



European Region

Zoom meeting

Monday, August 17th 2020

Estonia, Finland 20:00 (GMT+3)
Germany, Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands 19:00 am (GMT+2)
Great Britain 18:00 (GMT+1)
Iceland 17:00 (GMT)
12:00 pm (CST)



Minutes of the Meeting

Welcoming words by Ingibjörg Jónasdóttir, Regional Director

Welcome to this first Zoom meeting for the European DKG, but certainly not our last one on social media.

The reason we are holding this meeting is that we needed to wrap up the last biennium, especially the European Forum, but also to greet our new Regional Director. I know that we only can have 100 persons here today, but are recording it for availability later.

We also thought it would be a very good opportunity for us to gather together. We need to join forces, inspire each other and know what we are doing in each country. So this is an event instead of a gathering at a Regional breakfast and a Forum meeting in Philadelphia. This time it is without lectures about interesting topics, but they will be sent out later. I am looking forward to taking part in all sort of meetings on the internet in the future. I can promise you there are all sort of ideas going around.

First on our agenda is the DKG European Forum Meeting, then we give our state presidents time to tell us about their work and then we meet our new Regional Director.

Elisabeth Stärner the European Forum Chair for the last biennium, please take the lead.



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS
DELTA KAPPA GAMMA™

EUROPEAN FORUM

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European Forum Committee Members 2018-2020

L/R: Terttu-Triin Tomusk (Estonia), Barbara Carlsen (Norway), Ria Logtenberg (The Netherlands), Helga Steinsson (Iceland), Daniela von Essen (Germany), Kathrin Hodgson (Great Britain), Elisabeth Stärner (Sweden) and Iida Hyvönen (Finland).

European Regional Director (ex officio) Ingibjörg Jónasdóttir

Welcome and Opening Words by the outgoing Forum Committee Chair, Elisabeth Stärner:

I am happy to say welcome to our European Forum meeting. It was supposed to be held at the convention in Philadelphia. But as you all know plans had to be changed. I know that several forums have had their meetings virtually – and now we are having ours.

When I started as a state president, I only had little knowledge of what the European Forum is. Since then I have learnt a lot and now know the importance of the Forum and what it does. I know that some of you know a lot about the Forum, but I also know that – just like me some years ago- know only a little. Therefore, I'm very briefly going to tell you about the goals for the European Forum. You can find them in the European Forum operational guidelines, the last pages in the booklet that has been sent out. You can also find them on DKG's European website:

- to unite European members and celebrate their diversity
- to give opportunities to discuss issues in an open situation of educational importance
- to find ways to accomplish these goals and turn them into action
- to strengthen the links between the European Forum and the European Regional Director

The European Forum operational guidelines is the framework for us. The forum committee has a strategic action plan to fulfil the goals. In the booklet you will find the SAP for my biennium. There you also can see what we have accomplished during the biennium.

The European Forum committee has one member from each member country. I would like to present the members of the Forum committee 2018-20:

- Terttu-Triin Tomusk, Estonia
- Iida Hyvönen, Finland
- Daniela von Essen, Germany,
- Kathrin Hodgson, GB (minute taker and mentor)
- Helga Steinson, Iceland
- Barbara Carlsen, Norway (minute taker)
- Ria Logtenberg, The Netherlands (treasurer)
- Elisabeth Stärner, Sweden (chair)
- European Regional Director, Ingibjörg Jónasdóttir (ex-officio member)

In memoriam:

Kathrin Hodgson read the names of the members from Europe who have sadly died during the past biennium:

Great Britain

Redston, Gloria J., Gamma

Iceland

Aoalbjarnardottir, Sigrun, Gamma

Brynjolfsdottir, Aslaug, Alpha

Kristjansdottir, Thuridur, Alpha

Magnusdottir, Halldora, Theta

Steinthorsdottir, Bryndis, Gamma

Thorlacius, Kristin, Delta

The Netherlands

Eek, Kai, Epsilon

Sweden

Assarsson-Eklow, Ulla, Alpha

Soren, Birgitta, Mu

Business meeting, chaired by Elisabeth Stärner:

At first some words about the minutes from the international conference in Reykjavik last summer. You can find them both in the booklet and on the European website. I would like to highlight some issues:

- In 2019 we had a survey sent out digitally to the members about having our magazine EuForia or not. The survey showed that our European members wanted to have it, therefore the Forum has continued to work with that. The goal is that you will get EuForia to your mailbox twice a year, in May and in November. It is sent out to each state president, who then has the responsibility to send it out to all members in their country. Every country contributes to EuForia with small articles which then our editor, Helga Thorlacius from Iceland, edits and sends out to the state presidents. I think we have managed quite well since last summer. The new forum will continue this work.
- We opened a discussion whether we should have our European Forum meetings at the conventions physically – or if the forum meetings should be electronic. The reason for the discussion was that very few European members attend the convention. Well – here we are!
- We have also started an exchange program, a possibility for every member to visit a member in another country to share insights and knowledge about teaching and learning, make school visits and so on. Daniela von Essen is contact person for this exchange program.

