

Minutes of EEMS Council meeting, Prague, August 23, 2015, 16:00 – 17:10 h

Present: Marc Audebert (EEMS representative France), Roland Frötschl (treasurer EEMS), Pekka Heikkinen (EEMS representative Finland), Morten Hellmers Fjordholt (future EEMS secretary, after Prague meeting), Jorn A. Holme (EEMS representative Norway), Svetlana Khodyreva (EEMS representative of Russia, replacing Olga Lavrik), Lisbeth E. Knudsen (Vice president EEMS becomes president EEMS after Prague meeting), Elisabeth Lorge (President of the SFTG and councillor France), Leon Mullenders (president EEMS; will become member of the ExCom after the Prague meeting), Madeleine Nivard (EEMS secretary, will resign after Prague meeting), Francesca Pacchierotti (EEMS representative of Italy, replacing Margherita Bignami), Pavel Rössner (councillor Czech & Slovak Republic), Günter Speit (EEMS past-president and member of the ExCom; will step out the ExCom after the Prague meeting), Volker Arlt (councillor Germany)

(numbering is according to the numbers on the agenda)

1. Welcome and introduction of participants

Cancellations for this meeting were received from:

Ksenija Zahradka, Councillor Croatia

Teresa Roldan Arjona, Councillor Spain

On initiative of Mullenders everyone gives a short introduction of him/herself.

Agenda is approved.

2. Minutes of previous council meeting (Lancaster 2014)

Minutes are distributed. There are no comments.

Due to urgent and less urgent points on the agenda and in view of the time Mullenders suggests to discuss the most important points on the agenda first.

3. New EEMS constitution / status

Frötschl has made a PP-presentation about the current status of the EEMS. This presentation is distributed among those present. Frötschl gives a brief explanation.

The presentation shows a short overview of the history of the EEMS and gives an explanation why we cannot continue as a Friendly Society and Scottish Charity. In 2012 EEMS members have voted for transition to SCIO. This transition process to SCIO was put on hold in 2014 based on reluctant response of UKEMS members for becoming also individual members and the ExCom was worried that critical number of members needed for viable EEMS would not be reached. Other options were explored and in 2015 EEMS members accepted by voting the new constitution as required for Swiss societies. However for this Swiss Society option EEMS has to be dissolved as FS and Scottish Charity and to achieve this 75% of all members have to give a written consent. This seems to be impossible. Therefore the alternative SCIO option was researched a bit further. The advantage of this SCIO option is that there is no need for formal dissolution of EEMS as Scottish Charity; EEMS makes a transition. There is only need to dissolve as a FS, for which we would also need votes of 75% of all members but according to the auditor of the EEMS the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) might be more flexible when we are going to SCIO and remain in UK instead of going to Switzerland.

Therefore the ExCom proposes that the EEMS dissolves as a FS and reconstitutes as Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) which is a new legal form for registered Scottish charities and that we recognizes two types of memberships: EEMS individual members and EEMS corporate members (national societies etc.) and furthermore to have a UK based treasurer. Concerning this last point, the presentation also showed the problems with the ABN AMRO bank account of the EEMS; the bank rejected transfer of authority on EEMS accounts to the new treasurer. (Roland Frötschl replaced Anthony Lynch as new treasurer of the EEMS in 2014). We

may only be able to open a new EEMS bank account in the UK; elsewhere in Europe will be impossible. But if we open it in the UK the bank wants to have a UK resident as representative responsible.

After the presentation Lorge conclusion is that there was probably no need to reject to SCIO in 2014. Frötschl explains that the new constitution in 2013/14 was finalized with only individual membership. In contrast to the previous SCIO structure we will recognize not only EEMS individual members but also EEMS corporate members. In the new situation EEMS corporate members will have similar material benefits as individual members and each CM organisation will get voting rights according to size e.g. 1 vote per 10 members for CM organisation.

Knudsen reports that the Nordic societies will choose for individual membership.

Mullenders asks the EEMS representatives if the ExCom can present the proposal to the GA meeting on Tuesday. Everyone agrees. Frötschl will give the presentation also at the GA meeting.

