

**Oikosnet Europe
Annual Conference
Agape/Italy, 11-15 September 2019**



Minutes of the Business Sessions

Participants

Name	Academy	Country
Malte Dahme	Agape Centro Ecumenico	Italy
Sara Marta Rostagno	Agape Centro Ecumenico	Italy
Aleixei Bodrov	St. Andrew's Theological Inst.	Russia
Karolína Silná	Ecumenical Academy Prague	Czech Republic
Wiebke Juhl-Nielsen	Evangelische Akademie der Nordkirche	Germany
Birgit Weinbrenner	Evangelische Akademie Villigst	Germany
Claudia Schäfer	Evangelische Akademie zu Berlin	Germany
Miriam Meir	Evangelische Akademie Wittenberg	Germany
Marjaana Kanerva	Kirkkopalvelut	Finland
Yuri Roi	Laity Theol. College Grodno	Belarus
Vladimir Piatruchy	Laity Theol. College Grodno	Belarus
Marc Urban	Liebfrauenberg	France
Kristin Gunleiksrud-Raaum	Norske kirkeakademier	Norway
Kjell Riise	Norske kirkeakademier	Norway
Antonis Kalogerakis	Orth. Academy of Crete	Greece
Rüdiger Noll	Oikosnet Europe	Germany
Walter Lüssi	Plusbildung Schweiz	Switzerland
Istvan Elter	Conference Center of Monoszlo	Hungary
Sofia af Geijerstam	Sigtunastiftelsen	Sweden
Alf Linderman	Sigtunastiftelsen	Sweden

Proxies

Walter Lüssi	Proxy for TeCum	Switzerland
Alexei Bodrov	Kyrill and Meth. Center Minsk	Belarus
Rüdiger Noll	Lux Mundi	Spain
Rüdiger Noll	Ev. Akademie der Pfalz	Germany
Claudia Schäfer	Ev. Akademie Wien	Austria
Marjaana Kanerva	Ev. Akademie Baden	Germany
Antonis Kalogerakis	Interorth. Center Penteli	Greece

Guests:

Sören Lenz	CEC	France
Dietrich Galter	Ev. Akademie Siebenbürgen	Romania
Gunhild Galter	Ev. Akademie Siebenbürgen	Romania
Miray Yazgan	University Istanbul/Philos. Dpt	Turkey

1. Opening and Welcome

The President welcomed the participants in the Annual Conference, especially Sören Lenz, former Director of the Liebfrauenberg and now representing the Conference of European Churches in the AC. The participants then introduced themselves.

2. Roll Call and Quorum

At the beginning of the AC, Oikosnet Europe has 37 members. According to the Statutes, 14 members are needed in order to fulfil the Quorum. 13 members are present at the AC in person, 7 members gave their vote to a proxy. (cf. list above) With 20 votes present at the AC, the quota is fulfilled and the AC formally constituted.

3. Acceptance of New Members

The Orthodox Grodno Laity Center (Belarus) is present with three representatives: Father Vladimir gives a short presentation about the Center. Grodno is situated in Belarus, in the Diocese of Bishop Artemie, close to the Polish and Lithuanian border. In its 21 years of existence, the Center trained about 3000 participants in theological education courses. Today's emphasis of the Center is in theological training of laity and in social services. The Center is interested in hosting international theological conferences.

After the presentation, the Center was accepted in membership unanimously by acclamation.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Kjell Riise proposed an additional agenda item "Oikosnet beyond 2020", under which he wanted the AC to discuss a re-organisation of Oikosnet Europe in order to meet ecological standards as well as in order to clarify the different roles within Oikosnet Europe. As this proposal was not made to the Board in advance, the AC had to adopt it with a three-thirds majority (14 votes) at the AC itself. Put to the vote 12 participants voted in favour, 8 abstained. The motion was, therefore, not carried. But it was promised to be tabled to the Board in order to propose a procedure for processing the contents of the notion.

5. Election of Co-Signers of the Minutes

The President suggested Wiebke Juhl-Nielson and Kjell Riise als co-signers of the minutes. Both were elected unanimously by acclamation and accepted the task.

6. Adoption of the Minutes of Last Meeting (Date)

There were no comments or amendments to the minutes of the last meeting. Put to a vote, they were adopted unanimously.

