

N/réf : SW/FZ

## Procès-Verbal de la 318<sup>ème</sup> séance de l'Assemblée d'Ecole du mardi 30 mars 2021

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**Présences** Aleksandra Radenovic, Ens  
André Fattet, CAT  
Consuelo Antille, CAT  
Fabio Zuliani, CI  
Francesca Nicoletti, E  
Frédéric Courbin, Ens  
Georg Fantner, Ens  
Ghali Chraibi, E  
Jacqueline Morard, CAT  
Julien Gamarro, CI  
Marco Picasso, Ens  
Maxime Brosset, E  
Nicolò Ferrari, E  
Pauline Franz, CI  
Silvia Hostettler, CI

Kristin Becker, Déléguée des 2 AE au CEPF  
Sabrina Wuilleret, Assistante administrative AE

Jan Hesthaven, Vice-président Académique

**Absents** Frédéric Rauss, Mediacom  
Gianluca Paglia, CAT

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### Ordre du jour

#### **Membres AE; la séance débute à 12h15**

- Accueil
- Adoption de l'ordre du jour
- Adoption du PV de la 317<sup>ème</sup> séance
- Discussion avec notre Déléguée au CEPF
- Communications du Bureau de l'AE
- Consultations
- Divers et propositions du jour

#### **Membres AE et Invités**

- Echange avec Prof. Jan Hesthaven, Provost, Vice-président Académique **(13.15-14.15)**
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### **1. Accueil**

Séance ouverte à 12h15 par Fabio Zuliani, Président de l'AE.

## 2. Adoption de l'ordre du jour

L'ordre du jour est adopté.

## 3. Adoption du PV 317<sup>ème</sup> séance

Le PV est adopté.

## 4. Discussion avec notre Déléguée au CEPF

ETH Board meeting from 3/4 March:

### Desksharing concept

As already mentioned at the last meeting, a domain-wide concept for the ETH Domain is to be developed by the end of 2021, with the goal of achieving 0.8 working places/full-time equivalent. The lead will be taken by the HR managers, and a consultation will take place in summer/fall 2021. Kristin Becker indicated that it is very important to involve employees in this process. A workshop "Future at work" has taken place at EPFL – Jacqueline Morard participated.

### Gender Strategy

The strategy has been approved by the ETH-Board, the staff will give feedback from the consultations to the school assemblies.

### Ordinance Personnel ETH Domain (PVO ETH)

There are positive adjustments:

- Women can work until 65 (Art. 20c)
- Paternity leave of 20 days, also for same-sex couples ("registered partners") (Art. 52, para. 2c)
- care leave of max 14 days for sick children (Art. 37a)

But, as with the 1st partial revision, there are more negative than positive adjustments. Kristin Becker pointed out that employees feel that it is generally a worsening. There is also little understanding that the PVO is to be adapted to Ordinance of the employees of the Confederation in many respects without fail, even though federal employees have advantages in some respects (0.7% more pay increase, whole series of allowances).

- Occupational disability provision (invalidité professionnelle) is abolished (Art. 39a)
- Prime after 5 years will be abolished (Art. 45 para. 2)
- Early retirement benefits (Prestations en cas de retraite anticipée pour cause de restructuration) minimum age to be raised from 58 to 60 (Art. 22 and 22a)
- Bridging pension (rente transitoire ou rente pont) only from 62 instead of 60 with less financing contribution from the employer (Art. 42a)

The changes regarding the Early retirement benefits in the event of restructuring do not appear to have been discussed in advance with the social partners, although they have consequences for the social plan. Furthermore, the justification for not providing "prestations en cas de retraite anticipée" for employees aged 58 or 59 in recent years is questionable - why abolish something just because it has not been used in recent years and may be needed in the next few years (also in the context of the COVID crisis)?

Bridging pension: in the December meeting it was said that a rule tailored to ETH should be worked out, more generous than the Confederation, and then negotiated. However, as far as the employer's participation in the financing of the bridging pension is concerned, the proposal now on the table is completely aligned with Ordinance for the employees of the Confederation and is 5 to 25% lower than before, and the -25% concerns the lowest function levels! The only ones for whom the participation is not lower than before are the 64-year-olds in cadre plan levels 1 and 2!

