

2009

Annual Report

Promoting Innovation and Internationalisation

ACA  
ACADEMIC  
COOPERATION  
ASSOCIATION





The Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) is a dynamic think tank in the area of international cooperation in higher education. Since 1993, ACA has worked to promote innovation and internationalisation of European higher education in collaboration with its pan-European network of member organisations, each responsible in their respective countries for supporting internationalisation in education and training. ACA also maintains a global perspective through its affiliate members in other parts of the world.

ACA's activities include research and analysis, evaluations, consultancy for private and public bodies, advocacy, publications, and much more. The Academic Cooperation Association is a not-for-profit organisation whose Secretariat is located in Brussels—a privileged position to create and maintain close working relations with the European institutions and the world beyond.



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I am pleased to present this overview of ACA's activities and accomplishments in 2009 – our 16th year in existence. It is exceedingly challenging to encapsulate the work of a highly dynamic international organisation over the course of 12 months. Neverthe-

less, our annual report provides an excellent summary of what we do, who we are, and how we have worked over the last year to advance the agenda of internationalisation and innovation in European higher education. It has indeed been a busy and most satisfying year.

In 2009, we continued to build on a strong tradition of research, publication, and project work in our field. Our monograph series, the ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education, now includes a new publication by Ulrich Teichler, Kerstin Janson and Harald Schomburg, *The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility*. This is a key contribution to the literature on Europe's flagship student mobility programme. In addition, we wrapped up our work on the Erasmus Mundus Global Promotion Project, contributing substantively to the objectives of that initiative. ACA also made significant headway, through our so-called 'ENATIS' project, on making sense of an emerging area of interest having to do with international student services in European higher education.

ACA's ability to develop and deliver research that resonates with high-level policymakers continues to be evident. One clear example of this can be seen in the highly ambitious project we began in the final quarter of 2009 under the title *EURODATA II - Study on Mobility Developments in Higher*

*Education*. Funded by the European Commission, EURODATA II builds on EURODATA I (ACA's seminal work on student mobility from 2006) and may have a direct impact on student mobility policy objectives for both the Bologna Process and ET2020.

In addition to our project and publication work, ACA places a high priority on helping to disseminate cutting-edge information and ideas, as well as facilitating communication among interested stakeholders. On this front in 2009 we delivered four highly successful European Policy Seminars on topics ranging from the penetration of the English language into European higher education, to funding strategies for international students, to the latest developments coming out of the Brussels-based European institutions. The ACA Annual Conference in Warsaw offered another outstanding opportunity to bring together experts, policymakers, practitioners and participants for an intense two-day event on *Innovation through internationalisation*, and the *ACA Newsletter – Education Europe* provided monthly updates of interest to a growing body of subscribers.

Finally, we are delighted to announce that ACA membership grew by two in 2009, with the addition of the Public Foundation for the International Promotion of Spanish Universities – Universidad.es – as a full member, and AMPEI, the Mexican Association for International Education, as our newest associate member.

There is much more to discover about ACA in the pages ahead. Equally, we believe there will be many more exciting developments for our dynamic Association in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rolf Tarrach". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rolf" and the last name "Tarrach" clearly distinguishable.

Rolf Tarrach  
ACA President

## WHAT WE DO

### I: PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Every year, ACA seeks out—and is sought after to participate in—a broad range of research projects, consultancies and other activities related to our core areas of expertise in internationalisation and innovation. ACA is well-known in European higher education policy circles for the high quality of work it produces, and its ability to communicate very technical information (particularly in terms of international mobility trends) to non-technical and policy-oriented audiences.

Our research is conducted both by our own highly qualified Secretariat staff (an international group in and of itself) and in conjunction with a wide network of extremely experienced and knowledgeable professional and academic colleagues across Europe and beyond.

#### ERASMUS MUNDUS GLOBAL PROMOTION PROJECT

Ever more countries around the world are taking part in the global competition for international students and academic talent. But how is Europe performing in the global marketplace through its cross-border education and promotional activities?

The Erasmus Mundus Global Promotion Project, a major three-year initiative financed by the European Commission to address this question, was launched in January 2007 and concluded in December 2009. The Academic Cooperation Association coordinated one pillar of this work, which focused on exploring adequate ways to support the promotion and marketing of European higher education on a global scale. The project consisted of a collection of studies on the feasibility of various education promotion services, a pilot project and an international conference. In this work, ACA partnered with DAAD, CampusFrance and a subcontractor, JWT Education.

