



## *European Same-Sex Dance Association*

### **Minutes ESSDA AGM 2016**

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016, Töölö Sports Hall, Helsinki

#### **Attending:**

**United Kingdom:** Mary Logan, Petra Groot, Joanne Williams, Tom Dane, Tim Regan, Yvonne Settle, Victoria Settle, Ralf Schiller, Penny Johnson, Jo Chilvers, Jocelyn Pearson, Bradley Stauffer-Kruse, Jacky Logan, Chrisi Lyons, Trix Macleod, Sören Stauffer-Kruse

**Germany:** Thorsten Reulen, Dörte Lange, Cornelia Wagner, Kerstin Kallmann, Marc Schleuter

**Switzerland:** Judith Wildi, Helene Grob

**Israel:** Heather Gladding, Hadass Armon

Imre Zsoldos (**Hungary**), Davy Brocatus (**Belgium**), Diana Vinke (**the Netherlands**)

Six out of the ten paid-up group members were represented: UKSSDC, DVET, TTC Rot-Gold Köln, Pink Ballroom Berlin, Equality Dance Switzerland and Charme Hungary Dance Club.

The quorum of 5% of the members was reached.

**Chair:** Davy Brocatus, Co-President

#### **1 Opening**

Attendees are warmly welcomed by our Co-Presidents to the Annual General Meeting 2016 held at the Töölö Sports Hall in Helsinki.

#### **2 Approval of the ESSDA AGM minutes 06/08/2015**

The minutes of the 2015 AGM were mailed to all Essda members four weeks before the 2016 AGM. The chair asks whether there are any comments or questions related to the minutes. Since there are not any the chair asks to approve the minutes, which is proposed by Heather Gladding and seconded by Yvonne Settle.

#### **3 (Re-) Election of ESSDA board members**

Davy Brocatus, Sören Stauffer-Kruse, Michal Vaníček and Marc Schleuter are halfway their two-year term. Hadass Armon was re-elected for one year at the 2015 AGM, at our request, and stands for re-election for one more year. Diana Vinke stands for re-election for a two-year term. Chrisi Lyons and Trix Macleod were appointed as board members after last year's AGM and would like to get elected officially. There are no candidacies. This means that there is still one vacancy and that no voting is required for the (re-) elections. Trix is a general board member with PR & Marketing as dedicated areas. Chrisi is the Membership Officer. After Trix and Chrisi have given a brief introduction of themselves they are officially elected as board members, and Hadass and Diana are re-elected. Dörte Lange announces that she is interested in becoming a board member again. She did not put herself forward as a candidate prior to the AGM and the Essda Bylaws state that a candidate cannot be nominated at the AM, so she cannot be elected at the AGM. The board has the option to appoint Dörte at the first board meeting to fill the current vacancy until a new board member has put

forward a candidacy and is elected at the next AGM. It is agreed that in the mean time other Essda members can express their interest in becoming a board member by mailing to [board@essda.eu](mailto:board@essda.eu)

#### **4 Annual Report July 2015 – May 2016 by the Secretary**

The Annual Report by the secretary was mailed to all Essda members four weeks before the AGM, together with the invitation and the agenda for the AGM. It can also be downloaded from the Essda website at <http://essda.eu/essda-organisation/agm-documents/>

The secretary gives a brief summary of the topics covered by the report, which is appreciated by the attendees. There are not any questions related to the report.

Dörte would like to propose an addition to one of the amendments to the Competition Rules: in the last sentence of 8.3.e (Re-) instatement as a competitor or adjudicator, she proposes adding 'same-sex dance competitions' so the full sentence becomes: "No adjudicating activity in same-sex dance competitions is allowed during this period." This proposal is accepted unanimously and will be processed in the Competition Rules.

With respect to topic 7 of the report, Involvement in other international (dance) associations, the chair gives a brief explanation of the background and history, and of ESSDA's view. Umbrella organisations such as FGG (GayGames) but also NASSPDA, one of ESSDA's partners in IFSSDA, sometimes hold a view and take decisions that are not necessarily good for the sport. FGG, for example made an official statement that if for a particular sport the GayGames is used for championships (European or World) the host is not allowed to organise it in such a way that there are additional costs and/or participants have to pay a higher registration fee. NASSPDA does not agree with the fee that ESSDA asks for supporting the organising host. As explained in the annual report, ESSDA wants to deliver well-organised and high-quality dance championships and feels that the costs involved are justified, given the quality of the result. The money paid for the fee is spent on actual costs (on travel and accommodation expenses for one ESSDA board member for a site visit prior to the EC, for the trophies + transport costs and for the certificates), not on the hours of work put into organising the dance championships. Neither does NASSPDA fully support ESSDA's view that adjudicators should get a fee for judging competitions (it is the use of professional adjudicators that really makes a difference for the quality of a dance competition): NASSPDA prefers a 100% volunteer work and adjudicator fees will only be paid if there is money for it. This licence fee and the adjudicator fee are also what FGG would consider to be 'extra costs'. The 2017 World Championships will take place in Miami, so NASSPDA will be the granting body. For the GayGames in 2018 the Paris organisers will not pay the license fee but will only pay for the actual costs involved. This is the situation as it is, and ESSDA's views are facing the other end.