7. Annual Report

The President introduces the Annual Report in mentioning its different chapters. He highlights his reading fruits in the beginning of the report (President's Forward) and the sad news of Knut Rydjord and Hans May, who have passed away recently. He also mentions Friedrich Kramer, who has just left the Academy of Wittenberg as its Director, because he was elected and installed as the new Bishop of the Mitteldeutsche Kirche in Germany. He mentions that meetings of the Board in the last year were not all too easy, as several members were missing at some meetings. Despite that, a lot of work was accomplished. Nevertheless, processes of working together needed to be reviewed again.

Kristin Gudleiksrud Raaum in taking on the moderation for discussing the Annual Report mentions that the Board did not do justice to follow-up on the abolishment of the gender and justice network. She finds Walter Lüssi's meeting with Rüdiger Sachau important in order to keep in touch with the German Academies. She invited the Secretariat to comment on the communication strategy of OE. Sofia af Geijerstam explains that she aims at a two-ways communication between the Board and the

OE members and, therefore, encourages all members to send their contributions for the newsletter in time.

There were no comments or questions from the floor about the Annual Report. Asked to “accept” the Annual Report, this was done unanimously.

8. Finances

8.1 Accounts 2017

According to a decision of the AC 2018, the accounts of 2017 still needed to be reviewed by the Internal Auditors (Karolina Silna and Günter Renz). If done so and no irregularities found, the accounts were seen as adopted. Karolina Silna presents a statement of Günter Renz. Both Internal Auditors agree with the accounts 2017. They are thereby adopted.

8.2 Accounts 2018

The Treasurer projects the accounts 2018 on the screen. (cf. attachment). The accounts include a surplus of 9.069 Euros, which were announced to be taken to the reserves.

The Internal Auditors (Sara Marta Rostango, Birgit Weinbrenner) were invited to share their report (attachment). They had no questions or comments concerning the formal aspects of the documentation provided and the accounts. They thanked the Secretariat and recommended to the AC the adoption of the 2018 accounts. They recommended “the elaboration of written guidelines on schedule, principles and duties of an Oikosnet Europe Treasurer” and to “produce a concise information about how to apply for financial support for common projects and events”.

The Annual Conference adopted the 2018 accounts with income and expenditure of 38.450,00 Euros unanimously.

Equally, the Annual Conference adopted unanimously the 2018 balance sheet with a total of equity and liabilities of 136.016 Euros, including the 9.069 Euro surplus from 2018.

The President reported that the Board in its meeting prior to the AC accepted already the establishment of a Working Group on the Internal Auditor’s recommendations.

8.3 Budget 2020

The Treasurer presents the budget 2020 for adoption by the Annual Conference. The Board had worked on the budget in its meeting prior to the Annual Conference and adopted it for presentation at the Annual Conference. Some budget lines from previous budgets are not needed anymore and were deleted. In order to balance income and expenditure, the amount of 17.200,00 Euros is to be taken from the reserves. However, as the budget was never fully used in previous years, it is expected that not the full amount from the reserves will be finally used. Karolina Silna highlights that the budget includes 10.000,00 Euros for projects in general and makes provisions for 14.000,00 Euros for the civil society project. 4.000,00 Euros are designated for the Arab-European Dialogue, which will hold its Annual Conference 2020 in Crete. Decisions on projects are taken by the Board.

After discussing these items in the budget, the Annual Conference adopts the budget 2020 with income and expenditure of 55.750,00 Euros unanimously.

Karolina was thanked for her work as Treasurer, the Sigtuna Secretariat for bookkeeping and support.

8.4 State of Affairs 2019

Alf Linderman reports that 31.900,00 Euros have come in thus far in terms of membership fees. 6 invoices have not yet been paid. President Walter Lüssi reports at this stage, that the process of

dissoluting Oikosnet Europe as an association according to German law is now finalised. It is just not stated in writing, but Hermann Düringer received confirmation orally. Hermann is thanked for his work to this effect.

9. Elections

9.1 Report of the Nominations Committee and Election of a new Board Member

Alexei Bordov reports that due to the resignation of Julia Gerlach from the Oikosnet Board, a new member has to be elected. The Board entrusted the Executive Secretary to search for a German candidate as many Oikosnet members are German. The matter was discussed in the framework of the German Academy network and Jörg Hübner, Director of Bad Boll, is proposed as member of the Board. As he himself cannot be present at the Annual Conference, Alexei Bodrov reads a letter from him to the Annual Conference. No other candidate was proposed to the Nominations Committee prior or during the Annual Conference.

