

**AN EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE FINNISH  
INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS –  
ULKOPOLIITTINEN INSTITUUTTI**

**Report by the Evaluation Team of the Scientific  
Advisory Council  
Presented to the Board of Governors in April 2010**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The present Finnish Institute of International Affairs (Ulkopoliittinen Instituutti), established by an Act of Parliament in 2006, differs materially from the former institute of the same name. It now receives its general mandate and core financing (some 80% of the total) from the Finnish Parliament – Eduskunta – and operates under the budgetary and personnel rules of the Finnish public service. From 2007-9 under its new Governing Board and first Director, UPI successfully completed the transition to this new status while expanding both its premises and staff. This adjustment alone has absorbed a lot of energy.

Since the end of 2007 UPI has pursued four main research programmes covering EU affairs, Russia and its neighbours, environment and climate issues, and global developments respectively. It has kept up a full schedule of public meetings and conferences and achieved a respectable output of publications ranging from books to blogs. Its relations with the Parliament and other stakeholders have been correct, and in some particular cases close and productive. It has established partnerships at home and abroad especially in pursuit of specific programme activities.

While welcoming these results, many Finnish partners and observers would have liked to see UPI providing more policy-oriented advice, consultation and debate – including but going beyond high-quality information and analysis – for the Eduskunta and other stakeholders, on issues directly relevant to Finland. It is widely felt that the four-programme structure may have been too rigid and elaborate. Research results and publications have varied from the excellent and timely to the adequate and largely reactive. The institute's international image and standing, though always positive, could have been higher.

This report recommends using the opportunity of a new Director's arrival to actively explore the scope for a more operative and policy-focussed partnership with the Eduskunta, government, private sector and NGOs, as well as cooperation 'among equals' with other Finnish research establishments. UPI's research structure should be streamlined to place European and former Soviet affairs firmly at its heart, supplemented by selected functional and global issues that matter for Finland and its neighbours. Practical solutions should be sought to strengthen the institute's top and middle management, rationalize support arrangements, and foster an overall sense of community among staff, as well as attracting more foreign researchers and guests.

For strengthening UPI's profile and networks abroad, good independent research and Finnish expertise are paramount. A public affairs strategy that assures a better balanced, authoritative and timely publishing output, with effective quality control, and a meetings programme working in synergy with research priorities will also help. While UPI's website is of high quality, it should be reviewed to bring more representative and gripping material to the fore, preferably coupled with more active outreach.

## THE EVALUATION REPORT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

At its meeting of 8 September 2009, the Board of Governors of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs in Helsinki (Ulkopoliittinen Instituutti, henceforth called UPI for short) adopted a decision commissioning an external evaluation of the Institute's work in 2008-2009. The decision coincided with a planned change of Director, taking effect from 1 January 2010, and the evaluation was to be carried out by a team selected from within UPI's Scientific Advisory Council. The original deadline for completing it was end-March 2010 but after consultation this was extended by a couple of weeks. The Board decision containing the mandate will be found at Annex A.

This document is the report of the evaluation process, reflecting work carried out mostly in February-March 2010 at Helsinki and elsewhere. The evaluation was led by Alyson JK Bailes as Chair of the Scientific Advisory Council, assisted by (in alphabetical order) Professor Marja Järvelä, Professor Harry Harding, Dr Volker Perthes, Dr Pierre Schori and Professor Helen Wallace. The present report is presented on behalf of this team, and while it has been discussed with the entire Scientific Advisory Council, it remains the sole responsibility of the individuals named.

This introduction sketches the background on UPI itself and explains how the evaluation was conducted. The next section offers a short stock-taking of UPI's progress and output in the last two years. The remainder of the text is structured according to the points for possible consideration, change and improvement that were identified at the outset - in consultation with the UPI Board of Governors and Director - or that emerged during the review process. Key observations and recommendations are highlighted in Bold in this part.

#### History of UPI

The Institute was first founded in 1961 on the initiative of the Paasikivi Society, a non-governmental association dedicated to debate on foreign affairs. From this time up to end-2006 UPI was funded, together with the Paasikivi Society, by a private foundation called the Foundation for Foreign Policy research - Ulkopoliitiikan tutkimuksen säätiö - whose funds in turn came almost solely from the Ministry of Education. Under this arrangement UPI was independent of the public administration, while operating within the framework of Finnish law. The institute built its strength slowly, employing its first full-time Director only in 1972 and an additional full-time researcher in 1987. From the outset in 1961, however, it published the journal *Ulkopolitiikka* (Foreign Policy), which experienced only one break in production from 1968-1972 and continues to appear today.

From 1989 when Paavo Lipponen was appointed Director, the Institute grew in size to resemble other nationally-based foreign policy research bodies in Northern Europe and elsewhere. By the year 2006 it had 29 employees, focussing mainly on issues of Finnish foreign policy and international relations including Nordic affairs and Russia. A sporadic

debate about whether it should be linked more directly to the national administration took a decisive turn at that time. In 2006 the Parliament of Finland (Eduskunta) was debating how to celebrate and permanently mark its own 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The idea of founding a larger institute and think-tank on foreign policy was first put forward by the Foreign Affairs Committee. It was adopted as the chief centennial project and in June 2006, the Eduskunta adopted an Act (entering into force on 1 July) to create a Research Institute of International Relations and European Affairs (Finnish: kansainvälisten suhteiden ja Euroopan unionin asioiden tutkimuslaitos). Rather than starting a new institute from scratch, this new creation was to be based upon UPI and would continue to use the name UPI for all practical purposes. It would however gain a new governance structure, answerable ultimately to the Parliament itself; and would get its core funding in an annual grant – contained in the state budget but negotiated with and decided exclusively by Parliament - set at around 3 million Euros.

UPI's new constitution as set out in the Act of June 2006 is headed by a Board of Governors, composed of a chair and eight other members who are appointed by the Parliament on the basis of nominations from a variety of official and academic authorities. There is also an Advisory Council made up two-fifths of members of parliament and three-fifths of 'partners of cooperation' (representing Finnish officialdom, business and society). The Board was requested to make arrangements for a Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) drawn from domestic and foreign academic circles and international organizations: this met for the first time in early 2009, with 11 members from 9 nations, and chose Alyson Bailes as its Chair.

One of the key tasks of the Governing Board was to choose UPI's new Director and Deputy Director. As Director it selected Dr Raimo Väyrynen, who took office in early 2007. UPI's former Director (1991-2007), Dr Tapani Vaahtoranta, stayed at the new institute as head of the programme for environment and climate change issues. The title of Deputy Director was bestowed on the institute's head of administration, at that time Juha Sarkio. In September 2009, the Board of Governors appointed Dr Teija Tiilikainen to take over from Dr Väyrynen as Director from January 2010.

The Foundation for Foreign Policy Research and Paasikivi Society, which had their own independent statutes, were not superseded by the 2006 Act and remain in existence today, in an office co-located with UPI. They no longer, however, form part of the institute's governance or funding system and are occupied mainly with staging occasional very high-level public speeches (for instance on request of the President of Finland).

2007 was a year of transition for UPI. The contracts of previous staff had been extended for that year and there were short-term budget difficulties to be overcome. Under the new Act, all UPI personnel became members of the state administration and the institute's policies on working hours, travel, and leave as well as internal staff structures had to be adjusted accordingly. Accounting practices had to be adapted to what was in practice a more probing financial scrutiny. The institute also moved to roomier premises on Katajanokka in Helsinki's port district, not far from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The new scale and structure of the institute, with its currently valid research programmes,

emerged clearly only in 2008 and this explains why the evaluation team were asked to focus on achievements since that time.

