

EES 2020 Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 7 December, 2021

Via Videoconference

Time: 17:00 – 18:30 CET

MINUTES of the General Meeting (GM) of **European Evaluation Society**, an association, having its corporate seat in 's-Gravenhage, and offices at Johannes Vermeerplein 11, 1071 DV Amsterdam, registered with the Trade Register of the 's-Gravenhage Chamber of Commerce under number 40413697, hereinafter to be referred to as the **Association** or the **EES**, held via videoconference on 7 December 2021.

The Meeting was chaired by Daniele Lamarque, President of the EES.

1) Welcome

The Chairperson opened the Meeting and declared:

- that this is a General Meeting held by virtual electronic means, as per the EES' Statutes, Art.16, paragraph 1;
- that in the notice to convene this meeting all issues to be acted upon have been stated, in particularly the information on annual report 2021, EES finances and 2019 audit report.
- The audience can ask questions via the chat box during presentations and the presenter will respond at the end of their topic.

The Chairperson introduced other presenters: *Secretary General* – Karin Kohlweg, *Treasurer* – Laura Fantini, *Vice President* – Tom Ling, and Lauren Weiss, *Communication and Administration Manager*.

The Chairperson advised that EES were delighted to be welcoming newly appointed Board Members whose term of office would commence on 1 January 2022, when Tom Ling would also take over as President of EES, for a period of 2 years.

The Chairperson wished to thank all Board Members for their co-operation and the wider EES Community for their support during her presidency. It had been an honour and a pleasure to chair EES despite the troubled and trying years they had been. The Society had faced many challenges and difficulties both with the pandemic and management issues which had prevented the roll out of all planned projects. However innovative ways of maintaining activities were put in place.

She especially wished to thank Board Members, the conference team and the communication and administration manager for their outstanding contributions to the virtual conference in September. They should be congratulated on a remarkable feat.

Secretary General presented the AGM Agenda, which was approved by the Meeting.

2) Approval of the General Meeting Minutes 2020

The Secretary General presented the minutes from the previous Annual General Meeting, which took place on 14 December 2020 via virtual means and asked for comments.

- The minutes were unanimously approved by the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

3) President's Annual Report: Main activities 2021

The Chairperson presented the activities and highlights of the EES in 2021:

- EES held a very successful Online Conference, the theme was “Complexity, legitimacy and ethics” There were 6 PDWs 6-7 September; 90+ conference sessions 8-10 September; 500+ total participants.
- It is an additional advantage for attendees that having been online, all recordings are available on Whova for attendees until March 2022.
- The Biennial Conference 2022 is set for 6-10 June 2022. 180 submissions and 150+ papers have been submitted.
- Calls for PDWs, bursaries, sponsorship and the Best Diploma Contest are ongoing
- As it had been impossible to hold in-person seminars, a number of webinars had been hosted by EES: Transforming Evaluation Series; Emerging Data Landscapes in M&E Series; TWG 7 Workshop – Quality of Life as an Evaluation Criterion – recordings available for all EES members.
- Changed Secretariat to Bay Tree VA: Caroline, Julie and Sharon are already very actively involved in the management of EES, including the Board Election for new Vice-President and four new Board Members, and are proving very effective.
- EES has moved to a calendar-based membership and initiated an annual membership feedback survey. There were 66 respondents and the results are available on the [website](#). The President noted however that the results confirm EES Strategy. The main issues of importance to members are: access to Evaluation Journal; approval of what is provided on the website; the newsletter; the webinars, which is positive confirmation of what has been achieved by the communication team.
- EES has changed to a new membership platform “JustGo”.

- Communication continues to improve thanks to Communication Officer and Board Members. Increased number of blogs on website; double the number of podcasts; increased social media presence and 12 monthly newsletters.
- TWGs (Thematic Working Groups) update:
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 - 1 - Gender and Evaluation, held 3 virtual gatherings, and introduced the EES/TWG1 & Mainstreaming Gender in Evaluations to ESCE in March 2021, newsletter expected for January 2022
 - 2 - Sustainable Development, planning next virtual meeting
 - 3 - Private Sector, recorded podcast episode
 - 4 - Professionalization, ethical guidelines will soon be presented to the Board
 - 5 - Emerging Evaluators, very active group, Re-energized yEES! Volunteers: 20+ supported the EES Online Conference helping to launch p2p Europe Hub
 - 6 - Methods and Designs, hosted Getting Practical with Text Mining for Evaluation webinar in April, surveyed members to inform thematic planning for coming 12 months
 - 7 - EU Policies, preparing a workshop on digitalization of evaluations in EU policies
- EES Contribution to Global Campaigns:
 - Eval4Action Campaign still very active, led the Tweetathon in Europe on 7 April 2021; and produced 4 videos for the Walk the Talk Drive in October 2021
 - The Peer-to-Peer Career + Advisory for Emerging Evaluators (yEES was a founding partner), still very active
 - Continue to respond to requests from European Institutions e.g., Request from OSCE – OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria – Russian Translation is now available, supported by EES Board Member Alena Lappo.
- EES has worked with other evaluation societies/organisations:
 - President is a member of NESE' Advisory Board
 - Secretary General made presentation to Mozambique Monitoring and Evaluation Society
 - New Board Member representative to IOCE
 - President-Elect participating in Charity Evaluation Working Group's Around the Globe Event
- EES engage with different organisations which can provide offers to EES Members: Evidence for Policymakers Science Works event in December; discounts for publications from Routledge.com.