6. EEMS new president and vice-president

Lisbeth E. Knudsen has recently been elected by the EEMS members as new vice-president following a voting procedure. Simon Reed was the only other candidate for this position. The voting results showed a 56% preference for Knudsen. Knudsen becomes the new president of the EEMS after the meeting in Prague. At the same time the position of vice president becomes available. At the moment Simon Reed is the only candidate for this position.

The expertise of Reed is molecular biology related whereas Knudsen has a more epidemiology related background. Mullenders opinion is that this would be a very nice combination of expertise to have in the board. Mullenders asks the representatives of the national societies if they agree that Simon Reed will be proposed as the new vice president at the coming GA meeting also because Reed received at the previous election 44% of the votes. This would mean that there will be not a new voting for this position. An additional advantage would be that a full board is restored after the congress when the management change occurs. There are no objections.

11. 2016 EEMGS meeting

It is essential for the survival of the EEMS that it receives each year some profit out of these meetings. Therefore, the ExCom is worried about the decline in the number of participants at the annual meetings last years. There is no clear explanation for this phenomenon.

The annual meeting in Prague had in May 2015 only 150 registrations including 53 invited speakers which was far below expectation. This had consequences for the financial situation and it was decided to cancel the conference dinner and to shorten the meeting by one day. Since May another 50 persons have registered for the meeting which probably results in a financially neutral organization and in the best situation it might be that the meeting ends with a small financial profit.

Knudsen informs the councillors that Copenhagen will host the annual EEMS meeting in 2016 depending on financial support. In 2017 the IAEMGS meeting will be organized in Korea. Knudsen suggests to organise in parallel an annual meeting in Europa especially for the young scientists who are not able to go to Korea. She has spoken with David Phillips at the UKEMS annual conference in Plymouth. He mentioned that UKEMS will organise in 2017 a meeting together with BEMS in Belgium (Leuven). The EEMS GA meeting can be organised as addendum to the Leuven meeting. Arlt brings up that this construction is quite unique and that it must be clarified how UKEMS / BEMS meeting can include the EEMS GA.

Conclusion: next annual meeting will be in Copenhagen and the negotiation with UKEMS&BEMS will be continued.

4. EEMS: change of name

On January 8, 2015 Mullenders has informed the national societies that the name of the EEMS is officially changed into EEMGS (European Environmental Mutagenesis and Genomics Society). All kind of forms has now to be filled in before OSCR (office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) officially can accept the name change. Thereafter we can make the changes on the website.

7. Frits Sobels award

Only one nomination: Eugenia Dogliotti. She will get the award. She will give the opening lecture of the meeting.

8. Young Scientist award

Two nominations: Elizaveta Eduardovna Alemasova (nominated by the Russian Federation) and Vanessa Valdiglesias (nominated by the Spanish Society). Vanessa was elected as winner and will give the Young Scientist Award Lecture.

9. Young Scientists session / travel grants

Five applications are received and rewarded. All five are asked to present their work at the meeting and to indicate their award when presenting also to make the travel awardees more visible at the conference. Elena Dyakonova will give a short oral presentation in poster session 1, Maria Lukina will give a 15' presentation in the Young Scientists session and Anton Endutkin will give a short oral presentation in poster session 1 (all three are from the Russian Federation), Marko Geric will give a presentation in the Young Scientists session (Croatian EEMS member), and Sabina Wilde will give a presentation in the Young Scientists session (GUM member). To give the young scientists more visibility Knudsen has organised two sessions of short, 5 minutes, oral presentations of selected posters prior to the poster viewing sessions.

10. Treasurer's report

The past two years (2013 and 2014) the costs were higher than the income: a difference of, respectively, £16,754 and £7,599. Causes of these deficits are among others the absence of profits from the annual meetings, travel cost (ICEM) and the costs for the auditor are substantial (about £5000/year). Also in contrast to previous years the EEMS has no sustainable sponsors anymore. The financial situation of the annual meeting of 2015 is not known at the time of this meeting but will be either neutral or result in a small profit.

12. Other business

No remarks.

EEMS Secretary: Madeleine Nivard