

Report of the Review Committee of the
**‘Amsterdam Institute for Advanced
Labour Studies’
(AIAS)**

**Amsterdam
July 2004**

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Basic data about the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced labour Studies

The Amsterdam Institute for Advanced labour Studies (AIAS) is an institute of multidisciplinary research and teaching at the Universiteit van Amsterdam. It was founded in 1998 in order to bring together the university's expertise in labour studies from the Faculties of Law, Social and Behavioural Sciences, Economics and Econometrics, and Medicine.

In June 2000 the Institute's mission was formulated with more precision. AIAS wants to be a leading academic centre with a threefold task:

- To perform and facilitate research aimed at developing and empirically testing and applying theories that can explain the working of labour markets, labour relations and organizations, and social labour policies in an internationally comparative perspective.
- To develop integrated and multidisciplinary teaching programmes concerning these issues in cooperation with partners both inside and outside the University, both nationally and internationally, attracting foreign and Dutch students.
- To provide expertise to society by supplying analytical tools, results and data to enlighten policymaking in the field of labour and to contribute to the intellectual and public debate on labour, employment and social policies.

The AIAS bureau consists of 24 people. This includes 4 permanent scientific positions, 15 PhD students and 6 additional staff in projects and administrative functions. The number of AIAS research fellows is 25. The total budget of AIAS in 2003 was €962,909 in receipts, of which €452,007 through university funding and €510,902 through fees and research contracts. In addition, AIAS generated in 2003 €473,793 receipts administrated by other units in the University.

The Review Committee

In May 2004, the Board of the Universiteit van Amsterdam invited three experts to form the AIAS review Committee (see Appendix 1 for the informal invitation by email and the formal confirmation letter). Those experts are:

Prof. S. Sciarra, (Professor of Labour Law and Comparative Labour Law, Università di Firenze)

Prof. M. Regini (Professor at the Department of Labour Studies, University of Milan)

Prof. R.B. Freeman (Professor at the Department of Economics, Harvard University and Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics)

The board appointed Mrs. Dr. J.W.M. van Outersterp from the department of Academic Affairs, as the secretary of the Committee.

Short profiles of the Committee members are given in Appendix 2.

Scope of the Review

The task of the Committee was formulated as follows:

“Every four years the University Board will decide on continuation of the institute on the basis of an international peer review. The first peer review took place in 2000. On that basis the University Board decided to continue its financial contribution to AIAS for the period 2001-2004. This year AIAS has to be reviewed again. The assessment will be carried out under the auspices of the University Board and the report will be presented to the Board. The Committee is asked to write a brief report in which the following questions are answered:

- Has the Institute been successful in carrying out its mission?
- Are the results concerning education and research satisfactory?
- What is the opinion of the Committee with regard to the institutional setting, especially the position of the Institute vis-à-vis the faculties (more in particular, the commissioner) and the University Board?
- Are the institutional setting and its mission proportional?
- What is your opinion on the research plans of AIAS concerning the quality and the long-term viability?
- Should the Institute be continued? If so, in what form?”

Data provided to the Committee

The Committee has received the following information:

- Report of the Review Committee 2000
- AIAS Self-Evaluation Report 2000-2004
- AIAS-the way ahead 2005-2008 (supplement to the self-evaluation report)

The written material and the stimulating discussions during the site visit were the input for the Committee in formulating its opinion on AIAS. For all factual information about AIAS, the Committee refers to the documentation.

Procedures followed by the Committee

The Committee came to Amsterdam on 7 July 2004 for a one-day site visit. It had access to all relevant documents and had interviews with the scientific and managing directors, members of the steering Committee, junior researchers, the coordinator of the master in Advanced Labour Studies/Human Resources, the research coordinator and a graduate of the Master programme (the programme of the site visit is attached to this report as Appendix 3). During the site visit, the secretary of the Committee, has provided the Committee with necessary additional information. The results of the Committee’s evaluation are presented below.