During the period from January 2007 to January 2008, ACA prepared a series of feasibility studies in the area of innovative services for international study. The first component of this effort explored the feasibility of a potential online information service (call centre) for European higher education. The second study, entitled *Establishing a European Higher Education Presence in Third Countries*, was a comprehensive analysis of existing networks of promoters and national information offices for higher education. It provided recommendations on what kind of Europe-wide informational and promotional network should be established. This was followed by a pilot project in Mexico aimed at testing out the real-world application of some of these ideas.

Completed in July 2008, the third phase of ACA's involvement in the Erasmus Mundus Global Promotion Project consisted



“...the European Commission expects the project to make an impact on the present debate about the Bologna and ET2020 student mobility benchmarks.”

of a large-scale analysis of the trends and models in European cross-border education activities outside of Europe. This Transnational Education (TNE) study mapped the supply and demand for European transnational education and analysed the possible opportunities and risks for European providers. It contained five extensive country reports on transnational education policies and practices in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK. The profiles and decision-making processes of typical transnational education students were also examined. In May 2008, an international seminar on this topic was held as part of the ACA European Policy Seminar series, which led to recommendations for possible European-level activity and support for transnational education.

Ultimately, ACA's efforts contributed substantively to the objectives of the Global Promotion Project. It provided important insight into the specific issues of why and how Europe needs to provide comprehensive information and improve its higher education marketing and promotion strategy and activities. It also produced concrete suggestions for improving the availability and accessibility of information on European study opportunities, as well as the enhancement of professional capacity in Europe for proactive promotion of the region as a destination of choice for higher education.



#### EURODATA II - STUDY ON MOBILITY DEVELOPMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2006, ACA published one of its most cited works to date, the EURODATA student mobility monitor, which earned it the reputation of a leader in research on international student mobility. The publication collected, presented and analysed the best available statistics on outgoing and incoming student mobility in 32 European countries, and was successful in changing the student mobility data collection practice and definitions used by the international data collectors—UNESCO Institute of Statistics, OECD and EUROSTAT (UOE)—in order to capture ‘genuine’ student mobility.

In April 2009 the European Commission published an eagerly-awaited tender for a study on student mobility trends in European higher education, modelled in many respects on ACA's original EURODATA work. Having an intrinsic interest in this topic, ACA joined forces with CampusFrance, DAAD and HIS (a German social science research institute), as well as a number of researchers around Ulrich Teichler of INCHER at the University of Kassel, and successfully bid for the tender. The project started in October 2009, and is to be finalised in October 2010.

The *EURODATA II - Study on Mobility Developments in Higher Education* has a wider scope than its predecessor publication. Primarily, the study will provide a snapshot of the most recent year available as well as map trends over time in the

mobility of students into, within and out of 32 European countries (EU27, the 4 EFTA countries and Turkey). It will do so by compiling existing statistics, relevant studies and other available sources of information at the national and European/international level. In addition to analysing student mobility trends in Europe overall, the study will also look in-depth at student mobility in 11 selected European countries (Austria, Belgium – the Flemish community, Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the UK). Furthermore, apart from international

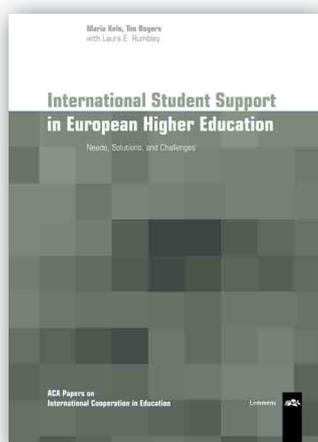
student flows, the study addresses the mobility of academic staff and will provide an overview of the available data on staff mobility in Europe, as well as propose a methodology for future data collection. EURODATA II will, in addition, produce a diagnosis of the present state of international data collection, with recommendations for improved practice in the future. Different from the first edition of EURODATA, EURODATA II will also look at the national policy context in the study countries to provide possible explanations for the observed mobility trends, and will put forward recommendations for enhancing mobility in the future. The project enjoys great visibility, as expectations on the EU political front run very high—indeed, the European Commission expects the project to make an impact on the present debate about the Bologna and ET2020 student mobility benchmarks.

### ENATIS – ENHANCING ATTRACTIVENESS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICES

An appreciation for the importance of exploring new dimensions of internationalisation motivated ACA to take on a research project in the emerging area of student services for international students.

