3rd of March 2015/BH

**Draft Minutes**

**Bureau Meeting**

Brussels, 20th of January 2015 to the 22nd of January

***Present:*** *Sérgio Aires, President, Letizia Cesarini Sforza, Vice President; Kärt Mere, Vice President; Barbara Helfferich, Director. Johanna Engen and Peter Kelly present from the 21st to the 22nd of January.*

***Excused: on Tuesday, 20th of January -*** *Johanna Engen, Vice President; Peter Kelly, Vice President.*

1. Preparation for the Meetings with Luc Tholoniat from Juncker’s Cabinet and Stefaan Hermans, Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Marianne Thyssen

The Bureau members discussed the situation regarding the ever-decreasing amount of core-funding as well as the uncertainties and difficulties that came with the Commission’s new approach to project funding. There was agreement that members would need to have continued funding; if not EAPN would have difficulties to continue to exist. The Bureau also underlined the importance of the participation of PePs and the European meeting, as well as the PeP process around it at national level. It was acknowledged that it had become harder and harder to raise funding for the PEP meeting. Last year’s funding was only given because the President of EAPN asked Commissioner Andor to intervene, which he did.

Then the Bureau looked at other issues that should be raised with the officials. Suggestions included: The Social Investment Package, child poverty recommendation. It was also felt that it was important to remind them what EAPN was, i.e. a partner of the Commission, reliable, but critical, having supported the Commission many times against Member States. EAPN acts often as an interpreter at national level and follows the agenda of the Commission very closely. Added to that, the Commission should be made understand that EAPN has been growing.

**Decision:**

**For the meetings with the Commission officials, it was decided to also raise in particular the issue of the continuation of the PeP, our work on the Semester and in particular on the Semester Alliance. Sérgio would also raise the point of meeting with both Commissioner President Juncker and Commissioner Marianne Thyssen.**

2. FINANCES

2.1. Changes to the Budget 2015

The Director raised the need for a re-adjustment of the 2015 budget. On the basis of her discussion with the accountant[[1]](#footnote-1), she asked the Bureau to agree to transfer 22,000 EUROs from the Europe 2020 line which supports national networks back into the line which funds the work of national networks in support of preparing their PeP meetings.

There was also a discussion about the guidelines and rules for selection and implementation of the 15 pilot actions. The Bureau insisted that the rules must be clear for everybody. It was also said that these were pilots and that would require some flexibility with a view to learning for doing things better next year.

**Decision:**

**The Bureau agreed to move 22,000 from the pilots to the national preparations of the PeP meetings.**

2.2. Salaries

The Director reported that there would be a likely shortfall on salaries of around 53,000 EURO, but she would need to confirm the exact amount with the accountant. She also reported that Micheline Gerondal had requested payment for her holidays during the notice period, in which she had not worked, but had been fully paid. The Director underlined that EAPN had met all legal obligations regarding the departure of Ms Gerondal. The Director recommended to write to Ms Gerondal informing her that EAPN had met all its legal obligations and therefore would not grant her request.

**Decision:**

**The Bureau agreed that Micheline Gerondal’s request be denied.**

2.3. Contracts with National Networks – Luxembourg: Final payment for REPIS – rencontre participative pour l’inclusion sociale in 2010 of 1,441,52. EUROs[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Director informed the Bureau about a long-standing request by EAPN Luxemburg to be reimbursed for expenses relating to the preparation of the PeP. She informed the Bureau that the accountant had advised against any payments to Luxembourg in relation to that particular request. The accountant had warned that such an action would set a dangerous precedence. He had also underlined that the fault was on the side of Luxembourg since it had not met its deadline. The Director, however, suggested that the issue was far from clear and it appeared that mistakes had been made on both side. She added that it was difficult to assign blame at his stage and suggested to go for a compromise meaning that EAPN would offer to pay half of the amount requested from Luxemburg. The total of reimbursement would amount to: 720,76 EURO. [[3]](#footnote-3)

**Decision and Action point:**

**The Director will write to EAPN Luxemburg to inform them that EAPN will reimburse half of the amount they requested (EURO 720,76) and would ask Luxemburg to agree. If agreement was reached, EAPN will transfer said amount of money to Luxemburg.**

3. EAPN SECRETARIAT/STAFF ISSUES

3.1. Appointment of a Development Officer

The Bureau discussed the appointment of a new development officer in light of the information that there was a shortfall in salaries. Several scenarios were discussed including not appointing anyone at all for the time being. However, the Bureau also took into account the renewed emphasis on member development in the work program and the creation of a new membership development group. It was also acknowledged that Tanya had done a good job facilitating the implementation of the MASS and that networks had clearly benefitted. The new person would need to pick it up from there. There was general agreement to proceed with the appointment of a development office as planned.