General conclusions and recommendations

In general the Committee has obtained a very positive impression of AIAS as a stimulating environment for both students and researchers. For the Committee there is no doubt about the continuation of the institute. As the Committee is asked to do so it would like to point out a few remarks/recommendations that might be taken into account for the next period: 2005-2008. Since the mission of AIAS is formulated in terms of research, education and society related tasks we will present our recommendations/suggestions accordingly and will end up making some remarks on the institutional setting and financial position of AIAS.

Research

Concerning research, AIAS has made a big leap forward in terms of quality, quantity and the attraction of good researchers, since the last evaluation in 2000. The number of PhD students has for instance increased from one in 2000 to fifteen in 2004. As an example of quality the Committee would like to point out the very high ranking that AIAS achieved in the competition for a grant from the Russel Sage Foundation to finance a large international comparative project on firms, work organisation and low wage occupation, which is extremely good for such a young institute.

The excellence of the institute is also demonstrated by the amount of external funds that AIAS has acquired so far, most prominently from the EC Framework Programmes. At the same time however this is a point of positive concern to the Committee, as there may be the danger for AIAS of being pushed into research projects that respond primarily to bids or issues raised by external parties, thus losing interest in developing more basic and innovative research that contributes to cumulative knowledge and allows AIAS to further strengthen and develop its scientific reputation.

The focus of the research programme was shifted from the Dutch case to a more international one and in early 2003 AIAS launched a new research programme, *Labour-In*³, which is more focused on institutions than it was in the period before. Given these changes it seems important to the Committee to also involve political scientists and comparative law scholars into the research activities of AIAS. AIAS should also encourage work with the University's experimental economics laboratory and should consider encouraging new simulation techniques like for example computational economics. Experimental and computational work fit well with the emphasis on institutions, providing different but complementary ways of analysing behaviour under different institutional arrangements. Implementation of these recommendations could bring the Institute at the very forefront in the field of Labour studies.

The Committee noticed that the participation of labour lawyers in AIAS research programs is insufficient. This situation is linked to the fact that law research at the Universiteit van Amsterdam is traditionally directed towards Dutch developments. As the European dimension is becoming more and more important, a shift towards comparative research in labour law is foreseen but only very slowly. The Committee therefore recommends AIAS to put even more

effort into an increased participation of labour lawyers in planning future activities and in drafting research projects.

Finally the Committee wants to underline that the basic asset and competitive advantage for the interaction and cooperation between researchers from different disciplines is the availability and development of internationally renowned databases at the Institute, such as the Dutch Collective Agreements Database (DUCADAM), that really give an added value to the research performed within the context of AIAS.

Education and Society

Since 2000 several changes have been made in the educational programme, partly due to the introduction of the bachelor / master programs (the so called Bologna agreement) in the curricula at the Universiteit van Amsterdam. The minor in Labour Studies will be continued in September 2004, incorporated in the bachelors programme Behaviour and Society of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. Furthermore, AIAS has developed a new master in Human Resources Management (in cooperation with the Amsterdam graduate business school, starting in 2005), a master programme in Comparative and European Labour Studies (in cooperation with the International School for Humanities and Social Studies and the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Studies, starting in September 2004) and a PhD training programme (in cooperation with the Amsterdam School for Social Sciences Research; started in 2002). The professional master in advanced labour studies, a two-year programme for university-graduates with several years of experience, was continued unchanged. For organisational and financial reasons (small core staff of AIAS), most programmes will be administered and organised by other institutes within the Universiteit van Amsterdam. Only the professional master in Advanced Labour Studies is both organised and developed by AIAS and is a way for AIAS to generate income.

The Committee obtained a positive view on the existing educational programme (the professional master and PhD programmes) and is positive about the bachelor and master programmes that will be launched in the years to come. Especially the interaction with research that is brought into the AIAS curriculum via the master programme in Comparative and European Labour Studies and the PhD training is of utmost importance for creating stimulating education.