### The Evaluation

Practical arrangements for the evaluation were agreed between the Chair of the Governing Board, the outgoing and incoming Directors, and the SAC Chair in December 2009. UPI itself provided important inputs in the form of key constitutional and programme documents; the results of an in-house self-evaluation conducted by staff in January-February 2010; and the results of a private opinion poll taken in late 2009 among stakeholders and customers of UPI's output. The Director's office also provided invaluable administrative support.

Three members of the evaluation team carried out a total of 36 live and written interviews in February-March 2010 with key UPI staff, members of the Board and Advisory Council, and individuals representing UPI 'stakeholders' in the Finnish government, the Eduskunta, business, other research bodies, NGOs and the media. A list of those interviewed is in Annex B but, by agreement, their views will not be identified or quoted individually in what follows. Three further team members assessed UPI's published output, the institute's website, and its general image and standing abroad. An interim briefing on the emerging findings was given to the Director and other members of the SAC when the SAC convened in Helsinki for its annual meeting on 1 March 2010, and contact was kept with the Chair of the Board of Governors throughout. The present report was agreed between the six members of the evaluation team during the remainder of March and presented to the Chair of the Board of Governors on 9 April 2010.

The evaluation team would like to extend their thanks to all those - inside and outside UPI - who gave their time, support and expertise to facilitate this enquiry, and helped to make it an interesting and rewarding process for us all.

## **2. UPI 2008-2009**

### General

The task of a foreign affairs research institute today is not simple, anywhere in the world. The range of topics to work on and the information available have increased relentlessly, while the funding climate has been tighter and more competitive since the end of the Cold War. Frequent swings in the agenda of policy makers (for instance before and after 9/11) have forced research leaders to judge how far to shift their focus accordingly, and how far to safeguard longer-term, often locally dictated, priorities. Every institute - unless fully government-owned - must find its own balance between research that is of academic merit and value in its own right; work designed to support policy-making and to inform and stimulate public debate; and in some cases, also educational activity. An institute whose name links it with a specific nation must also judge how much of its profile should be devoted to, and represent, that particular nation and how much should be designed to add to the body of international knowledge. In practice, none of these is an either-or choice. Good policy advice and public information work must build upon sound professional knowledge and intellectual independence – qualities that also have much to

do with an institute's international standing and attractiveness to partners; while success at home and abroad are integrally linked.

Hardly any institute in Europe could claim to have made perfect choices and given a perfect performance in these terms. Moreover, what succeeds in one year may not be ideal for the next and institute management is also in large part about change management. Yet good staff have to be recruited and motivated, and one of their needs is understandably a degree of job security. It is against this exacting background that the performance of UPI, an institute still very new in format and serving a nation of 5.3 million, can most fairly be judged.<sup>1</sup>

While the 2006 decision to base the Parliament's wished-for new institution upon UPI was a pragmatic and possibly unavoidable one (given the time constraints), it created challenges of its own. A new Director and new mandate were combined with a senior staff who remained substantially unchanged, and a working community that had not itself willed or designed the new arrangements. Even the financial benefits of the change, in principle helpful to all, took some while to work through and were not equally felt at all levels. It is no secret that there were personal and personnel difficulties within UPI throughout the time of transition, many of which might be traced to this uneasy mixing of 'old' and 'new' (a language used by many of those we interviewed). We shall see later that some arrangements adopted in order to get through this difficult time may not be objectively best suited to an institute like UPI, and might not be necessary or advisable to continue now.

#### What is the standard?

Turning to stock-taking, the first problem is to establish the benchmark of achievement: *what was the new UPI supposed to be, and to do?* As one interviewee pointed out, the ambiguity starts with the language of the founding Act, when it re-defines the institute as one of 'international relations and EU affairs' but states that it will continue to be called UPI. In Finnish, Ulkopoliittinen Instituutti translates directly as 'Foreign Policy Institute': but its traditional English name, which also continues to be used, is Finnish Institute of *International Affairs* (our italics). To work on 'foreign policy' implies an empirical, nation-based approach, whereas 'international relations' is the name of an academic discipline including sometimes quite abstract theoretical studies and non-state perspectives. Which of these approaches was UPI expected to pursue, or if both, in what proportions? Going back again to the new name, were broader 'international relations' and 'EU affairs' to be studied as two equal targets, or in co-relation with each other, or what? And was UPI to continue regarding itself literally as a 'research institute' (tutkimulaitos) or to develop more as a 'think-tank' – a term found nowhere in the

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<sup>1</sup> We did not use any formal and general system of comparison with other institutes in making this evaluation. Evaluators did however check their expectations of UPI against some specific aspects of other institutes' performance: and when doing so, selected institutes of similar size and/or those sited in nations of comparable size and status for purposes of benchmarking.

documents, but one that our interviewees used constantly as short-hand for a more engaged and policy-relevant approach?

The Act of June 2006 itself did not say anything about the substantive content of UPI's work, nor about the extent to which, and ways in which, it should work with (or for) the Parliament itself. This was certainly no accident but reflected concerns felt at the time about preserving the institute's general academic independence, as well as its impartiality among political groups. Accordingly, the Board of Governors was set up in such a way as to be clearly independent and distinct from the Eduskunta; while the Advisory Council (partly manned by MPs and hitherto chaired by Parliament's Deputy Speaker, Minister Seppo Kääriäinen) was to play an auxiliary and less constraining role.

The new UPI's relationship with the Eduskunta is referred to only in the opening clause of the Act, where the new institute is said to be established 'in connection with the Parliament for conducting research and briefing on international political and economical relations as well as the European Union's affairs' (Official translation). 'In connection with' is a translation of the Finnish word 'yhteydessä' which is perhaps deliberately imprecise, having meanings that the dictionary defines as connection, relationship, contact, context, and unity among others.<sup>2</sup> In the Act it was clearly used to signal a relationship not based in subordination or exclusive ownership; but it did not offer UPI much of a guide on what the relationship *should* be. Finally, the noun translated above as 'briefing' is 'selvitys' which the dictionary defines as a 'report' or 'account' – terms implying the conveying of information rather than advice.

What all this means is that for its first two-three years, UPI was operating between a set of formal rules that were not explicit as to substance, and a set of substantial expectations that were not formally expressed - and probably not identical among the various stakeholders. In this situation, the institute and more especially its new leadership had to make its own choices in a mode of trial and error. The down-side is that by not meeting certain expectations, the choices adopted could result in disappointment. The good news is that if there is a consensus inside and outside UPI to make certain adjustments, that may be done while staying within with the formal rules and without having to dwell unduly on the past.

The conditions for such an effort seem positive. During our evaluation much goodwill was expressed towards UPI in general and towards the Board's choice of its new Director. All those who suggested changes wanted to get more from UPI rather than less. Among institute staff a mood of 'cautious optimism' was detected and some praiseworthy new ventures were already under way. This can be considered a fortunate starting-point for any institute. We shall now look at the foundation from which UPI starts.

### Institute-building

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<sup>2</sup> UPI's own Strategy of 2008 (English version) translates the same phrase 'in conjunction with' – see text at <http://www.upi-fiia.fi/en/info/76/>.

