with the methods of scientific research in Law and Economics. The yearly mid-term meeting of most of the professors and all of the students involved in the programme is used for this purpose, e.g. through a workshop at which working papers on various topics in Law and Economics are discussed. Working on the thesis is in itself an important opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with current research.

From the above, the panel is convinced that teacher qualifications are (more than) satisfactory and that the programme is closely linked to research activities. This clearly relates back to the ambitious academic aims of the programme. The fact that several EMLE graduates have moved on to PhD programmes in Law and Economics is an achievement in this regard.

## APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

According to the self-evaluation report, there is a common approach to teaching and learning methods within the programme. The need to harmonise the courses, those of the first term in particular, is addressed at meetings of the whole consortium. As a result, common readers have been introduced and there are plans to introduce common exams as well. A course evaluation form has been developed and is used by all partners. Action is taken on the basis of the outcome both within each institution and throughout the consortium. A joint grading system (1 – 10) has been in force from the start. The possible further need for harmonisation is a point of discussion.

In the panel's experience, the common readers are useful to students by providing an introduction to each subject area so that all students are able to grasp the common areas and get similar points of reference.

The panel further supports the consortium's efforts to increase the fairness and transparency in terms of assessment of students. As identified in the self-evaluation report and confirmed by the site visits, students sometimes have complaints about differences in grades between partner universities. Introducing a joint grading system is therefore a positive move. There is also good reason to keep discussing methods and benchmarks for assessing student performance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

Within the programme, attempts are made to strike a balance between traditional lectures and more participatory teaching and learning methods. Generally, lectures are thought to be the most efficient way to teach new concepts and provide the students with an overview of the main concepts, while active class participation (e.g. presentations of short papers or moot courts) is thought to contribute to critical and independent thinking. Interactive classes seem to be more common in the second and third term of the programme at some of the partner universities.

The panel agrees with the notion that teaching methods should be adjusted to suit the aims of each course. Judging from the site visits, students appear to appreciate the possibility for interaction offered primarily in the second and third term most of all. This type of learning experience seems well suited to a student group like that of EMLE, consisting of mature students with high academic capabilities. It should be noted though that a prerequisite for meaningful class interaction is to keep student numbers relatively low in individual classes. While not currently a problem, this may become an issue in future as the programme is set to expand.

Different partner universities have made different policy choices regarding teachers, e.g. whether each course is taught by at least two teachers (one from Law and one from Economics), or whether the teaching is done by a smaller number of teachers specialised in the Economic Analysis of Law. Rather than advocating harmonisation in this respect, the panel would view such differences as an asset to the programme. This way, each partner institution may work on its local strengths. It is worth pointing out, however, that if a partner institution opts for a model that involves a large number of teachers, a well-developed communication system is required so that everyone is aware of what everyone else is doing. During the site visits, the panel noted some problems in this respect.

Finally with regard to teaching and learning methods, the panel notes that some partner institutions have started using computer-based (Internet) learning platforms

to organise studies. As mentioned above, this could usefully be developed programme-wide throughout the consortium.

### 3.4. Quality assurance

#### CRITERIA

- The programme formulates and implements a joint quality assurance strategy/ies. Strategies may consider e.g. changes in student demand, external expectations, developments in teaching and learning, and new research areas.
- The programme develops mechanisms for follow-up and continuous improvement.
- Quality assurance practices involve students, staff and other stakeholders from all participating institutions.
- The programme evaluates whether its aims are met and standards upheld.

#### SYSTEMS FOR QUALITY CONTROL AND IMPROVEMENT

According to the self-evaluation report, EMLE is subject to a number of external as well as internal quality control systems. External control is mainly exercised through the respective country's recognition system. In some jurisdictions such as the Netherlands and Germany this entails relatively elaborate accreditation and/or evaluation processes. In other cases such as the UK the quality control of EMLE is integrated into the regular audit system.

From the above, the panel is aware that EMLE undergoes rigorous quality control. Presumably, this provides many valuable insights. At the same time, and as raised in the self-evaluation report, the multitude of control systems and, sometimes, contradictory standards, may also be obstacles to the day-to-day running of the programme. Furthermore, the national systems do not take into consideration the joint nature of the programme or the delivery of the programme in different partner universities. As EMLE shares this problem with other joint programmes, it is discussed in more detail in the methodological report.

Because they are the degree-awarding bodies, the individual partner institutions are responsible for quality. In effect, the main responsibility for the internal quality control of EMLE lies with the local coordinators. In this they are bound by national regulations and local university policies on quality assurance.

