

European Forum: Saturday 4 August 2007-08-05
Strawberry Hill, London, GB
Business Meeting

Chairman: Ria Bleeker

The Chairman introduced the following:

Reporters: Bettina Kulsdom and Mary Wardrop – Great Britain

Timekeepers: Gisela Baronin von Engelhardt (Germany) Carin Ahlberg (Sweden)

1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Børg Nakling to give the inspirational moment.

The Chairman said that Sweden had asked for three question to be included on the agenda: What is the purpose of the Forum?, What can it decide? And What had it decided?

There were no other items for AOB.

2 In Memoriam: A minutes silence for those members who have passed away during the past year, to remember them and what they meant to each of us and to the society.

3 Minutes of meeting in San Diego, 2006: The Minutes of last year`s meeting held in San Diego, California, on 19 July 2006 were read. One question concerned the design of the pin awarded for the European Achievement Award: would it always be the same? This had not yet been decided, and would be considered by the next Forum, which will make the next award. Mary Wardrop asked whether attendance should be included in the Minutes, and this was agreed. A list was passed around for everyone to sign.

4 Suggestions for the future had been printed on page 22 of the Conference Handbook Plans have been made to meet in Amsterdam in November this year, and Frankfurt next year. Communication would be strengthened by using the internet, with translations into English. Possibly states could set up a weblog with an English page on their website. It was vital to maintain communication between the Regional Director and the states. We should also encourage members to attend State Conferences. It had been recommended that we should waive fees for members from other states to attend conventions, to make it easier to exchange ideas between European countries. Hospitality could be offered, which might be reciprocated later. An English translation of State meeting Agendas would also help. More and more members are travelling to other countries to visit each others` State Conference. A complete database of members` details may not be possible for privacy reasons, but Kate will produce a form to send to each State President.

5 Contacts with the media should be encouraged. Sheila Roberts (GB) confirmed that there would be press coverage of this Conference. The pre-conference workshops on electronic communication had been very successful, and Eyglo Bjornsdottir was congratulated for her leading of them. Her email address is in the List of Participants and she agreed that members could contact her for advice. Suggestions for the future included a Eurowebsite, with a calendar, forms, chatrooms, blogs, etc.

6 Iceland was proposing that we should create a platform for ΔΚΓ women in different groups within education, eg teacher training lecturers, primary school teachers, managers, who would like to meet and exchange ideas and experiences, perhaps via a working lunch or breakfast, workshop or some other forum.

7 We still have not decided how to organise **financial matters** for the Forum. A European Treasurer could be appointed

Trijny Schmitz du Moulin (Regional Director for Europe) emphasised that effective communication relied on contacts between herself and the state presidents, then information disseminated to the chapter presidents and from them to each member of the chapters.

8 Euforia: Joan Carroll reminded members that 10 years ago we met in Breukelen, and soon decided that we needed something better than paper to communicate. EuForia has been published 3 times a year for 10 years. This works reasonably well, and copy can be printed and distributed for members without internet access. However, one visual image is worth 1000 words: hence the video programme on the Germany conference. It is vital to communicate top down from State Presidents, to Chapter Presidents, to all members. She reminded State Presidents that copy is required for the next edition by 20 September. There should be a superb record of this Conference via Jim Miller's DVD, and Joan emphasised the importance of making sure every single member of each chapter saw it. She asked everyone to contribute if asked, to help the organisation to move forward in a lively way. This would be an excellent tool for expansion.

9 Forum Committee 2008-2010: members from Finland, Germany and the Netherlands will be leaving having served 4 years, and these countries will need to appoint replacements. A Chairman will also have to be chosen. State Presidents will be asked in March to submit candidates.

10 Other business: Ann Charlotte spoke on behalf of Sweden on the questions raised earlier: what is the purpose of this Forum, what can it decide, and what has it decided to date? Standing Rules refer to 3 levels: Chapter, State, International, with no intermediate level. Can this Forum decide, or only recommend? It is difficult to run this system because there is no money allocated. The Chairman agreed that as a Forum we can only recommend, not decide. Dorothy Haley reminded the meeting that Forums originated so that areas like Europe, Latin America and Canada could have meetings and make decisions for their own affairs. We can make decisions concerning Europe, but anything else must be a recommendation. Birgit Svensson said that she had been Chairman when the question of the fee to attend other conferences had been raised, and confirmed her view that we in the Forum can take decisions about questions concerning Europe, such as the European Achievement Award, or minimising of fees for attending State Conferences. It was agreed that every 5 years or so we needed to look at these issues, which should be discussed in advance so that each member was better able to put forward the views of those not in attendance as well as their own. This is about democracy, which should be devolved from Forum, to State, to Chapter, to each member.

