

ILGA-Europe Extraordinary General Meeting Online

12 June 2021

Minutes

Minute Taker: Marta Ramos

I. Introduction

Beryl Abols (ILGA-Europe) welcomes participants to the online platform and explains the housekeeping rules and voting procedures.

Darienne Flemington and Soudeh Rad (ILGA-Europe Co-Chairs) explain the reason for the EGM: to approve ILGA-Europe's 2020 audited accounts. According to the Belgian Code of Companies and Associations (BCCA), ILGA-Europe must have its annual accounts approved by the membership and submitted by June 30th of the following fiscal year.

In addition, the Board wants to take the opportunity to also discuss today the future of the Annual Conference and the Board proposals to be discussed at the regular Annual General Meeting (AGM) later this year.

The Board proposed as Chairing Pool for this Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM): Mamikon Hovsepyan, Ulrika Westerlund, Marta Ramos and Luca Stevenson. The membership voted and the Chairing Pool was approved by 108 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 4 abstentions.

II. Approval of the agenda

Ulrika went through the agenda of the EGM:

- Approval of the agenda
- Treasurer's report on ILGA-Europe's finances for 2020
- Revision of the ILGA-Europe Constitution in accordance with the BCCA
- Future of the Annual Conference
- Voting results for the 2020 audited accounts and financial discharge of the Board
- AOB

The agenda was approved by 116 votes in favour (which corresponds to 100% of the votes casted).

Ulrika Westerlund reminded participants of the voting rules and explained how the quorum was calculated: members must have paid their membership fees for the past 3 years which for this EGM corresponded to 197 eligible full member organisations; article D.11 of the Constitution states that the quorum needs to correspond to 15% of full member organisations; so the quorum for today is 30 full member organisations. No questions were asked.

III. Presentation on ILGA-Europe's finances for 2020

Mamikon Hovsepyan introduced Yves Aerts (ILGA-Europe Treasurer) and reminded participants to use the chat box or raise hand feature to pose questions and to vote.

Yves Aerts presented and explained the ILGA-Europe Financial Report for 2020, which the membership had received in advance, stating that ILGA-Europe's financial statements covering the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020 have been independently audited by a certified auditing firm contracted by the Executive Board: Callens, Pirenne and Co.

They show actual income registered at 3 143 122.56€, expenses of 3 043 547.28€, and a year-end result of 99 575.28€. The budget for the year had been previously approved with a deficit of 64 073€, which did not materialize and the funds were added to reserves.

Not only because of the pandemic, but also because of the end of several grants, ILGA-Europe had to adapt and make the best use of existing resources, thus there were significant budget shifts and amendments introduced. Nevertheless, ILGA-Europe are still struggling to acquire the 250 000€ of flexible resources needed annually to fulfil co-funding requirements. With more work carried out in a fast-paced environment based on emerging needs, like the work done in light of Covid-19 ('Protect, Adapt, Rally' package, 'No-One Left Behind' fund, etc.), ILGA-Europe find it challenging to secure sufficient funds to cover staff time and effort associated with these activities that are not directly captured in existing projects. Mobilizing new resources remains a priority.

The lockdowns introduced had far-reaching consequences for financial operations and the financial position of the organisation. Thus, an intense process of work reassessment began, and most funders understood the need to adapt budgets – e.g. funds previously earmarked for travel and events were shifted to other areas of work that were prioritized and ILGA-Europe launched the 'No One Left Behind' fund to award grants to groups and organisations taking on work on addressing socio-economic inequalities. Nearly 400 000€ were dispersed within this fund, increasing the total of fund regranted in 2020 to over 825 000€.

Regarding the 'No-One Left Behind' fund, which work will be carried out by 26 grantees until June 2021, a total of 50 other grants were made to organisations and unregistered groups across the region, from a few hundred euros to 25 000 €, averaging 11 000€.