The first and indisputable achievement of the years 2007-8 was to settle UPI firmly in its new constitutional framework. The Board of Governors and Advisory Council were formed and started meeting regularly under the chairmanship of Professor Antti Tanskanen and Minister Seppo Kääriäinen respectively. A new internal Working Order was drawn up in conformity with the 2006 Act and adopted on 20 October 2007. Staff terms and conditions and internal structures were brought in line with the requirements of the Finnish public service, and this appears to have caused no serious or general difficulties for personnel despite comments about greater 'bureaucracy' and some over-inflexible provisions.<sup>3</sup> Though this evaluation was not asked to look at financial questions, it should be noted also that after funding shortages in 2006 and early 2007, the new Director was able to agree with Parliament on transfers that brought the institute's budget into balance by end-2007.

In June 2007 the Governing Board approved UPI's three-year Research Programme as proposed by the new Director. This document starts with a clear statement of UPI's interpretation and intent regarding independence and academic excellence. It goes on to map the contents of four major and equal research programmes, which have remained in place up to the present:

The European Union

The Transformation of the World Order

The International Politics of Natural Resources and the Environment

Russia in a Regional and Global Context

In December 2008 after an internal consultation process, UPI adopted a Strategy for the institute that is available on its website. This is a short, aspirational document centred upon the aim of making UPI Finland's leading research institution 'in its own field' by 2015. The prescribed means are hard to quarrel with, including getting the full potential from staff and building strategic relationships with other institutes at home and abroad. The Strategy's treatment of UPI's relations with the Parliament and other Finnish stakeholders remains, however, non-specific and somewhat cautious. It describes the institute as combining 'academic and policy relevant research, *with the emphasis on the latter*' (our italics), and as seeking 'constructive and innovative cooperation' with decision-makers and opinion-formers. But it depicts the institute as providing top-quality information, analysis and 'innovative models' as an input to policy debates, rather than going further to offer direct policy advice or directly stimulate such debate itself. The document does not specify targets or methods of interaction and includes no detailed, quantified or time-limited goals.

#### Research programme and structure

In execution of the Research Programme, each thematic programme received an experienced academic as its leader in 2007. In essence, the EU and Russia research groups continued under their previous leaders while the Natural Resources and Environment team was headed by the previous Director and the programme on the World

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<sup>3</sup> The main issue raised with the evaluation team in this context was the interpretation of minimum working hours.



Order by the new Director. Each programme took responsibility for recruiting its own junior staff; deciding internal staff structure and division of work; planning its research, publications and any directly related events, within institute guidelines; building partnerships inside and outside Finland, and seeking additional outside funding.

This four-part structure had definite merits including clarity and ease of explanation. It reduced scope for high-level friction and gave research staff the chance to coalesce in teams of manageable size, while 'sheltering' within their programmes from any larger stresses the institute was facing. As each programme had a somewhat different range and variety of research topics, it was reasonable to let programme leaders decide on internal role-divisions and external partnerships for themselves. Finally, the familiarity of three out of four programme leaders with UPI's past work was a force for continuity. It was thus not surprising to find during the evaluation that the balance of opinion was distinctly more favourable towards the programme structure among UPI staff than it was outside.

The down-side of the four-programme structure has been described by interviewees inside and outside UPI in very similar terms. The obvious point to query are: could a fairly small institute justify as many as four major programmes in its formative years, were the four themes chosen the correct ones, and should they have been given strictly equivalent status? While all four programme topics are important *per se* both for research and policy, it is not clear that all of them are equally important for Finland and for Finnish stakeholders' needs; that they match the wording and intent of the Parliament's 2006 Act equally well; or that they are ones on which – in a European or global perspective – Finnish researchers have the right comparative advantages to deliver added value. Some interviewees saw the real logic of the programme structure as an *ad hominem* one, notably allowing the previous and new Directors to play separate roles under one roof. Others noted a risk of the 'World Today' programme becoming a mixture of left-over issues, where the choice of regional/functional themes could have been better tailored to a specifically Finnish perspective.

Concrete problems seen with this structure start with its 'silo'-creating effect, which has made it harder for an overall sense of community to emerge within the new UPI; has left in limbo some topics that cut across two or more programmes (eg: Russia and the EU, rise of the BRICs); and has bred inconsistency on some important points of practice. The programmes have differed for instance in the frequency of internal staff meetings, in how they have provided for support functions, in whether or not they have scheduled regular meetings with their closest local customers and partners, in whether they have pursued direct consultations and personnel exchanges with the Foreign Ministry (or corresponding ministries of interest), and regarding how widely and in which areas – US, Brussels and leading EU states, Northern Europe, other continents – they have constructed their external partnerships. There is little sign of good practice and lessons learned diffusing from one programme into others. Partnerships well managed by one programme could not necessarily realize their potential for UPI as a whole, and different parts of UPI might even approach the same partner without coordination. Finally, the delegation of most fund-raising efforts to programme level probably explains why the majority of grants gained in this period were small and short-term and the total raised was modest, so that

the state allocation still supplied some 90% of the institute's budget in 2009. One commendable development was the success of the world order team in securing EU funding for a COST programme led from Helsinki on humanitarian issues, while in early 2010 a far larger research coalition was constructed to apply for an EU integrated research programme grant of around €10 million (on the EU in the world).

### Research Output and Quality

In terms of published output, travel and other activities, all four programmes can be said to have been reasonably productive in both 2008 and 2009. As an example, UPI's annual report on 2009 prepared for the Governing Board lists a total of 52 external and 3 internal seminars, lectures or other meetings held by the institute that year, of which some 25 were large multi-speaker events. 24 Briefing Papers, 3 Working Papers and 3 Reports were published in UPI's own publications series (all freely available online) while staff also finished two doctorates and published 3 monographs. Staff further wrote 39 short articles for the quarterly journal *Ulkopolitiikka*; 14 book chapters, articles and briefing notes for publication in Finland; and 31 for publications abroad. 96 newspaper articles were written by UPI staff, of which 34 by the Director, and 118 speeches and similar presentations were given, 91 of them by the four most active senior staff. Finally, a total of 130 radio/TV interviews and 155 blog entries on the UPI website were recorded.

This is a creditable result and points to hard work by many individuals against a background of institute transformation, excessive staff turnover, some lengthy sick leaves and other internal turbulence. However, the figures are not so remarkable when it is considered that UPI's staff level was around 50 persons, including over 30 researchers, throughout the year. There are smaller and less well-funded institutes in Europe that regularly produce more, notably including more articles in respected international journals, and more long-ish publications and books. The reasons for UPI's pattern of output may include several factors explored further below, including not only conscious choices and priorities regarding methods of outreach, but also the support/ academic staff ratio and the recruitment of many young, relatively inexperienced researchers (several of whom were trying to finish their doctorates).

We did not, in fact, identify any clear overall UPI strategy for the publication mix and profile, or any overall quality monitoring arrangements – including efforts for a consistent standard of English when writing in that language. UPI has a highly effective editorial team for *Ulkopolitiikka*, but not for the screening of all publications. The output goals set for staff seem to have been more quantitative than qualitative: a certain number of short Briefing Papers per year, or a certain frequency of contributions to *Ulkopolitiikka* and to the Finnish press. Moreover, as seen below ('Relationships in Finland'), it has been far from clear to outsiders that the selection of topics for published output was geared to any specifically Finnish needs, strengths, and perspectives. Several papers were linked to events and timetables outside Europe, but fewer to the time-frame of policy-making within Finland (with some commendable exceptions eg on climate change), and very few reported on Finnish developments - which would have added to their value for foreigners. Few if any publications have contained specific policy

recommendations. Far more have been reactive and written in factual, reportage mode than have been deeply analytical and forward-looking.

