

**Minutes  
of the Meeting of  
Network of Evaluation Societies in Europe (NESE)  
13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2011, Trento, Italy**

**Attendees** (in alphabetical order)

Basile, Irene	Société Française de l'Évaluation (SFE)
Davies, C. Ian	European Evaluation Society (EES)
Diez, María	Spanish Evaluation Society (SEE)
Gombitová, Dagmar	Slovak Evaluation Society (SES)
Gutknecht-Gmeinder, Maria (partly)	DeGEval (Austria)
Haubrich, Karin	DeGEval (Deutschland)
Mihalache, Roxana	Romanian Evaluation Society (EVALROM)
Pesce, Flavia	Italian Evaluation Society (AIV)
Petrová, Eva	European Evaluation Society (EES)
Radej, Bojan	Slovenian Evaluation Society (SDE)
Simons, Helen	UK Evaluation Society (UKES)
Sodomka, Vladimír	Czech Evaluation Society (CES)
Vataja, Katri	Finnish Evaluation Society (FES)

**1) Opening and welcome**

Karin Haubrich (DeGEval), the NESE coordinating partner since 2009, opens the meeting and formally hands over the coordinating role of the NESE to Flavia Pesce (AIV). Flavia Pesce introduces the Agenda which is accepted.

**2) Approval of last NESE meeting minutes (Prague October 2010)**

The minutes are approved.

The Slovenian Evaluation Society wants it to be noted that it considers that its concerns are not fully taken into account in the mission statement.

**3) Round table: News from national societies**

- *Italian Evaluation Society:*
  - Finalizing process of the Register for professions (80 requests, only 30 accepted): special committee to be elected during the upcoming AIV meeting for defining better criteria, competencies and mission. “.
  - Thematic working groups (tools and techniques, impact evaluation, research at Universities) with events at local level
  - Use of Social network (Facebook)
  - Revamping of the website
- *DeGEval:*
  - New brochure of the working group “Competencies for Evaluators and Didactics of Evaluation” produced (German), probably translation into English in future
  - New working groups (methods in evaluation, gender aspects, ethics in evaluation, etc.)
  - Revamping of the website

- *Romanian Evaluation Society:*
  - New project for increasing transparency to promote the evaluation in terms of more transparency in the public administrative – 2 workshops
  - Conference in 2010 dedicated to the parliament
  - Revamping of the website
  - “Research centres for evaluators” for gathering the material from national societies to be promoted and published
  - Bilateral partnership with national societies (e.g. Swiss evaluation society)
  
- *Slovak Evaluation Society*
  - International training for the development evaluation - cooperation with CES
  - “EVA the Evaluator” translated into Slovak in order to promote the evaluation to Slovak NP’s due to a sudden drop in the evaluation activities in 2010, no political support
  - Workshop for managing authorities “How to prepare the terms of reference for the evaluation assignment”
  - Database of evaluation assignments created on the basis of free access, some reports cannot be published on the website (author rights)
  - Revamping of the website
  
- *European Evaluation Society (EES)*
  - EES has approved a student membership fee
  - Revitalisation of EES electronic discussion group on LinkedIn
  - Continued involvement in IOCE and AfrEA
  - Ongoing support to the development of evaluation through collaboration with national societies in Eastern Europe
  - 10<sup>th</sup> EES Biennial Conference will be in Helsinki in October 2012 under the Presidency of current VP Maria Bustelo
  - Award for outstanding contribution to evaluation in Europe, to be launched in Helsinki
  - Participation at “OPEN DAYS” under DG REGIO in Brussels in October 2011 (to be confirmed)
  - The EES Brussels event (1 day event with 2-3 speakers followed by discussion) is planned late fall 2011- suggestions and ideas are welcome
  
- *Finish Evaluation Society:*
  - Delighted to have the 10<sup>th</sup> EES Biennial conference in Helsinki
  - New FES strategy for 2011 formulated
  - Planning the annual evaluation seminar in November 2011
  - Benchmarking of evaluation training programs in Finland and other countries
  - Discussion forums in 2010 open for everybody
  - Survey for members done 2010 for developing practices of the society
  - Brochure planned for branding the FES
  
