

## THE MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY SPORTS ON A REGIONAL LEVEL

Jan BONNARENS\*

### SUMMARY

As a result of the recently changed situation concerning cooperation between universities and institutions for higher education, due to the Bologna-process, the management of university sport has to deal with some important changes and evolutions. The University of Ghent is now cooperating with three other partners; together they are involved in “the Association Ugent” (AUGent) with more than 50000 students. There is not only cooperation in the field of education and research (BaMa), but also in other fields, such as accommodation, student restaurants, medical care, mobility..., and sports. It is clear that cooperation should lead to an improved management, but at this moment there still are a lot of difficulties as a result of differences concerning the topics: structures, finances, know-how, accommodation, regulations, etc. The Flemish Government changed some laws concerning study-financing and students’ services, and offered a framework for “regional cooperation”. This framework is meant to result in a regional cooperation in which students from institutions who do not belong to the AUGent should also be able to benefit from existing services. An overview of possibilities will be given too.

**Key words:** Regional cooperation, associations, management of university sport, students’ services

### ÖZET

#### ÜNİVERSİTE SPORUNUN BÖLGESEL DÜZEYDE YÖNETİMİ

*Bologna sözleşmesi nedeniyle üniversite ve diğer yüksek öğretim kurumları arasında işbirliği alanındaki değişiklikler sonucunda üniversite sporunun işletimi bazı önemli değişimlerle karşılaşmaktadır. Ghent*

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\* Ghent University, Belgium

Üniversitesi üç partnerle işbirliğine girerek 50000 öğrenciyi kapsayan "Ugent Birliği"ni (AUGent) oluşturmuştur. Sadece eğitim ve araştırmada değil; barınma, beslenme, sağlık hizmetleri, spor ve benzeri alanlarda da işbirliği söz konusudur. Bu şletmede gelişmeye yol açması gerekir, ancak henüz şu alanlardaki farklılıklardan ötürü zorluklar vardır: altyapı, finans, know-how, barınma, yönetmelikler gibi. Flaman hükümeti eğitim finansmanı ve öğrenci hizmetleri alanlarında bazı kanunları değiştirmiş ve bir "bölgesel işbirliği" için çerçeve oluşturmuştur. Bu çerçeve sayesinde AUGent oluşumuna dahil olmayan kurum öğrencileri de var olan hizmetlerden yararlanabilecektir. Zorluklar ve olası gelişmeler konusunda da bir bakış burada sunulmaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Bölgesel işbirliği, birlikler, üniversite sporunun yönetimi, öğrenci hizmetleri

### **Where do we come from?**

In Belgium, education is administered under the authority of the Communities. Consequently, all education in Flanders operates under the authority of the Flemish Parliament. Associations are Flemish options to cope with a number of evolutions, opportunities and changes in the higher education. Flemish higher education consists of two types of institutions: the Universities (education + scientific research) and the "Hogescholen" (high schools: education mainly). Associations are the result of reform changes:

1. In the 90's, various reforms reshaped the Flemish higher education system. The decrees on the universities (1991) and hogescholen (1994) reflected a policy that provided more autonomy and responsibility to the institutional level, introduced new concepts such as quality assessment, and assigned new missions (such as services and research for all subjects) to the hogescholen. After all, both hogescholen and universities should cope with lifelong learning, the knowledge society, a need for more flexible curricula geared to new types of students, etc.
2. The Bologna Declaration (1999) acted as a catalyst. All the partial reforms and changes could now be structured and shaped profoundly, with the added bonus of meeting the Bologna principles and preparing for an international context. Universities and hogescholen had to become partners, rather than remaining as different levels of higher education. Associations were useful instruments to reach this goal.

### **Who are we?**

In 2002, the Flemish Parliament decided to regroup all institutions of higher education (universities and hogescholen) in five units called associations. Each association consists of a university and one or more hogescholen. Each institution could freely choose its partners. One such association is the "Ghent University Association". It was established in 29 April 2003 and has four partners:

- Universities Gent (Ghent University, founded in 1817, predating the Belgian State: 1830)
- Hogeschool Gent (Founded in 1995 as a result of the merge with 13 hogescholen + the "Mercator Hogeschool" in 2001)
- Arteveldehogeschool (Founded in 2000 as a result of the merge with four hogescholen)
- Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen (Founded in 1995 as a result of the merge with six hogescholen)

The result was a total of 50000 students (28% of the total population), 8500 personnel, about 200 basic courses (in BA and MA), 160 postgraduates. Campuses were based in Ghent, Aalst, Bruges, Kortrijk and Ostend (provinces of East and West Flanders). Services, applied and fundamental research in all relevant fields were thus provided.