Our evaluators saw considerable variation in the nature, frequency and intellectual quality of materials produced by different research programmes. None was graded adversely but the judgement on output ranged from 'competent' and 'reasonable' to 'high, well and cogently presented'. Differences were also seen in the depth of research and originality of thinking behind the pieces. Having a preponderance of relatively short, informative papers may have been a deliberate communication strategy, but even these could have been written with more depth of references and scholarly discipline than was always the case. In a modest-sized European institute it could be expected that programme publications would reflect areas of special expertise selected and developed over time, linked in with international research cooperation, capable of adjusting to and anticipating changes in the policy environment, and projected through live events at home and abroad. These standards were met by the output of some UPI programmes in 2008-9 – several products on Russian/former Soviet issues and on climate change were highly rated, for instance - but not by all.<sup>4</sup>

### Staffing Issues

By the end of 2009 the total number of UPI personnel had risen to 52, which makes it Finland's largest freestanding research institute and respectably large by European standards. However, somewhat more than a third of these staff were in administrative, accounting, editing, library and other support functions – not counting research assistants within the programmes. The research programmes themselves reported serious difficulties in building up stable and balanced teams, for reasons including unexpected absences (maternity, illness) and staff moving early to other jobs, including official ones. A rather high proportion of junior and support personnel remained on short contracts, sometimes for as little as three months – a feature some staff found hard to reconcile with the institute's supposedly benign funding situation. Across the whole research field serious difficulties were reported in recruiting, for reasons that included the not always enticing pay and conditions, but perhaps also the fact that the net was not thrown very widely beyond traditional academic circles in Finland. Where staff *were* brought in from foreign countries and other professional backgrounds, including one non-Finn who was retained as a programme head, we found that the assessment of their performance was positive both inside UPI and outside - despite the unavoidable issue of public communication in Finnish.

The most telling comments made during evaluation interviews with representative UPI staff were about lack of explicit guidance, norm-setting and leadership from the highest levels in the institute. Typical remarks were '*We don't know what constitutes good work at UPI*'; or in more precise management terms, '*We have not developed many evaluation tools*' for defining quality of output. Comments on the institute's new status included:

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<sup>4</sup> More detailed comments on the evaluation of individual products have been conveyed to the Director.

*'Out from the ivory tower, that was made clear, but where to go next remains more or less unclear'; 'If we should be more of a think tank, the director... should make clear what this means in more concrete terms'.* Taken together with the down-side of the four-programme structure, these comments signal a need for a fresh 'institution-building' effort at UPI, designed – among other things – to establish clear central standards, consistently applied, for the productivity, direction, quality and manner of staff behaviour and output.

Such efforts can only be made within the given parameters including the fact that three out of four programme heads left UPI around January 2010, requiring some further temporary solutions, and other senior contracts will end in December 2010. Some turbulence in staff arrangements may thus be inevitable for a certain while yet. At the same time, these movements can be seen more positively as giving the new Director unusual leeway to change both the shape and nature of the staff establishment, where appropriate. It goes without saying that careful management will be needed to gain the staff's understanding and to sustain and preferably improve morale while doing so.

#### Relationships in Finland

It seems beyond doubt that both the Eduskunta itself, and government bodies in Finland, expected some form of greater input and interaction from the 'new' UPI than the 'old'. Otherwise the grant of a new public status and enlarged funding to the institute could hardly be explained. Moreover, as was noted during the evaluation, Finland is not well supplied with 'think-tanks' – as distinct from high-grade university work and media analysis – and Finnish ministries typically have very limited resources of their own for research and policy planning. There was, therefore, and remains a distinct gap for UPI to fill: in terms of channelling and analysing information beyond what official networks and the intelligent media can supply; in early warning of emerging issues, and taking the longer-term view; in providing a sounding board and independent critique on existing policies, and promoting and contributing to debate on further policy development. All stake-holders seem well aware that only a truly independent institute can bring added value in these roles. They may also, however, need to make some further effort themselves to grasp what a 21<sup>st</sup>-century 'think-tank' is and what it takes to work with one successfully.

UPI's actual performance over the last two years was assessed differently by different interviewees both inside and outside the institute. All seemed agreed that the institute had established a 'correct and solid' basis for playing a role in policy-relevant work and public information, as well as pure research. At the most positive, some felt UPI had adopted exactly the right profile to maintain its independence. Its staff had given satisfaction when providing input to parliamentary work, such as appearing at committees. Other successes were reported from UPI's cooperation (on a greater or lesser scale) with ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Environment, Defence and Interior, through means including sponsored research, briefing and brainstorming, regular 'contact groups' and exchanges of personnel. Good regular contacts had also been established with the EU representation in Helsinki, and good experiences of cooperation were reported by some

NGOs. As regards issues of substance, several positive remarks were made about UPI's work on climate change during 2009, including its effort to forecast the approaches of other powers during the run-up to the Copenhagen Summit in December. (See also below, on successful public events.)

In the majority of interviews with parliamentary, governmental and non-governmental figures, however, at least some shortcomings were identified and – as also reported in the opinion poll survey – the word 'disappointment' came up more than once. Contacts between UPI and Parliament were described as high-level, occasional and relatively formal. UPI's annual seminar day in Parliament was of good quality but too structured and 'grand' to allow give-and-take debate. UPI did not appear to have probed Parliament's detailed needs or made efforts to overcome initial barriers such as the limited number of MPs with established foreign-affairs interests, or the constraints of working hours. The Prime Minister's office and some other relevant ministries felt they had not been offered a chance to explore the full range of ways UPI might be helpful in their work, although they themselves did see such openings and might even be able to offer extra funding. After, in some cases, deliberately sampling UPI publications to prepare for evaluation interviews, well-placed individuals both in the Parliament and government offices said they had found little or nothing there of policy relevance to themselves – partly because the Finnish angle (and general rationale for selecting topics) was not clear enough. More positive remarks were made about the journal *Ulkopolitiikka*, although again with some suggestions that it was more enjoyable and informative than it was original or incisive on Finnish issues.

This evaluation included only minimal contact with UPI's stake-holders in the private business sector and the media. *Mutatis mutandis*, their remarks pointed in the same direction – an appetite for more policy-relevant interventions, fresh and if necessary provocative ideas, and flexible, preferably informal, methods of interaction. A need was also seen for more cross-sectoral policy debates, since Finland's think-tanks dealing with economic or with political/strategic issues respectively had worked along largely separate lines. Some would like to see UPI's Advisory Council taking a more active role in this context. The question of UPI inputs to the independent media is taken up below.

All interviewees were invited to comment on whether there was space for UPI to coexist positively with other Finnish institutes, colleges and universities, including in areas of international affairs where expertise is widely spread (such as Russia). No-one saw any real problem here, since other respected contributors' fields of expertise are well demarcated - the Bank of Finland leading on economics, for instance, the Aleksanteri Institute covering internal questions (among others) and the Defence College dealing with hard military issues. There was a general view that UPI could go further to build the cooperative relationships that this *de facto* complementarity would allow; and both in Parliament and government circles, there was a welcome for any initiative that would let the different centres of excellence coordinate and work more closely together.