With funding from Action 4 of the European Commission's Erasmus Mundus Programme, ACA launched in 2008 the ENATIS project—short for *Enhancing attractiveness through international student services*. This initiative featured the collaborative efforts of ACA and two highly experienced partners, CIRIUS (the Danish internationalisation agency) and International Education Consultants, UK. The project took as its starting point the widely-recognised notion that attracting and retaining international academic talent (particularly full-degree students from outside Europe) hinges as much on institutional excellence and responsiveness in terms of student support as it does on high-quality academic programming.

ENATIS was designed to achieve three major outcomes: 1) to establish a baseline of information on student needs and institutional provision in the area of international student services; 2) to make recommendations in regard to best practice and baseline standards of provision; and 3) to disseminate information on findings and recommendations through several mechanisms, including a comprehensive published report, an ACA European Policy Seminar event, and a 'companion piece' brochure highlighting practical guidelines for good practise.



“The project took as its starting point the widely-recognised notion that attracting and retaining international academic talent... hinges as much on... student support as it does on high-quality academic programming.”

By the end of 2009, data collection for the project had been completed. This work involved conducting 3-5 site visits in six target countries—Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and the UK—allowing for interviews with key institutional actors and student focus group discussions. A large-scale quantitative student survey also provided data critical to the study, capturing responses from nearly 1 300 international students from 124 different nations studying in the six target countries. Information was also gathered via semi-structured telephone interviews with representatives of national-level organisations and advisory bodies in each of the target countries.

Moving into 2010, ACA actively prepared to deliver on the promised outcomes. The EPS event on this topic was scheduled for March 2010, and analysis and writing relevant to the final publication and guidelines brochure was underway.

## INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Programme evaluations are hardly ever exciting. Not so in the case of the assessment of the Institutional Grants Programme (IGP), the flagship initiative of Sweden's STINT Foundation. ACA carried out this work in the first eight months of 2009, and the evaluation proved to be a fascinating endeavour.

The IGP supports the bilateral cooperation of research teams in Sweden and elsewhere in the world. Since its inception in 1996, it has funded some 250 multi-annual cooperation ventures across all subject areas, involving some 800 researchers and over 4 000 exchanges. The evaluation of this large-scale programme, representing about 40 percent of STINT's total programme investment, was undertaken by ACA in cooperation with Neil Kemp Education Ltd. from the UK. It covered all 250 IGP projects started before the year 2005. The research team administered six different surveys, targeting over 500 researchers involved in IGP projects, and it conducted face-to-face and telephone interviews with 100 Swedish and international researchers. Notable findings include the fact that the IGP had

- facilitated high-quality sustainable partnerships across all subject areas;
- led to a net migration of researchers to Sweden;
- generated additional income ('leverage') of 70 percent of funds invested; and
- produced 1 200 publications in international peer-reviewed journals, 600 books or book chapters and 1 000 papers given at international conferences.

However, most impressive was the impact of the programme on young researchers in their formative years. In the context of IGP projects, 350 PhDs were completed and almost every early-stage researcher reported to have acquired new knowledge and research techniques. Many young researchers experienced a major career boost.

Ultimately, the assessment team found that the IGP has been a resounding success and recommended that STINT continue to support the scheme.



“...while European institutions are making unprecedented efforts to become more international and cope with global challenges, no other Europe-wide initiative to measure institutional success in becoming more internationally-oriented has been initiated.”

#### INDICATORS FOR MAPPING AND PROFILING INTERNATIONALISATION (IMPI)

Quality in internationalisation has been—and continues to be—a subject of enormous interest for policymakers and practitioners alike. It is also an area in which ACA has some considerable experience.

In the mid 1990s, ACA embarked, together with OECD (IMHE), CRE and a number of international higher education experts, on an exercise to create the Internationalisation Quality Review (IQR)—a tool designed to help higher education institutions assess their progress (or lack thereof) in internationalisation. ACA ran this service for a number of years and, together with its partners, conducted evaluations and provided advice to several European and non-European higher education institutions on their internationalisation strategies. Since then, however, the European and international higher education landscape has changed tremendously. Supranational and European reform agendas such as the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy, amongst others, call for increasing the attractiveness of European higher education to the world beyond Europe. And while European institutions are making unprecedented efforts to become more international and cope with global challenges, no other Europe-wide initiative to measure institutional success in becoming more internationally-oriented has been initiated.

