



Notes of EAPN Executive Committee

28 May 2021, 14:00-17:00

Zoom

Participants (members): Aleksandra Zivkovic (Croatia), Anna Galovikova (Slovakia), Biljana Dukovska (Macedonia), Carlos Susías (Spain), Eleni Karaoli (Cyprus), Honoratte Muhanzi (Norway), Ian Johnston (IFSW), Jasmina Krunic (Serbia), Jo Bothmer (Netherlands), Kamila Plowiec (Poland), Kärt Mere (Estonia), Katalin Juhos (Hungary), Laila Balga (Latvia), Mathias Becker (Germany), Nolwenn Foy (France), Vito Telesca (Italy), Yota (Greece), Ziva Humer (Slovenia).

Participants (staff): Cláudia Guerra, Hélder Ferreira, Magda Tancau, Philippe Lemmens, Sigrid Dahmen.

Apologies: None.

Session 1: Welcome and Introduction

Key discussion points

- Agenda approved
- No conflicts of Interest

The President welcomed members to the meeting and stated that, as agreed at the last Ex Co meeting (May 14), the present meeting will focus on discussing and approving the process for the 2021 national networks contracts. It is a matter that needs to be resolved as soon as possible due to the importance of the contracts.

Session 2: Proposal for the National Networks contracts process

Key discussion points

The Director briefly presented the initial proposal for the National Contracts. The idea of the proposal was to dilute the process throughout the year and make it easier to identify how the Brussels office can support the NN's. Due to previous experiences, the Director also emphasized that one of the problems highlighted was that some documents were not presented correctly. He also added that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss ways to work with this proposal and change it in a way that works with the NN's, in order to reach a final version.

Ziva raised the issue "With the new system that you introduced, it means that NN's would have to pay the expenses in advance, and then we would get through a system similar to the European projects. Right?". She also mentioned that Slovenia network is a network of different organizations and that all people work for free but, as an example, she mentioned the need to pay for the translation at the PW, which would be a problem.

The Director stated that the proposal was being discussed, not introduced. He also underlined that it was a good observation and how they could incorporate it into the proposal.

Kärt expressed her frustration with how the conversation and discussion started. She also mentioned that the National Networks have responsibilities and the first payment should be higher, as they already had some expenses. She said she was totally against the new system.

Kamila was also concerned about the new system. For her, the new system would be more complicated and it would mean more work for NN's. Also, it would be more difficult to manage the money as stipulated in this proposal.

Biljana referred that NN's rely on EAPN funds to organize events. She was not against the payment system, but she finds it to be a technical problem.

Yota pointed out two dimensions: the distribution of the money (in her opinion, it would mean double work for NN's) and the cooperation among the Brussels office and the NN. She also referred that needs clear guidelines on the elaboration and implementation of the report. She finished saying that is necessary for both sides to be more cooperative and supportive.

The President referred that it was the first time that a meeting with a single subject had been held and that it is essential to reach a decision on the proposal.

The Director mentioned that the national contracts, delivery of reports and the impact of this on EAPN's work had always been an issue. He emphasized that members need to improve the original proposal in a way that addresses EAPN main goals: timely delivery of reports (technical and financial) and submission of documents that are considered eligible. He also discussed an issue raised by Ziva "How can we reach a first payment level that allows different NN's to continue their activities without having to advance funds they do not have?".

Jo demonstrated his appreciation to Philippe, who helps him whenever he faces difficulties related to contracts. He also indicated that he believes the first payment should be higher.

The President agreed with the idea that Honoratte (Norway) wrote in the chat "I think EAPN should do a membership mapping by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each network to find a solution to the contracts problem". He also added the fact that some members want to increase the first payment to 70% and to finalize, asked if anyone had more proposals.

Kärt stated that reporting is the responsibility of NN's, but that the Brussels office needs to be more supportive of NN's who cannot understand the guidelines so well.

The President underlined the need for cooperation between the Brussels office and the NN's and asked if all members agree with the proposal to change the first payment to 70%.

Kamila referred that it should also be addressed if members agree on the need to make two reports. In her opinion, one report would be better.

Following Kamila's suggestion, The President indicated to vote first on the amount of the first payment and then on the reports.

Philippe mentioned that it does not make sense to vote first on the amount and then on the reports, because they are linked. He would like to receive an interim financial report from each NN and made himself available to assist them in ensuring that the documents provided would be accepted by the auditor and the EC. He also specified that is important that requests for assistance must be made promptly.