I've mentioned the operational guidelines for the forum before. In the booklet you will find the "old" version of the guidelines. We have revised the guidelines and sent them out to be discussed by the state presidents and the chapter presidents in each country. You can also find the suggested changes on the European website. Formally they should be approved by the European Forum meeting, but we don't know how much the suggested changes have been discussed during spring, and it will be very hard to do so tonight. Therefore, I strongly recommend you read them and discuss the changes with your members. We will then let the new forum decide when a decision can be made. Maybe an electronic survey like the one we had about EuForia?

Financial accounts:

Ria Logtenberg, Forum Committee Treasurer, presented the accounts that had been previously circulated to all members. She spoke briefly about a few salient points. Once the new committee has chosen their new treasurer, Ria will arrange to transfer to them the balance brought forward from 2019-2020. She reminded the committee that they will need to contact the US to ask for the \$3,000 annual payment to be made.

There were no questions about the finances. Elisabeth thanked Ria for her work on behalf of the committee for the past 4 years.

Forum-State Presidents-Regional Director link:

Ingibjörg spoke about the importance of keeping the links between the three entities strong:

I myself was on the Forum committee for 4 years and the chair, for the latter 2. In the beginning I had no idea what the Forum was about although being a member of DKG for almost 10 years at that time. And I expect many of you do/did not either. It is often not until you start working at something you finally understand how things work. What is the Forum and what is the role of the Regional Director? Where do the presidents fit in?

- The presidents are dedicated to serving the state/country.
- The Forum is the platform for finding out how we can join forces, where the focus is at the time. It is therefore necessary that the member in the Forum committee is either the state president or has a strong connection to the board, either is on it or is an ex-officio member.
- The Regional Director is on the International Board and is the link to Europe from there. The first year she is busy organizing the Conference in Europe, but of course has contact with the state presidents, who are then in their second year of office. Her second year she contacts the new set of state presidents and tries to support them in any way possible. Furthermore she sits ex-officio on the Forum, i.e. without a vote.

We have now been led through the Forum matters. You can see the Forum Committee really looks into many aspects of what you do in your states and chapters. They care about the wellbeing and growth of both members, countries and the society. They look for how we as a Region can join forces, where the focus should be each time.

Therefore it is of great importance for us in the region to have a platform like this, a committee that focuses on these matters and then with us all working towards these goals we will be able to empower members and working towards a growing and flourishing European community in our DKG society.

Any Other Business

No other matters were raised.

Closing words of the Business Meeting from Elisabeth Stärner:

It has been a privilege to be the chair of the European Forum, to be able to work on an international level. I have met new friends; I have got new insights – and we have had a lot of laughter together.

The last five months has been challenging – in different ways. We talk about a crisis where it's easy to focus on what you can't do. I think it's important to stay positive. I once heard a lecturer say that in a car the front window must be bigger than the back window. By saying that he meant that we must look forward, not look back complaining about what we can't do. We must remember that a crisis always leads to innovation, we must find different and new solutions to solve problems.

I think we have learnt some important things about ourselves and humanity. What is important to you? Social and emotional health has become critical for all of us. The importance of school and education have been in focus. Teachers miss their students and students miss their teachers. I think we all have heard students say something about the importance of teachers to be able to learn. These last months have also shown us how we can teach and meet digitally.

We know that we must keep ourselves and others healthy and safe and that we need to maintain physically distancing. But we also have interesting and inspiring times ahead. Better than before we can connect our 8 member countries through Skype, Zoom, Meet. Do we have members who say they don't know how to do this? They will have to do the same as we say to our students – ask for help! And you know – they will be so glad they did!

I would now like to introduce Ewa Johansson – the new chair of the European Forum. I also would like to wish the new Forum members all the best, you will have an exciting time the next two years!

Introducing the new Forum Committee: Ewa Johansson

My name is Ewa Johansson and I am a member of DKG Pi-chapter in Sweden, Västerås. I have been the state president during 2017 – 2019 and now I am going to be a part of the European Forum as the chair.

I am still working inside the school system as an operations manager for compulsory school in a community close to Stockholm. Before that I have worked as a teacher, principal and lecturer.