#### **5 Financial Report 2015 by the Treasurer**

The financial report 2015 was sent by mail to all members about 10 days prior to the meeting. As the report shows, ESSDA's financial situation is quite healthy. The year 2015 is closed with a positive result of €4382,-. It should be noted, though, that this is partly due to the license fee for the 2017 European Championships, of which the first part of €1500,- was already paid in the fall of 2015. The chair points out that budget-wise the European Championships of this year (and also last year) have been a problem for the organisers (EuroGames). Part of the reason is the number of participating couples, which seems to have been going down the last few years. The registration fees do not cover the costs involved for the organisers (such as venue, adjudicators). And if umbrella organisations such as EuroGames or GayGames are not prepared to pay the license fee that ESSDA requires for support of the EC organisation and for the trophies (see topic above), the membership fees paid by ESSDA members will not be enough to cover for the costs involved for ESSDA. As the financial report shows, the membership fees generate an income of around €630,- per year in total,

of which ESSDA pays around 300,- for our EuroGames and GayGames membership (which gives ESSDA members a discount on the registration fee).

Tom points out how important a body such as ESSDA is for the organisation of same-sex dance competitions and European Championships. The chair asks all attendees to act as an ambassador in their own dance association for the position of ESSDA.

Some attendees respond to the lower number of participating couples: a sports hall is not a nice venue; the EC was too early in the year (people working in education did not have their summer holidays yet); EC was in an expensive country twice in a row; sports were all scheduled around the same time so people did not have the chance to watch other sports (option: schedule dance competitions in the afternoon and the evening).

Suggestion to generate more income for ESSDA: require ESSDA membership in order to take part in European Championships.

Other related issue: the number of participants for the 10-dance category was not in balance with the costs involved.

## **6 Proposed amendments to Bylaws and Constitution (becoming a member; rights and obligations)**

As part of the input for this AGM the proposed amendments were mailed to all members 4 weeks prior to the AGM. The proposed amendments are introduced and briefly explained by Chrisi. Some of the rules related to membership are not in line anymore with how the procedure works in practice. In addition, some practical information on becoming an ESSDA member is lacking, for example a time frame. The proposed amendments are:

- you can become an ESSDA member by submitting “a *completed application form*” (replaces “a written application”; Constitution, 13.1.1.). NB for your information: application form can be downloaded from our website <http://essda.eu/essda-organisation/essda-membership/>
- after your submission of the application form the Board or a membership committee will let you know within two weeks if your application has been granted (added as B.13.1.1.a to Bylaws: “*Applicants should allow two weeks for their application to be processed and granted by the Board or a membership committee.*”);
- in case of an ordinary and extraordinary membership: you are a fully paid up member after you have received an acceptance acknowledgement from the Board or membership committee and after you have paid the membership fee involved (added as B.13.1.1.b to the Bylaws: “*Applicants will only be considered to be a fully paid up member after they receive an acceptance acknowledgement from the Board or membership committee and have paid the membership fee involved.*”);
- as for voting rights at the AGM, a textual amendment is proposed for B.16.3 of the Bylaws: replace “if there is a membership fee, only paid up members can vote at the AGM” with “*only paid up members have the right to vote at the AGM*” (because ESSDA does have fees for an ordinary and extraordinary membership);
- in order to allow for acknowledged acceptance of a membership application (2 weeks) and payment of the membership fee involved (1 week), the following addition to B.16.3 of the Bylaws is proposed: “*This implies that new members can only vote at the AGM if they have submitted their application for ESSDA membership to the Board three weeks prior to the AGM at the latest (follows from B.13.1.1.a and B.15.1).*”
- If a reasonably easy and inexpensive way for money transfer from non-euro countries is in place, it is proposed to add a deadline for having paid a membership fee in order to be entitled to vote at the AGM. This requires an addition to B.15.1 of the Bylaws: Once it is decided by the General Assembly, there is an obligation to pay an **annual membership fee**

*“one week prior to the AGM at the latest. The annual membership fee has been established as follows:” ....*

All amendments are accepted. As indicated before, the last amendment about the deadline for paying the annual membership fee as related to voting rights, will only apply after a relatively easy and inexpensive way for money transfer (from non-euro countries) is in place. The text of the Constitution and the Bylaws will be adjusted accordingly.

## **7 Evaluation of the senior age category**

Two years ago the minimum age for the senior age category was raised from 35 to 40 years, with a minimum combined age of both dance partners of 90 years. It was agreed to evaluate this change after two years. Attendees are asked for their opinion:

- the change is good;
- minimum age should not be reduced;
- if the age is lowered there will not be any difference anymore (between the age of competitors in the adult category and senior age category);
- consider the Helsinki senior age competitions: extremely low number of participants (e.g. 12 registered couples of whom 6 actually participated). If there are fewer than 7 couples it should be considered not to have a separate competition for a category such as the 10-dance);
- suggestion: organise 2 / 3 / 4-dance competitions and change the dances to be danced for a category every one or two years + announce this well in advance. Then everyone can prepare for it + everyone can dance all dances over time;
- registration for Helsinki was unclear (‘limited to 3 categories’);
- senior age competitions are not / hardly supported: only 2 competitions per year;
- in Frankfurt there were enough entries for all categories;

Given the reactions, it is decided to maintain the current minimum age, to monitor participation after one year, and to evaluate it again after two years.

## **8 Any other business**

- Dörte: positive developments: DTV (German Dance Association) is interested in same-sex dancing. They have been in touch with the WDSF and WDC, and are open to learn from same-sex dancing.
- Kerstin: announces EC 2017 in Berlin, from 27 – 29 July 2017. There is a website (in German and English): <http://equalitydance-ec-2017.info/> NB more recently also a Facebook page has been created: <https://www.facebook.com/equalitydance2017ec/>
- Next same-sex dancing competition in Germany will be on 9 October 2016.
- Trix: if you know any new same-sex dance competitors or couples/dancers who might want to start with competitive dancing: please ask them to mail to Trix for information and/or support: [marketing@essda.eu](mailto:marketing@essda.eu)

The meeting is closed with mutual thanks between the board and the other participants.

14 August 2016

Diana Vinke, Secretary to the Essda Board