### Public Relations and External Partnerships

The general public image of UPI *at home in Finland* appears positive and trustworthy, if sometimes rather low-key and loosely focussed. The private opinion poll conducted by Taloustutkimus in late 2009 reported opinions as more positive than negative, although – significantly – 'There were also those who didn't feel that they were sufficiently familiar with the institute's activities to be willing to assess its success'. The most positive welcome was expressed for UPI's major set-piece lectures and seminars, including those featuring foreign VIPs and arresting topics like 'Why Europe fails'. Aside from Finnish 'customers', these were well frequented and appreciated by the Helsinki diplomatic corps. A clear majority of our own interviewees thought it a good thing that UPI staff from the Director downwards had written quite often in Finland's leading newspapers, and had occasionally been provocative (eg a piece asking if Finnish troops were 'at war' in Afghanistan). Some would like to see UPI experts interviewed even more often on radio and TV.

It is worth noting that reactions to events and publications were the only measure available to us of UPI's public relationships, since the institute has not hitherto chosen to develop special 'membership', 'sponsorship' or 'subscription' features for individuals and corporations, as many other European and US institutes do. In successful cases, such non-state partnerships have borne fruit for think-tanks both in opening up new areas of demand for their products, influence and advice, and in offering openings to diversify funding.

Turning to UPI's *standing and relationships abroad*: it is noteworthy, first, that the 'strategy' of 2008 defines no target as to UPI's international status, as it does for the institute's standing within Finland. For the last two years UPI has not figured in the 'non-US top fifty' or 'West European top forty' institutes selected by the University of Pennsylvania on the basis of an opinion poll among peers,<sup>5</sup> although – among UPI's Nordic neighbours - PRIO, DIIS, NUPI and Ui have all done so at least once. While it has not been possible to research this aspect in depth, the impression gained by the evaluation team is that:

- (As already noted,) the strength and the pattern of UPI's external links differ widely from one research programme to another; there seems to have been no clear central strategy to seek (for instance) a more-than-symbolic Nordic or Nordic/Baltic base, a pan-European network, a small/medium state network, or a particular balance of contacts with major powers;
- The international profile and reputation of some individual researchers is clearer than that of UPI as such, with similar variations in their personal networks;
- The resulting pattern of bitty, predominantly working-level interaction has also made it hard for UPI to exchange ideas and learn lessons about institute profiling and management generally. Several interviewees indicated that UPI might have

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<sup>5</sup> The latest version of this report from the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, covering 2009, is at [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/irp/documents/2009\\_GlobalGoToThinkTankRankings\\_TTIndex\\_1.28.10.pdf](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/irp/documents/2009_GlobalGoToThinkTankRankings_TTIndex_1.28.10.pdf).

- lessons to learn from institutes elsewhere in Europe, including some with smaller resources such as CER in London and the IEA in Dublin;
- UPI does not seem to be offering news and analysis on and from Finland, and a gate into Finland (and its surrounding regions and neighbours) in the way that most smaller national institutes do. It does not illuminate the 'Finnish model', in which there is actually quite wide international interest;
  - It is not always clear to potential foreign partners (or rather, is clearer in some programmes than others) what other 'niches' of value UPI is trying to develop as an input to the European and international division of labour. Some research foci that outsiders would expect given Finland's position, eg on Nordic/Baltic affairs and EU economics, have been largely lacking of late.

As with any modern institute, UPI's website is an important engine of its image- and connection-making as well as its research dissemination and information policy. Our team and our interviewees were generally agreed that the present website at <http://www.upi-fiia.fi> is elegant and up-to-date in design, user-friendly to get around, and well-balanced as between text and picture material, with a plain, direct and where appropriate personal style of communication. It is commendable that English and Swedish language versions are available and easily accessible. Making just about all UPI's materials available for free download is also welcome, for educational as well as public information purposes; and it is good to see modern technical opportunities being explored, notably through the offer of researchers' blogs. But the site's content and structure could go further to make the best impact on all users, abroad as well as at home.

For example, it may be confusing, and creates a crowded and bitty effect, to structure the main home-page according to types of output (blogs, papers etc) rather than topics. Most institute front pages give a smaller number of 'samples', organized by themes and/or dates, and followed by 'read more'. When first visiting the site, short 'sound-bite' products (including reported media inputs by staff) also appear to dominate at the expense of longer and more serious ones. Compared with the multiplicity of such writings, there is little on the front pages to show that UPI is playing an active, more than just informative, role in Finnish life and debate. Events (tapahtumat) and news announcements (uutiset) take quite a low profile so that, among other things, natural opportunities for self-advertisement and reports on successes may be being missed.

On exploring the website, the material offered under the 'Institute' heading appears slanted towards history and practical information. It does not clearly enough spell out UPI's research profile and major activities, including important foreign links and international programmes. Giving more information up-front on the latter would reduce the possible impression of an inward-looking national site. The website could also highlight the Governing Board's role more clearly, eg with pictures. Finally, there are many inconsistencies in the content, method of presenting work, and terminology used in the website's sections for the four research programmes. It is not always clear how the activities reported serve UPI's strategic research aims; while some important cooperative frameworks and products (EU-27, COST) are mentioned only incidentally and hard to track down.

### 3. IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION

#### General

All the points covered in this section are grounded in suggestions made by one or more interviewees during the evaluation, including the incoming and outgoing Directors themselves. Main themes and what we see as particular priorities are highlighted in **Bold**. The results should not be regarded as constraining or exhaustive, but rather as a ‘toolbox’ of high ambition and maximum scope, on which the Director should feel free to draw selectively over time. Clearly, the implementation of change at UPI must be gradual and step-by-step, for practical reasons such as staff contracts and the constraints of funding, but also in order to preserve maximum understanding, buy-in and goodwill both among the staff and with stakeholders. Some actions of a more symbolic, course- and model-setting nature need not of course be delayed, and we have noted that several useful steps are already underway in early 2010.

#### UPI’s identity and values

The general aim in the next stage of institution-building for the new UPI should be to **bring clarity to areas of uncertainty, and transparency to sensitive issues and relationships**. As the institute’s independence cannot be in doubt after the past three years’ work, and all major interlocutors disclaim any wish to put it at risk, the time is ripe to **seek closer, more regular and structured, face-to-face engagement with policy-relevant ‘customers’ and partners**. But this needs to be done without overloading the institute, promising what cannot be delivered, compromising on quality, or leaving any scope for misunderstanding whether inside or outside UPI. In particular, if the element of policy engagement is to grow, particular care will be needed to guide and support those staff who so far lack experience of how to handle it.

Against this background, we suggest that the Director consider:

- agreeing, through discussion with staff, on a **basic code of values** for UPI including the meaning of academic quality, objectivity and independence; together with procedures to handle cases of difficulty and dispute;<sup>6</sup>
- developing in the same way a **generic ‘toolbox’ of ways for working with official and non-state Finnish stakeholders and partners**, in the modes of briefing, policy debate and advice, and public education. Such a document should also clarify which services are integral to UPI’s work and which are offered only at a price, and what if any limits apply to the acceptability of potential funders. UPI top management could then set some initial goals for such interactions that apply fairly to all staff and areas of work; and set up procedures to monitor the results and discuss any issues arising;
- developing and informally recording an explicit **‘modus operandi’ for regular cooperation with the Parliament**, to be discussed notably with the leaders and

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<sup>6</sup> This work might take the prologue of the initial Research Programme as a starting point.



advisers of the principal relevant committees (see below for more substantial ideas on this relationship);  
- going through the **same process with other local stakeholders** as needed.

