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## **Minutes from the meeting of Board of EURA, Sibiu, 19th June 2015**

In attendance:

Jacob, Robin H., Panos, Hubert, Rob, Cristina, Cristiana, Paula, Ivan, Dubravka, Pawel, Joanna, Robin C., Jan Erling

1.) **Welcome and review of the Agenda.** Karsten Zimmermann, the president of EURA welcomed the members of the Board.

The Board accepted the agenda without changes.

1. Welcome and Review of the Agenda
2. President's Report
  - a. Year in review
  - b. Finances
  - c. Contract Taylor and Francis
  - d. UAA & AESOP cooperation
  - e. The Regional Review
3. Membership Development and Report
  - a. Update on the one year free membership
  - b. Encouraging and recruiting new membership
  - c. Institutional membership criteria and definition
4. Election & Role of board members
  - a. Election Update
  - b. Tabled Topic from 2014: Task of Board Members \*
    - i. refer to EURA Futures Doc: pages 19-20\* & Tasks of the Members of the EURA Board
5. EURA Conference 2016 & 2017
  - a. Torino: C. Rossignolo
  - b. Warsaw: P. Swaniewicz
6. Summer Schools Update
7. Website/Newsletter Update
  - a. Newsflash and December Newsletter
  - b. Updates to 'About Us' and 'Conference' pages
  - c. Tabled Considerations: Development of an "exclusive" membership section and other improvements?

2.) **President's Report (Karsten)**

The President updated the board about the EURA website. It has been altered as per suggestions from 2014 and is now also hosted at a new server. A request was made for the EURA conference be featured more prominently on the website (Jacob). This could be done either through the front page or through a banner. The newsletter is now being sent out in a new HTML format, unlike earlier PDF versions. Suggestions were made to include PDF versions for those who would like to continue printing out the newsletters. A 'newsflash' is also now instated to provide updates more often. This is useful in the case of deadlines for events. Members are encouraged to submit more content regularly. The Board was informed that the COST action with AESOP and ISOCARP failed (Karsten). Reasons cited for the unsuccessful the application included that EURA was not considered an 'institution' and also EURA lacked diverse EU representation. The topic of the application was 'participation in planning', and the most current update is that Izabella Moronowicz (AESOP Secretary General) is working on a new proposal. An update was provided on the small grant for the workshop organized by Carla Tedesco at the UVA in Venice. Only three EURA members attended out of the eight participants. This was attributed to poor communication, and Carla never followed up with the EURA grant.

The budget report disclosed that current running costs include hosting the site and paying the secretariat (Karsten). Other than these main costs, EURA is financially comfortable. Improvements were suggested with regards to following up on membership invoices. Reports that some Italian members stopped getting invoices and thus had their memberships cancelled without realisation indicated a need for a better membership application process (Cristiana). The question was also raised as to how EURA could improve the current membership management system, whether a better system could be instated, and emphasize institutional contacts who are responsible for payments.

Changes to EURA's contract with Taylor and Francis regarding the journal subscriptions required the Board to consider increasing membership dues. These changes allowed for EURA individual members to pay 30 € per volume beginning with volume 9 in 2016. Each volume would include 3 issues. Initially, a two-tier membership was suggested, where full members would pay an extra 20€ for access to the journal (Rob). Another suggestion was to add 50% to the membership dues regardless of category to allow for access to journal (in this case an additional 20€ would be applied to full individual membership, and extra 12€ for discounted memberships - Jacob). The latter was selected and agreed upon by the board.

Following, updates on activities with the UAA included the participation of five EURA members at the 2015 UAA conference (Karsten). EURA also conducted a roundtable with AESOP at the 2015 AESOP conference. Considering that the 2016 AESOP is in Brazil, and that many European researchers would not be attending the next conference, suggestions were made to invite AESOP to organize a roundtable/joint track at the 2016 EURA conference.

Next, the board was provided a report on the advertisement opportunity in the Regional Review (Karsten, Robin C). Some of the Board members expressed scepticism at the expense of the advertisement to gain new members. Other members expressed support but also acknowledged a need to reach out to

practitioners as opposed to the participants at the Open Days in Brussels 2015 event at which the Regional Review would be distributed. In response, a suggestion was made to re-instate feedback forms to gauge membership interest and concerns (Robin H.). Further suggested improvements included promoting EURA through other networks such as the Critical Geography network, and the International Geographers Union (Cristiana, Cristina). It was then added that it is possible to promote the sponsorship of tracks and panels in partnership with other networks as a means of reaching out to more people from other backgrounds (Robin H.). An offer was made to follow up on this after the Governing Board meeting, by sending out bids to the EURA Network for track sponsorship (Robin H, Panos, Cristiana).