- *Czech Evaluation Society:*
  - Sharing the experiences and trends with the SES, support of the training organized by SES
  - Promotion of the evaluation in the Czech Republic
  - Organisation of trainings for ministries responsible for EU programmes is planed
  - Congress of Czech Evaluation Society and Conference (CES ethical codes will be presented) in cooperation with Charles University to involve the academics sector
  
- *Spanish Evaluation Society:*
  - Conference in November 2011, Malaga
  - More user friendly website, el. discussion groups for non-members from Latin America
  - New master programme for students from Latin America at the University of Andalusia
  - Plan to transfer the Journal into electronic version
  
- *Slovenian Evaluation Society:*
  - Finalizing the book on evaluation for non-evaluators
  - Two presentations on evaluation study results (human developments, health institutions)
  - Day-seminar for leading government officials
  - Preparing the working paper on multilevel evaluation
  - European social funds financing of the project “Establishing of spatial network”

- *French evaluation society:*
  - No website yet
  - New working groups (9) on the health sector, cultural policies, evaluation consultancy
  - “Network of researchers” – summer school on public policy evaluation research (“French view of evaluation”)
  - Interest to be active in French parliament and court of audit
- *UK Evaluation Society:*
  - Development of the sectoral groups by involving non members and led by a UKES member;
  - Programme of Evaluation Training is planned
  - Further development of the website is planned
  - Developing a Framework of Competencies for evaluation and evaluators, but capabilities may be a preferred term.
  - Cooperation with Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) to produce grey literature (network of resources) on specific themes in evaluation

Bojan Radej (SDE) requests that NESE members be given free access to the EES members only area on the EES website. Ian Davies (EES) explains that the members only area is for EES members only but should NESE pursue the request he will refer it to the Board of EES.

Bojan Radej (SDE) states that the EES Biennial conference fees are too high. Ian Davies (EES) explains that the Board of EES is well aware of the problem and working to improve accessibility.

Bojan Radej (SDE) states that he is not aware of EES activities in Central and Eastern Europe. Ian Davies (EES) explains that EES’ collaborations are usually communicated when events take place such as the launching of the Portuguese evaluation society at the EES conference in Lisbon in 2008.

#### **4) Presentations and open debate: Exchange of practices and experiences on standards and ethic**

Standard and Ethics in Evaluation (presented by Helen Simons (UKES)). See presentation attached



Standards\_and\_Ethics\_in\_Evaluation\_Hel

- Reflections on guidelines, principles, standards, quality: no universal usage of these terms, specificity and purpose is one of the way of distinguishing;
- Overview of organizations producing standards/guidelines/principles
- Different purposes for each such standards, principles, guidelines; and drawbacks,
- Different messages in the language of “standards”, no international standards
- Example of UKES guidelines produced and presented. Uniqueness compared with other guidelines/ principles is that it has four sections; one each for evaluators, commissioners, participants and institutional self-evaluation
- Ethics – absence of ethical statements in many sets of standards and guidelines;
- Different function than standards, standards more about governance and quality of product and ethics about behaviour (how we behave, “do no harm”);
- Ethics is a relational concept about people ( at three levels: personal, community, professional )
- Ethics are situational, ethics principles are abstract, not always clear how to apply them in specific situations;
- Relationship between ethics and politics and the fact often intertwined;
- Different ethical theories to which we can appeal in making decisions
- Ethical decision-making: balancing of principles in concrete situations is the ultimate ethical act ( House, 1980) in the specific cultural, socio-political context.
- Balance between a person’s right privacy and the public right to know.

*Discussion centred on:*

- *the reality and independence of evaluators in terms of ethics (problem of changing the mind of people?)*

- strict rules set by the client in advance (not always possible to adhere to principles evaluators put forward?);
- different evaluation culture in each country,
- problems with the vision of institutions given the guidelines and standards.
  