The (PhD) students were extremely positive about the contents of the courses and the interaction with their teachers. The professional master programme in Advanced Labour Studies/Human Resources, which is intended for graduates with several years of work experience, helps them to obtain a broader view on their current work but is also an opportunity for them to get ahead in their careers. The Committee would like to suggest to AIAS to use this qualification for the acquisition of new students. The only remark on the professional master is that the pace of the course was tuned to the less fast and less devoted

students, thus making it less challenging for the more devoted ones. A deadline for the hand in of papers might help to solve this.

The PhD training programme creates a stimulating environment for exchanging ideas and making new contacts with PhD students or junior scholars from outside the Netherlands.

A point of concern that the Committee wants to express about the extramural teaching activities of AIAS, the so called De Burcht lectures, is that they have greater difficulty attracting participants from the unions. This situation may be caused by the severe financial problems the Dutch unions are in. For this reason AIAS is already experimenting with a changed format for these courses but maybe AIAS could also consider to expand this extramural teaching activity and design courses for European union/labour leaders. In this respect the co-chair with the union should be further strengthened as this is an entrance for AIAS to reach the right public and to keep informed about topics (for example monetary union and its impact on wage policies, or - more broadly – on the co-ordination of union initiatives on a cross-border basis) that are of interest to them.

Institutional settings and financial position

In 2002 AIAS moved to a new accommodation with more space for PhD students and Post Docs. The new premises give AIAS a clear identity without losing its connections with the participating faculties, which are physically in the very close environment. Although this setting seems to be working well, the Committee keeps the same concern as the 2000 peer review Committee: namely, the problems involved in dual commitment. Especially to young researchers (PhDs and Post Docs) it seems rather risky for their careers to work in a multi-disciplinary research field, as it is obvious that for becoming recognized scientists, they will have to be excellent in their own disciplines. The Committee therefore recommends PhDs and Post Docs to seek the commitment of their own faculties, when planning research projects within AIAS and to keep in close contact with their faculties. After completion of the doctoral thesis, researchers must be helped to return to their own disciplinary environment and their contacts with scholars in their field must be facilitated. Furthermore, the Committee wants to point out the importance to enhance international contacts for doctoral students or even to establish a co-supervisor, in order to follow young scholars' research and support the activities already undertaken in this respect by the core staff. Such an effort is particularly useful when research covers more than one country, since it should aim at improving a comparative methodology.

AIAS is run by a very small core staff. At the moment this setting seems to be adequate although it is reaching its limits, and it is clear that a further expansion of AIAS would cause problems. Therefore, in the coming period AIAS has to decide for itself about its optimum size. If AIAS intends to expand its activities and attract more external funds it is clear that the core staff is too small for guiding the group of PhDs and Post Docs performing the research projects. In this respect the Committee wants to underline the importance of co-chairs that AIAS intends to establish, to strengthen the intellectual and programmatic leadership of

AIAS. Additionally, AIAS has to make a decision whether their current activities should be consolidated or not and whether AIAS should invest more in a selection of certain research questions or not. AIAS should avoid becoming too dependent on external funding and should select its own projects on the basis of fitting into the AIAS research program and learn to say no!

According to the Committee AIAS should not confine its research and educational activities to labour questions only but the Committee recommends to expand the overarching focus of AIAS to welfare, educational and social inclusion issues as well, as they clearly become more and more important for demographic and changing labour markets reasons.

There is also a need to increase the basic funding of AIAS to create more financial stability and to thus guarantee that AIAS can continue its fundamental and innovative research activities. The fact that AIAS is very able to attract external money should not prevent the participating faculties and the university from continuing the funding at the same or possibly at a higher level. Perhaps AIAS could look a little bit into the private sector for some endowment. Or attract more students in the De Burcht lectures and professional master as these are the programs that AIAS earns money with.