Kristin Becker's proposal, namely to increase the participation for function levels 1 to 3 so that the difference from the current level is no more than 10%, was accepted by the ETH board.

Paragraph 4 (Art. 42a, para. 4) says that the ETH Board, in agreement with the two ETH and the research institutes, shall determine the functions for which there is an entitlement to a participation for the bridging pension - this point seems critical and it is not clear at the moment how this should be done – Kristin Becker noted that staff representatives and the social partners should in any case be involved.

The 2nd partial revision should now go into office consultation and internal consultation.

## Strategy for the development of the number of students and doctoral candidates

As reported at the last meeting, the ETH Board has to develop this strategy (part of the Federal Council's strategic goals for the ETH Domain 2021-2024). A workshop will be organized on the growth strategy in May. From EPFL there will be Jan Hesthaven, Kathryn Hess and Isabelle Cahour. Kristin Becker will also participate.

## 5. Communications du bureau AE

- Commission opérationnelle Covid-19 :
  - Discussion sur de possibles ouvertures suivant les mises à jour des mesures fédérales.
  - Fabio a amené le fait que les différentes Facultés n'étaient pas cohérentes dans l'application des autorisations exceptionnelles d'accès au campus. Le point a été réglé avec les Doyens concernés.
- Réunion du Bureau AE :
  - Corps intermédiaire : travail en cours pour améliorer la représentation du Corps Intermédiaire par les membres concernés. Le Bureau a rencontré la Prof. Luisa Lambertini qui a établi un contact avec Isabelle Cahour. Entre temps, la Direction a pris en main le projet, le Secrétariat Général va être contacté sur ce sujet.
- Accréditations institutionnelles :
  - Le bureau est impliqué dans l'écriture et la relecture du rapport d'auto-évaluation du processus qualité de l'EPFL.
- Desk sharing : comme précité dans la rubrique de notre déléguée CEPF, un concept pour l'ensemble du domaine des EPF doit être élaboré d'ici fin 2021 (objectif 0,8 place de travail/équivalent plein temps). Consultation prévue en 2021.

## 6. Consultations

- 03.02.2021 : Consultation sur le projet de la Révision de la Directive pour la gestion de noms de domaines (autres que epfl.ch) (LEX 6.2.1) et de sa fusion avec la Directive concernant la validation des dénominations et sigles de site WEB (LEX 6.3.2), GT – Julien, André, Maxime, Georg (Deadline 30.03). Prise de position de l'AE validée par l'ensemble des membres présents. Envoi ce jour à Thomas Mertl, cc. Tristan Maillard.
- 09.03.2021 : Consultation sur le projet de « Révision partielle de la Directive interne concernant les épreuves d'examen à l'EPFL (LEX 2.6.1), du Protocole d'épreuve en session d'examen (LEX 2.6.2), et de la Directive concernant les rapports de travail des assistants-étudiants, des assistants de construction et des assistants temporaires à l'EPFL (LEX 4.7.1). », GT – Ghali, Fabio, Aleksandra, Consuelo (Deadline 05.05.2021)
- 16.03.2021 : Consultation sur le « Projet d'Ordonnance sur les bourses de l'EPFL », GT – Fabio, Consuelo, Francesca, Marco (Deadline 05.05.2021)

## 7. Echange avec Prof. Jan Hesthaven - Provost, Vice-président Académique

- Presentation of VPA organization.
- Questions & answers:

## Teaching

- Starting a third semester of online classes, many professors were interested in using pre-recorded lectures (sometimes the ones from the previous year). When there are good quality videos, some professors use it as a way to delete any interaction with their students during the semester. To solve this problem some professors

organize live sessions to answer questions or do a summary of the material taught in the current week to maintain an interaction with their students. Do you think that the direction could strongly encourage such practice as interaction is key for good quality teaching?