According to the self-evaluation report, centralisation of quality control can only be achieved through agreements among the partner institutions (and only if such agreements are not in conflict with national regulations). Indeed, the consortium has agreed on some mechanisms, such as a common grading system and a common evaluation system. The programme aims to identify shortcomings so that appropriate action may be taken both within each institution and throughout the consortium. As previously mentioned, the board meetings are important fora for discussing quality improvements. It is the board that decides what needs to be done to remedy any deficiencies that may be identified.

The fact that national legislation overrides central initiatives is, in the panel's view, a challenge to the development of a joint system. Nevertheless, part of working towards a joint degree should be the gradual build-up of a joint quality control system. The panel therefore supports the steps that the consortium has taken so far and is in favour of further initiatives in this direction and recommends that such an internal

quality assurance system should be transparent. This does not mean formalisation; it means that procedures and methodologies should be clear to everyone involved in the programme: students, teaching staff and programme coordinators. The apparent commitment to quality improvement as well as the well-established mechanisms for cooperation should pave the way for this. The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance would be an important tool in the development of such a system.

### **STUDENT FEEDBACK**

The self-evaluation report describes the common system in place for collating student feedback and for using it in the development of the programme. Students are asked to fill out evaluation forms for the individual courses. In order to facilitate comparison, the questionnaires are identical for all courses at all teaching centres. Questions mainly involve course content, teaching and organisation of studies (including practical matters such as accommodation). The outcome of the evaluations is discussed at board meetings, to which student representatives are invited to present their main points of view. In between board meetings, students also have the opportunity to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the programme through regular meetings with teachers.

According to the self-evaluation report, there are several examples of how inconsistencies reported by students have led to changes to the programme. One issue currently under consideration is the perceived difference between teaching centres with regard to the marking of exams.

The panel supports the efforts made by the consortium to strengthen student involvement in the programme. The harmonisation of course evaluations is commendable, as it will give better opportunities for comparison and, subsequently, quality development. While useful, feedback given by a small number of student representatives at board meetings cannot on its own fulfil this role. Similarly, the informal “open door” policy of direct student-teacher communication that the panel encountered during the site visits, means that students have plenty of opportunity to raise individual views and concerns, but it cannot replace formal systems. The panel has learnt from students that the demand for student representatives on the board is on the table and recommends that transparent programme wide procedures concerning student representation be considered.

The panel further notes that the consortium takes student feedback seriously in the sense that criticism and suggestions are discussed and action is taken. As a further step, more could usefully be done to inform the students of what changes have been made on the basis of their proposals or, should this be the case, the reasons why a certain suggestion could not be followed.

### **ALUMNI AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT**

From the site visits, the panel has learned that an EMLE alumni association has been established. Its activities include the publication of a journal and the organisation of an annual conference. A relatively recent construction, the alumni association is not yet linked in with the quality assurance activities of EMLE. The panel recommends that this should be taken into account in the further development of quality assurance.

With the exception of those students who move on to do a Ph.D. in Law and Economics, the consortium appears to have limited knowledge about former students and their careers. The panel therefore proposes that methods for reaching out to

alumni, e.g. through questionnaires, be developed and given a place in the quality assurance system. The alumni network, if successful, could play a part in this. The panel believes that establishing a system for follow-up of former students would be of great value to the programme. Not only could alumni provide views on whether the aims (academic and professional) of the programme are fulfilled, they could also act as ambassadors for the programme.

The panel is of the view that stakeholder input to the programme needs strengthening. At present, because there is no systematic involvement of stakeholders in the quality assurance process, there is a shortage of information on the programme's value to employers. Marketing of the programme and making it attractive to employers outside academia, the panel would regard as major challenges for the future.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

### **Concluding reflections**

In conclusion, EMLE is a well-run programme with many strong points. During the course of the project, the panel has been impressed by the enthusiasm displayed by teachers, coordinators and students alike, and also by the many achievements made in respect of quality development. Any reflections or recommendations that the panel makes should be seen as suggestions for further improvement only.

One of the prime strengths of EMLE, as the panel sees it, is the system for co-operation. This is built upon two, equally important, pillars: a shared dedication to the cause of developing Law and Economics as a discipline and a well-functioning communication system (including frequent meetings).

A solid link to current research and an ambitious approach to achieving the academic aims of the programme are other characteristics of EMLE. Conscious efforts are also made to establish joint quality assurance procedures, including the systematic collection of student feedback. The panel is supportive of these endeavours.

