



European Same-Sex Dance Association

ESSDA AGM 2013 Minutes

Wednesday 7th August 2013, Hilton Hotel, Antwerp

Attending: Dörte Lange (Germany), Thorsten Reulen (Germany), Vernon Kemp (UK), Kees Notenboom (Netherlands), Bradley Stauffer-Kruse (UK), Sören Stauffer-Kruse (UK), Michal Vaníček (Czech Republic), Thomas Martner (Austria), Margarita Vyshetravska (Hungary), Hadass Armon (UK), Davy Brocatus (Belgium), Frank Morche (Germany), Diana Vinke (Netherlands), and Garret Gerritsen (guest, board member of NASSPDA)

The quorum of 5% of the members was reached.

Chair: Davy Brocatus, Co-President

1 Opening

Attendees were warmly welcomed by our Co-Presidents to the Annual General Meeting 2013 held at the Hilton Hotel in Antwerp.

2 Approval of the minutes ESSDA AGM 25/08/2012

The minutes of the 2012 AGM had been emailed to all Essda members in September 2012 and had been posted on the Essda website as well. Next to the agenda, the invitation for this meeting included a link to the 2012 AGA minutes. The chair asked whether there were any comments or questions related to the minutes. Since there were not any, the minutes were approved of.

3 Annual Report 2012-2013 by the Secretary

The Annual Report by the Secretary had been mailed in advance to all Essda members, as part of the invitation for the meeting. The chair asked whether there were any comments or questions related to the report. Since there were not any, the report was accepted. The chair thanked the secretary for the good job she had done.

4 Financial Report 2012-2013 by the Treasurer

Davy read out the Financial Report 2012-2013 in brief. The income amounted to €4674,- and the expenses to €3678,-. The year 2012-2013 is closed with a positive result of €996,-. The main sources of income were membership fees and the license fee for the World Championships in Antwerp. The largest costs were for the preparation / organisation of these championships. Dörte and Thorsten asked why the expenses for the Outgames were so high, since no travel and accommodation costs were involved, and if the license fee might be reduced. Davy explained that this included a consultancy fee of about €1400. This triggered a discussion about the appropriateness of spending

Essda money on professional consultancy. No agreement was reached on this topic. The board will discuss this in their board meeting and come up with a proposal. Kees suggested to include more detailed information in the financial report about expenses made by board members and to keep a record of it. It also gave rise to a discussion about the license fee itself. Thomas proposed to split up the license fee in a fixed and variable part: a fixed part for the license and a variable part for travel and accommodation costs, and to include this in the bid. The amount for the variable part depends on how much support is required for preparation and organisation, so on how often an Essda board member has to travel and spend time on it. The board will discuss the license fee in their board meeting, too, and will come up with a proposal.

The board will discuss the issue of a professional consultancy fee and the license fee itself, and come up with a proposal for this.

The full financial report will be sent to all members, along with the minutes of this AGM, and will be posted on our website.

5 (Re-) election of ESSDA board members

Out of the seven board members of the past year, two are halfway their term (Frank Morche and Diana Vinke), two are standing for re-election (Hadass Armon and Davy Brocatus), one is not standing for re-election (Salvador Lloret-Fariña) and two have resigned earlier this year (Frank Röpke and Kees Notenboom). This means there are three vacancies, for which two candidates have applied and are nominated to stand for election: Sören Stauffer-Kruse and Michal Vaníček. Therefore the Chair asks whether all attendees agreed with the proposal to elect both for a board position. At this point Vernon makes a critical remark about the proper procedure for the election of board members not being applied (provide all Essda members with the candidates' names and CVs in advance). The candidates would have appreciated it, too, to have known the name of the other candidate(s). The board agrees to apply the formal procedure next time. Despite the lack of the proper procedure, Michal and Sören are accepted as new board members. Thomas makes another critical remark about the voting procedure itself: in case of elections (and a change in the constitution) every attendee should be asked to cast his or her vote individually, instead of the general question "Does everybody agree?". The board agrees to apply the proper voting procedure next time.

Thorsten offers to become a (temporary) board member to fill in the third vacancy. Here, too, Vernon points out that co-opting is something for the board, not for the AGM, and the newly elected board members should have a say in this as well. The board agrees to follow the proper procedure next time. For now Thorsten is accepted as a temporary board member.

At this point of the meeting it was proposed and agreed on to discuss the proposed change of the organisational year first and then the proposed change related to individual ESSDA membership.

6 Proposed change in Constitution (Article 7): Organisational year

The proposed change of article 7 of the Constitution (organisational year) had been included in the invitation for the meeting: change it from 1st August – 31st July to 1st January – 31st December. The proposal was accepted unanimously. This means that the next organisational year will start on 1st of January 2014.