Kärt understands Philippe's frustrations but she highlighted that the welfare of National Networks must be the priority. She also indicated that the Brussels office should organize seminars and better guidelines to help the NN's that have more difficulties.

Aleksandra understands that Philippe has a lot of work but indicated that they should be aware that they are very different in terms of organizational capacity and that they are all volunteers.

Yota proposed to establish a system to monitor the implementation of contracts at the Ex Co meetings so that members become more involved. She also insisted on the guidelines again and suggested that Philippe make a list for frequented ask questions. She finalized her speech saying that it is necessary to find a simpler way to make the interim report.

The Director stated that it is imperative to agree on a system that works both for the NN and the Brussels office. He pointed out the importance of communication. NN's assistance needs should be more dispersed. Regarding guidelines, there are templates available, but if further clarification is needed, it is important to do so. Furthermore, he added that the need to make an interim report would simplify the final report.

Eleni believes that many of the ideas that Yota mentioned are good and should be considered for the future.

Kärt declared that none of the members should feel guilty about asking for clarification. She underlined that the aim of the Brussels office should be to support and assist NN.

Philippe explained that the reason this meeting is being held is mainly for NN's. NN's should ask for assistance in advance and as such he proposed the interim report. As for the guidelines, he referred that there are templates available and some NN's do not use them. He also mentioned that in 2020 he did a Zoom information session, and no one showed up. It is important for NN's to appear, especially those who have more difficulties. To finalize his speech, he recalled an idea from EAPN Belgium: putting a reminder on the December Ex Co meeting agenda to verify the status of contracts.

Jo tried to bring forward a proposal to make the team's work easier: send the completed documents before Christmas to Philippe. He also liked Yota's idea of having FAQs so Philippe could release it later in the year to all NN's.

The President expressed that the priority of the contracts is the strengthening of the NN's but is also crucial to comply with the rules that EC imposes. He also summarized the changes in the current proposal:

- Change of the 1st payment to 70%
- Interim report: It should be a progress report that explains what has been done and that contains all the expenses

***Problems with translation (Spanish to English) ***

The Director explained that the President was trying to explain that the interim report could be a progress report and as they already know what type of expenditures they will have, there is a need to compile a list of documents by type. He added that if the NN's validate as many documents as possible in the interim report, they will have less work in the final report.

Kärt believes these guidelines should be described in a manual beforehand.

Kamila raised a question "If we make this report, when will we have access to the second payment?"

The Director indicated that in the proposal the money was split in three payments. If the first payment increases to 70%, he was not sure if it would be feasible to split the rest into two more payments.

Philippe stated that if the first payment is 70% it would be very time consuming to make two more payments. For him, the first payment can be 70% and after an interim report, a final payment of 30% can be made.

Kärt declared that every NN needs resources. She added that they are volunteers and must do the work at the national level too. In her opinion, it is not possible to punish all NN's because two or three cannot manage the reports.

The President highlighted that the meeting aims to solve the problem of contracts and legalities. It should be noted that it is a problem that occurs every year. He believes that due to the work of all the members, **the proposal was improved.**

- **Increase the first payment to 70% and try to proceed to payments as soon as possible**
- **Progress report: forecast of expenses and documents that prove the expenses. The NN that do not present problems receive the last payment of 30%**

Jo asked The President to set a date for the progress report.

The President said the date it would be proposed later and proceeded to vote on the improved proposal: **All members voted in favour.**

The Director replied to a comment made in the chat by Laila (Latvia) "not possible to vote" affirming that an electronic vote was not organized for this proposal because the proposal was agreed upon at this meeting. He underlined that a Zoom information session must be maintained so that Philippe can present and explain the reporting templates. As mentioned before, it is important that all NN's attend, to find ways to help each other in this process.

Ian raised a question as to whether the Zoom's information session could be open to members (Ex co and Bureau) who are not normally involved in this process and if it is possible to identify organizations and try to understand how they deal with this kind of matters.

Philippe responded to Ian by saying that Ex Co members can invite anyone they want to the meeting.

The Director added that it would be better if Ex Co members and the person responsible for financial tasks came together to the information session. As previously mentioned, he also recommended updating the status of the contracts' process at the December Ex Co meeting.

The President thanked all members for their presence and finished the session saying that **France will count as an abstention** due to a comment made in the group chat by Nolwenn (France) "Just for information, for me it's not possible to vote, I'm intern at EAPN France and I'm not able to take such a decision. Thank you".