Ultimately, the Director's own principled, balanced and successful engagement in both purely intellectual and policy-oriented work will send the clearest message and build the necessary confidence most rapidly. Keeping the staff aware of what the Director is doing and why is not as simple a prescription as it seems, but will repay effort.

#### Research structure and themes

UPI should consider moving towards **a streamlined and more focussed research structure, with a permanent 'core'** in certain fields of monitoring, analysis and policy advice that are inextricably linked with Finnish interests, and for which a Helsinki-based research team has some comparative advantages. It is widely agreed that the indispensable topics here are *EU affairs and Russian affairs*; that these should be inter-related in substance, and should systematically cover the various relevant 'neighbourhoods' - Northern and North-eastern Europe, the Arctic, and the former Soviet sphere or 'Eurasia' - as well as the pan-European and (where appropriate) global perspective. UPI's work on Russian and post-Soviet issues may continue to be approached from an international-politics angle, to complement other Finnish expertise. But there is considerable demand for both the core topics to follow a *multi-functional* approach giving more weight to **economic issues**, and to the more political (institutional, functional and 'softer') **dimensions of security** including the strategic nexus Russia/NATO/EU/China. More detailed points suggested for attention in this core area include CSDP and the EU's overall strategic profile, direct EU-Russia relations, EU neighbourhood policy and enlargement, and the evolving roles of the EU and Russia on the global scene in the light i.a. of the economic crash.

A further recommendation when approaching these key topics is that **UPI should focus more clearly on the 'Finnish angle'**, not just in terms of **implications for Finland** but also documenting and critically analysing **Finland's own actions and positions and the Finnish 'model'** – in their own right and in the more obvious comparative perspectives. It is normal for a think-tank serving its own country to have a function of 'record' regarding national policy; but such information also constitutes part of what UPI can and should bring to the international research and policy analysis market. It does not appear that any other academic actor in Finland today is filling or can fill the gap.

UPI should continue to **work on other functional, regional and global issues, but in a way that is at the same time more coherent with the core, more strongly coordinated, and more flexible in modalities**. Such issues do not necessarily require separate and permanent programmes but could be addressed through finite projects linked to individual researchers' contracts, specific cooperation schemes and externally funded projects with partners, or even very brief visits of outside experts leading to a one-off seminar or publication. As a broad guide, non-core topics should be selected and re-mixed over time in the light of **global strategic trends and priorities on the one hand, and relevance for Finland's and Europe's interests and potential roles on the other**

**hand.** Many of our interviewees commended the quality of UPI's work hitherto on *environment and climate change*, and the logic of our proposals would support maintaining this as a serious research focus for the institute at least in the medium term, preferably linked with *energy* issues which hold a central place in EU/Russia relations as well as in many Nordic/Baltic national concerns and the new High North agenda. We also noted considerable demand for comment/analysis to be provided on **China and other rising powers** from a similar Finnish- and Europe-based angle, including attention to the world economy and fallout from the current crisis; for UPI to maintain a capacity to work on **crisis management** issues and the principles of intervention, including (at present) the hot topics of the greater Middle East; and for at least some attention to the agendas of developing regions and North-South affairs. Finally, an interesting suggestion was made that UPI should consider developing a **data-base or regular report/audit of some sort** to help stake out its international niche and to draw regular publicity for the findings.

#### Staff Issues

The substantial role that UPI's leadership needs to play has already been defined, but how to find the capacity for it is another question. While it seems impractical to change the assignment of the Deputy Directorship - as defined in the 2006 Act - to the Head of Administration, this does raise questions about how to deputize for the Director (when absent) in academic and representational modes, and how to guarantee sufficient leadership and advice for academic staff overall. Some interviewees suggested the Director might designate **one or two persons as 'academic deputy/ies' or (in usual parlance) research director(s) or coordinator(s)**, as an internal decision to be discussed with but not formally enacted by the Board. In a large institute this could be a free-standing step in the hierarchy, but given UPI's size it would make more sense to combine the research direction/coordination function with substantial academic and management tasks within the new proposed research structure. One option would be to have the title carried by one or both of the two core programme heads, or rotate it between them, but this might risk over-burdening them and/or creating a conflict of interest. Another option that has drawn some support would be to move towards the creation of a post for overall coordination of non-core research, and for integrating it with the core: a function that could logically be combined with overall fund-raising duties and perhaps the supervision of consistent academic and publishing standards. It would be interesting to consider tailoring this post for a candidate with a non-academic or not purely academic background.

While personal leadership is invaluable, the arrival of a new Director is also a good time to review internal procedures for the building of **team-spirit and communication throughout the whole staff**. One method available at any time is to build **cross-programme work teams** for exploring cross-cutting issues, and/or for organizing some particular major event or publication including major interactions with outside stakeholders. Other normal instruments would include internal brainstormings for the researchers or full staff, taking advantage i.a. of interesting visitors and guest scholars, as well as away-days and purely social events. For staff confidence and cohesion a **consistent and effective approach to work disciplines, individual goal-setting,**

**assessment, and (to the extent permitted) merit-related pay** is also important, and this would be a good time to check whether UPI is making full use of the means it could apply to these ends within the public service employment framework.

In recruitment policy, a general aim should be to look for **more ‘middle management’ figures** who earned their doctorate or the equivalent<sup>7</sup> some time ago and are able to work independently, engage in policy work with confidence, and provide younger staff with a role-model and guidance when needed. Under the recommended structure such persons might be placed at middle level in core programmes – in which case they should have contracts of 3 years or more - or may lead shorter-term additional projects, on more variable employment terms. Such difference of career expectations ought to be acceptable if the rationale is spelled out clearly and equal pay is provided for equal work. At the same time an effort should be made to **widen the range of backgrounds for both contracted staff and short-term attachments**, including academics from other fields than international politics (economists, lawyers?), non-academics with strong international experience, government secondees, and certainly more foreigners – from a wider range of nations. Recruitment modalities, including the use of language, channels for advertising and active head-hunting, should be reviewed to open the way for this, while ensuring that **all appointments follow competitive and transparent procedures**. Finally, UPI’s succession strategy for leading staff in particular should try if at all possible to **avoid a recurring situation where all senior contracts expire simultaneously**.

Other institutes of modest size have employed experts part-time, shared them with other institutions and used consultancy services to expand their reach without exceeding their resources or over-complicating the staff hierarchy. Of these options, part-time work may not fit Finland’s public service culture, but the outsourcing of some tasks to consultants could certainly be considered when UPI wishes to help fill an official request without changing its own research profile. A more general remedy, which would also help build longer-term partnerships for UPI, would be to **develop a ‘pool’ or recognized network of individual experts within and beyond Finland** who would be on call to help with ad hoc research assignments, events, publications, and integrated research projects on a basis of case-by-case remuneration

While this evaluation was oriented towards research staff rather than staff management in general, it has uncovered some questions about support staff that deserve the Director’s attention. As already noted, some 18 out of 52 staff in 2009 were identified as part of the main administrative team, without clearly demarcated functions in some cases, while research programmes were relying for support on young, short-contracted staff including interns. In principle, **support staff also in the research field should be distinct from interns**, and should have reasonable job security. **Internship policy** should be designed i.a. to guarantee a useful educational experience to such young people **and needs to be**

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<sup>7</sup> Note that the 2006 Act is careful to allow ‘equivalence’ in place of a formal doctorate, at all levels. UPI’s system for reflecting non-academic experience in pay levels may still need some refinement.

