



# **Minutes**

## **of the Meeting of**

### **National Evaluation Societies of Europe (NESE)**

**1st of October 2008, Lisbon**

#### ***1. OPENING***

Murray Saunders (EES) and Jacques Toulemonde (SFE – French Evaluation Society) open the meeting and introduce the agenda.

##### *1.1. Steps already taken*

A majority of European countries now have an evaluation society. A questionnaire survey answered by 12 societies shows an overall membership of 2300, dozens of working groups, and four journals.

Following a first meeting in Strasbourg, 15 societies have expressed their willingness to take part in a network within the EES<sup>1</sup>, 4 other societies are willing to be kept informed<sup>2</sup>. There is not yet an evaluation society in about 10 other European countries.

The EES and the SFE have initiated the network and will jointly co-ordinate the activities in 2009. In the future, the network will be co-ordinated by the EES and another national society every year on a rolling basis. DEGeval will play the role in 2010.

##### *1.2. Purpose and status of the meeting*

The participants belong to twelve national societies<sup>3</sup>. Some have the status of 'delegates' and a mandate of their board but others don't.

The purpose of the meeting is: (1) to initiate a process of mutual learning and (2) to discuss the first annual work programme.

#### ***2. Mutual learning: two good practices***

##### *2.1. Setting standards for the training of evaluation professionals*

Christiane Spiel, president of DeGeval presents her society's experience with the standards for training evaluation professionals (see Box hereafter).

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<sup>1</sup> BE-F, BE-W, CH, CZ, DE/AT, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, PL, RO, SE, SK, UK

<sup>2</sup> DK, IC, NL, SI

<sup>3</sup> BE-F, BE-W, CZ, DE/AT, FR, IE, IT, PL, RO, SE, SK, UK

The first trainings programmes in German were initiated by the universities of Bern and Saarland. Another master programme is being launched in 2008 in Bonn University. These universities tend to offer part-time programmes to a growing number of mid-career professionals. Participants typically add an evaluation competency to their main professional experience in a given policy field.

The Bologna process raises interest for training young post-graduate students whose main professional identity will be evaluation. This created a need for a set of training standards. A first draft was designed by a DEGEval working group, and then submitted to all other working groups, endorsed by the society, and published in German and English. The whole process took 2 ½ year.

The standards are available at <http://www.degeval.de/calimero/tools/proxy.php?id=18021>. They define what knowledge and competencies are necessary for the job of an evaluator and should therefore be incorporated into an education and training programme. They are structured in four fields of competencies: theory and history of evaluation, methodology, public organisations and policies, social and personal behaviour. In addition, these competencies should be tied to evaluation practice, i.e. acquired in the course of practical training.

During the discussion on Christiane Spiel's presentation, the participants express their interest to further exchange views on:

- The actual use of training standards by universities for developing curricula and teaching methods,
- The benefits of defining evaluators' competencies in terms of justifying who can call him/herself an evaluator

## *2.2. Bringing an evaluation society to birth*

Roxana Mihalace, President of EvalRom (Romanian Evaluation Society) gives an overview of the successful foundation of her society.

A first step was taken in August 2006 when 22 professionals created an informal network and started to discuss the need for and ways to setting a national society. Then the small circle of initial promoters enlarged progressively, and the purpose of the future society was clarified. In particular, it was specified that the society would not provide technical assistance for building evaluation capacity in the Public Administration. Valuable support was received from IOCE and the Romanian Ministry of Finance.

The society was formally established more than one year later, at a time when a wide consensus had been reached.

The discussion on Roxana Mihalace's presentation raises the following issues:

- The support of powerful national authorities might have put the independence of the young society at risk. For this reason, EvalRom did not accept an offer to be hosted in the premises of the Ministry of Finance.
- In another context, the Flemish Evaluation Platform came to birth in December 2007 through a widely attended conference and a free-of-charge membership which attracted almost 900 registrations. The society immediately attracted evaluators working in a wide range of policy areas.
- IOCE's website supplies a list of 14 case studies of establishing evaluation societies (see [http://ioce.net/resources/case\\_studies.shtml](http://ioce.net/resources/case_studies.shtml)), including Italia and Spain.

## **3. Mutual learning: next steps**

### *3.1. Displaying and transferring good practices*

The network of National Evaluation Societies of Europe (NESE) will be visible through a specific section on the EES website. Inter alia, this section will display a series of good practices such as the

above quoted cases of DEGEval and EvalRom.

Evaluation societies are invited to briefly introduce these good practices into their own website in their national language with linkages to the EES website.

Thematic interest groups of national societies are invited to continue / initiate the discussion of good practices through emails and/or telephone conferences, and to comment upon their transferability.

### *3.2. New areas for mutual learning*

After a reminder of the discussion held in Strasbourg, and an open discussion, the participants propose that additional good practices be presented and discussed within the network:

- Promoting professional use of evaluation standards (UK, France, Belgium-Wallonia)
- Co-operating with other professional associations aiming to improve government (Belgium-Flanders, France)
- Promoting quality without standards (Sweden)
- Improving the visibility of evaluation for politicians, media, and citizens (DEGEval).

More generally, there is a general willingness to learn about:

- Regulating the evaluation profession (although there may not be available good practices in this area)
- Building evaluation capacity in the public administration.

## **4. Work programme 2009**

### *4.1. Commitments of the co-ordinators*

A co-ordinators of the network in 2009, EES and SFE commit themselves to open a NESE section on the EES website including:

- Detailed presentation of each evaluation society, according to the 2008 spring survey, and update of this survey in spring 2009
- Presentation of a series of good practices proposed by national evaluation societies (starting with an improved version of the two boxes above).

The co-ordinators will also create a private web-server for the purpose of mutual learning.

### *4.2. Commitments of the societies*

National societies participating in the network commit themselves to:

- Nominate a contact person and maintain an effective line of communication with the co-ordinators (Murray Saunders and Jacques Toulemonde)
- Open a page on their own website in their national language. This page will explain their belonging to the network, and provide a brief introduction to the other societies' good practices, (with links).

### *4.3. Next meeting*

The next meeting of the network will be hosted by DEGEval. It will take place in Munster, October 2009, one day before the DEGEval conference.