



## Document R3

### **Report by the International Advisory Board** **to the EUR-ACE Project Coordinator and Legal Representative**

**March 2006**

The present report has been prepared by the member of the International Advisory Board (IAB) at the invitation of the Project Board. It is based on my experience with EUR-ACE since my appointment, in particular on my participation in EUR-ACE meetings/events since September 2004.

#### **1. The International Advisory Board in EUR-ACE**

##### Composition

The International Advisory Board consists of one member:

Dr. Kruno Hernaut, DVT, Germany

Initially it was envisaged to appoint more than one member. After investigating several possibilities, all of them failed. Finally the Project Board made the decision in accordance with the already appointed IAB member to leave the IAB with only one member.

In my opinion this solution was adequate to the situation in the EUR-ACE project. The project partners have been well selected. They were highly motivated and fully committed to the clear defined project goals. They followed the realistic, although quite tight project time table, and brought a certain level of guaranty that the project can be run and finished successfully.

It is important that IAB members serve *ad personam* and do not in any way represent their organisation. It is equally important that the appointment process and the choice of IAB members be decided by the appropriate EUR-ACE Project and not by current IAB members.

### Role

In accordance with my appointment and with discussions in the Project Board, I see my role as that of external, independent person providing expert view and advice and drawing the attention of the EUR-ACE leadership to relevant present and forthcoming issues. Such views and advice are formally made to the President and Coordinator rather than to the full Project Board. The IAB member is observer and cannot carry any executive or fiscal responsibility. It should also be clear that while I may on occasion participate in discussions at EUR-ACE information events or meetings, I may not represent the project in any formal or legal way.

### Conditions for efficient/useful functioning

First I wish to emphasise that it has been a very positive initiative of EUR-ACE's leadership to create an International Advisory Body (IAB) to ensure that its decisions and activities are based on the independent knowledge of the field and background trends. This has been confirmed by my experience hitherto, which indicates that the IAB can provide useful information and viewpoints, serve as a link between the various internal parties and relay EUR-ACE activities to the external world.

I see the following as the key conditions for the relevance and efficiency of the IAB:

- The IAB member should normally participate in a manageable number of meetings, usually of the Project Board but cannot and should not get involved in the many meetings of other EUR-ACE groups;
- The quality of the work of the IAB is dependent on good information on EUR-ACE activities and issues. The current practice of sending to the IAB an invitation to all main meetings (thus seeking the involvement, however with no obligation to attend) and all minutes/documents is commended and encouraged;
- The IAB member should speak openly, including commenting on deficiencies and problem areas, as indeed I have been able to do;
- Finally IAB costs must remain modest in the overall EUR-ACE budget.

## **1. IAB observations on progress in the work of EUR-ACE**

### Structure/organisation

A European system for accreditation of Engineering Education is a permanent issue since Bologna Process was started and even before. Different European programmes such as H3E, E4 and TREE addressed this topic with high priority. It was stressed that Europe needs a common approach to accreditation of Engineering Education not only to respond to the requirements of the Bologna Process but also to meet the challenge of global developments and competition like Washington Accord, APEC initiatives and others.

As a consequence a natural step was to bring together the accreditation agencies which are already involved in accreditation of engineering programmes in Europe. It is logical that the EUR-ACE partners are national and European accreditation agencies and organisations of Engineering Education and Profession.

Given the clear definition and ambition of the Project, its basic structure/organisation into Project Board (representatives of all partners) and Steering Committee (Group of Experts)

is logical and gives the necessary operability of the project. Such lean organisation minimises the risk that some activities might fail, in particular when the timetable of the project is tight like this in EUR-ACE.

#### Time and progress management

Both the PB and MC have been strongly committed to the success of the project. The project steps have been carefully planned and the achievement of the objectives accurately monitored.

Starting with the collection of information on current accreditation procedures in preliminary stage of the project, the partners did an extraordinary work in relatively short time, which provided them a unique basis for formulating common accreditation standards and procedures and testing these in the subsequent stages. The result of each stage was accurately reported, discussed and documented, not only in the Board and Committee meetings but also between the meetings using e-mail and website of the project. The IAB was properly and up-to-date inform at all stages of the project. The excellent time and progress management of the project led finally to an excellent project outcome.

On the organisational side I observe that the management was supported by an efficient group of staff and that the financial arrangements were well administered. I pay special tribute to Professor Giuliano Augusti and Mr. Philippe Wauters who have continued to invest an immense amount of time and effort to ensure progress across the PB, MC and the whole project.

### **3. IAB Recommendations/suggestions**

- The IAB firmly acknowledges EUR-ACE as an important project for the future of Engineering Education and Profession in Europe in frame of Bologna Process and global trends.
- The IAB recommends to pay special attention to dissemination of the project results. The 'EUR-ACE Framework Standards for the Accreditation of Engineering Programmes' is a very valuable document. In addition to the final conference the document should be published and disseminated to all stakeholders such as authorities, higher education institutions, educational and professional associations, and social partners on national and European level.
- The IAB encourages the EUR-ACE partners to continue the activity as proposed in the EUR-ACE document 'Organization and Management of the EUR-ACE Accreditation System', establishing the European System for Accreditation of Engineering Education.

This report goes to the Coordinator and the Legal Representative for their consideration. I suggest that they may wish to share my observations with the Project



Board and/or include (some of) them into the Report to the EU Commission. I am ready to comment on the use of this report and to answer questions arising from it.

Dr. Kruno Hernaut

10. March 2006