Early 2009 offered an excellent opportunity for ACA to re-engage with the quality question when Germany's CHE Consult GmbH (Centre for Higher Education Development) suggested ACA participate in the IMPI project, i.e. Indicators for Mapping and Profiling Internationalisation. ACA members NUFFIC, Perspektywy, CampusFrance, SIU and DAAD are also partners in this work. Spanning the period between October 2009 and September 2012, the project will develop and test a set of internationalisation indicators for use by European higher education institutions. ACA will have a lead role in the second part of the project, when it will design the external testing and benchmarking phase and organise a workshop and the final dissemination event – a symposium.

**AND MORE...****Bologna working group on the 'external dimension'**

Since its launch in the year 1999, ACA has been arguing that the Bologna Process should develop an 'external dimension', defining its relationship with higher education elsewhere in the world. At their get-together in Leuven in spring 2009, ministers of education of the European Higher Education Area renewed their commitment to this external dimension and gave a new mandate for the Bologna working group on this issue, now named 'global openness'. As in previous years, ACA is again a member of this group, which is, among other things, to develop a strategy for the global promotion of European higher education.

**ACA-EAIE seminar on doctoral programmes in Europe**

The 2009 version of the ACA-EAIE Seminar, held at the EAIE conference in Madrid in September, was devoted to the internationalisation of doctoral programmes in Europe. The seminar was devised and chaired by Maria Kelo (ACA) and Hans de Wit (for the EAIE), with Solange Piszcz (CampusFrance), Robert Coelen (University of Leiden) and Kjersti Fløttum (Bergen University) as speakers. As with past ACA-EAIE seminars, this event was very well attended.

**Internationalisation Handbook**

In its second year of existence, the Internationalisation Handbook continued to provide readers with up-to-date expert assessments on all fields and facets of internationali-

sation in tertiary education. The loose-leaf collection, a joint project of ACA, the European University Association (EUA) and Raabe Academic Publishers, saw three new instalments in 2009. It also won many new subscribers.

**Internationalisation at the University of Groningen**

Increasingly, ACA is asked by universities and colleges to assess their international activities. An example in 2009 was the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, which requested ACA Director Bernd Wächter to 'take a look' at its internationalisation strategy. Though he tried hard, he could not find anything amiss in this institution's very advanced approach to international affairs.

**HEXTLEARN**

In 2009, ACA continued to be an advisor for the multi-partner HEXTLEARN project, led by Scienet Italy and the Budapest University of Technology and Economics. HEXTLEARN, whose full name is *Higher Education Exploring ICT Use for Lifelong Learning*, is funded by the EU Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme. ACA's role in this work has been to provide knowledge and support in the particular area of internationalisation. The project, to end in late 2010, seeks to build an online community for actors in e-learning and distance education of various kinds.



## WHO WE ARE: OUR MEMBERS

### MEMBERS



Austrian Agency for International  
Cooperation in Education and Research



Centre for International Mobility  
(Finland)



Academic Programme Agency  
(Latvia)



The Flemish Council of Hogescholen



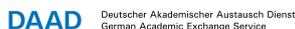
CampusFrance



Education Exchanges Support  
Foundation (Lithuania)



The Flemish Interuniversity Council



German Academic Exchange Service



The Netherlands Organization for International  
Cooperation in Higher Education



Archimedes Foundation (Estonia)



State Scholarships Foundation (Greece)



Norwegian Centre for International  
Cooperation in Higher Education

### New Members

ACA happily welcomed two new members in the course of the year: the newly established Universidad.es, the Public Foundation for the International Promotion of Spanish Universities, and AMPEI, the Mexican Association for International Education.

**Universidad.es** is a public sector foundation aimed at promoting the Spanish university system throughout the world. Its main objectives are to increase the international dimension of the Spanish university system; establish Spain as a leading destination for foreign students and researchers; increase the presence of Spanish students and researchers throughout the world; and help universities to strengthen their internationalisation strategies and enhance their development cooperation projects. This orientation is directly in line with the focus of ACA's other members, making it an ideal addition to the ACA

ACA's strength as an organisation rests on the extensive network of dynamic national level bodies that comprise its membership. These organisations are involved in a broad range of activities in their respective countries in support of internationalisation of education, and play various key roles in the areas of research, programme administration, and policy formulation and implementation. ACA's role is to promote the interests and needs of its members in EU policy circles, and to influence the European higher education policy and research agenda in ways that support the work of the members. For their part, the members participate actively in the governance, decision making, and programmatic activities of the Association. ACA currently has 20 European members and 4 associate members in North America and Australia.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS



Perspektywy Education Foundation (Poland)



International Programme Office for Education and Training (Sweden)



IDP Education Australia



Slovak Academic Association for International Cooperation



The Swedish Institute



Universities Australia



Slovak Academic Information Agency



The Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities



Mexican Association for International Education



Public Foundation for the International Promotion of Spanish Universities



The British Council



Institute of International Education

network. Universidad.es has quickly demonstrated a commitment to active membership in the association and has agreed to co-host the ACA Annual Conference in Córdoba in May 2010.

**AMPEI** is a new associate member of ACA. Since its founding in 1992, AMPEI has operated as a non-profit organisation focused on promoting the academic quality of Mexican educational institutions through various activities, such as academic exchanges; informational and skill-building workshops; policy advocacy; and domestic as

well as international academic and professional collaboration. AMPEI is the first Latin American member of ACA, and enjoys a membership of some 150 individuals representing more than 50 Mexican and international educational institutions and related organisations.

## WHAT WE DO II: EVENTS

Bringing people together for lively discussions, debates, and deliberations on the current trends in innovation and internationalisation in higher education is one of the things ACA does best. The seminars ACA organises four times a year—typically in Brussels—offer participants the opportunity to interact directly with colleagues and experts around a tightly defined topic, in a relatively small group and a highly collegial environment. Our annual conference, normally co-hosted by an ACA member in a different European country each year, brings together a larger yet equally engaging set of speakers and delegates to explore a key cross cutting theme. ACA staff also speak widely at events across Europe and elsewhere.

### EUROPEAN POLICY SEMINARS

In 2009, ACA added, with great success, four instalment to its now-widely recognised European Policy Seminars (EPS). Launched in 2004, the series consistently draws large crowds of practitioners and stakeholders to Brussels for high quality debates and networking. Today, the EPS series is considered one of ACA's flagship products.

EPS1: This year's opening event was the traditional and highly successful *What's new in Brussels? Recent developments in European programmes and policies*. This marked the 20th European Policy Seminar, a special anniversary. Once again, ACA rounded up top experts from the European Commission and beyond and presented the latest information on, and analysis of, the Erasmus Mundus II Programme, other EU higher education schemes with non-European countries, as well as the plans for the Bologna Process after 2010 and the European Commission's ambitions for global cooperation in science and technology. Other issues on the agenda were the French EU Presidency's plans for a new approach to global higher education rankings, and a case study of global outreach in the form of the Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association.

EPS2: In March, ACA hosted its second seminar of the year, under the title *What's in a name? The changing nature of mobility*. In this session, ACA applied its expertise to deciphering the meaning of a much debated phenomenon in the area of higher education, namely that of mobility. A series of high-caliber experts laid out how definitions, goals, outcomes and impact have changed over the past decades, from both an individual and institutional perspective. The presenters and participants also provided insights into what can be expected from mobility in the future, while also presenting new tools for forecasting.

EPS3: For its third seminar, ACA joined forces with the Swed-



ish Institute, one of its member organisations, to discuss the financial aspects of internationalisation. *Making ends meet— Innovative ways of funding international students* brought participants to Stockholm (for a change of pace) in order to explore the financing of international students; the context of setting appropriate fee levels to attract quality international students and young researchers; the strategic potential of scholarships at both national and institutional levels; and innovative and new modes of financing. As usual, renowned experts were present to lead the way.

EPS4: The 2009 series ended in December with a wonderfully fresh look at English-medium tuition in European higher education. *Better taught in English? Institutional language strategies in European higher education* presented all sides in the language debate. Leaders from the field presented an overview of current trends in English-taught programmes in

Europe as well as the institutional language policies shaping these trends, or fashioned in reaction to developments. The perspectives vis-à-vis the labour market and expectations from prospective employers were also presented by top human resource specialists.

ACA is looking forward to continuing its European Policy Seminars in 2010, keeping a watchful eye on the most pertinent debates and developments, and drawing new crowds with other critical themes.