Answer: Yes, we strongly recommend it. Teachers should be available to clarify what is not in the video, typically during normal class hours. If there are complaints from students, class delegates must forward specific information to sections. AGEPoly will do a survey to evaluate if it affects a substantial number of students.

- With the current situation, there is a need to introduce some continuous evaluation rather than a final exam only. Your position about this?

Answer: I'm a big fan of continuous evaluation, in every class, at any level. The teaching platform should help enable this, in particular for the fundamental classes and first years. Unfortunately, it is not possible to transition quickly to such a system, due partly to the added workload of giving constructive feedback on exercises.

- In the introductory presentation last year in September, you mentioned that you want Bachelor students to do practical lab training earlier in their studies compared to now. In study courses like Chemistry and Biology, this makes a lot of sense. How far advanced are your plans to put this intention into practice?

Answer: Bachelor students should have the opportunity to get research experience (internship) as early as possible on EPFL campus. Doing it during the semester is not without complications as class configuration would have to be completely rethought. However, the summer period is feasible. We are working to implement this as early as Summer 2022 and are currently looking for resources. Emphasis is on bachelor students who would like to benefit from this experience would be paid a stipend during that period. Master students already have other opportunities to get experience.

## Research

- Update about EU/Innosuisse (agence suisse pour l'encouragement de l'innovation) projects and teaching hours?

Answer: There is no update or change (neither from the Research Office or ETH). It's well known that teaching hours are used very differently among Chrono software users.

- The last ERC (European Research Council) results were not so good...Any thoughts?

Answer: Research office's conclusions: 1) The number of full professors who apply is very low (ETH Zürich too). Only a small fraction applies. 2) External applicants do not receive enough help from EPFL. Observations are that EPFL is the only institution who does not offer any financial support to these junior researchers. In April, we will implement a similar concept as ETH Zurich providing financial support which may hopefully positively turn the trend. 3) We do not give the rank of Professor to external fellowship recipients. If financial support appears to be insufficient, rethinking titles given might eventually be considered.

- Your position on lab closing and CDI contracts?

Answer: We have to be better in planning this. CDI contract is not a permanent contract and sometimes it is not realistic to keep such specialists until retirement. Unfortunately, some of them are unemployable due to their specific specialization. We should prepare them on what is possible outside EPFL – think about their career path inside/outside EPFL. They have my full sympathy on this problem. A solution could be to consider pools of CDI employees not attached to a specific position (as it's impossible to employ anyone on a CDD for 5 years for instance). Decision is on the Dean level. Unfortunately, labs do not have any interest in substantially changing status quo.

## Regulations

- The number of investigations into faculty members has drastically increased in recent years. The intended aim of these investigations is to assure a culture of respect at EPFL. The side effect however is often severe psychological and professional harm done to the investigated as was documented by a recent survey. What

are your plans to redesign the grievance process at EPFL to ensure an effective and fair process to handle suspected cases of misconduct?

Answer: Let me first dispel this misunderstanding. The number of investigations has not increased dramatically in recent years. Except of one year which seemed to be a singularity, the cases are very low and stable. That said, every such case is to be avoided, and we must do what we can to improve. VPT Gisou Van der Goot will meet AE in May and will discuss those issues (harassment). The Respect Unit has been restructured towards a de-escalation strategy to solve issues before legal actions are taken as this often as possible. There is a lack of trust between the different bodies at EPFL. We should all think about it and understand why so this can be addressed.

- In situations where PhD students must leave their advisers lab after candidacy exam, but before graduation (for example due to problems with their adviser) are in a precarious situation, since it is very difficult to find alternative advisors. Students who have passed their candidacy exam but then do not progress fast enough to expect graduation within the time allowed at EPFL are in a similar situation. A gentler procedure than expulsion from the doctoral school would be very helpful to find satisfactory solutions for such cases. Would you be in favor of generating a “fallback degree” for students who pass the candidacy exam, but not the PhD? Such a fallback degree is common at many US universities where students after passing the candidacy exam obtain a master’s degree.