The Oikosnet President explains that he would be happy for Jörg Hübner to be elected to the Board.

Jörg Hübner is elected as a new Board member unanimously with two abstentions.

9.2 Elections to the Nominations Committee

The President explains that last year the Annual Assembly elected Bishop Ioannis (Penteli) in addition to Alexei Bodrov as member of the Nominations Committee. There should be a third member as well and Alexei should be re-elected after three years of service. After some discussions about the role of the Nominations Committee, Claudia Schäfer stands as a candidate.

The Annual Conference re-elects Alexei Bodrov unanimously per acclamation (with one abstention) for another period of three years as member of the Nomination Committee.

Claudia Schäfer is elected as a new member of the Nominations Committee per acclamation (unanimously with one abstention)

The Nominations Committee now consists of Bishop Ioannis, Alexei Bodrov, Claudia Schäfer.

10. Follow-Up to Statements tabled in 2018

At last year's Annual Conference the Board tabled two documents, one on the Vision and Mission of Oikosnet Europe, one on the Inclusion Policy of Oikosnet Europe following the end of the pre-conferences of the Gender and Justice Network. Both were discussed controversially during the Annual Conference the year before. President Walter Lüssi explains that both documents were just to summarise in a short form what Oikosnet had said already before, for instance, in the course of the Oikosne(x)t process. Both papers were meant as papers for use by the Board; the paper on the vision as a self-reflection, the paper on the Inclusion Policy as a self-commitment for implementation.

Kjell Riise finds it a wise decision that the Board is responsible for implementing the contents of the papers. He moves as a recommendation that the final version of the papers should be added to the minutes. The motion is adopted unanimously with two abstentions.

At this stage Birgit Weinbrenner asks why there is so little response from the Annual Conference to what is presented by the Board. This should be further discussed under the agenda item "any other business". Others respond that they trust the Board. Items for discussion are still to come. For newcomers it is sometimes difficult to discover what is meant by certain items on the agenda. This is also an issue of communication with Oikosnet members throughout the year. Kristin is suggesting the Oikosnet Constitution to be added to every invitation to Annual Conferences. Walter Lüssi finds it important to revise the website to the extend that it enables discussion. Others see it as a problem that it is sometimes different people who represent Oikosnet members in the ACs. Therefore, there

should be a hand-over within the Academies. Rüdiger Noll reminds the participants that there used to be an introductory session for new members at previous Annual Conferences.

11. Staff Exchange

The President reminds the AC that the issue was raised by Rüdiger Sachau in previous ACs and Rüdiger Noll often reminded the Board about the issue. Requests came from Claudia Schäfer as well as from Tobias Thiel (Wittenberg) and the Orthodox Academy of Crete. The Board at its meeting in Zurich has entrusted Kristin Gudleiksrud-Raaum to deal with the issue, but there is no document as to yet. Therefore, the issues for discussion now are: What do members expect? What is supposed to be achieved? Kristin wants to see a check list and an online platform to be developed. Claudia wants a description for this project in order to be able to present it at home. It then needs a step by step guide from the first request to the implementation. What needs to be fulfilled by the sending and hosting centers? Which support does Oikosnet Europe offer? Alf Linderman emphasises that staff exchange does not depend on a common project.

After this discussion, the issue is transferred for further implementation to the Board.

12. Communication

Sofia af Geijerstam presents it as a challenge to communication to communicate well on who we are in order to attract new members. Members are invited to look on the Oikosnet website and to suggest changes. The communication tool of the Board is the newsletter, which has at present 156 subscribers. The newsletter should also be a two-way-communication tool for OE members to present developments in their organisation of interest to all. For the latter purpose the facebook page should also be used. Representatives at the AC should invite their colleagues in the Academies to also contribute.

Kristin Gudleiksrud-Raaum encourages participants to look critical at the website again to make it a tool also for new representatives. The President wants the Board to look at the website again based on comments and suggestions from OE members.

