

TULIP – Project

Organisational and structural comments on the Liaison Office University – Trade Unions at the Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg

1. Structure of the Organisation

As staff unit, the Liaison Office University – Trade Unions is assigned to the Presidential Chair and hence directly responsible to the university president. Staff and communication about focal points of work hence take place in direct consultation with the president. This structure is rather unusual for other liaison offices in Lower-Saxony and the region – there are different allocations and directive structures for liaison offices.

The Liaison Office Oldenburg is currently equipped with 1,5 posts for staff, i.e. the director, which is a position as a research associate with a respective salary. The other post is assigned to an administrative assistant with approx. 50% of the usual working

2. Finances

The permanent expenses and personnel costs are covered by a special budget of the university, financed directly by Lower-Saxony. Thus in case the university leadership decides to stop the work of the liaison office, the personnel costs as well as costs for tangible means would be paid back to the state budget. Hence such a decision would not endow the university with any financial advantage.

Besides the financing of personnel costs for the 1,5 posts mentioned, the liaison office has a yearly budget for tangible means that amounts to approx. 12.000 Euros.

This budget serves to cover all expenses of the liaison office – costs for tangible means of the office as well as costs for conference and other focus points of work.

This budget for tangible means is the same for all liaison offices in Lower Saxony (i.e. 5 offices) – the rest of the financing is acquired by very different means (partly by regional or supra-regional trade unions). This also means that there are no uniform federal or state regulations for the financing of liaison office in the

3. Contacts – Exchange between University and Trade Unions

Liaison Advisory Board

The work of the liaison office is accompanied by an advisory board, in which trade unions and university are both represented by the same persons. On the side of the trade unions, the head of department of the DGB federal district Lower-Saxony responsible for universities, the regional executive secretary of the trade union educational association as well as colleagues from the individual trade unions from the Weser-Ems region are present in the advisory board. From the universities there are representatives of the professors, research associates as well as technical and administrative staff. The advisory board meets approx. twice a year.

Kooperation Information

Every six months information about the work and the projects of the liaison office are published. In Lower-Saxony this Information dissemination is conducted in cooperation with the other four liaison offices. Aim of this information dissemination is provide the universities and trade unions with up-to-date information about the main fields of

work of the liaison office and thus give directives and suggestions for further cooperation.

Networks of the Liaison Office

An annual meeting of the Working Committee of liaison offices takes place in Germany in order to exchange work experience and discuss perspectives of liaison offices. The meeting is coordinated and financed by the research and study foundations of the trade unions.

The liaison offices in Lower-Saxony meet four times a year to exchange experiences with their work and major projects. In context of the network of liaison offices in Lower-Saxony an annual conference is organised on the topic of "Future of work formation". Furthermore joint projects of the individual liaison offices are planned and coordinated. At the beginning of 2008 the network of liaison offices in Lower-Saxony takes part in a EU project for the second time. The liaison offices applied for it in joint cooperation with the trade union adult education institution.

The cooperation of the Liaison Office Oldenburg within the universities takes place in the following ways:

- Involving professors and research associates as speakers at conferences, which are organized by the liaison office
- Inquiring contacts for courses or research projects (involving trade unions or lobbyists from businesses in the North-West region);
- Presenting the work of the liaison office to new university lecturers
- Regular exchange on the work of the liaison office with the university president
- Representing the liaison office in different research centers and university networks

The cooperation of the liaison office Oldenburg with regional trade unions takes place in the following way:

- Regular attendance of the liaison office in several regional bodies of the trade unions
- Cooperating with the steering committee of the interregional trade union council Weser-Ems Northern-Netherlands;
- Inviting directors of the liaison offices as speakers to current political topics concerning trade unions in different bodies of the individual trade unions
- Good informal contact to all regional offices of the individual trade unions and their directors
- Organising an annual conference on a current political topic concerning trade unions, to which representatives of the steering committees of the individual trade unions or the DGB respectively and trade-union-oriented scientists are invited. These conferences have developed into a forum of critical discussion of trade union politics in the region and have hence become a 'trade-mark' of the liaison office (as Science-Practice-Dialogue)

4. Current thematic focus of the Liaison Office Oldenburg

- Precarious work relations; theoretical argumentation and monitoring of a regional DGB project on this topic
- Interregional trade union politics: Participation in the IGR at the German-Netherlands-Border; IGR as a part of a European trade union strategy
- Internationalisation of occupation education: participation in the establishing of a German-Netherlands exchange structure of trainees; Monitoring the discussion on the modernisation of occupational education in the European context:
- Project acquisition and conference organisation on further topics concerning trade union politics.