We are living in a strange time where lots of things are changing. Some of them because of Covid-19 and others because of development and new strategies for digitising. During the last year I have been thinking a lot of the similarity in my role as an operation manager and a leader in DKG. In Sweden and I think probably rest of Europe we are moving towards a development

where trust and distributed leadership are a success factor. I am going to read a short text from an author and researcher.

“Distributed Leadership for learning and teaching is a leadership approach in which collaborative working is undertaken between individuals who trust and respect each other’s contribution. It occurs because of an open culture within and across an institution. It is an approach in which reflective practice is an integral part enabling actions to be critiqued, challenged and developed through cycles of planning, action, reflection and assessment and preplanning. It happens most effectively when people at all levels engage in action, accepting leadership in their particular areas of expertise.”

I think these words fits our organization and that it is based on participation, commitment, and sisterhood.

We now also have the great opportunity to meet even if it does not happen physically. We are just about to end this meeting where more members have had an opportunity to participate. Pretty soon we will have the opportunity to take part in Riita-Liisa’s lecture digitally. It opens up for closer collaboration and where the meetings come closer in our association DKG.

I take on the leadership of the European Forum with a lot of respect for the great work that has been going on. I am so grateful and proud that I have been given the confidence to chair the European Forum. I will also bring with me the picture that Elisabeth gave us of the front window in a car and try to look forward to new opportunities.

I really look forward to leading the development of a framed DKG together with everyone on the European Forum.

The new members of the **European Forum Committee for 2020-2022** are:

- Estonia - Reeli Tänavsuu
- Finland - Pia Nyman
- Great Britain - Evelyn Goodsell
- Germany - Marika Heimbach
- Iceland - Guðrún Edda Bentsdóttir
- Norway - Astrid Skaaland
- The Netherlands - Marie-Antoinette de Wolf
- Sweden - Ewa Johansson

The Forum meeting closes.

Our Region

The current **European State Presidents**, now in the second year of their biennium (Daniela in her fourth) were invited, by Ingibjörg Jónasdóttir, to speak briefly about what has made them proud about DKG in their own countries:

- **Katrina Mill (Estonia)** is proud of her three chapters and their work. The theme of their conference is: Teachers' stress at work and how to reduce it. There are three traditional activities in Estonia: in the autumn – hiking; at Christmas – a Christmas dinner together; in spring – the annual conference. She was also very proud that a small country like Estonia should have one of their own members, **Margarita Hanschmidt**, as the new **Regional Director**.
- **Daniela von Essen (Germany)** was sad to announce that due to decreasing numbers – there are now only 20 members – the previous two chapters have now merged into one single chapter. This is her second biennium. They hope to hold their state conference in September.
- **Evelyn Goodsell (Great Britain)** is proud of her members' on-going response to Revitalisation from which GB have gained 6 new members. The state conference has been transferred to October and its theme is 'Wellbeing'. The two GB chapters are planning virtual meetings together during the autumn under the umbrella topic of 'Diversity'; each month a speaker will talk on a different aspect. She is looking forward to meeting the other members of the Forum Committee in November in Amsterdam.
- **Ingibjörg Elsa Guðmundsdóttir (Iceland)** is proud of the Regional Convention that was held in Iceland in 2019, for which the country received many positive comments. They currently have 330 members and hope to maintain the numbers. She spoke of a lively range of activities within chapters. Their State Board is studying the effect of 'Fake News'. Their conference in September is being streamed.
- **Astrid Helen Bie Skaaland (Norway)** described the period from 12 March 2020 as a 'sleeping period' during which time there were no DKG meetings. Despite that, they kept in touch with and cared for one another. Astrid's chapter are planning to get together the following day. Sadly, just before lockdown Norway were about to introduce 6 or 7 potential new, younger members. They have tried to keep in touch and hope that these young women will still join. They have not met electronically yet but hope to do so soon.
- **Helga Skeidsvoll (Sweden)** spoke of their 10 chapters – all very different – some extremely active, some not so much. They have held some meetings on Zoom. More lectures available on the internet is a positive result of Covid.
- **Marie-Antoinette Hubers-de Wolf (The Netherlands)** said that of their 46 members, she is proud that half of them are young enough still to be working. They hope to gain more members during this next year. It is The Netherlands' 45th anniversary as a state in DKG in May 2021. All meetings have been cancelled since the start of lockdown on 15 March 2020, but the first chapter meeting will be held in September in Amsterdam. Their state meeting will be in November – usually attracting about 25 members. Chapters have been keeping in touch via virtual meetings and a WhatsApp group.
- **Eija Liisa Sokka-Meaney (Finland)** spoke in the absence of **Auli Ottelin**. She invited

everyone to next year's Regional Convention in Tampere which is still in its planning stages. **Riitta-Liisa Arpiainen** will be a speaker there. The state meeting is planned to be in late September, depending on the situation with Covid. They are looking forward to meeting Margarita in Tampere.