**formulated and overseen at central level**, including guidelines for handling unsolicited applications. While any more substantial **reassignment of support capacity** is bound to raise complex issues including budgetary ones, we believe it would be worth devoting the time for an **internal review on this subject**, including suitable representation of all interests and consultation with the relevant staff bodies.

#### Relations with Finnish stakeholders and partners

UPI should take the opportunity of its new leadership to **actively explore the wants, needs - and receptive capacities - of the Finnish Parliament and its committees, the Prime Minister's office, other government departments and authorities**. What kind of partnership is offered in future should depend on what they ask for, as well as UPI's own capabilities and priorities, but could well include:

- more **comments and advice** on relevant legislation or similar major business going through Parliament, and on major policy reviews being conducted by the MFA or PM's office;
- (aside from formal seminars or public briefings) more **round-table in-house brainstorming sessions on policy issues**, under Chatham House rules, where UPI may 'facilitate' debate among officials themselves by defining issues in a clear and provocative (but not partisan or 'campaigning') way, putting scenarios and options on the table, probing what Finland's policy is and why, etc. The new 'information breakfasts' now planned are a good start;
- regular **working lunches with committee chairs and advisers**, to review methods as well as topics for further cooperation;
- more **'early warning'** of emerging policy issues directly relevant to Finland and/or Europe, with identification of the questions they raise for Finland itself;
- more ability to **comment and advise at short notice** on events and actions having consequences for Finland, through direct and in-house briefings to stakeholders, not just through media articles and public comment (but less *post facto* exegesis of things adequately explained by quality media and other sources);
- occasional **exchanges of personnel**, sending people along on delegations and visits, etc.

**With other think-tanks and intellectual centres in Finland**, UPI should exploit the apparent lack of conflict to **build closer cooperation in an open and generous spirit**. The Director could approach her peers, for example, to suggest co-sponsoring events or series of events on major policy developments where each partner could display its own special skills for the benefit of stakeholders. As confidence builds, the way could open for more frequent joint funding attempts, sharing/exchanging of personnel and so on. One potential benefit for UPI is being able, as a result, to more deeply and systematically tap others' expertise – business, military etc – for its own work and publications.

UPI could and should of course also think of **building stronger direct links to non-official constituencies in Finland, including both the private business sector and internationally active NGOs**. What it can offer them is *mutatis mutandis* the same as listed above for official partners: including the facilitation of debate and brainstorming among sectoral leaders themselves, who often have serious and internationally respected

expertise on world affairs in their own right. Some of our interviewees felt that Finland has not profited as much as it might from pooling such expertise through structured cross-sectoral debate (as distinct from informal networking), and that UPI's mission and governance structure made it an appropriate base for such experiments. One option could be to **consider developing a cross-sectoral forum** that would meet annually, perhaps outside Helsinki, to focus on a recurring theme or set of themes important for Finland and ideally also filling a gap in international debate. The effort required might be well repaid in 'branding' value, international visibility and the cementing of sectoral relations.<sup>8</sup>

At the day-to-day level UPI might consider offering membership/subscription/ 'friends of UPI' arrangements to private sector and other customers not involved in its main operational partnerships. Enrolment need not be fee-paying if local practice is against this, but could include privileged access for example to a periodic, actively distributed newsletter /bulletin and to invitation-only events. Electronic mailings could of course also be extended to the network of foreign addressees and correspondents that UPI already possesses but has yet fully to exploit.

UPI could also consider making a virtue of its large number of young, recently graduated staff by using them in a **programme for youth outreach** (outside the purely educational context), designed to cultivate both knowledge of external affairs and skills in debate and policy-making among the next generation. Natural instruments would be the building of a Facebook network, club/pub evenings, debating events etc – or more ambitiously, a summer course or regular 'young faces' conference of some kind.

We support an idea that arose in our interviews that UPI should stage **occasional visits and events in large provincial cities**, eg on EU issues or others of universal interest, with an active media strategy to get added image value. Both UPI's own staff and foreign researchers visiting Helsinki might be used as presenters, and co-sponsorship with a local university or society would often make sense.

#### External Profile, Partnerships and Funding

As a general guide UPI should aim to **be more active and proactive in networking and building its image and audiences internationally**, in a way closely geared to what it adopts as its (a) future core roles and (b) shorter-term priorities. The staff could begin by jointly reviewing their programme-based and individual contacts, together with the new Director's own network, to see if added value could be gained from these for the whole institute and to identify any obvious gaps. The institute should also **develop more consciously the mission of 'bringing Finland to others'** – by such means as making an active showing at the think-tank community's 'must-go' events, providing information on Finnish actions, plans and viewpoints during wider European/ international discussions, and promoting an understanding of and informed debate on Finland's own policies both abroad and at home. In keeping with the suggested research profile it would be worth paying special attention to the quality of UPI's information sources and partnership

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<sup>8</sup> This might further be linked with the idea mentioned earlier of a distinctive UPI database and/or reportage function.

networks in the Nordic/Baltic space, with Finland's 'small state' analogues, and with important players on the European scene, including a variety of suitable contacts and outlets in Brussels. It could aim to establish at least a 'niche' role in partnership with the largest and most influential policy-focussed institutes beyond Europe.

While such relationships have value in themselves for image- and status-building, mutual understanding and the exchange of good ideas, UPI should also have a hard-headed approach to gaining benefit from its partnerships. It would be timely at this stage for the new Director to **visit a few analogous, successful European institutes to discuss institute strategy in general**. UPI should also look out for opportunities to develop more **major joint funding applications** like the one recently prepared on Europe in the world: while recognizing that the ideal for a smaller institute is to be invited to ride along on someone else's project – something that in turn becomes more likely as an institute makes itself better-known and popular abroad.

#### Public activity

Active public events such as seminars are widely seen as strong point of the new UPI. Rather than making any major change, this success and the effective events team in the institute should be built upon **for a more conscious and comprehensive public affairs strategy, which – above all – makes the link and interdependence clearer between public outreach and UPI's core research and policy functions**. This is important not least so that research staff should understand and not grudge the effort they themselves have to expend on helping with events and publications. When building its events schedule UPI cannot and should not give up the 'targets of opportunity' role it has inherited from the Paasikivi Society and 'old UPI', ie hosting major speeches by major figures whether they fit the institute's own profile or not; nor should it miss opportunities to co-sponsor major seminars with domestic or foreign partners who seek a platform in Helsinki for their own research messages. But fulfilling these needs should be seen as just one of *three purposes of the events programme*, the first two – and logically prior – being to provide an open platform and forum for UPI's own current research preoccupations, including the policy debates linked with them; and (more specifically) to launch UPI books and other major publications.

For the latter two purposes, it is **worth thinking afresh about the optimum style and format of events** – there is less reason here for the 'grand' formal approach, and more to be said for promoting an interactive style of debate, when necessary by offering outspoken and opposed views. More opportunities could be found to showcase UPI's international partnerships and standing by bringing interesting foreign speakers on interesting topics, as UPI's guests or in a co-sponsored format. When publicizing books and other substantive papers it has been suggested that UPI should use more 'commercial' tactics such as sending review copies and giving away a certain number of free ones to first-comers at the launch. One specific idea mooted was that the institute could bring in a professional media/publicity expert for a short visiting review to offer such practical suggestions, preferably on a 'friendly' basis to avoid large consultancy fees.