The review Committee,
Prof. R.B. Freeman,
Prof. M. Regini,
Prof. S. Sciarra

Appendix 1 Invitation and confirmation letters

Dear professor,

In 1998 the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) was founded at the Universiteit van Amsterdam as a separate interfaculty unit, outside the regular departmental structure, with contributions from economics, sociology, law, psychology and occupational health. Every four years the University Board will decide on continuation of the institute on the basis of an international peer review. The first peer review took place in 2000. On that basis the University Board decided to continue its financial contribution to AIAS for the period 2001-2004.

This year AIAS has to be reviewed again. The assessment will be carried out under the auspices of the University Board and the report will be presented to the Board.

The director of AIAS, prof. J. Visser, recommended you as a possible candidate for the Committee of peers. Therefore, on behalf of the University Board, I hereby would like to ask you to consider a membership of the review Committee.

The Committee will consist of three members. Apart from you I have also invited prof. and prof. The Committee is asked to write a brief report in which the following questions are answered:

- Do the scientific activities of AIAS (research and education) meet the required high international and European standards?;
- Is the AIAS research programme for the period 2005-2008 sufficiently innovative/viable and what are its prospects bearing in mind national and international competition?

On the one hand the Committee is asked to assess the institute on the basis of the AIAS activities report 2001-2004, the report of the review Committee from July 2000 and a short assessment by prof. J. Visser on the course of the Institute, on behalf of the institute's steering Committee.

On the other hand, to further deepen the first impressions acquired on the basis of the evaluation report, a one-day site visit will be organised in June this year. During this site visit meetings with representatives of the institute will be organised and a final meeting between Committee members to make agreements on the final report will be planned. Of course all travel and accommodation expenses will be paid for and you will also receive a fee for your participation.

Could you please let me know as soon as possible if you are willing to accept this invitation and if so, could you please indicate when you are available in June for the site-visit. If you can accept the invitation, additionally a formal invitation letter from the University Board will be sent to you.

Hope to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Dymph van Outersterp,
on behalf of the Board of the University of Amsterdam

To the invited members of the Review Committee
of AIAS

Professor R.B. Freeman

Professor M. Regini

Professor S. Sciarra

Amsterdam, May 2004

Your reference: -

Re: Review Committee Amsterdam Institute for
Advanced Labour Studies

Encl: -

Division: Policy Support
Contact: Mrs Dr. J.W.M. van Outersterp

Our reference: 2004cu

Tel: +31 20 525 4961/2666

E-mail: J.W.M.vanOutersterp@uva.nl

Dear Professor,

I hereby want to express my gratitude to you for accepting the invitation to become a member of the peer review Committee for the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS). As you have already been informed, this year a decision has to be taken about the future of the institute, particularly regarding its funding by our university. In view of this the Board of the Universiteit van Amsterdam has asked three referees to review the accomplishments of the AIAS. Prof. and Prof. have also accepted the invitation to become a member of the Committee. Mrs Dr. J.W.M. van Outersterp, from the department of Academic Affairs (Universiteit van Amsterdam), will act as the secretary of the Committee.

By way of terms of reference I like to confirm that the Committee is requested to submit to the Board a report addressing the following questions about AIAS:

- Has the institute been successful in carrying out its mission?
- Can the results concerning teaching and research be considered satisfactory?
- What is the opinion of the Committee with regard to the institutional setting, especially the position of the institute *vis-à-vis* the supporting faculties and the University Board?
- How well the institutional setting and the mission relate to each other?
- What is your opinion about the research plan of AIAS, especially in regard to its quality and long-term viability?
- Should the institute be continued? If so, what format do you think is best?

In early June you will receive a self-evaluation report of the AIAS. On the basis of this we ask you to report your preliminary findings and further questions by email before June 23rd to the secretary of the Committee (J.W.M.vanOutersterp@uva.nl). On the basis of these findings and in consultation with you and the other Committee members the detailed agenda of the on-site visit can be determined. This will be held on Wednesday July 7th with the purpose of helping you to elaborate on your first impressions. During the visit meetings with representatives of the institute will be organised as well as a concluding meeting between Committee members to arrange for the report. At the end of this, the Rector of the university (who is a member of the Board), professor Paul van der Heijden, invites you to meet with him for an exchange of views.