Questions

Elliot Stern enquired whether the contract with the new secretariat provider had any provision for linguistic capabilities within the secretariat team.

Secretary General advised that the Baytree team were English native speakers.

The President stated EES language is English, and the Board were very happy to have an English-speaking secretariat to check English grammar is correct for communication purposes.

Bastaan de Laat commented that issues had been experienced with poor English from the previous secretariat provider. Furthermore, he was pleased to hear that a new secretariat had been appointed.

Bastiaan asked what the competitive advantage was of the new provider compared to C-IN.

Secretary General advised that there had been a very robust selection process: 5 companies put in a tender of which 3 were selected for interview. Baytree came out best on all criteria. C-IN withdrew and did not re-apply.

Bastiaan also enquired whether C-IN were still involved in the organization of Copenhagen conference, it was noted that they are.

He continued by congratulating the EES Board for all the new initiatives developed over the last couple of years, despite all the difficulties.

4) A brief outlook for 2022 by Tom Ling, the EES Vice-President

The Vice-President expressed the EES appreciation to the President for guiding The Society through a very difficult and challenging period and for handing over EES in very good standing. EES profile with EU and Global Institutions is much crisper, clearer and stronger than it has been.

Looking to the future:

- The environment will continue to be turbulent and EES plans to be agile and responsive, in particular in relation to the Conference in Copenhagen in June.
 - C-IN will be the conference organiser
 - EES have met virtually with Tivoli, the organiser in Copenhagen, with the aim of securing best possible value for money for members.
 - Given the wider circumstances, it is acknowledged that the Conference will not achieve numbers that attended in Thessaloniki, planning on 350 for June 2022
 - Great quality proposals and abstracts have been submitted.
 - Clearly there are those who are anxious about travel arrangements and are waiting to decide upon whether or not to attend nearer the time. However, EES is tied in to an in-person Conference.
 - A hybrid conference was explored but the costs were prohibitive.
 - The conference team are doing a fantastic job in terms of preparing for the Conference.
- EES has moved membership to calendar year membership, and have invested in a new membership platform
 - A campaign to maximise membership will be launched in January
 - Annual Conference is an opportunity to increase membership too.
- EES will be continuing to strengthen its relationship with The Evaluation Journal
 - There is a shared ambition to articulate the European Evaluation's contribution to global evaluation challenges
- EES recognizes it has a responsibility to strengthen the practice of evaluation not only in EU Institutions but more widely across other organisations working in Europe.

- This can be achieved by working in partnership with national evaluation societies, and it was noted that a fruitful meeting had been held with UK Evaluation Society and EES will be continuing that through the coming year.
- There is an interesting relationship between what is a European voice and a national voice, and the desire is to articulate that more clearly going forward.
- Thematic Working Groups are going from strength to strength, inevitably some will move forward at a faster pace than others but pleased to have a healthy set of 7 TWGs.
- Build a profile to become a trusted convener of key discussions about the future of evaluation.
- Continue to improve the business operations (Secretariat; Website; Communication platforms) to provide members with an exciting offer and great value for money, but also the wider evaluation community, a challenge EES takes seriously. The Comms Team, led by Lauren, has been invaluable.

Questions

Elliot Stern requested that in future careful consideration be given to both the venue and date for future EES Conferences, as experience showed that hosting in southern or eastern Europe in October was financially beneficial to EES and members whereas expensive venues in northern Europe such as Copenhagen or London in June were not. The Vice-President supported this recommendation.

The President advised that there had been an implicit statement that EES should alternate venues in the north and in the south, which was the reason for selecting Copenhagen, but this can be changed and adapted.

Bastiaan de Laat congratulated the Board on linking back to NESE and reviving the TWGs, which had been discussed in Thessaloniki.

He further concurred with The President's explanation of choosing Copenhagen for the Conference but added it is not necessarily in the north that it is more expensive, as the EES Conference in 2012 was held in the north, in Helsinki, which was very profitable as a result of a very generous sponsor. So, sponsorship is a key factor for consideration.

The Secretary General added that two years ago there was a very active team in the Danish Evaluation Society who had brought pressure to bear to host EES Conference in Copenhagen. There have been internal discussions along these lines, and it has been agreed that the next Conference will be held in a southern or eastern European country next time.

Laura Tagle, Conference Team Member, responded to comments in the chat, stating that EES always endeavours to determine the date for conference avoiding other conferences, however for 2022 given many organisations have had to re-organise their events it has proved very difficult and it is unfortunate that the Canadian Evaluation Society Conference is so close to Copenhagen Conference.