#### ACA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The era of internationalisation as nothing more than a marginal concern for national higher education systems and the broader European higher education landscape is definitely a thing of the past. Internationalisation, with its ever evolving range of meanings and instruments, has become central for higher education endeavours at the European, national and institutional levels alike. In parallel, so has innovation. The two concepts have been thoroughly researched in recent years, but almost always independent of each other. Scholarly literature and policy discourse, even in the context of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009), has rarely explored the links between the two concepts in a noteworthy way. Preoccupied by the relations between the two processes and striving to find a meaningful answer to the question of whether innovation in higher education is conceivable without internationalisation, ACA decided it was time to explore the theme in a high quality international event with a diverse and well-informed audience.

*Innovation through internationalisation*, ACA's 2009 Annual Conference, was held on 13-15 May in the fascinating and historically rich capital of Poland, Warsaw—also known as the Phoenix City, the town having essentially been built anew in the aftermath of World War II. The event, co-organised by ACA's Polish member the Perspektywy Foundation, and hosted by the University of Warsaw, drew almost 200 participants from all around the world, and was by all measures a most enriching and intellectually stimulating experience.

The overall tone and quality of the event was superbly set by Jane Knight, from the University of Toronto, with a keynote speech on current trends and issues related to internationalisation and some of its unintended consequences. The overriding questions of the conference were then explored by focusing on a number of thematic areas, among them foreign languages; marketing, recruitment and mobility; international rankings; ethics and intercultural dialogue; transnational education and the Bologna Process. Three of the sub-themes were discussed in-depth in a trio of highly stimulating and dynamic workshops. The sessions benefitted from the first-rate contributions of the international specialists present, who debated the wide range of issues at stake. All of the speakers brought valuable insights and raised a number of challenging questions that engaged participants in spirited and wide-ranging discussions. Other outstanding speakers and panelists included Hans de Wit, Christine Ennew (University of Nottingham), Richard Yelland (OECD), Neil Kemp (former Director of Education UK at the British Council), Volker Gehmlich (Fachhochschule Osnabrück), Germain Dondelinger (Director for Higher Education at the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research), and Frances Kelly (Education Counsellor Europe from New Zealand). The finale - a speech that reflected on future trends in internationalisation, as embedded in a system of global politics and interlinked developments - was brilliantly presented by Annette Julius of DAAD.



### ACA PRESENTATIONS, MISSIONS, AND MEETINGS

ACA Secretariat staff regularly give presentations at international conferences and meetings, serve as panelists at forums, and undertake missions abroad. These kinds of activities took ACA staff to at least a dozen different countries over the course of 2009 and included such engagements as:

- Speech on “Internationalisation from a European Perspective” at the Arcada staff development days (Helsinki, May)
- Speech on “Hochschul-Internationalisierung in Europa. Grenznahe Kooperation und globale Ambitionen”, CHARTE Conference, University of Luxembourg (June)
- Keynote Speech on “Emerging trends in European higher education”, AEC Annual Conference (Bucharest, September)
- Chair and speaker responsibilities, EAIE Conference (Madrid, September)
- Speech on “The Bologna Process”, EU-US Higher Education Dialogue (Washington, DC, October)
- Speech on “Mobility and the Bologna Process” at the Erasmus Mobility Quality Tools (EMQT) Meeting (Brussels, December)
- Chair and speaker responsibilities, EUA Conference (Giessen, October)
- Keynote speech on Governance, research and internationalisation: the future of universities of applied sciences
- Speech on “Netzwerke”, Swiss Forum (Bern, November)
- Panelist at the Financial Times Conference “Hochschulmanagement” (Berlin, December)



“ACA Secretariat staff regularly give presentations at international conferences and meetings, serve as panelists at forums, and undertake missions abroad.”

Since 1999 ACA has produced its own monograph series, the ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education (published by Lemmens Medien GmbH in Bonn/Germany). All of the books are standard reading in educational internationalisation and they are quoted widely. The books combine the advantages of readability with a sound research base and most have emerged from ACA's own research and analysis projects. ACA studies and reports are also published outside of this series, and individual staff members occasionally contribute to non-ACA publications in the field.