Harmonisation and specialisation are key themes for EMLE. The panel believes that the consortium is right to move towards increased harmonisation e.g. in the area of quality assurance. At the same time, it is important to make effective use of any specialisation that each university may have as this provides the programme with added value as compared to similar programmes delivered at national level.

As the panel sees it, the drive towards harmonisation is a way of dealing with providing the same programme to students from different backgrounds (Law or Economics, legal system, national background etc.) yet striving towards all students having the same, advanced level of knowledge at the end. The panel is conscious that this goal is hard to live up to, considering the relatively short duration of the programme. As a detailed analysis of content is outside the remit of this report, the panel will not get into a discussion on possible solutions to this dilemma. Nonetheless, it should be noted as a pertinent issue for discussion in the future as the student group is likely to become larger and possibly even more diverse.

Otherwise, many of the challenges facing EMLE, identified by the consortium itself as well as by the panel, are intrinsic to the running of joint programmes within the EU and Erasmus Mundus context. Current issues include coping with differences in legal systems and accreditation standards. In future, dealing with inequalities within the student group and other discrepancies arising from the scholarship rules of Erasmus Mundus, may pose additional problems. These and related issues are discussed at some length in the methodological report.

Another challenge relates to the professional aims of the programme and the involvement of stakeholders. As the panel sees it, this aspect may merit some further reflection. The panel is of the view that it is possible as well as desirable to give Law and Economics a practical application so as to prepare students for employment outside academia. A clear professional stance is likely to be of even greater importance in future as the programme is set to expand and its fees increase.

## Recommendations<sup>5</sup>

- In order to fulfil the professional aims of the programme, more thought could usefully be put into the systematic integration of theory and practice, and contacts with stakeholders.
- If/when the consortium introduces a joint degree, it may be important to ensure that it is well marketed and competitive e.g. in comparison with the national degrees of today.
- To secure the sustainability of the programme, long-term agreements on teacher contributions etc. should be sought with senior management at each partner institution.
- A sustainable funding strategy, taking into account the projected changes to the programme, should be developed.
- In order to attract new students from a wider social background (despite an increase in fees) and in order to assist them in making informed choices, more effort could usefully be spent on information provision.
- The third term specialisation provides an academic added value and therefore could be developed and highlighted further.
- The work towards developing a joint quality assurance system should continue and, if a joint degree is to be developed, be intensified.
- The consortium should set up transparent and programme wide procedures concerning student representation.
- Methods for involvement and reaching out to alumni, e.g. through systematic questionnaires, should be developed.
- Stakeholder input to the programme should be strengthened.
- An integrated electronic learning platform for EMLE should be considered.

A final point relates to the level of support that EMLE receives from senior management of the respective partner institutions. This appears to vary quite significantly from one institution to another. Where resources for dealing with administrative problems (to do with student accommodation or otherwise) are limited, students and local co-ordinators are put under unnecessary strain. To secure the sustainability of the programme, some partner institutions would therefore need to make more investments.

---

<sup>5</sup> The following recommendations concern matters over which the consortium may have some influence. General comments and reflections directed to the European Commission are included in the methodological report.

# Annex I.

## Timetable of site visits

SITE VISIT	TIME	VISITING PANEL MEMBERS
Erasmus University Rotterdam	13–14 June	Kalle Määttä Wolfgang Mincke Stephan Neetens Staffan Wahlén Axel Aerden (Site secretary)
University of Aix-Marseille	27–28 June	Michael Faure Wolfgang Mincke Vladimir Bastidas Mark Frederiks Sara Karlsson (Site secretary)
University Gent	19–20 Sept	Michael Faure Kalle Määttä Vladimir Bastidas Paul Periton Sara Karlsson (Site secretary)
University of Hamburg	10–11 Oct	Paul Periton Eva Jansson Stephan Neetens Staffan Wahlén (Site secretary)
University of Bologna	17–18 Oct	Michael Faure Wolfgang Mincke Stephan Neetens Axel Aerden Staffan Wahlén (Site secretary)

# Annex II. Feedback letter from EMLE



ENQA  
Emmi Helle  
Unioninkatu 20-22  
Havis Business Center (3<sup>rd</sup> floor)  
F1 – 00130 Helsinki  
Finland

**European Master Programme in Law & Economics**  
Erasmus Mundus Coordinator:  
Prof.dr. R.J. Van den Bergh

Erasmus Mundus Assistant Coordinator:  
Drs. W. Schreuders  
Tel. +31 10 4081606  
Fax +31 10 4089191  
E-mail Schreuders@frg.eur.nl  
Internet <http://www.emle.org>

Our Reference  
EMLE/2006/008/WS

Your Reference

Date  
June 8, 2006

Subject  
TEEP II project

Dear all,

In this letter, we provide some general comments on the TEEP II project and formulate a number of minor remarks concerning the Report on the EMLE Programme.