### **What do we do?**

The partners of the "Ghent University Association" are to combine forces regarding education, research (including the development of Arts), services, infrastructure and student-related facilities. Practically speaking, their first areas of mutual interest and close collaboration are:

- Streamlining opportunities in education
- Facilitating educational routes
- Student and staff exchange
- Joining staff, expertise and funds in fields of research and services
- Educational quality assessment
- Infrastructure, including information technologies
- Common student-related facilities (housing, catering, advice, sports...)

## The regional context

As you already noticed, a lot of changes in the area of higher education took place over the past decade, resulting in today's situation, i.e. five associations, geographically covering the Flanders region:

- Ghent University Association
- Catholic University Louvain Association
- University - Hogescholen Limburg Association
- University - Hogescholen Antwerp Association
- University Brussels Association

While four of these five associations cover a clearly defined region, the Catholic University Louvain Association covers the whole Flemish region. So, in Ghent apart the Ghent University, the Hogeschool Ghent and the Arteveldehogeschool which belong to the same Ghent University Association, there also are the Catholic Hogeschool Sint-Lieven and the Catholic Hogeschool Sint-Lucas, belonging to the Catholic University Louvain Association.

In the field of education and scientific research, the main goals of all the institutions for higher education are similar, so there is no problem concerning this situation. But there is some concern regarding social services for students (housing, catering, sports and culture, mobility, advice, etc.), because the partners of the Ghent University Association have a lot of infrastructure and facilities, and the two Hogescholen of the Catholic University Louvain Association do not have them (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Situation of sports in the Ghent region

<b>Association</b>	University	Infrastructure	Sports Services	Dept. of PE
	UGent	x	x	x
<b>AUGhent</b>	HoGent	x	x	x
	ArteHo	-	x	x
	HoWes	-	-	-
	City of Ghent	x	x	-
<b>AULeuven</b>	Ho St Lieven	-	-	-
	Ho St Lucas	-	-	-

## Sports-structures

UGent: The University itself covers all expenses and receives funds from the Flemish Government (Universities get more money than the Hogescholen).

Hogescholen: Autonomous structures (“vzw’s”: without the purpose of making profit) in which the Hogescholen themselves are represented. These structures receive funds from the Flemish Government to organise their social services.

### **Evolution**

- Up to 1997: No cooperation, no privileged partnership, strong differences in policy, pricing, etc.
- 1997: Cooperation agreement between the Ghent University and all the Hogescholen in Ghent was established. Every student/employee could use all the facilities and participate in all the activities in the same conditions.
- 2003: The AUGhent was founded and as a result of this, the cooperation agreement from 1997 was terminated. Every student/employee could only use the facilities and participate in the activities of own institution in favourable conditions.
- 2003 - 2005: A new cooperation agreement between the partners of the AUGhent has been prepared, but it still has not been signed.
  - Other priorities (cooperation in education, etc.)
  - Different systems of financing.
  - “Pressure” from the Flemish Government (decree) to cooperate on a regional level rather than on an Association level for most of the social services.
  - Different situation for students (autonomous structures) and employees (institutions themselves) in the Hogescholen.
- 2006 on: Remains a question mark...

### **Possibilities**

- Social services (including sports) remain under the authority of each institution and cooperation is reached, using the principle of payment on a basis of reciprocity.
- Social services (including sports) are transferred to the Association level. Different approach for students belonging to AUGhent and AULouvain in the same city.
- Social services (including sports) are organised on a regional level in an independent structure. All students/employees can use all facilities at the same conditions. Impact of institutions can be considered.
- Other possibilities (outsourcing, public private structures, incorporation into city services, etc.)

**Correspondence e-mail:** Jan.Bonnarens@Ugent.be