### THE PROFESSIONAL VALUE OF ERASMUS MOBILITY

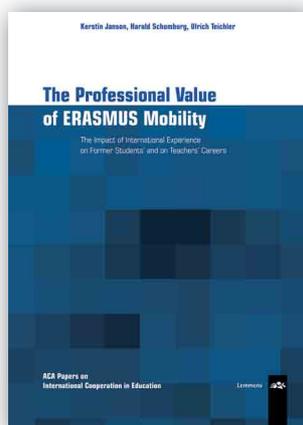
In 2009, the ACA series welcomed an eagerly anticipated new instalment: The VALERA evaluation study, authored by Ulrich Teichler, Kerstin Janson and Harald Schomburg of the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER) of the University of Kassel. VALERA stands for *The Professional Value of Erasmus Mobility* and this research, as the title indicates, explores the professional impact of the international Erasmus experience on the subsequent careers of students and teachers who were mobile through this programme.

This is the second major piece of Erasmus-related research published in the ACA series. The first study, published in 2002 under the title *Erasmus in the SOCRATES Programme: Findings of an Evaluation Study*, was also edited by Ulrich Teichler. That publication looked into the strengths and weaknesses of the Erasmus Programme in its second phase, i.e. under the overarching umbrella of European Commission's SOCRATES Programme. The 2002 study found that the programme, despite the revolutionary fervour of the reforms of the mid 1990s, was largely characterised by continuity, remaining a clear 'success story'.

Since then, the European Commission has funded no other comprehensive evaluation study of Erasmus, and all other research that has been undertaken on the topic has been on a much smaller scale. It was clearly time for a new large scale study and for careful consideration of a key question, namely, what is the value of the Erasmus study experience

on the labour market and the real impact on the professional careers for those who have been mobile thanks to Erasmus?

The VALERA study points out a paradox of continuity and change. On the one hand, the immediate impact of the Erasmus experience on individuals (i.e., the eye-opening experience of learning by living and studying in another European country), seems to have remained unchanged. However, Erasmus alumni after 2000 report a less impressive career impact five years later than prior generations of Erasmus students. The recent graduates report less privileged access to international professional opportunities and fewer advantages when job-seeking in general. The authors of the study account for these findings by virtue of the fact that internationalisation in recent years has become a very mainstream phenomenon in Europe, therefore the Erasmus experience is bound to lose its exceptionality over time. To counterbalance this trend and turn a temporary study abroad experience into an added value again, the authors argue that more ambitious curricular initiatives may be needed.



This book is a 'must read' for anyone interested in Erasmus specifically and European student mobility in general. These findings should be taken particularly seriously by those with formal responsibility for the Erasmus Programme, if the 'success story' is to continue.

## HOW WE WORK: ADMINISTRATION, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCES

ACA is governed by a supreme body, the General Assembly (GA), where all ACA members are represented. The decisions of the GA are based on proposals put forward by the Administrative Council (AC). The AC consists of up to 7 members who are elected for two year terms by and from the members of the General Assembly. The Brussels-based Secretariat handles the day to day affairs of the Association, with a high priority placed on professionalism, cost efficiency, and high quality service delivery.

### NEW ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

In December, the ACA General Assembly (GA) elected a new Board (Administrative Council). Rait Toompere, Director of the Archimedes Foundation and one-term administrator, was chosen as the new ACA Vice-President. The post of Treasurer was entrusted to Ulf Melin of the International Programme Office for Education and Training (IPK). The rest of the new Board is composed of Ulrich Grothus (DAAD), Mònica Margarit (Universidad.es), Pat Killingley (British Council), Hubert Dürstein (OeAD) and Urs Nufer (CRUS). All five are serving on the Administrative Council for the first time.

On this occasion, the ACA members also paid tribute and thanks to the outgoing administrators: Nuffic's Herman Vriesendorp, who served as Treasurer with great dedication for six years, as well as Christian Bode (DAAD) and Ulrich Hörmann (OeAD). Earlier in the year, Vice-President Gunn Mangerud of SIU and CampusFrance's director André Siganos had already resigned from the board upon leaving their respective organisations.

### NEW FACE FOR ACA

Throughout 2009, ACA was engaged in a comprehensive exercise aimed at overhauling and modernising its image. The project commenced with the development of a new logo, which laid the groundwork for a new visual identity. In the course of this process, ACA also made broad efforts to improve overall communication and services, particularly in regard to the organisation and functionality of the website. The *ACA Newsletter – Education Europe*, which continued its monthly publication in 2009, was also modified significantly. A small survey conducted by the ACA staff on the satis-

“The Brussels-based Secretariat handles the day to day affairs of the Association, with a high priority placed on professionalism, cost efficiency, and high quality service delivery.”

faction of newsletter subscribers guided work on some key elements to enhance both the newsletter service and the management of subscriptions. This exercise blended nicely with the overall refurbishment of the ACA image, a challenging task to be finalised in early 2010.