3.2. EAPN Fund

Fintan Farrell joined the meeting.

There was an initial discussion regarding the distribution of monies from the Fund and the support for the networks. It was felt that none of the EAPN reserves should go to the Fund this year due to the shortfall in salaries and other budgetary complications. The Bureau said that in principle, the money from the solidarity fund should go to national networks on the basis of clear but broad selection criteria. However, the reporting on how the money was applied should be made tougher. It was also proposed that the membership development group should be overseeing the selection of the networks and the dispersing from the solidarity fund.

The President explained that the Bureau agreed that money for the Fund should come from actual fundraising. He added that EAPN was not able to transfer funds from its reserves to the EAPN Fund this year, but if things changed, that decision could be reviewed

The President underlined that it was core business for the development group to support the fund.

It was also said there were no criteria for the European Organizations

**Decisions and Action Points:**

* **The Membership Development Group would be responsible for the selection procedure regarding. The President will participate in the work of the group.**
* **Requests from NNs for support from the Solidarity Fund will go to the Membership Development Group. They will give recommendations to the Bureau.**
* **The President, Director, Treasurer and one member of the EXCO should be in the Fund.**
* **Fintan Farrell will check whether the Belgian member of the EXCO is willing to do it.**

3.3. EAPN Prize

Fintan suggested to launch the call for the Prize at the end of this year. He added that he would prefer if members nominated winners of the Prize to avoid what happened with the Barka Foundation.

The Bureau examined the objectives of the prize. The President underlined that it was important that the Prize was connected to policy work and to show that something worked that we had been proposing works. He also said that the Prize should also be a marketing tool.

It was agreed to inform the Management Committee of the discussion.

Fintan proposed to have a discussion about how to continue the Prize. He said the idea was to give profile to the fund and thus to EAPN. To show that transnational exchange worked and generated ideas and progress. That was why you had to show the inspiration and what you did with it. It was set up around it. However, he added, there had not been many applications.

**Decision:**

* **Fintan will revise the table for spending of the Fund according to the decision taken by the Bureau**.

3.4. Membership Development

Fintan Farrell listed the networks which were in some kind of difficulties. These included Slovenia, the Netherlands and Greece. He suggested that if there were legal problems, it should be the Bureau, first and foremost, which should deal with them. The President also reported that France had asked for a visit by the President and the Director.

**Decisions/Action Points:**

* **President and Director to hold informal meetings with the Netherlands and France.**
* **For Slovenia and Greece, EAPN will wait until the new development officer is in place to set up a formal meeting: Development Officer, Director, Members of the Member Development Group/Bureau**.
* **Fintan Farrell and/or the new development office to gather information about Cyprus.**
* **The Bureau will write to NNs which have not submitted a report, i.e. Cyprus.**
* **The Director will check on Latvia and where it is with the report**.
* **Sérgio will write to members of the Membership Development Group and agree on date and mandate**.
* **The Membership Development Group will be responsible for the capacity building events** **among other things.**

The Bureau also examined which of the networks were mostly absent from the EUSIG. Peter Kelly reported how difficult it was for the other three nations in the UK and that the resources were too depleted in England, but there were new developments in Northern Ireland, for example.

3.5. Preparations for the PeP Meeting 2015

Fintan reported on the contacts with the Luxemburg Presidency and that it had been a reasonably good meeting. He is working with Gilles and Robert on the follow-up. He also informed the Bureau about the preparations for the meeting of the national coordinators in Vienna on the 21st and 22nd of February.

The discussion centered on the theme of the meeting. Several proposal were made, i.e. the Revision of the Treaty, linking the meeting to the Development Year and follow the link with migration.

3.6. PEP Hearing in the European Parliament

There was agreement that EAPN should aim for a Hearing in the EP for next year. The concept note should clearly say that it must be a formal meeting where the messages from the PeP meeting are brought to the attention of the Members of the European.

