



Notes of Bureau Meeting

14 June 2021, 14:00-16:00

Zoom

Participants: Biljana Dukovska (Macedonia), Carlos Susías (Spain), Eleni Karaoli (Cyprus), Honoratte Muhanzi (Norway), Ian Johnston (IFSW).

Participants (Staff): Cláudia Guerra, Hélder Ferreira, Philippe Lemmens, Rebecca Lee.

Session 1: General Intro

- Agenda approved
- No conflicts of interest

The President introduced the session.

The Director summarized the important aspects of the last meeting which already discussed the staffing proposals which the staff produced and introduced the meeting which needs to take a decision.

Ian stated again that he is not in favour of the proposals. He prefers a more traditional recruitment process. For him, if EAPN has the ability to be able to advertise permanent positions this will lead more likely to attracting high-calibre candidates. He also expressed that if EAPN does not have systems in place, it will necessarily act inappropriately.

Eleni mentioned that when she heard that Anna was resigning, her first thought was that someone needed to fly to Brussels and talk to the team about this situation. For her, enforcing the policy team is a priority, EAPN needs to find money to increase the policy team. Regarding the Policy Officer position, if EAPN does not have enough money to offer a permanent position, a temporary one should be offered. About the Policy Coordinator, she proposes to find someone and tell them to start quickly, or go to a more interim solution and find someone from the members for 3 months and, during that period, follow a more traditional recruitment process.

The Director stated they have a scope of 3 months to make sure they find the best candidate possible for the coordinator position and find a short-term response for the new Policy Officer. If the FPA is approved, EAPN can try to gather the necessary conditions to offer a second policy officer more permanently. Regarding the headhunting process, they need to make sure they do not do anything that members perceive as disloyal. He also agrees with Eleni and staff about having someone in an interim capacity, coming from the membership.

Rebecca thanked Eleni for her words about wanting to meet with the team in person as it has been a challenging 9 months. As for the principles of recruitment she is all in favour of a clear system based on very clear principles. She justified that staff proposed a headhunting process since EAPN is facing a specific situation and a policy coordinator is urgently needed. She also stated that staff and Ian have different views with respect to the number and level of experience of the latest candidates. She expressed that the lowered salary grid is an issue for recruiting experienced people in Brussels.

Honoratte mentioned that due to the fact EAPN is facing an extraordinary situation, an extraordinary decision should be made. She also agrees with the suggestion of hiring someone that they already know, who is competent and that could start working as soon as possible. She also pointed out the need of a new recruitment strategy and a new follow up strategy.

Philippe also agreed that it is important to have processes but, under these specific circumstances, the team proposed selecting someone as a policy officer from the previous selection procedure. It is up to Ex Co to decide if EAPN can have a permanent position for that job. He also highlighted the importance of finding a procedure that is acceptable to all and that is in line with EAPN values but emphasized that if they do not have a budget for next year, they cannot fight for People in Poverty at European level.

The President emphasized that EAPN's current priority is the FPA. He proposed reaching out some people from EUISG to help them with the FPA. He also declared that it is very important to make an immediate decision to help the policy team and it is crucial to ensure that a good FPA proposal is made to guarantee the continuity and stability of the EAPN.

Ian noted that Ex Co made abundantly clear that they should have more capacity in the policy team, as such, he thinks they should find the money to increase the policy team. He also thanked staff for saying they appreciated where he comes from in terms of his concerns about these situations.

Biljana stated they immediately need someone to help the team. She was a little confused and believes they should be clear about the kind of person they need. For her, if the focus is on the FPA, it is necessary to find someone to help in that process, as it is the main priority now.

Philippe agreed with Biljana. He also added that there are two processes for which policy people are needed: the Work Programme 2021 and the FPA. For the 2021 Work Programme, they need two policy officers because the work is not progressing. For the FPA, they need a person who is very experienced for the role of policy coordinator. He mentioned that it is the Ex Co's responsibility to find money for a new policy officer and stressed they must submit a decent Work Programme proposal *and* budget to accompany it.

The Director underlined that, in theory, they should be able to hire people based on agreements, but in fact the regulations are not entirely clear. EAPN needs someone with experience to help make a good FPA application. It would be a useful resource to have someone from the members organisations helping from July to September and select the best possible candidate for the Policy Coordinator position in that time.

The President proposed that a document should be drafted stating that EAPN will hire an additional person to immediately support the new Policy Officer (Sabrina) and hold a meeting, as soon as possible, with the EUSIG Steering group to see how or if they could give support. The document should be prepared by Hélder and Eleni.

The Steering group will have a meeting on the 18th and they will probably be able to speak with them at that time.

The President added another pertinent matter to be discussed, the preparation of the Ex Co and GA meetings.