**ACA SECRETARIAT**

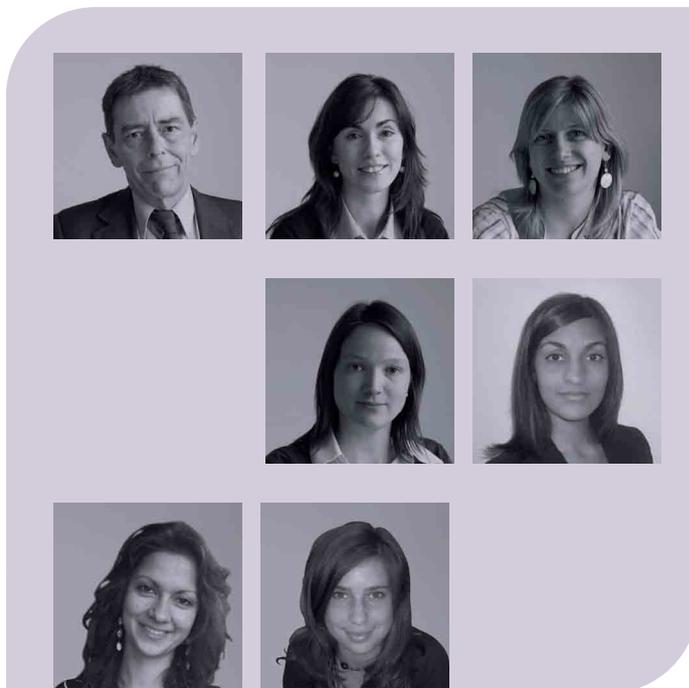
Continuity and change characterised the staffing structure within the ACA Secretariat in 2009.

ACA had the pleasure of once again hosting two highly competent trainees. Paulina Mihailova’s stay with ACA covered the period from May to October. Dora Harsfalvy joined the ACA team in November and continued her traineeship well

into 2010. Both served as appointed editors for the *ACA Newsletter – Education Europe* and contributed to a variety of projects.

The end of the year marked the departure of two key staff members, Maria Kelo and Chripa Schneller. Maria Kelo joined ACA as Senior Officer in 2003 and ACA remains deeply indebted to her for her excellent work. Chripa Schneller had served as Policy Officer since 2007, and ACA also thanks for her many valuable contributions to ACA’s mission.

Continuity in the composition of the ACA team was ensured by Office Manager Isabelle Deneyer, Policy Offer Irina Lungu and the Director, Bernd Wächter, who remained on post.



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ACA Accounts 2009 (EUR)

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Staff costs	438.450	402.566	353.572	401.863	447.868	392.384	293.535
Secretariat running costs	128.467	119.448	124.583	100.550	91.176	86.124	89.453
Project expenditure	216.521	215.840	328.893	178.342	558.659	270.216	89.524
Travel, meetings	16.279	25.354	33.334	32.716	18.172	15.455	23.380
Provision	0	0	10.548	0	63.026	48.006	27.973
<b>Total</b>	<b>799.717</b>	<b>763.208</b>	<b>850.930</b>	<b>713.471</b>	<b>1.178.901</b>	<b>812.185</b>	<b>523.864</b>
<b>Income</b>							
Membership fees	296.230	271.738	257.033	257.621	274.540	274.486	274.528
ETAPE payment for Secr. Serv.	0	0	0	0	0	34.679	34.679
ACA share of ETAPE man. fee	0	0	0	10.425	152.531	125.244	125.244
Project income	520.543	537.948	534.332	480.200	810.502	451.880	155.186
Other income	28.209	54.091	44.781	31.875	7.263	2.662	3.607
<b>Total</b>	<b>844.983</b>	<b>863.777</b>	<b>836.146</b>	<b>780.122</b>	<b>1.244.836</b>	<b>888.951</b>	<b>593.244</b>
<b>Result</b>	<b>45.265</b>	<b>110.569</b>	<b>-14.783</b>	<b>66.651</b>	<b>65.935</b>	<b>76.766</b>	<b>69.380</b>

**ACA**  
ACADEMIC  
COOPERATION  
ASSOCIATION



Promoting Innovation and Internationalisation

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Imprint

Brussels, June 2010

Editing: ACA Secretariat

Printing: Impact Communication

Number of copies: 700

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