

E.MAlumni – A Network for Human Rights and Democratisation

I am a Masteroni of the Year 2008/ 2009. I “served” as student rep and tried to keep our little Lido-cage with cameras (they must be somewhere there) free from major catastrophes. During this job I somehow started to identify with the Programme, but also with the idea of a lobby institution for human rights, some kind of “positive lobbyism”. That is why I came to talk to Florence Benoit-Rhomer and told her about my experiences in creating an alumni-network in Germany. I am member of the CSP Network for international Politics and Co-operation, which is also an alumni association of young academics who were part of a scholarship programme. The network has the same age-structure and interdisciplinarity. Those experiences showed me how much a structured coordination of alumni can not only help to keep contact, but also can engage in the actual political and academic discourse. Together we pushed for certain agendas and topics.

This is what I believe we could do in the field of human rights. The Alumni association should thus help us not only to keep the private contacts, or even make new contacts, but also to accumulate our voices and engage in the human rights discourse and its implementation. An organisation of human rights experts, who are spread around the world and over IGOs and NGOs could, in the long run, lobby for certain issues, topics, problems... within human rights.

In order to make my idea more clear I copied the project proposal, which I handed in with to of my colleagues to Florence Benoit-Rhomer last February. There you can read more specifically what I think should be done in the near future and in the long run. Some features have been created by the fabulous Christiano already, so just scratch them. And please read instead of “will” a “should”. Those are just my ideas. I believe, that the intranet can provide us with a very good infrastructure to make the decision processes as inclusive as possible. I think the president(s) are there for representation and coordination. The thematic decisions, activities, projects... they all have to come from all of us!

Now, why me?

- I would bring in my experience in managing and creating a network with the same age structure and interdisciplinarity (check csp-network.org, also in English)
- I am definitely enthusiastic about the idea
- I am a workaholic, with a special spleen for project management (do not ask why)

To give some examples what did I did as student representative with Claire:

- We wrote student guidelines (from students for students) in order to better prepare the arriving students and give them little hints and tricks for coping with lidonese life
- We drafted a curriculum revision with all our colleagues to give an input for a revision of the programme
- We organised tutorials for students (from students for students) with problems f.e.g. in EU law
- For sure we organised Parties, some which became legendary (for sure)

Project proposal

1. Objectives

Every year highly qualified human rights experts leave the E.MA programme. An Alumni organisation exists but fails to closely link Masteroni across the generations. Thus the Masteroni themselves but also EIUC and the EU Commission lack a sufficient database of contact details and current occupation of the Masteroni. The re-launch of the Alumni-organisation as an “**E.MA Alumni - Network**” should address those gaps with the following main objectives:

1.1. *Strengthen the linkage between former E.MA students*

One main objective is to strengthen the linkage between all Masteroni across all continents who work in all the spectrum of human rights projects from Non Governmental organisations to private companies through national Ministries and international organisations/ companies.

A strong linkage will enhance the international Human Rights work and enforce the standing of Human Rights through close cooperation of the Masteroni.

The Network will benefit from the various cultural and academic backgrounds after the E.MA programme and strengthen the visibility and thus the quality of the Masters around the world in an interdisciplinary manner.

1.2. *Database of Human Rights Experts and information-sharing*

The Network will serve as a database of and for all its members. Current occupation, areas of interest and place of residence can be shared between the members and with the EU Commission or the EUIC. The Network will thus provide external partners with available experts in the field of human rights and democratisation.

In addition to the Database, the Network will operate as an information-sharing platform. The Intranet as well as ad hoc email-lists will provide the members with job offers, lessons learned, topical publications and forthcoming initiatives. This will contribute to a better preparation of young professionals providing them with useful expertise and lessons learned and increase the performance of the Masteroni in their work.

1.3. *Active engagement in academic discourse and practical projects*

As an additional long-term objective the Network will involve actively in the academic discourse and concrete projects in order to contribute to the enhancement of human rights and democratisation processes. Thus the Network could participate in the organisation of thematic conferences and organise joint publications. For this purpose it will rely on the expertise of its members in the field.

To complement the involvement in academic activities, the Network will also support concrete projects proposed by its members. This includes projects where

Masteroni are already involved (since some Masteroni are members of NGOs before they enter the E.MA programme) and external projects.