It is important to get news to and from the Forum, and every country has a representative who should be the vehicle for this. Sigrun Klara proposed we should forward such questions to the next Forum. This proposal was seconded by Mary Wardrop. Dorothy Haley expressed concern at communication between the Forum and State Presidents, who should know everything that is going on which might concern their members. It was preferable for State Presidents to be the Forum representative, since they had been voted in by their members. It was pointed out that the onus should be on each member to read information sent out by whatever medium. Marika Heimbach said that Germany will send out to each State President a CD with some proposals to be discussed in each State. It was confirmed that there should be some coverage of this Conference in both the local and national press next week. Thanks for a full, frank and lively discussion were expressed.

Dorothy Haley presented a gavel to Europe given to her by the Southeast Region.

Attendance:

Denmark – 2: Finland - 11: Germany – 9: Great Britain – 27: Iceland – 15: Norway – 19: Sweden – 29:
The Netherlands – 13: Guests: Canada – 1: USA – 11:

The Business Meeting was closed by the Chair, Ria Bleeker at 9.30.am.

Suggestions and proposals arising from the London meeting in August 2007

These suggestions and proposals were sent to all chapter presidents 17th February 2008 in the minutes of the Forum of November 2007.

1. Communications:

- 1.1. Members (of the EF Committee) agreed that making contact with other European members is sometimes difficult. A booklet with information similar to the one listing 'Conference Participants' in London could be slightly expanded for circulation to all European members.

Kate York offered to extend her current work on the GB database to cover this idea. The booklet could be sent to State Presidents electronically for printing and circulation to their members. A procedure for collecting the necessary information was agreed.

- 1.2. Members agreed that state websites are an important aspect of communications and information. **It was therefore agreed that it would be good practice for at least some part of state websites to be in English. The address for each state's website would be included in the European contact booklet.**

- 1.3. The DVD currently being worked on by Janny Kisteman would be valuable for publicizing the Society within Europe, especially to new members. It was suggested that material from State Conventions would be valuable.

A budget and action plan would need to be agreed and implemented in order to complete this project. It was agreed that a realistic target would be to have the new DVD ready for circulation at Chicago in July 2008.

2. Financial matters. There is no Treasurer for Europe.

2.1. Travel costs of European Director:

A payment of €1 per member payment to facilitate travel around the Region by the Regional Director was recommended at the Regional Conference in Malmö. Minutes from the meeting held in Amsterdam in 2005 state that the seven State Presidents had decided in 2004 to pay this amount. At present only some states are making a payment. Members agreed that guidelines for payment would increase the likelihood of the money being collected from *all* states.

The following suggestion was agreed:

- i. **States to include €1 per member for this purpose in their annual budgets.**
- ii. **The €1 per member contribution to be collected with membership dues by Chapter Treasurers and forwarded to the State Treasurers.**
- iii. **Contributions to be sent in Euros via European Forum members to the November meeting for handing over to the Regional Director, with written receipts obtained for accounting purposes. It was decided that the Regional Director would submit a financial report on her travel and other costs to the European Forum meetings in November each year.**

2.1.1. European Achievement Award:

It was further agreed that payments for the European Achievement Award pin could be made in the same way, with the following recommendation:

€25 per year or €50 every second year to be sent via the European Forum Committee members to the November meeting, to be passed to Ria Bleeker (or whoever is delegated to be responsible for this matter).travel costs of committee members of the European Forum to the annual November meeting.

