

Summary of the discussion on the future of the TURI network

TURI conference, Madrid, 4/5 May 2010

The discussion was introduced by underlining the need for the TURI network to tackle three main issues with regard to its future development: the question on the *governance* of the network (bottom up/top down etc), the more practical aspect of the *functioning of the network* (work organization, differentiation between different products and dynamics, common vs. specific projects) and finally the *themes* to be addressed (current issues but also specialization of research centers).

Concerning the issue of *governance* of the network, the question of the role of the ETUI was discussed. So far the ETUI has acted as the cornerstone of the TURI network but this should not be the case in the future. TURI should be functioning in a more bottom up way so that national members also take initiatives for activities in the framework of TURI. The cooperation between the Spanish members for the organization of this conference is a very good example in this respect. It was suggested that the commitment to be member of the network should be acknowledged and internalized at the highest hierarchical level of a member organization as it is a rather strategic and political issue. All members should try to invest in the network – no matter if by means of own financial resources, human resources, logistics etc. A larger commitment to work together will boost the dynamics of the network.

As far as the *practical functioning* of the network is concerned, this conference, which is clearly a success, can be an example of the type of conference which the network should have once a year. These meetings should have a mixed objective – to exchange information on what is happening in the different countries but also to get an update and discuss the developments of the network. The format, nevertheless, can be subject of discussion, as well as the place of the conference, which should not be Brussels only.

The proposal of the WSI to install thematic working groups (WGs) was very well received. The ETUI added to the proposal that a WG should be proposed by at least 2 TURI members (without one of them being ETUI). Those institutes should be able and willing to devote own resources to the WG. The ETUI can be member of the WG(s) and can provide some financial/logistical support but it can not cover all costs. The cost sharing is not only necessary from a financial point of view, it would also demonstrate a greater commitment and would trigger a broader participation. There should not be more than 3 WGs at the same time and their work should be evaluated after a period of 3 years according to a well defined procedure. If it turns out that nothing has been achieved in a given WG then it should be abolished and a new proposal should be given a chance.

Concerning the *topics*, in addition to the proposal by the WSI to establish a WG on collective bargaining, the ETUI would suggest creating a WG on climate change and sustainable development.

Another axis of work could be the coordination of *a common project between different journals/reviews published by TURI members* which would result in having a more or less identical issue once a year. The coordinators of each review would have the possibility to be in contact with each other (meetings or teleconferences) in order to exchange their views and coordinate the common issue.

The network needs to strengthen the *TURI mobility grant* which was not a success after it was launched in 2009.

A crucial issue that needs to be reinforced is also the *circulation of information*. At this year's conference the request for information was mentioned repeatedly. The system for exchange of this information already exist (website, mailing list), what we need is a regular input of information from the members in English. The update of such information (also what is needed on a regular basis for the website) should be formalized to ensure a smooth information flow.

There has been also the demand from the *Health&Safety* and *Education* departments at the ETUI to establish similar networks on these issues in Europe.

A trainee at the ETUI has just started work on the update of the TURI website and a specific communication procedure will be put in place so that the website is updated on a regular basis.

It was suggested that TURI should try to make use of the financial opportunities provided by the EC (f.ex. the Budget Lines on Social Dialogue, the European Social Fund etc). The bigger institutes which have more administrative capacities could be leading a WG and managing bids for financing by the EC. A good example is the SALTSA initiative.

The important role of TURI to provide knowledge and research to TUs so that they can cope with this complex situation was also emphasized. It is essential to deal with specific topics and to have specific targets as f.ex. the change of financial model. In Spain the issue of the legitimacy of TUs, the TU- and more generally the social model have been under attack recently and the 1st of May foundation would like to see this question tackled by TURI. Research should not be detached from the trade union movement; it should go back to the basis, to the TU leadership, we should be cautious of 'translation' problems in this process. The ETUI should be the reference for the ETUC in terms of research (which is also most efficient) and create formal and informal structures for encounter. In thus respect it is key to exchange documents and information instead of doubling efforts, spending unnecessarily resources and re-inventing things.