The Director explained what will be discussed at the Ex Co meeting and that the objective is to prepare the two meetings (Ex Co and GA) to focus on the same issues. In the Ex Co it is intended to begin to give life to the contributions of members for the FPA process. Anna already drafted a survey for the EUISG members and it would be interesting to do a similar process with the Ex Co. He also explained that the FPA call is expected to be published around June 23rd and the expectation is that the deadline for the application is September 28th.

Biljana reminded everyone that the Membership Development Group (MDG) sent an e-mail comprised of two parts, one of which was about how to motivate the national networks (NN) to become more involved in the entire FPA process. NN's are very important in the process and, as such, it should be discussed how to improve the engagement of members so that they can actively participate.

The President highlighted that is important to take into account MDG considerations. Biljana and Hélder are responsible to see when this introduction could be made, to be discussed at a future meeting.

The Director mentioned that he is not sure whether it is possible to change the GA agenda after it is announced. One of the proposals put forward by MDG is to change the order of sessions. Since it is very important to approve the accounts and it is necessary for the GA to give the Ex Co the mandate to vote on the application of the FPA, he would not change the order of these sessions. He found it a little surprising to receive their suggestion so short before the General Assembly, but if Bureau members find resources to implement the suggestions that do not add to his workload, they should proceed.

Eleni also believes is not advisable to change the two first sessions of the agenda because they are the most important matters. She also agrees with Carlos regarding MDG considerations, in that they should have a more dedicated discussion on this in a future Ex Co meeting.

Ian agreed with Eleni.

The Director informed that the MDG contributions are related to two agenda points, one focused on policy priorities and impact and other focused on members' exchange. It is acceptable if members decide to swap the order of those two points. He just strongly recommended keeping the first two sessions, because it is very important to get the approval on those matters. They can use the methodology suggested by MDG, but it is necessary to find the resources.

The President expressed that as there are many people in the GA, they cannot change the methodology. He agrees with the proposal, but he proposes to use that methodology in the next Ex Co meeting and Extraordinary GA. The draft needs to be prepared in advance.

Philippe stated that as the agenda and invitations have already been sent, it is not possible to change the methodology.

Biljana said she will not push it for now but believes that in the Bureau and Ex Co, membership development and involvement should be discussed more. She also believes that the agenda is not as well structured as it is proposed.

The President recalled they will try to make the November GA face-to-face and that the July Bureau meeting should be held in person, if possible in Brussels.

Eleni expressed that they must present the proposal on Richard's resignation at the beginning of the General Assembly and add this information in the AOB session.

Ian mentioned that most organisations have some willingness to change their GA discussion, to take into account things that could not have been foreseen or important things that happened very recently.

The President answered that EAPN has a procedure for urgent motions that can be presented at the GA and there is a procedure that requires that to present the motion it must be supported by several networks and by some European body. That possibility exists.

The Director stated that the topics that were brought to the Ex Co or other statutory business meetings are important given the fact that EAPN has been facing a lot of statutory and internal issues. Since they have limited resources, either the focus of EAPN is to find agreed solutions on issues that are important and that cannot be delayed or increase the number of meetings. He also believes they should be better organized and be more focused on what can be done rather than what is desired.

Honoratte referred they have made a lot of sacrifices since last year, a lot of meetings and overtime work. She would like more precision in deciding on the different dates and different activities.

The President agreed with Honoratte and proposed to decide on the different dates in the July Bureau meeting because there will be an increase of activities in the last period of the year. The proposal drafted by the MDG should also be discussed in the July meeting. The July Bureau is especially important and as such, if possible, should be face-to-face.

The Director mentioned that in the last Ex Co meeting a proposal regarding **national contracts** was approved by the members, with the abstention of the French network. Philippe had a different understanding of the proposal that was approved. The Director gave the floor to Philippe to present some points regarding the follow-up to this proposal.

Philippe mentioned that the team is testing the DocuSign app so that people can sign remotely and that it needs to be applied in 2021 for all statutory meetings as it is a legal obligation. He also referred that he did not understand the idea of a progress report. He would like the members to enlighten him on every detail as he needs to put that in the contract and make a template to distribute to all NN. In addition, he noted that they need to find a person to verify these progress reports and evaluate them as he cannot do so for the policy content.

The President answered to Philippe saying the progress report must contain all invoices for all expenses incurred up to 70%, accompanied by informative descriptions of the correlation between the contract and the expense invoices. He stated that Philippe is responsible for checking if the reports are well executed and verifying which networks had more problems filling out the report. He underlined that the priority now is the contracts and what was established

was to advance the 70%, justifying this value with the progress report and later, releasing the remaining 30% if everything is correct.

Philippe intervened asking if the progress report is a financial report with all the invoices, where he can verify if NN spent all these expenses.

The President confirmed and proposed to communicate to all the networks so that they will present the justifications for the expenses. He also proposed that a meeting should be held between himself and Philippe, at the end of July, to plan in advance how they will follow up.

The Director stated that Philippe can adapt the proposal so that they can proceed with the contracts.