5) EES membership – status of individual and institutional members by Lauren Weiss, EES Communication and Administration Manager

- Membership graph presented with membership numbers in period 2010-2021 including information on the number of delegates at EES Conferences.
- It was noted that whilst attendance at conference in 2021 was a little lower than normal, it should be remembered this was an online conference.
- Individual membership varies over time, membership always increases before EES Conferences.
- Changed to calendar-based membership
- Launching membership campaign in January 2022 for renewals if members do not have 2-year memberships
- Efforts undertaken to increase membership with membership drives throughout the year e.g. complementing registration for the online conference, new discounts for students, six month membership for Q3-Q4 2021
- At 2020 AGM it was agreed to offer a two-year membership option for Institutions. 19 institutional members opted for this in 2021 and we welcomed 10 new Institutions.

6) EES Finances /Annual Accounts 2018, 2019 and 2020 by Laura Fantini, EES Treasurer

- The Treasurer presented the figures from the Profit/Loss overview of 2019 2020 and 2021 accounts. 2021 was updated to the end of November 2021.
- Main source of income is the Online Conference.
- As a result of handover of Secretariat there has been greater expenditure in this area, there was a couple of months overlapping and new processes and systems had to be put in place.
- Status of bank account (30 November 2021): 94.219,31 EUR.
- Deposit of 106.894 EUR has been paid to Tivoli for the 2022 Conference Venue
- It should be noted that the Net Result for 2021 should read 68.630, 44 EUR

Questions

Elliot Stern noted this was an income and expenditure bank statement rather than a budget. Whilst it was heartening to note the surplus achieved from 2021 online conference, which would partly cover any unexpected deficit on the Copenhagen Conference, was there a budget allocating reserves to specific items including Copenhagen Conference?

The Treasurer responded that EES does have a budget, together with a forecast for the coming year, although pointed out that the forecasts prepared for 2020 and 2021 were not reliable given cancellation of the conference.

Burt Perrin recalled that EES had always made money in conference years and lost money in non-conference years, partly through taking in registration and conferences which helped support the operations of the society. Also, membership went up during conference years. He was impressed that even though there hadn't been a live conference, membership seemed to be only slightly down from last time which is quite encouraging. Nevertheless, it seems the EES is still rather precarious financially and with a smaller cohort projected for 2022 Conference, what will this mean for the future of the EES? How is the Board planning to deal with this?

The President advised that with regards to sponsorship, many institutions are now interested in sponsoring bursaries, they wish their sponsorship to be linked to a specific activity in supporting evaluators from the south. This has to be considered in the finance strategy.

She added that during the non-conference years, the Board had worked hard to maintain the community life with Webinars which were very successful. Given the success EES had with the online Conference consideration is now being given to hosting webinars with a fee in future. It is clear that going forward gatherings will be organized differently, not only because of the pandemic but because of changing working patterns and the discovery of online meetings, which means EES will need to adapt to this new way of communicating.

Laura Fantini drew attention to investment in the website development and audit in 2021, both expenditures would not be so great going forward.

Laura Tagle highlighted that the costs of the online conference were kept to a minimum because of the tremendous volunteer support and input from May Pettigrew, & Ananda Millard which could not be sustained for the future. The contribution of Lauren was above and beyond that of her contract and was invaluable.

Elliott Stern wished to register the Members thanks and immense gratitude for this effort as it was widely recognized that the whole team was making an exceptional contribution which should be formally acknowledged.

7) 2021 EES Board Election Results by Karin Kohlweg

- 5 vacant positions on the Board
- Election results:
 - May Pettigrew – Vice-President
 - Ananda Millard – 33 votes
 - Marco Lorenzoni – 24 votes
 - Taruna Gupta – 23 votes
 - Mita Marra – 22 votes
- Congratulations to all newly elected Board Members and Vice-President.

- Newly appointed Board Members were invited to say a few words and thanked those who had stood for election and members who had voted, they were all looking forward to taking up their role on the EES Board.
- Outgoing board members were thanked for their hard work and dedication: Karin Kohlweg; Weronika Felcis; Laura Fantini.

Estelle Raimondo took the opportunity to express especial thanks to Karin Kohlweg who had held the position of Secretary General for the past 4 years.

The President echoed this vote of thanks to those leaving the EES Board at this time, and also to current and new board members. Volunteering on the EES Board demanded considerable time, skills, and dedication.

Questions

Elliot Stern enquired who would be the next Secretary General and it was recorded that this decision would be determined by the Board in the new year, at which time a decision would also be made on the Treasurer.

8) NEXT AGM/GM

It was noted this would be held either at the Copenhagen Conference in June or online again at the end of 2022, as it is advantageous to the members to have a summary and outlook for the coming year.

9) AOB

- **Karin Kohlweg** stated that it had been a really challenging time changing the secretariat as C-IN had been on board for a long time. She added that the EES Board were really happy to have Baytree on board and they had already done some amazing work for the Society, so a huge thank you to the new secretariat.

There were no further questions raised and the Chairperson closed the meeting.