The fiscal year was audited in January 2021 and the auditors concluded that all costs were appropriately verified and approved, and that the operations were carried out in a cost-effective way. The total income accepted for the year was 3 143 122.56€ in revenues. ILGA-Europe's rationale of deferring over 300 000€ of donations for future expenses instead of adding them to reserves, though initially questioned by the auditors, was deemed reasonable and in the best interest of financial sustainability of the organisation. The total costs incurred were 3 043 547.28€, leaving a balance of 99 575.28€ to be added to the reserves. The current state of reserves is 245 484.92€.

Mamikon Hovsepyan read the following questions members left in the chat and Yves Aerts replied:

1. I just found on page 13/14 of the Treasurer's Report, under column 2020, there is zero listed on expenses on campaigning and other fundraising costs, that is because we don't have any costs in 2020 because of Covid.
2. The purpose of the reserve is two-fold, we are actually obliged in Belgium to have reserves sufficient to cover notice periods of staff. So that's the formal part of it. But the practical part of it is that for an organisation that has an annual budget of 3 million € if we don't have reserves of at least half a million that means that we might be facing cashflow issues.

Yves Aerts, on behalf of the Board asked the membership to approve the ILGA-Europe Financial Report for 2020 and to financially discharge the Executive Board.

IV. Revision of the ILGA-Europe Constitution in accordance with the BCCA

Ulrika Westerlund introduced Soudeh Rad to speak to the membership about the Board proposals to revise ILGA-Europe's Constitution.

Soudeh Rad explained that in the following AGM in October 2020, the Board will introduce proposals to modify the Constitution in the areas concerning the AGM and the Annual Conference. As mentioned previously, the Belgian law now requires the membership to meet once in the first 6 months of the year for the purpose of approving the accounts. In addition, and in light of the pandemic, the Board would like to introduce different possibilities of holding the AGM, including web-based solutions.

Also relevant to change are some language issues, such as 'ILGA' to 'ILGA World', the removal of 'Friends of ILGA-Europe' as membership category, and some clarifications regarding the contribution fees.

In addition, there is a need to further explain and clarify references to sex characteristics (currently not mentioned) and to remove the address of the office (no longer mandatory).

These proposals will be sent in the 1st mailing (early July) ahead of the regular AGM in October 2021. Members can also propose changes and amend the Board proposals by mid-September.

The Board recognises the need to introduce substantive changes, but would like to keep those to when possible again to meet in person.

V. Future of the Annual Conference

Luca Stevenson introduced Evelyne Paradis (ILGA-Europe Executive Director) to talk about the future of the Annual Conference.

Evelyne Paradis explained that the conversation around the Annual Conference started in 2019 in Prague. The focus should be on its sustainability, including how ILGA-Europe staff organises itself, which roles local hosts should play and how can the conference cause local impact. In addition, ILGA-Europe has noticed that it is becoming harder for the membership to bid two-years in advance.

Another argument is that there are other solutions to cause local impact: by attending local Prides; having Board meetings outside of Brussels; organising other smaller events throughout the year.

The draft proposal would be to stop voting for locations two years in advance and to mandate the Board to agree on selection criteria and search for suitable venues.

Jackie Lewis (UNISON) suggested to the Board to send out a summary paper providing context to this proposal, and it should also clarify the role of the local hosts.

Louise Ashford (UNISON) raised the issue of accessibility of the conference for disabled people – hybrid meetings have significantly encouraged disabled people to attend but also disabled organisations or disabled members of ILGA-Europe need to be involved in these conversations.

VI. Voting results for the 2020 audited accounts and financial discharge of the Board

Beryl Abols shared the voting results:

- The 2020 audited accounts were approved by unanimity (130 votes casted in favour)
- The financial discharge of the Executive Board was approved by unanimity (130 votes casted in favour)

VII. Closing

Luca Stevenson closed the EGM and Soudeh Rad thanked the staff, the Charing Pool and the membership for the success of the EGM.

The EGM ended.