**Decisions and Action Points:**

* **EAPN will ask the EP that the meeting should be held as a formal meeting every two years. It should have broad participation of people experiencing poverty. EAPN should also aim to have that meeting take place in the plenary session of the European Parliament.**
* **The Director will get in touch with President Schulz’ cabinet to discuss further details;**
* **Concept note should be prepared as soon as possible.**

3.7. The EMIN Project

Fintan explained that EMIN continues even though the project was over. He proposed that EMIN and ETUC make joint event about adequate income. That could give some support for the network and would be relevant during the International Year of Development.

Fintan also said that we were waiting for the next funding round of EMIN, but that there was no guarantee that EAPN would get it. The chances, however, were not bad.

3.8. Fundraising

Fintan explained the changes in the funding situation and that it was absolutely necessary to maintain the five pillars of the fundraising strategy.

The Bureau then discussed the different proposals for fundraising including an individual donation drive; a revival of the row-for-rights, as well as fundraising event, and major donors’ contributions. There was some discussion on whether to pursue all ideas or concentrate on one or two and set priorities.

It was agreed to continue to pursue project funding. There was a strong support for working on concrete things like event organization. The President felt uncomfortable to take a decision where to prioritize just on the basis of this discussion.

**Decision:**

* **It was decided to continue the discussion during one of the next Skype meetings of the Bureau.**

4. STRATEGIC PLAN AND CONGRESS

The Bureau deliberated whether to hire a consultant to help draft the Strategic Plan. It was felt that it would be money well spent and should be done by José Manuel Fresno. The Bureau agreed to ask JM Fresno to work on indicators so that the Strategic Plan could be made more operational.

**Decision:**

* **Ask JM Fresno to work on the Strategic Plan**
* **5000 EURO would be made available from EAPN’s core budget**

5. PREPARING THE PILOT ACTIONS

The Director explained that there was money for 15 pilot actions – each action could benefit from 6000 EURO. The pilot could bring visibility, training and twinning with national networks with less experience on Europe 2020 and the European Semester. The President added that the main objective of the pilots was to raise awareness on the semester.

It was also felt that the 15 pilot should have key messages coming from them which could be brought together in one single action. It was also felt that a report would not be the best way and one should explore more the possibilities of social media and videos. The Bureau explore dthe possibility of directing extra funding to such a product.

**Decision:**

* **10,000 EURO should be found to support such a project. If at all possible, the money should be coming from the 22,000 EURO which was reassigned to the poverty line of the budget.**

The Bureau met with the policy coordinator. The Director outlined the previous discussion of the Bureau. The President added that this was an opportunity to shape the work of EAPN and that her expertise was needed in the process. The policy coordinator insisted in turn that the members of the EUISG Steering should be involved in this.

Decision:

* The policy coordinator will draft the concept note based on a previous draft by the Director.
* The EUISG will need to approve that procedure.
* The Steering Group will be central to the selection of the projects – this decision, however, will need to be reviewed on the basis of the agreement of the Steering Group.

6.ITEMS FOR THE DRAFT AGENDA OF THE EXCO IN MARCH 2015

**Decisions/Action Points:**

**The following items will be on the next EXCCO AGENDA**

* **Strategic Plan**
* **Validate the Development Group Work Programme**
* **Fundraising**
* **Directors Report and Finances**
* **Resumé of Bureau Activity**
* **Report on the EUISG**
* **PEP Feedback from the meeting of the national coordinators**
* **Organisation of the GA**
* **New Mandate of the Bureau**
* **Announce Process of Election**
* **TTIP –continue the discussion**
* **Maria – alternative economies – workshop around the EXCO**
* **The Director will explore whether an official from the Commission could be invited such as Luc Tholoniat from the President’s Cabinet.**
* **The Director will send the existing mandate to the Bureau/Standing Orders**

5. CALENDAR

23rd or 24th of February to meet in Brussels for the MDG/ SA will prepare an agenda.

2nd of March Bureau Meeting – at 15:00 Skype

12th of March – 15:00 Bureau Meeting

Dates after the General Assembly should be fixed by the new Bureau and EXCO

*The Meeting of the Bureau closed.*

1. The Accountant was ill on 20th January 2015, but not on 21st and 22nd of January 2015 and was available in the office.. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Request of payment by EAPN Luxembourg: A total of 6.883,04 of expenses - Request 50 % = 3.441,52 minus the advance payment of EUR 2.000 received by EAPN Brussel = 1.441,52 EURO to be paid by EAPN [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Philippe Lemmens, accountant, had requested that either Fintan or he, or both, be heard in this matter, but the Bureau and/or director didn’t deem it necessary. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)