

## “EUROPEAN JOURNALISTIC EDUCATION SYSTEM NEEDS A MONITORING BODY”

*In the perspective of the database showing the results of a research done by FEJS and the Pascal Decroos Fund on European journalistic education, we tried to interview the president of the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) **Marianne Peters**. Due to a lack of time Peters could only touch a few topics of all the questions we'd sent her. A summary.*

The situation of journalistic education in Europe differs from country to country – some countries only have mid-career departments, some are still busy adopting the Bologna declaration. Due to those differences the president of European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) Marianne Peters finds it hard to say what should be the first thing to be done in the field of journalistic education. Peters mentions that the programs in Eastern Europe seem to be more unified, while in general there are more schools for journalism in the Northern European countries. However, more and more journalism schools open overall.

Is there a kind of 'best school' of journalism in Europe? Peters: “El Pais is brilliant, but it is a one year programme and not a Master's. They select 40 students out of for example 1000 applicants so obviously the quality is higher than when a school needs to accept everyone who is applying. In that sense, various schools are incomparable.” Another problem of comparing journalism schools in different countries is the language barrier and the fact “there is no European body that looks into higher journalism education”. The UK for example is constantly looking into the American education and vice versa. But the rest of Europe is not familiar with a similar practice. Even only in Britain it is hard to compare schools. “Comparing is a complicated issue since British Universities are rated on a variety of activities and the ranking may change per year per issue. Theoretically we can only say that for example Cardiff may be the leading University in research; London in practical education ...”

According to Peters Europe also misses an organisation providing internships for young journalists abroad. “There is the European Programme Leonardo for internships within Europe, but for journalism students it would be very hard to take part because of the language barrier. If you want to work in a certain language you need to be completely fluent in it. And only a few people are. You cannot be a radio or TV journalist for example and have a strong accent.”

That is why Peters is all for more English exchange programmes: “We need English exchange programmes. Programmes that are only in the national language are often more academic than practical and therefore easier to accomplish. Internships and exchange programmes are different experiences, both valuable but the first is easier to accomplish in journalism education than the second.”

To EJTA and to Peters, the international experience is very important though. In Europe there are many exchange programmes, but they depend on the type of the school. For Peters, international experience is a vital and essential part of journalistic education. Since in Europe there are a lot of possibilities to get money, her suggestion is that especially Eastern European countries need to be more active to get their students Erasmus funds. “My organisation will do anything to promote journalism student exchange programmes.”

### Frame1:

#### **What is EJTA?**

The European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) wants to be a platform for comparing the experience and new developments in journalism and higher education. At this moment, they are discussing the Dublin descriptors and implications and guidelines of the Bologna system. As it is written on their homepage ([www.ejta.nl](http://www.ejta.nl)), the organisation was established in Brussels in 1990 to enable different training centres all around Europe to collaborate and to broaden the European dimension. The Association, based in The Netherlands, represents the interests of the journalism training centres, co-ordinates exchanges and organizes educational co-operation.

### Frame2:

#### **What are the Dublin descriptors?**

Within a European space of higher education, the Bologna declaration (process) proposes a system of qualifications in higher (tertiary) education that is based on two cycles: the first (undergraduate) cycle ending in a Bachelor's degree and the

second (postgraduate) cycle, based on Master's degrees and doctorates. The aim of the Bologna process is to encourage a nomenclature of awards that is comparable between countries and easily to read, promoting the mobility of students. The Dublin Descriptors for Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral awards have been proposed by the Joint Quality initiative in March 2004. The reason for that is that a range of higher education awards are available to students who have undertaken a programme of study within the Bologna's cycles, but which do not represent the full extent of these cycles. The Dublin descriptors are more specific and indicate Short cycle, First Cycle, Second Cycle and Third cycle awards (previously referred as Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral awards). The criteria for different cycles are available at [www.jointquality.org](http://www.jointquality.org).

### Frame3

#### **Journalism education monitoring associations in the UK and the USA**

In the United States and the United Kingdom there are some organisations concerning the quality of journalism education. The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication's (AEJMC) aims are (by organising different conferences and other events) promoting the highest possible standards for education in journalism and mass communication in the USA, encouraging the widest possible range of communication research, encouraging the implementation of a multi-cultural society in the classroom and curriculum, and defending and maintaining freedom of expression in day-to-day living ([www.aejmc.org](http://www.aejmc.org)). Together with (American) Journalism Education Association ([www.jea.org](http://www.jea.org)) that wants to promote professionalism in scholastic journalism, the Journalism Division of the AEJMC set Standards for Journalism Educators. These are the guidelines for educators teaching secondary school journalism to enable them a broad range of knowledge and performance abilities. In the United Kingdom there is the Association for journalism education ([www.ajeuk.org](http://www.ajeuk.org)) seeking to uphold the highest standards in journalism education, providing a common voice for those involved in it, promoting and supporting research into journalism education and journalism.

### Frame 4:

The Universidad Autonoma de Madrid (UAM) /EL PAÍS School of Journalism was founded in 1986, when the UAM and the PRISA group agreed to sign an agreement about it. Since October 1988, the school depends on the UAM/EI Pais School of Journalism Foundation, which was established in the same year. More information about the EI Pais School of Journalism is available on [www.escuela.elpais.es](http://www.escuela.elpais.es).

Katja Žižek  
3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006