7 Proposed change in Constitution / Bylaws (Article 13 / Article 15): Individual ESSDA membership through membership of national association

The proposed changes of the two articles related to individual Essda membership had been included in the invitation for the meeting, too: increase the number of individual Essda members through their membership of their national association, and ask from national associations a small additional fee per individual member. The proposal also included a starting date for this: 1st of January 2014. The goal the board wants to achieve with this is to enhance commitment and participation of individual dancers and supporters, at the level of national associations as well as the level of Essda. Kees asked to clarify this. Davy explained that at the national as well as the European level we need a broader base and a sound structure if we want to have high-quality same-sex dance competitions. By means of the proposed change we can strengthen the national associations as well as Essda. Some of the attendees thought the proposed change would provide a logical structure. Vernon was positive about the proposal but added two critical remarks: 1. it should be a robust system, and 2. we should prevent members of national associations to get the feeling that they are obliged to become an Essda member as well.

From the discussion it also became clear that national associations differ quite substantially from each other. The membership of the German national association, for example, consists of individuals and clubs, some of which have about 300 members. Therefore the proposed change would not work for them. For the other national associations that were represented at the AGM (UK, Netherlands, Austria and Hungary), the proposed change would not be a problem, given their membership (individual members only).

Another related topic was the voting rights: attendees felt that the change should not only be about membership fee but also about voting rights. And finally, the moment of introducing the change (1st January 2014) would be too soon if we want to give all national associations the opportunity to discuss this at their own AGM. The dates of these AGMs ranged from November 2013 to May 2014. For the Netherlands it would not be possible to discuss the proposed change at their next AGM because the agenda was full.

Davy proposed to set up a working group consisting of representatives of various national associations. The assignment of this working group is to make an inventory of the current membership types within all national associations in Europe and to come up with a proposal for (individual) Essda membership as well as for voting rights, taking into account the differences among national associations. If we aim for January 2015 as the implementation date for this change, the working group needs to propose a draft version on 1st November 2013 and a final version on 31st December 2013. The proposal is accepted unanimously. When asked who would want to participate in the working group, Thorsten, Michal and Thomas agree to do so. Davy will also be part of this group. At the first board meeting the board will discuss how to get the working group started as soon as possible.

8 ESSDA label (explanation of intention / goal)

The goal of the label is to guarantee the quality of the same-sex dance competitions and to enable comparison by applying the same competitions rules. Vernon comments that the introduction of the Essda label comes too soon, and that it is more a topic for the national body level. But the idea should not be thrown away. All agree with this. Right now Germany and the UK are making their national competition rules closer to Essda's rules.

9 EGLSF / GLISA / FGG => Membership and organisation of next EuroGames / Outgames / Gay Games

Davy introduces this topic: the registration fee for the Outgames was way too high. Dance competitions take up a special position, since a couple consists of two individuals who both have to pay this registration fee, which is really over the top. He discussed this with GLISA in advance, which resulted in a limit for the entrance fee. Davy would like to have an official statement from the AGM, which allows him to negotiate about the registration fee for Outgames, EuroGames and Gay Games and to set a limit for this. All attendees agree to give him this mandate.

10 Ideas for small ESSDA gift

The idea was to have a brainstorm with the attendees about what would be an attractive Essda gift that people can buy at dance competitions sanctioned by Essda. But due to the discussions of the previous agenda topics and the time this took, we did not succeed in this. The board will think of another way to involve Essda members. An advice from the attendees is not to buy large quantities of such a gift but to only order it for someone who wants to have it (so this someone pays for it upon delivery).

11 Goals & Plans 2012 - 2013

The IFSSDA Constitution has been signed by the three founding associations (NASSPDA, ESSDA and IAGLCWDC) and has now officially been established, so the next steps can be taken, amongst which are getting in touch with other continents besides the US and Europe (e.g. Australia), and to draw up Bylaws and Competition Rules.

The discussions about a broader base and structure (see topic 7) and the Essda label (see topic 8) should be considered in the light of this new global association. It also shows that Essda should try to have a vision on longer-term goals, for example for 2020. The board will discuss this in their first board meeting. This vision will provide a framework for the Working Group that will come up with a proposal for a change of the (individual) Essda membership and voting rights (see topic 7)

12 Next year's European Championships

The 2014 European Championships will be in Blackpool, on June 14 and 15. The organisers have been able to book the Empress Ballroom in the Winter Gardens. These specific dates have been chosen because they coincide with the Blackpool Pride.

13 Q & A

- Dörte: announcement of senior competition in Germany. Flyers have been distributed at the Outgames.
- Garret: announcement of competitions in Boston, Philadelphia and the Gay Games
- Kees: reports a registration problem at the Dutch Open Championships: a Dutch couple did not want their true names to be published and some people strongly objected to this, especially because in the Netherlands being openly gay is not an issue. He asks if there are any guidelines.

Davy answers that the law on privacy applies: you cannot publish someone's name without their consent.

- Vernon: has a remark on the age categories but will get in touch with Davy about this.
- Michal: observes that some sport things are missing that might motivate (younger) dancers / couples, for example a ranking list. Bradley comments that this puts the emphasis on winning whereas it should also be on the fun of entering a competition. And it would only motivate the strong couples (nobody likes being at the bottom of such a list). Davy comments that we need something like the Essda label for this.
- Margarita: announcement of same-sex dance competition in Budapest in December 2013

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