Answer: Granting degrees at departure is not an option as it collides with our rules for what it takes to obtain an EPFL degree. This would require a complete rethinking of what is a Master. We are working to create a fund to support the student during the transition to another lab to help solve this issue.

- New rules, new Lex: after consultation on new organization, some Lex have changed, but there are some side effects, not considered, on other Lex. There is also no clear information on what is new in Polylex, what is applicable, etc.... It is sometimes tricky to manage all this.

Answer: A list of changes that have been made & where they appear can be set up. The most important ones are submitted to a Consultation: compromises are taken & Direction replies during the consultation.

## Participation

- What is your opinion on School Councils? Are you aware of the huge variance between the Schools? In STI consultations are rarely carried out. What would be the best strategy to improve functioning of the School Councils -would information session for new Deans be a good idea as some Deans that are external to EPFL are not aware of the obligations/role of School Council - regular meetings, consultations, and participation of all bodies.

Answer: Yes, we are well aware. Prof. K. Hess is doing a survey to understand the situation better.

- How do you see the lack of Intermediate Body representation at EPFL?

Answer: ACIDE seems to come back to life. Too few people are willing to get involved in associations during the elections. I would welcome a much broader level of participation at all levels and by all bodies.

## Future

- How do you see increase in number of students? (+20% in 10y listed in the strategic plan) What is the EPFL doing to include student’s representatives in the discussions to address this extremely complex topic?

Answer: Students are not taking part in these discussions, which are taking place between ETH Board and EPFL Direction. Swiss Confederation is trying to understand EPFL needs. It is too early to involve the students in this discussion.

- How do you see the same increase in professor positions be absorbed by infrastructures, especially with the refurbishing of the old buildings...?

Answer: We don't know where to place them yet. The government has introduced new standards for workspace (compression of available space and way to use it). Space will continue to be an issue in the future, but it is on the table.

- Advanced Sciences Buildings funding?

Answer: Funding is on its way. Construction is expected to start in the upcoming 5 years, two buildings are planned to be built between the Plasma center and the Innovation Park. One for experimental labs with high requirements in terms of vibrations, electromagnetic shielding, etc., and the other one for offices and additional lab space for activities which are less sensitive.

## 8. Divers et propositions du jour

- Elections des étudiants qui siégeront à l'AE et aux Conseils de facultés dès septembre 2021 : début du processus à organiser dès avril. Les canaux de diffusion de l'information doivent être déterminés (Covid – cibler un maximum d'étudiants).
- Nouvelle structure de la direction et notamment de la VPA : l'AE demandera un retour détaillé de la part de la direction cet automne.
- Stress psychologique des étudiants et des doctorants, dû à l'enseignement à distance : le Corps professoral et le Corps des étudiants sont très inquiets et constatent une réelle détresse de certains étudiants (cas graves connus dernièrement). Les étudiants ont besoin d'accompagnement et de soutien, particulièrement à certaines étapes clé de leurs études. Le « point santé » avec des professionnels de la santé sur le Campus et la proposition actuelle de soutien psychologique au CHUV ne semblent pas être suffisants.

### Idées :

- Prise en charge plus rapide pour désamorcer des troubles, éviter une aggravation, réduire l'impact sur la personne
- Séances avec des psychologues/psychiatres en anglais
- Soutien à moyen/long terme
- Prise en charge des frais de séances à moyen/long terme.

### Débat :

Faut-il une présence permanente de professionnels de la santé psychologique, employés par l'EPFL, sur le site ? Certains patients préféreraient au contraire être traités sur un lieu externe non lié à l'EPFL.

### Action :

- L'AGEPoly effectue un sondage pour comprendre les besoins/attentes spécifiques des étudiants dans les semaines à venir (exemple : remboursement des frais des séances pour favoriser la discrétion et éviter d'impliquer financièrement des proches/parents)
- La Task Force sur le Harcèlement travaille sur les mesures d'accompagnement psychologique, il se pourrait qu'une augmentation de l'offre arrive prochainement. Si rien ne se passe prochainement, l'AE envisage de soumettre une proposition.