As for venues, UPI has good smaller seminar rooms in its main building and a larger auditorium literally round the corner, and it should make full use of them. It is not entirely a trivial point to suggest that the entrances to both should be more prominently labelled to give a professional and welcoming impression, and that more might be done to help visitors grasp the lay-out of the main UPI offices (where the reception lobby is hidden some distance inside). It is also, however, good for UPI's image and audience-building to **make frequent use of down-town venues**, including the 'Citizens' Square' facility in the new Parliament building and other locations handy for parliamentarians and officials. Events in other parts of Finland have already been suggested and clearly, part of any international profiling strategy should be the organization or (preferably) co-sponsoring of **occasional talks and seminars at Brussels and in other important foreign centres**.

**The publications programme deserves review in its own right, both to re-assess the balance of output and to address the issue of quality control.** On the first point, there is much agreement that **Briefing Papers are not the ideal 'default' product** – both too long and too short for various audience needs, and not the best instrument for developing researchers' own skills. A better aim would be to **focus on stakeholders' need for rather short, rapid-reaction analyses at one end of the spectrum (but including more judgemental and policy content),<sup>9</sup> and at the other, encourage staff at all levels to aim for publications in prestigious journals as well as more larger-scale reports and books for UPI's own imprint.** It would also be good to recognize that not every researcher has to have the same writing profile and output, so long as each major research theme is adequately represented. A further issue worth exploring is the writing burden that Ulkopoliitikka currently imposes on UPI staff (nearly half of all the articles they wrote in 2009): is this effort as fully geared as it might be to deepening and disseminating the institute's main substantive research achievements – including its international partnerships? Or if the magazine is meant to follow a separate agenda, complementing rather than directly communicating UPI's core work, could it not use a higher proportion of outside writers? Finally, since there is clearly approval and appetite for UPI staff to continue writing for the independent media and appearing on radio and TV, it would be a worthwhile investment to offer media training to the less experienced staff members, with a view both to building their own competences and sharing the burden of media outreach more widely.

**Overall planning and quality control needs attention at two levels: the choice and timing of publications, and editing for academic rigour as well as language.** At least initially the Director may wish to make her own review of the former to judge how far some of the comments reported above about lack of logic or of a Finland-relevant focus may be justified, and if they are, what could be done about it. Quality screening of outputs by all research programmes, including the way they fill their pages on the website, is a priority and may at first have to be approached by deploying existing resources. For

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<sup>9</sup> It may also be worth considering whether some good-quality analyses should be injected into 'privileged' dialogues with official and other stakeholders rather than just propagated through the website, where impact will always be harder to measure.

the medium and longer term, **it is worth considering whether UPI should employ one or more all-purpose editors for these purposes; be prepared to pay for external professional editing; set up an editorial committee such as several other institutes and publications have, or design some other peer-review system – maybe a combination of all.**

**UPI's website should be reviewed** in the light of the comments made in section II above: in particular, **re-thinking the 'first impressions'** created by the front page and introductory information on the institute, and setting/monitoring common standards for the structuring of the research pages. More could be done **to highlight external partnerships** i.a. by showcasing, or providing links to, co-produced work and partners' outputs. **Regular checks and updates should be carried out on factual material** such as names of personnel. Another issue is **assessing the impact or 'outcome'** of the effort devoted to the site, and if UPI is not already doing so it should regularly check the level and distribution of 'hits' received. Given the effort currently devoted to researchers' blogs it would be particularly worth checking what audience they are attracting. It should always be possible both to make and to retract experiments in the light of user response.

**Signed by the evaluation team:**

**Alyson JK Bailes  
Harry Harding  
Marja Outi Järvelä  
Volker Perthes  
Pierre Schori  
Helen S Wallace**

**9 April 2010**



## **ANNEX A**

UPI:n hallitus  
8.9.2009

Liite 2

### International Evaluation of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs

The Board of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs commissions an external evaluation of the Institute's activities since the beginning of 2008 when the current program structure was initiated. The aim of the evaluation is to obtain independent views on the research and policy orientation of the Institute to build up basis for the development of Institute's research program beyond its current expiration at the end of 2010.

The assessment will be conducted by a selected team of the Institute's Scientific Advisory Council. The team will be headed by the Chair of the Council, Professor Alyson Bailes, who will choose its other members from among the Council members. The evaluation will be initiated during the fall of 2009 and will be finished by the mid April of 2010.

The evaluation team will be invited to spend in Helsinki a necessary number of days in the conjunction of the Council's annual meeting. The evaluation team may also hold additional meetings as needed. The Institute will pay an honorarium for the chair of the team and its members. The team is expected to interview Board members of the Institute, its executive leadership, researchers and other staff as well as some of the Institute's key stakeholders in the Parliament and elsewhere in the Finnish society.

The Institute and its programs will assist the evaluation team by producing a self-evaluation report and by commissioning a study of the views held by the main external stakeholders of the Institute. The Institute will provide secretarial support to the team as needed.

Specifically, the evaluation team is requested to

1. provide an assessment on the quality of research conducted by the Institute
2. evaluate the policy relevance and visibility of the Institute's work
3. explore the extent and quality of the Institute's international activities
4. judge the outreach and dissemination work done by the Institute.

## **ANNEX B**

### Interviews conducted for the Evaluation of FIIA/UPI, February-March 2010

Archer Toby, Researcher of the FIIA  
Grüne Yrsa, Editor of Hufvudstadsbladet  
Halonen Kare, State Secretary for EU Affairs, Prime Minister's Office  
Iivonen Jyrki, Director for Public Policy, Ministry of Defence  
Jalonen Olli-Pekka, Counsel of the Foreign Affairs Committee  
Johansson Frank, Chairperson of Amnesty  
Kivinen Olli, Former editor of Helsingin Sanomat  
Koivisto Jukka, Vice-CEO of the Confederation of Finnish Industries EK  
Korppoo Anna, Programme Director of the FIIA  
Kosonen Eikka, Head of Representation, European Commission Representation in Finland  
Laakso Liisa, Dean, Member of the FIIA Board  
Liukkonen Leena, Head of Communications of the FIIA  
Luomi Mari, Researcher of the FIIA  
Moshes Arkady, Programme Director of the FIIA  
Möttölä Kari, Professor, Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Nojonen Matti, Programme Director of the FIIA  
Ojanen Hanna, Former Programme Director of the FIIA, Director of Research, SIIA  
Paasio Pertti, Minister, Member of the FIIA Board  
Pimiä Kirsi, Counsel of the Grand Committee  
Pynnöniemi Katri, Researcher of the FIIA  
Ryynänen Mirja, Former MP, Member of the FIIA Board  
Salonius-Pasternak Charly, Researcher of the FIIA  
Salovaara Jukka, State under-secretary for EU affairs, Prime Minister's Office  
Saramo Peter, Counsel of the Grand Committee  
Sepponen Teemu, Counsel of the Foreign Affairs Committee  
Suominen Ilkka, Minister, Member of the FIIA Board  
Taalas Jaalas, Head of Policy Planning Research Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Talvitie Tuija, Executive Director of Crisis Management Initiative  
Tanskanen Antti, Minister, Chair of the FIIA Board  
Tiilikainen Teija, Director of the FIIA  
Torstila Pertti, State Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Tuomioja Erkki, Chairperson of the Grand Committee  
Vaskunlahti Nina, Director of Russia Department, Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Wasström Pernilla, Financial Manager of the FIIA  
Viitasalo Mikko, Professor, Member of the FIIA Board  
Volanen Risto, State Secretary, Prime Minister's Office

Kääriäinen Seppo, Vice-speaker, Chair of the FIIA Advisory Council (written statement)  
Salolainen Pertti, Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee (written statement)