The following recommendation was agreed: Members of the European Forum committee are entitled to have the difference in their travel costs between the payment from Forum funds and the overall total reimbursed from the funds of their respective states. This item should therefore be built into state budgets. **It was agreed that the recommendations should be on the agenda of the European Forum meeting in Chicago (July 2008) for ratification.**

3. Pre-conference Seminar.

- 3.1. Members decided that some agreed guidelines for the seminar which precedes every European Regional Conference could help to improve the organization and efficiency of the event. The following suggestions were agreed:

- i. **The Forum committee should be responsible for deciding the theme and format of the pre-conference seminar.**

- ii. The appropriate Steering Committee should be informed of the Forum decision and given guidance about anticipated costs.
 - iii. The theme should be decided and agreed at the Forum Committee meetings in November of odd-numbered years in advance of the next European Conference. At the same time, a decision will be made about who will be invited to present the seminar. Final decisions about the presenter and costs must be made by January in the year in which the conference is to take place.
 - iv. Details of the seminar, together with the necessary registration form, must be ready for publication by the end of January of the year in which the conference is to take place. For 2009, the Pre-Conference Seminar will focus on aspects of electronic learning, blogging and websites.
4. **Letter from Sweden:** The following three questions were presented to the European Forum meeting in London on behalf of Sweden:-
- i. What is the purpose of the European Forum?
 - ii. What can it decide?
 - iii. What has the European Forum decided or recommended?

4.1.1. The purpose of the Forum: It was agreed that the purpose of the Forum is always printed in the relevant conference booklet. For the London conference, the purposes were included in the red booklet which was circulated to all members attending the Forum meeting.

4.1.2. Decisions which can be made by the Forum: During a Forum meeting at Conventions or Conferences the members present can decide on any proposals made by the European Forum Committee. Proposals made by the European Forum Committee are submitted to European member states, they belong on the agenda of every Chapter and State meeting, where decisions about them are taken.

4.1.3. Decisions made or recommended by the Forum:

Apart from the recommendations included in the minutes of this meeting, yet to be ratified, the Forum as a whole has decided the following:

- I. That the Registration Fee (or its equivalent) for State Conferences should be waived for the members of other States who wish to attend. This represents the fees of the business part of the conference (*see clarification below). It has also been decided that hospitality should be offered in members' homes, if appropriate, to further reduce the costs for members attending conferences in other States.

* The basic costs of State conferences are met by the host state by setting a budget which includes a registration fee to cover the cost of the venue, the speaker(s) and any other fixed costs. This is the element of costs which it has been agreed to waive. All other conference expenses are paid by visiting members, for example, trips, visits, meals, entrance fees, hotels etc.

- II. The European Achievement award.

- III. The levy of €1 per member to enable the Regional Director to travel to Society events within the Region.

Accomplishment of goals for the European Forum 2006-2008

- i. *Plan both Regional and International Forum sessions through regular meetings of the Forum Committee.*

After discussion, the following recommendation was agreed:

- Meetings of the European Forum at Conferences and Conventions should be sub-divided into two sessions
 - 1. Business and discussion,
 - 2. Speaker with time for comments and questions.

Rationale – There is always a shortage of time because previous meetings have attempted to cover both business and a speaker in one session. The committee wishes to enable discussion rather than curtail it.

- ii. *Continue to strengthen the seven member states by using electronic newsletters and homepages with English summarization.*

This goal is included in the minutes and proposals above.

- iii. *Maintain co-operation between Regional Director and member states.*

Members agreed that this goal has been actively achieved.

- iv. *Encourage members to attend State Conventions and the European Regional Conference.*

Members agreed that the achievement of this goal is encouraged by:

- Waiving the 'business' element of registration fees for members from other countries.
- Publicising dates early.
- Issuing explicit invitations.
- Giving members an assignment to involve them and encourage them to be present.
- Chapters subsidising attendance at Regional Conferences.
- Exploring the possibility of offsetting attendance costs against income tax.
- Exploring the possibility of European funding, for example from Leonardo or Socrates.
- Planning activities where non-members will attend and making applications to the Cornet Fund.

- v. *Recognise ongoing research by members in establishing contacts between members and members' schools.*

Amongst other initiatives, this has included (or may include in the future):

- School visits - School exchanges - School email and pen pal exchanges
- PowerPoint presentations of visits
- The benefits to members of having international contacts.

- vi. *Portray AKT events and projects through contacts with the media.*

Members are using every opportunity to obtain publicity for projects and events, whilst remembering that the project or event is the main focus and the publicity is a secondary consideration.

- vii. *To organize a pre-conference seminar or workshops.*

This goal has been achieved.