

Highlights from the work of the FEANI CPDC

[Continuing Professional Development Committee]

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During the 90's until the new Statutes and Bylaws were re-written FEANI had three standing committees: The European Monitoring Committee (EMC), The European Affaires Committee (EAC) and The Continuing Professional Development Committee (CPDC). These Committees helped to pursue the federation's objectives and assisted the Executive Board in defining its Policy in their respective fields.

The Committee on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was established in 1993 from the Working Group Continuing Engineering Education created in 1992.

The CPDC has always been based upon "voluntary" membership: there have been no quota for the participation – it has been open to all national members without any restrictions as to the geographical location of the participating national members.

I was invited to join the CPDC in 1995. The Chairman was Professor Mogens Kümmel. A major report had just been concluded, called the **Aquaforce phase 1**. This ambitious project aimed – already in those days – to safeguard and guarantee quality in CPD, developing criteria on which an efficient system could be based for accreditation for CPD courses. A driving force behind the execution of the project was Peter Hector, the secretary. The report was published in 1993/1994. The intention was to proceed with phase 2, but unfortunately lack of funding did not permit the programme to be completed up to the implementation of the accreditation process. The project was stopped after production of the "Project AQUA-FORCE Part I" handbook which defined a list of criteria which are an adaptation of the International ISO 9001 and 9002 Standards to education.

After the Aqua Force project the Committee was working hard on what was later to become the FEANI Policy and Guidelines on CPD. Christine Somers was responsible for this work under the supervision of the Chairman. Effective communication was identified as one of the top five priorities for the work of the Committee. Dr. Ing. Luciano Fassina, as leader of the Committee's Work Group on Communications, produced a document in September 1996 with some ideas in the development of a strategy for the Committee's communication arrangements. In 1998, Heinz Müller started to develop a concept for the idea of enhancing the efficiency of communication by setting up a website on CPD to deploy and increase dissemination of services and information for engineers who were members of any of the National Member Organisations.

The Communication Project was finalized in 2001 and the site "**Pinboard**" was operational on the FEANI website in March 2003.

The guidelines of FEANI's CPD Policy were approved at the General Assembly in Lillehammer in 1997. FEANI would work towards implementation of the agreed policy to raise awareness of the importance and urgency of CPD to economic competitiveness. Mogens

Kümmel was elected Vice-President of FEANI and the new chairperson was Christine Somers. FEANI Headquarters Office moved from Paris to Brussels in 1997 and we got a new CPD secretary, the very competent Anders Hagström. Together with the newly elected Secretary General, Sirka Pöyry, the Secretariat produced the very useful FEANI Handbook, comprising not only the Statutes and Bylaws, policies etc. but also most of what we can find today on the FEANI website – which did not exist in those days.

The main reason to move to Brussels was to get closer to the European Commission and thus make FEANI the official "Voice of the European Engineers".

During 1998, FEANI submitted two LEONARDO applications:

- the project "**EuroPro Record**", which was based on two previous projects (EuroPro, a Concept for Strategic Competence Development, and EuroRecord) where FEANI had been one of the key partner
- and the project "**EDWIN**" (Education with Industry) aiming at investigating CPD practices and needs with European Industry, to benchmark and analyse them, to develop new concepts, to offer practical recommendations and widely diffuse them.

The extent of the implementation of these projects depended on the success of the applications and on the outside financing. In 1999, Ivan Brikké took over the Chairmanship of the CPD and the Committee worked hard on the EDWIN project. It worked all the way – almost! The application for the project was handed in to the Commission. We had arranged for participating universities and industry and the application was approved by the Commission, but not by the Executive Board of FEANI!

In 1998 - 1999 FEANI had a lot of problems: the Executive Board had been dissolved but not discharged because of certain accusations, the economy was very weak (to say the least) and FEANI was definitely not a healthy body. The new Executive Board (which also comprised the newly elected chairman of the CPDC, myself, Claes Trolle,) voted against accepting the contract from the Commission. Of course – everybody was not against the Contract: the President Kostas Alexopoulos, the former interim Chairman, the treasurer Bernard Lafitte and myself voted for, but we were a minority. The financial risk was thought too big, so the Contract was not accepted.

However, the CPDC thought the idea of making a survey of CPD in European Industry a worthwhile one. The Chairman of the CPDC managed

to get assistance from a big hightech Swedish company. This, in conjunction with hard work from Germany, Finland and some other countries, resulted in carrying out the project anyhow – without funds from neither the Commission, nor from FEANI. The result was presented at a seminar in 2001, which also saw speakers from various countries. This was not the first CPDC seminar. Already in Lillehammer 1997 the CPDC had arranged a seminar on CPD with participating speakers from Norway, Sweden, UK, Spain and Hungary.

The CPDC is used to work in project form. We aim at starting the project with a brainstorming session to get a quick start – and involving as many as possible of the CPDC members. Just to mention two more projects: **the e-learning project**, aiming at promoting e-learning in Europe (as we are far behind the Americans) and **the Employability toolkit** aiming at assisting the engineers to be continuously employable, presented in 2005.

One of the latest projects, to be presented at the GA 2008, is **the revised FEANI policy on CPD**.

The basics have not changed, but ways and means etc. are subject to technical development. Increasing international mobility is important, the Bologna declaration, the extension of the EU are other factors influencing the way we and our engineers look upon CPD and the possibilities to develop in our daily work.

As Chairman, I approached the National Members asking them to contribute to the work of the CPDC. To get more involvement was not an easy task! Still – the more participants (within reasonable limits), the more exchange of ideas, the better the possibilities to find the Best Practice in various areas. To encourage all countries to participate in our meetings and our work, we have since many years arranged our CPDC meetings in various countries. In this way we get to know more about the current situation for the engineers in most parts of Europe and we increase our network.

Looking ahead: most likely we will get our second female Chairperson at the 2008 General Assembly. The chairmanship has rotated between the member countries and we are lucky to get another inspired and competent chairperson. There is nothing contradicting the suspicion that there will not be less work in the coming years, but it will have to be shared. Participating in the work of the CPDC is in itself – CPD!