- the meaning of “governance” – often a control mechanism rather than building a relationship with participants and sponsors in the evaluation;
- different position of young democracies in the meaning and understanding of “ethical” and “ethics” by the clients
- meaning of governance and situations in other evaluation societies

## 5) GOING INTO DETAILS OF FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND WORKPLAN 2011/2012

### 5.1) COMMUNICATION – HOW TO INCREASE COMMUNICATION FLOWS

*Proposals made by Ian C. Davies (EES) and decisions made by NESE in order to support the NESE (EES as a volunteer in providing the administrative support to NESE – “NESE secretariat”):*

- Distinct tab for NESE on the EES website
- To upload a list of NESE members with contact details and link to their website
- To send the contact details to all NESE members and to do a regular update 2 x per year.
- Create a NESE Email address: [NESE@europeanevaluation.org](mailto:NESE@europeanevaluation.org)

Bojan Radej states that the NESE logo is too similar to the EES logo which creates confusion for some. It is agreed that a new logo is a good idea and Ian Davies will see whether 2-3 designs can be had and circulated.

Actions agreed:

- Preliminary external contact list provided by NESE Secretariat to be circulated among the NESE members to add other contacts
- 1<sup>st</sup> letter presenting the NESE to other societies, invite them for participation and offer them the promotion on the NESE website (contact persons) - to be posted on the NESE website and to be sent to new societies that have not been NESE Members till now. Flavia Pesce (AIV – NESE Coordinator) will draft it and will circulate among NESE members for comments.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> letter presenting the NESE workplan and inviting the societies to present contributes to be uploaded to the website (conf. events, resources, trainings, “best thoughts”) – collecting content and sent to NESE secretariat on quarterly basis. Flavia Pesce (AIV – NESE Coordinator) will draft it and will circulate among NESE members for comments.
- To ask Sandra Speer to provide the NESE Secretariat with the survey 2008, 2009, to be uploaded and archived in the NESE secretariat. Karin Haubrich (DeGEval) will ask Sandra Speer.
- To prepare a short questionnaire on the basis of the Sandra Speer surveys to be sent to evaluation societies (to ask Maria Bustelo if she can propose a draft questionnaire, but will be signed by NESE) – questionnaires on regular basis

Bojan Radej requests that it be possible to upload and download documents to the website. The NESE secretariat will explore possibilities.

The point is made that responsibility for content of the NESE webpage rests with NESE and that the secretariat’s role is only for maintenance.

### 5.2) WHAT TO DO BETWEEN A MEETING AND OHTER

*Discussion about the possibility of having another meeting during the year.*

- Personal meetings are important for exchange experience and to be active (bilateral or trilateral meetings, conf calls)
- Identify two/three issues of interests (e.g. Complexity of evaluation) on which single evaluation societies can do event and invite who is interested in the topic (hi-level content is important)
- Conferences of Evaluation national societies as occasion to organise parallel event for NESE (e.g. EES event within the OPEN DAYS in Brussels, October 2011)
- Poster board – platform for communication on NESE website (check technicalities)

### 5.3) POINTS DECIDED IN MÜNSTER 2009, PRAGUE 2010

- a) standards and ethics
- b) getting politicians involved
- c) engaging in key issues with EU institutions
- d) glossary (common view, common words, a product of NESE?)
- e) running a society
- Getting politicians involved: too difficult, different in every country

*Discussion about the example of SES with translation and dissemination of “EVA the Evaluator” to members of the Slovak parliament including the explanation letter for politicians, that could be disseminated as a practice example to all NESE societies, but not suitable for every audience, problems of funding for NESE (not an entity) for translation and producing*

- Presidential letter to national association asking for examples of successful stories about evaluation in terms of consequences to access the network, can be presented as a product of NESE

*Discussion about the reason, impact and implementation of consequences, use and meaning of word consequences as such and if the evaluation should have recommendations; about the different expectation of the evaluators and politicians (Results x ethical behaviour).*

- Engaging in key issues with EU institutions

*Discussion about the limitations, no independency of evaluation for the EU institutions and European Commission as a political issue (problem of behaviour of the European politicians); about issue of tokenism of evaluation and need to create awareness and education about the evaluation.*

#### *Summary:*

- NESE is only a network cannot assign the tasks, different ideas and topics from the societies to be described and shared with the societies that are interested in.
- Use the network as a forum for circulating the issues and raising the issues and topics that can end with bilateral – trilateral communication.
- For topics to be raised: to raise topics, puts questions, etc. on the basis of email exchange.

Flavia Pesce thanked the participants for attending and for fruitful NESE meeting and closed the meeting.