In our view, the greatest benefit of the TEEP II project is that there is now a general awareness across accreditation agencies that joint master programmes need joint quality assessment procedures. It should be avoided that programmes are subjected to a multitude of accreditation reviews in which each agency uses its own criteria. For this reason, we particularly welcome the proposal of the final methodological report according to which accreditation of joint master programmes will be done jointly by two accreditation agencies. Mutual recognition by other accreditation agencies of countries where parts of the joint master programme are offered is the most efficient solution to avoid an unnecessary multiplication of quality assessments.

The EMLE Programme will also profit from a number of suggestions for improvement, of which one has been implemented already: the election of official student representatives as a more formal way to organise student feedback, next to the other tools of quality assessment by students that are already used in the programme.

We are happy to inform you that we have no more major comments on the "EMLE Programme Report". Only some minor remarks concerning the EMLE Programme Report (draft 4 April 2006) are formulated below:

- p. 7, last sentence: "They also receive an informal EMLE certificate"; since the EMLE Graduation Ceremony of October 2005 this informal certificate has been adapted to the standards of the Diploma Supplement.
- p. 14, 3rd paragraph: "This yearly mid-term meeting of some professors and students...."; we would prefer to have this changed as follows: "This yearly mid-term meeting of most of the professors and of all students involved in the programme ....".
- p. 14, 5th paragraph, one of the last sentences: "The partners had also agreed on a joint grading system, which was now being applied". Unfortunately, this is not clear to us. We are using the same grades for all courses at all partner universities (1 - 10 for all courses; max. 30 per supervisor / per external examiner for the thesis); there are also plans to have a common





exam for some courses in the future. It is not clear what is meant by 'a joint grading system'; maybe this can be explained in the text.

- p. 20, recommendations: it seems advisable to give a number to all recommendations, instead of using the 'dots' or 'bullets' only; using numbers better enables us to refer to a particular recommendation in a discussion or in a written comment.

During the recent final conference in Stockholm we have made some remarks regarding the general "TEEP II project report" (draft 9 April 2006). The chairman of that session asked us to send these comments later on.

These comments concern the proposal made in par. 5.2.1 (pp. 35-38) regarding the methodology for evaluating joint master's degree programmes. Three different types of evaluations / models are presented there: A, B and C.

A: a part of a mandatory accreditation / evaluation process

B: a part of a voluntary evaluation / accreditation process

C: a part of a voluntary process for the purpose of enhancement

Apart from the fact that the purpose of C can be combined with the goals of A and/or B, there is some overlap in the methods. However, the differences between the three models presented are not totally clear.

In C it is written (p. 38): "... be carried out according to the principles described in B above AND sections 5.2.2 - 5.2.5...". This implies that C needs to address more specific issues than B; does it imply that C needs more specific requirements as A as well? And how does B compare to A? Are 5.2.2 - 5.2.5 not parts of the models A and B?

Our first impression is that a mandatory accreditation / evaluation procedure (= A) needs the most heavy evaluation of the three; a voluntary procedure for accreditation (= B) would be somewhat less heavy compared to A, but C - not mandatory AND not asking for any official accreditation at all - would be the least heavy procedure. However, the text at pp. 35-38, and especially the text at p. 38 directly at the start of the text on C, gives the opposite impression.

In our view, the three presented models (A, B and C) need more explanation, for example by using a table indicating clearly what are the parts of each of these specific models. This makes it easier to understand the differences and overlaps between the three models.

Hopefully the remarks made above are helpful. If you want to have additional clarifications on these remarks, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Finally, we wish to thank you for the organisation of the TEEP II project and the conferences in Stockholm in particular. It was a pleasure to participate and to work with you in this project.

Best regards,

On behalf of Roger Van den Bergh

Erasmus Mundus Coordinator EMLE Programme

Wicher Schreuders

Erasmus Mundus Assistant Coordinator EMLE Programme





EMLE programme report (TEEP II)  
PDF publication

ISBN 952-5539-10-5  
ISSN 1458-1051