For the organisation of the review, the Committee will be supported by Mrs M.A.E. van Essen, LL.M of the AIAS (Plantage Muidersgracht 4, 1018 TV Amsterdam, Tel: +31 20 525 5025, Email: M.A.E.vanEssen@uva.nl). She will contact you for booking your flights and hotel accommodation. Possible invoices or receipts for travel and accommodation expenses can also be sent for reimbursement. Finally, I like to propose that you will receive a fee of €3000 in exchange for your participation.

If you need any further information please contact the secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

dr. S.J. Noorda,
President of the Board of the Universiteit van Amsterdam

Appendix 2 Short profiles of the Review Committee members

Professor R.B. Freeman

Richard Freeman studied at Dartmouth College and graduated in Economics in 1964, and obtained a PhD from Harvard in Economics in 1969. He is Ascherman professor of economics at Harvard, Faculty Co-Chair of the Harvard Labour and Worklife Program, Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics, and Director of Labour Studies at the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Professor M. Regini

Marino Regini studied Sociology at the University of Milan, Columbia University and the University of California, Berkeley, graduating in 1969. Currently, he is Dean of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Milan, and Professor of Industrial Relations and Economic Sociology in the Department of Labour Studies. Previously he was Professor at the University of Trento and Visiting Professor at Duke University and Johns Hopkins University, as well as a visiting scholar at Harvard and MIT. He is the Past President of SASE (the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics).

Professor S. Sciarra, Chair

Silvana Sciarra holds a degree in law from the University of Bari. She was Professor of European Labour and Social Law at the European University Institute (Fiesole, Italy). She worked and taught in several Universities, including UCLA and Harvard Law School. She was Leverhulme Professor at Warwick in 1987 and BNL Professor at Columbia Law School in 1999. She collaborated with the European Commission on several projects, such as the 'Davignon Report' and a study on 'The evolution of labour law (1992-2003)', covering 15 Member States.

J.W.M. van Outersterp Ph.D., Secretary

Dymph van Outersterp studied Chemistry at the Universiteit van Amsterdam and graduated in 1990 in Inorganic Chemistry. She did a PhD (1995) at the Universiteit van Amsterdam in the field of inorganic photo- and electrochemistry. In 1995 she continued her career at the Universiteit van Amsterdam as the coordinator of the Holland Research School of Molecular Chemistry. Since 1999 she is working as policy advisor (research policy) at the department of Academic Affairs at the Universiteit van Amsterdam.

Appendix 3 Programme of the site visit: 7 July, 2004



Evaluation of the AIAS

Program of the on-site visit on July 7th

Location: AIAS, Plantage Muidergracht 4, Amsterdam

- 10.15- 12.00 Meeting with Jelle Visser, scientific director, and Wiemer Salverda, managing director (library AIAS)
- 10.30-11.00 Meeting with the chair of the Steering Committee, Hugo Keuzenkamp
- 11.15-11.45 Meeting with the research co-ordinator, Kea Tijdens
- 12.00-12.45 Meeting with a PhD student, Mara Yerkes, a Postdoc, Ada Ferrer-i-Carbonell and a graduate of the Master programme, Li-Swan Tjen (library AIAS)
- 12.45-13.30 Lunch with Joop Hartog and Evert Verhulp, members of the Steering Committee (loft AIAS)
- 13.30-14.30 Meeting with the course co-ordinator of the Master in Advanced Labour Studies/Human Resources, Matthijs Visser, and Jelle Visser (library AIAS)
- 14.30-15.45 Evaluation Committee meeting (library AIAS)
- 16.00-16.30 Meeting with the Rector of the University of Amsterdam, Paul van der Heijden (Maagdenhuis)