13. Reports from Projects

13.1 Civil Society in Central Europe

Rüdiger Noll reports that there is a clear will on the side of the German Foreign Ministry to still support three pilot projects in 2019, although the written contract is still not there. Oikosnet Europe has made provisions in its budget to also support the project. The projects are in the advanced planning process. The first brings together the Academies of Berlin, Sigtuna and Prague on issues related to energy change and civil society. The second is organised by the Academy of Rostock with the Reformed Church in Hungary and the Academy of Monoszlo on European narratives. The Academies of Villigst and Suprasl together with the Ecumenical Council in Poland are organising a consultation in Suprasl on climate change following the COP24 UN negotiations in Kattowice in the previous year. Participants are selected by the respective organisers and are still sought.

Walter Lüssi reports from a successful pre-conference to which Plusbildung Schweiz had invited. Implementing members were the Paulus Akademie Zürich and the Reformed Church of the Canton Zürich. Though more participants were expected, there were representatives from all countries and organisations, which participate in the project. Based on Swiss experiences there were interesting discussions on the role of religion in civil society in the different countries. The consultation raised a number of questions to be followed up in the further development of the project.

Oikosnet members, especially from Central Europe, are invited to indicate to Rüdiger Noll, if they are interested in joining the project in 2020/21 and if they have ideas for consultations in cooperation with other academies. Future emphasis of the project should be to look on conditions for a fruitful

civil society dialogue beyond borders and on how to feed results into the political decision-making process.

13.2 The Arab-European Citizens Dialogue

Alf Linderman reports on a successful dialogue meeting in Sigtuna in 2018. It addressed the priority topics which were selected for three years: human rights, media, migration, civil society. Since then, the Board asked the Executive Secretary to again join the Acting Committee of the Dialogue. The next meeting will take place in Cairo, 15 to 17 October. European participants are still sought. A letter of invitation is available upon request.

13.3 Dialogue for a Peaceful Change (DPC)

DPC has just published a first Handbook, which can be looked at the publication table. It can be ordered through the equally new website of DPC: www.dialogueforpeacefulchange.org. The Executive Secretary brought DPC in touch with the Lutheran World Federation. Several engagements emerged out of this.

14. Delegations

14.1 CEC Working Groups

At this stage, Sören Lenz extended a word of greetings from CEC. He refers to a lack of cohesion in our societies and in Europe. Individualism and segregation is growing. "CEC is preaching from island to island." According to Fukujama's latest book, there is a need for common values, which keep societies together. Important is also education for and within churches in order to include the individual in the broader society. CEC has developed a strategic plan, which is to be seen as a "sailing plan". For its implementation the Academies are needed.

The Board after discussion at its meeting in Zurich had entrusted the Executive Secretary to write a response to CEC's draft strategic plan. The response has been part of the documentation for this AC. The main focus of OE Europe was to engage in a permanent working relationship with CEC on European issues. In response Oikosnet Europe was invited to nominate members in CEC working groups. The final decision about the composition of working groups, though, will be taken by the CEC Board. After discussion in the AC Plenary on the kind of commitment, the duration of the mandate, the workload implied, several members of the AC indicated their or their colleague's interest in joining one or the other CEC thematic working groups. A small group was formed to discuss the matter in detail. It was agreed that any concrete interest should be indicated within the next two weeks to the OE President, who would then forward the names to CEC.

14.2 European Christian Convention (ECC; European Kirchentag)

Alexei Bodrov reports: Oikosnet Europe is member of the Association for the ECC. Katerina Karkala is one of the Vice-Presidents, Alexei Bodrov is on the Board. More members of the association are sought. The next members assembly will take place in Crete, 7 to 9 October. The Oikosnet Board had nominated the Executive Secretary to participate in this. Key issues for the ECC are at present to find a venue (and connected to this a date) for the Convention and to find resources. It is also unclear how roman-catholic organisations and bishops conferences relate to the project.

15. Membership

Issues related to OE membership were sufficiently described in the annual report and were not further discusses.

16. Dates and Venues of Future Oikosnet Annual Conferences

The dates for 2020 are decided: the AC will take place in Bad Boll from 9 to 13 September. According to a previous survey among Oikosnet members, future ACs will take place in the first week of October. The second week of September might be a second best option.

Members are encouraged to indicate, if they are interested to host the AC in 2020 or 2021.

As part of the Annual Assembly, there was also a deliberate session on “Europe after the elections” and a session on the cooperation among academies, which identified five issues around which several academies want to cooperate. In each case someone was identified, who will initiate the process.

The President thanked the hosts of this year’s AC for their extraordinary hospitality and their inspiration. Equally the Board, the Executive Secretary and the Secretariat were thanked for organising the meeting.