### 3.) **Membership Strategy (Karsten) \***

Challenges with ongoing membership payment and invoicing were emphasized. This was countered with the need for more reminders and follow up emails (Pawel). Additionally, the Board agreed upon the suggestion to rescind 2015 membership of those with outstanding debts by December 2015 (Robin H., Cristiana, Hubert, Jacob). This applies to all members, including those on the governing board.

With regards to encouraging and building EURA membership, a suggestion from last year was raised for discounts on new institutional membership (Robin H.). Additionally, Board Members were encouraged to brainstorm a list of potential institutions who are not yet, but could be interested in EURA membership (Robin H.). Further suggested strategies include reaching out to Anna Geppert and Francesco LoPiccollo from AESOP to ask for support in promoting EURA membership, using the Torino conference as a promoting event, and follow up emails with all Board Members to push for active membership support and recruitment (Cristiana). The Secretariat could also reading out to institutional contacts to request that potential new contacts information be forwarded.

### 4.) **Preparation for the General Assembly**

Opening up the discussion on the board election, the concern was raised that some returning members are not, or will not be active. In response, it was suggested that inactive members not be nominated as part of the board or that they propose new substitute members (Pawel). This is a particular concern considering the reminder that if Board Members missed more than two Governing Board meetings in a row that they should be removed. In general, the Board discussed the need to review EURA objectives and activities in consideration of the following actions:

- refer to the *2013 Task of Board Members's and EURA Future's* documents,
- strategically recruit active members,
- clarify the sections on re-election conditions in the charter,
- articulate and define the exclusion of candidature requirements  
(Pawel, Panos, Robin H., Cristiana, Hubert, Cristina, Rob and Karsten)

The last two action points are proposed as key tasks for the Torino conference.

#### **5.) *Role of board members.***

Karsten provided an update on the election and revived the tabled 2014 topic to review the Task of Board Members document (with reference to pages 19-20 of the EURA Futures document). Emphasis was added on reviewing the rules regarding individual member's commitment.

#### **6.) *EURA future events.***

Christina updated the Board on the 2016 conference in Torino. The event will take place in June and not July. 200 to 300 participants are anticipated, and it is envisioned that the acceptance process will be more selective (i.e. template abstract, same conference tool as in Vienna and Enschede). The question as to whether a feedback mechanism to help learn and improve for future events was raised. Additionally it was forwarded that the Milano conference guide should be revised to include information on post-conference evaluation (Jacob). Cristiana and Karsten volunteered as the first committee members to revise the guide. A reminder was made to promote membership discounts at Torino (Robin H). Lastly, Joanna and Pawel updated the Board on the 2017 conference in Warsaw which would take place in September as opposed to June. Last September is the final decision for the conference time frame, but specific dates are still to be selected.

#### **7.) *Summer School Update***

The 2015 Summer School in Spetses was a success. The event was financed by the COST program and focused on local government innovation. An evaluation report is anticipated, and it is suggested that Board Members think about methods and developing "navigator" guides (Panos, Hubert). Prof. Dr. Henk van der Kolk was a key helper with the students. Further outcomes discussed with Sabine Kuhlmann included a discussion about a participant database. In response, the question as to how many EURA students participated was asked (Karsten). There was an emphatic reminder to target young researchers who participate in such events to involve themselves with EURA through future opportunities, and also look for more financing sources as current funding will end in 2016 (Hubert). Further recommendations included organizing a summer school that focusses helping young scholars develop academic papers into articles (Hubert) and forwarding the list of Spetses participants to include them in the EURA network. Dubravka shared that plans for a summer school in Croatia were in the works, but still required additional 12,000 euro in funding. The tentative topic is 'smart cities, innovation' and the event may potentially be opened up to all students as opposed to only Eastern European students. The target audience includes students in the fields of geography, planning, and political science. Hubert suggested that Dubravka consider planning this for 2017 as Sabine Kuhlmann has committed to organizing the 2016 summer school in Potsdam.

#### **8.) *Website/Newsletter Update***

Robin C. reminded the Board to think about content for the December Newsletter and Newsflash.

***Action Items:***

1. Send out Track Sponsorship Bids through EURA Network
2. Review *Task of Board Members: Membership Commitment and Activity*
3. Review *Conference Guide: Post-Conference Feedback Mechanism*
4. Review *Charter: Re-Election Conditions*
5. Consider & provide Website/Newsletter/Newsflash Content