The support will mainly be in promotional matters but will also depend on the special abilities and willingness of the members. The Network will thus work as well as platform for members who want to engage themselves in a charitable manner.

1.4. Increasing visibility of the E.MA programme

Creating an alumni network is crucial for increasing the visibility of the Masters worldwide. Fostering ties between Masteronis will help improving the transition to the job market and thus the reputation of the Masters.

1.5. Creating institutional memory

As a pool of former Masterini from more than 10 years, the Network will facilitate also a smoother handover between two Masterini generations and supply new Masterini with needed information before getting to Lido.

2. Assets

The above-mentioned objectives will be accomplished through the following assets.

1.1. Organisation, membership and structure

The E.MA Alumni would be an independent organisation besides EUIC, based on the ownership of its members. It will have its own agenda and representing bodies but work in close relation with the EUIC.

The members, through an e-voting system in the intranet, will take the fundamental decisions. A discussion-forum in the intranet will function as preparation of decisions concerning the Network's activities.

Masteroni of the E.MA programme will automatically become members but can resign from the Network. Hence the successful participation of the Master will function as a selection process to ensure seriousness and quality of the Network.

In addition a council and one or two presidents will be elected on a regular basis to ensure flexible decision processes. The president(s) will represent the Network and a secretariat will support the Network in administrative matters.

The board will

1.2. Database, intranet, Email-lists

The core element of the Network would be a www-based **intranet** to which all members have access.

Each member can create an own profile stating his current occupation, residence and/ or interests (similar to facebook but focused on profession and only accessible to members of the Network). Additional sights of information can be created, providing useful information f. ex. about certain cities, application procedures (EU, UN,..) or publication formats. The intranet would be uncomplicated to format, so that the members can easily create those sights

themselves. Experience from the “CSP Network for International Politics and Cooperation e.V”. (www.csp-network.org - Arne Hoffmann is member of this Network) has proven the practicability and value of such an intranet.

The intranet would then be the basis for a **database**, which can be accessed by the members and partners of the Network. Through search-functions in the intranet information about members, functions, cities,...etc can be easily found and compiled. External partners searching for certain expertise could be provided with contact details of members who are specialised in the needed field providing the member prior agreement.

As an additional tool **email-lists** would be created in order to enhance information sharing. Members would subscribe to thematic email-lists (email-list jobs, email-list human rights and development, email-list human rights and business,...). If now a member has e.g information about a job offer or a publication regarding a certain topic, (s)he would forward the offer to the list and every subscribed member would get the information. This would enhance access to information and communication between Masteroni .

1.3. Further activities

In addition to the intranet functions the network would also work as an Alumni-organisation and a think tank. Thus it would organise Alumni meetings across the different student generations and systematise what is currently done on an ad hoc basis. It would also participate in thematic related conferences or publications.

In order to support human rights, the Network will also function in a charitable manner. Hence it will function as a platform for the members to initiate or support human rights related projects. The contribution will come from the members and the Network would serve as facilitator and coordinator.

1.4. External representation

For the external representation the Network will set up a Homepage. Members can decide the type of information they are willing to share on this public homepage.

Furthermore information about the Network and its activities can be publicised. For the interaction with partners, the council and especially the president(s) would represent the Network.

3. Timeline/ construction process

The creation process of such a Network is an ongoing process and depends on the contribution of its members. Nevertheless the basic structure has to be created in order to give the members a framework to contribute.

First, the intranet, database, email-list and e-voting system would need to be created. Masteroni and Masterini who worked as Web-designer have already signalled interest in helping with the set-up.

In terms of time line, should this first step be undertaken before the inauguration ceremony 2009 an information campaign should be launched to reach all Masteroni of the 11 previous generations. An e-voting can be held in order to elect the council and president.

4. Finances

For the long term perspective the Network should envisage financial independence through membership fees of working Masteroni. Until then, financial support is needed especially in the initial set-up phase. For the administration of membership and budgeted a secretariat would be needed to support the Network's council and presidents in creation and coordination of the network.

5. Future perspectives

The Network is meant to strongly link and enhance human rights. Thus the Network does not have to be limited to the E.MA programme but could be extended to its sister programmes in Africa and the Balkan.

Though the above mentioned activities and links the Network could take a predominant role in the development and enhancement of human rights, not only academically but also in praxis.