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President's Newsletter October 2008

Dear Members of ELFA,
Dear Deans and Colleagues,

As the newly elected president of ELFA, I have the pleasure to keep you informed on the state of affairs of our association.

First of all, I want to express my deepest thanks on behalf of all ELFA Members to our outgoing President, Prof. Dr. Heribert Hirte (University of Hamburg), for the tremendous organisation of our last General Meeting in Hamburg. Both the scientific discussions and the overall program were on a very high level. A recent message from Peter van der Hijden, Head of Sector Higher Education of the European Commission, underlines how positively impressed he was from our meeting and our discussions. I have also to thank the Bucerius Law School and its President, Prof. Dr. Karsten Schmidt, to have given us the hospitality in such a marvellous place.

The 2008-2009 Board is composed of the following members : Prof. Pascal Pichonnaz (President - Fribourg), Prof. Janez Kranjc (First Vice-President - Ljubljana), Prof. Manuel Bermejo Castrillo (Madrid), Prof. Hans Van Houtte (Leuven), Prof. Jacek Petzel (Warsaw), Prof. Heribert Hirte (Hamburg). As you may remember, our **secretary**, Leni Sannen (Leuven), resigned since she wanted to pursue further education. I thank her for all the excellent job she did during one year and a half at the Secretariat of ELFA. Since April 2008, we have the chance to count *Mrs Helena Ferro de Gouveia* as the new Secretary of the Association. Helena graduated at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa in Media Sciences and Corporate Communication and has a post-graduation in Law and Communication. As Journalist at Deutsche Welle in Germany, and thanks to her legal background, she has the needed competences to enhance the effectiveness of our communication to the outside world. The whole Board is very pleased to greet her and wishes her a lot of exciting challenges. I am sure she will take care of all 177 members of our Association.

Since the last General Meeting in Hamburg, the Board met three times and dealt with a number of issues. Hereby a brief account of the most important ones:

1. ELFA's resolutions. The Resolutions taken by the General Assembly of ELFA in Hamburg were sent to all Ministries of Justice and Ministries of Education of the EU-Member States and other countries, as well as to main Newspapers. They can still be read on our website (www.elfa-afde.eu). We got very encouraging answers, in particular from the Minister of Justice of France, the Head of Education of Switzerland, the Minister of Justice of Ireland, the Minister of Education of Latvia and the Minister of Justice of Ukraine.

2. Project Tuning II. As most of you know, the previous Tuning I Project aimed at questioning academics, former students and employers on general and specific competencies expected from Law students. Despite efforts by the promoters, the University of Deusto and Prof. Julia González, by the Quacaas committee and numerous colleagues from our member Universities, the result were not satisfactory.

After the important discussion in Hamburg, the board explored further with Prof. Julia Gonzales how, and on what conditions, ELFA could participate in the Project Tuning II, also founded by the European

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Commission. The leaders at the University of Deusto expect today a rather limited input from our side and we are about to finalize the frame of our participation to this second stage.

3. EJLE (European Journal of Legal Education). Members who attended the Hamburg meeting might remember that the Board had appointed new EJLE Editorial Board members. However, during summer, the Board got the unpleasant news that Routledge, the publisher of EJLE, decided to cancel the contract. It explained in its letter the following «the absence of a timely publication has made it extremely difficult to coordinate our sales and marketing efforts and consequently subscriptions have remained at a disappointingly low level. As a result of these factors we have taken the extremely difficult decision that we would like the 2007 volume (4) to be the last that Routledge publishes. »

After a meeting with the General Editor, Prof. Julian Lonbay (University of Birmingham), the ELFA Board, in agreement with Julian Lonbay, decided not to look for a new publisher, but rather to opt for an electronic publishing of the EJLE. Julian Lonbay who invested a lot of time in the previous editions will continue to act as the scientific Director of the peer-reviewed part and a non peer-reviewed part will enhance the link between our members and constitute a showcase for the various ideas, experiences and goals of our Association and our members in Legal Education.

4. Database of Law Schools. In our newly designed Webpage, we have now posted the new database of all Law Schools in Europe. The tremendous work to collect the most important information of all law schools (490!) has been launched last year and was largely fulfilled thanks to the work of Dr. Sebastian Mock of the University of Hamburg. You will find your school and the information related under the following link: www.elfa-afde.eu(and then "Database"). The Board wants ELFA's webpage to become the *primary source of information on Law Schools in Europe*. Please keep us informed on any important changes or specific needs you may have.

Our webpage will also contain a list of available *academic positions in Europe* and other useful service information. So surf on it and give us feedback!

The next general Meeting will be held in Fribourg (Switzerland) on **13 and 14 February 2009**. The main topic will be the *Convergence of Legal Education and Doctoral Studies in Europe*. We expect some very good speakers, as well as substantial inputs from our members in an interactive discussion. Please block already the date in your agenda. Detailed information will follow in December.

Finally, I wish you a fruitful academic year 2008-2009. The continuous challenges of legal education will bring new ideas, new experiments and researches that should be shared at our next meeting in Fribourg! In the meantime, I remain

Yours sincerely



PASCAL PICHONNAZ
University of Fribourg
President of ELFA

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