Ingibjörg thanked the presidents for their thoughts and wished them luck for the second year of their biennium.

She then introduced the **Regional Director for 2020-2022, Margarita Hanschmidt** who thanked Ingibjörg and Elisabeth, for their contribution to the European Forum and DKG Europe Region.

She then went on to address the members present:

I do not feel like a VIP just now; I feel like a member of a friendly family. Thank you for supporting me for the position of Europe Regional Director for the next biennium.

First, I would like to say some words about myself:

- I am a founding member of DKG Estonia State Organization in 2008 and Past State President 2011-2013.
- I have started two Estonian chapters in 2010 and in 2017.
- I have served as a member on the International Expansion Committee and on the International Membership Committee.
- Currently I am working as a teacher of English in the Audentes International School in Tallinn.
- I am granny of 10 grandchildren aged 2-22.

It will be an honour and a great responsibility to facilitate continuing collaboration among the DKG Europe state organizations.

Despite 8 cultural differences we are ONE. Our ONENESS is evidenced by our similarities – our similar values. These similarities have no relationship to where we were born or where we live. These similarities are born out of our desire to achieve a better world for ourselves and for the next generations and to promote DKG Europe Region.

I have dreams, but dreams stay dreams if we do not have goals for actions. Today, I have tentative goals in mind and after I have my training for the position next week I will seek your suggestions in mid-September about how I might improve on the goals and how you might help me reach the goals.

Regional Directors walk on 2 roads –

- One road leads to the International Conference, which we will have in Tampere next July. I already have a good collaboration with the hard-working Steering Committee and other leaders of DKG Finland State Organization. But we are also seeking volunteers from all Europe state organizations to make the conference a success.
- The other road drives me to 8 state organizations in Europe.

Here are my **4 tentative goals** today:

- 1. To stay closely connected with Europe State Organizations:** The current situation has given us the best tool for it – Zoom meetings and other ideas you might suggest. I would like to meet each state with a larger audience including the Board, the chapter presidents: more heads and more hearts to discuss the issues.
- 2. To share best practice:** Every state organization in Europe has its niche. Why not collect these practices on our Europe webpage, where members have access, to get ideas how **To Revitalize Chapters**.
- 3. To encourage membership growth:** I wish that each European organization find an innovative way to recruit 1-2 collegiate members during the biennium. Young people's energy + our experience equals a productive synergy.
- 4. To foster a greater understanding of Diversity and start communicating also with the non-European States in our Global DKG Society:** The cultural diversity of different cultures is a privilege not very common for other educational organizations. I encourage you to become curious of what the members in Guatemala (1975), Puerto Rico (1976), El Salvador (1978), Costa Rica (1980), Panama 2009, Japan 2012, and the United States are doing thus enriching our own chapter activities.

And finally, let us **focus on YOU**, as the DKG International **President Becky Sadowski** stressed in her speech at International Convention in Philadelphia. **YOU** are every member in our Europe Region. **YOU** are driven by doing, **YOU** - grabbing the opportunities and becoming **YOU** as a contribution which can have a big impact on our Region and DKG worldwide

I promise I will give my time and energy to the well-being of the DKG Europe Region. I will do all I can to continue Europe Region forward movement for the next biennium. Thank you.

Astrid thanked Ingibjörg for her hard work as Regional Director during the past two years.

Closing words from Ingibjörg Jónasdóttir:

Two years ago I mentioned the story about the geese flying in a V-formation that are a welcome sign of spring as well as a sign that heralds the coming of winter. Not only is this a marvellous sight, but there are some remarkable lessons to learn from the flight of the geese because all that they do has significance.

- People who share a common direction and sense of purpose can get there more quickly.
- It is harder to do something alone than together.
- Encouragement is motivating.
- Shared leadership and interdependence provide each a chance to lead as well as an opportunity to rest.

Now there is a time for change, there is a new Forum committee, and now we have a new Regional Director. I wish them all the best.

I thank all those who helped with organizing this event, and all who participated. I now hand over the gavel to Margarita and wish her all the best in her work as Regional Director. This has

been an amazing journey, I would not have missed it. It is good to know that the Forum is in good hands and I know the Region will be as well.
Thank you all - I now close the meeting.

There were 42 members present at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 19:20 (GMT+1)