



OIKOSNET EUROPE

“59th Annual Conference 17. – 21. September 2014 in Evangelische Akademie Villigst/Schwerte

Minutes Business---meeting 19./20.9.201

Participants:

Nils Ivar Agoy, Shona Bell, Alexej Bodrov, Hermann Düringer, Irmgard Ehlers, Dietrich Galter, Sofia af Geijerstam, Roman Juriga, Andreas Kalkowski, Katerina Karkala---Zorbas, Jörgen Klusmann, Friedrich Kramer, Paul Krieg, Sören Lenz, Alf Linderman, Peter Markus, Rüdiger Noll, Katsiaryna Pastukhova, Kristin Gunleiksrud Raaum, Elisabeth Reichen---Amsler, Günter Renz, Rüdiger Sachau, Rüdiger Sareika, Jiri Silny, Jaap van der Sar, Marielisa von Thadden, Katalin Zoltani, Konstantinos Zorbas
Guest: Afia Darkwa---Amanor

1. Opening and welcome

The president of Oikosnet Europe, Jaap van der Sar, welcomes the participants of the 59th Annual Conference and opens the Business meeting.

“...Compassion doesn’t end in geography. We heard about a colleague in Aleppo, Syria, who wasn’t able to attend a meeting of Oikosnet International, our umbrella---organisation. We heard about illness of members, about a car---accident which made it impossible for our treasurer to participate, about a beloved who passed away. And we know about developments in Ukraine, in the Middle East, in In this sense Europe doesn’t end....” Jaap van der Sar gave a warm welcome to Afia Darkwa---Amanor from Oikosnet Africa as a special guest.

2. Roll Call (checking the Quorum)

Hermann Düringer, responsible for the minutes, informs about the quorum: Oikosnet Europe has 47 members. That means: 25 votes are necessary for the quorum.

The following 19 members (from 13 countries) are present, from 6 members there are proxies; that are together 25 voting members – as needed.

1. Casa Cares, Italy
2. Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland
3. Evangelische Akademie Villigst, Germany
4. EREN – Théologie Education Formation, Neuchatel, Switzerland

5. Evangelische Akademie Bad Boll, Germany
6. Home of Hope, Romania
7. Le Liebfrauenberg, Centre de Rencontres et de Formation, France
8. Norwegian Church Academies, Norway
9. Sigtuna Stiftelsen , Sweden
10. Stichting Oikos, Netherlands
11. St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute, Russia
12. Orthodox Academy Crete
13. Saints Methodius and Cyrill Christian Educational Center, Belarus
14. Haus am Schüberg, Germany
15. Evangelische Akademie Siebenbürgen, Romania
16. Evangelische Akademie Wittenberg, Germany
17. Evangelische Akademie im Rheinland/Bonn, Germany
18. Evangelische Akademie zu Berlin, Germany
19. Evangelická Akademie, Prag, Czech Republic

Proxis from:

21. Evangelische Akademie Neudietendorf
22. Berkfürdö, House of Reconciliation, Hungary
23. Ev. Akademie Loccum
24. Centro Ecumenico di Agape, Italy
25. Boldern, Ev. Studienzentrum, Switzerland
26. Evangelische Akademie Frankfurt/Arnoldshain

Proxy votes carried by

- Rüdiger Sareika
 Katalin Zoltani
 Hermann Düringer
 Paul Krieg
 Elisabeth Reichen
 Hermann Düringer

3. Agenda

From the participants an additional point was requested: 'Informations from the centres.'

The assembly decided to take time for this point on Saturday afternoon.

The proposed agenda was accepted.

4. Adoption of Minutes AC 2013

4.1 The General Assembly accepted the minutes of the Annual Conference 2013 in Liebfrauenberg.

4.2 The Assembly elected Nils Ivar Agoy as co---signer for the minutes 2014.

5. Elections

Walter Lüssi, treasurer and member of the Board, has been appointed in a new job within his church. He will leave the Board. A new Treasurer/ Board member has to be chosen.

Konstantinos Zorbas was proposed as candidate by the Chairperson of the Nominations Committee, Paul Krieg.

After his presentation, he was elected unanimously.

6. Annual report – moderated by Peter Markus

Vice president Katalin Zoltani presented the Annual Report (attached)

From the discussion_

- In Addition to the membership issues Kristin Gunleiksrud Raaum informed that Haugtun likely does no longer exist as a Norwegian Centre. So they have to be removed from the list of members of Oikosnet Europe. This is taken as a fact.

- Concerning the relations between Oikosnet Europe and EAD (Evangelische Akademien in Deutschland) Jaap van der Sar highlighted that the proactive efforts took a lot of energy but it helped to find a very positive perspective for both, as it is now expressed in the cooperation through Rüdiger Noll.
- Marielisa von Thadden emphasized the importance of the upcoming Kirchentage. Just a couple of days before the German Kirchentag 2015 in Stuttgart there will be a conference in Bad Boll further exploring the idea of an European Kirchentag in the near future. Her plea: 1) Oikosnet Europe should be present in Stuttgart, cooperating in a booth with the Academies Bad Boll and Bad Herrenalb, 2) Oikosnet Europe should take part in the conference before in Bad Boll. Regarding the presence with a booth, the decision was taken to do so. Regarding the participation in the pre-conference, no decisions were taken at this moment in time.

7. Finances

7.1 Instead of the treasurer, who was unable to be present, the president Jaap van der Sar gave the **Financial Report for 2013** (attached). In the following discussion the question about outstanding membership fees played a main role. Several members didn't pay in the last years – with the effect of ca. € 10.000 less income per year. Last year the way the budget was made has been changed. From 'calculated' income through membership fees towards 'expected' income.

The Oikosnet Constitution stipulates that members, which did not pay for two years in a row and did not communicate with the Board, could be suspended, but – according to the president's plea – “we should take consequences carefully” in order to find ways to keep those centres which have financial problems. In this sense the Executive Secretary and the Board tried to connect with members that did not pay their dues for the last two years.

7.2 Report from the internal auditors

Paul Krieg gave the report as the internal auditor. His investigations came to the result: “There is no reason not to accept the given report about the income and expenses 2013.” He recommended to discharge the Board.

The assembly discharged the Board unanimously.

7.3 3 Budget 2015

Jaap van der Sar presented the Budget 2015. The budget was prepared just some days before the Annual Conference started, due to the fact that our treasurer was taken to hospital after a serious car accident. The budget was now made by the Board and was presented as the new proposal at the meeting itself. After an open discussion during the Business Meeting the Budget 2015 was accepted unanimously (see attached document). Points of discussion were the fact that for seed money for projects an amount of € 10.000 was reserved. In addition to this € 5.000 was reserved for initiatives to bring together possible members in Eastern Europe as well as € 2.000 for the presence at the German Kirchentag in 2015. The total amount of the budget (income and expenditure) was fixed at € 42.650, including an amount of € 10.550 to be taken from the reserves. The assembly discussed how far in-kind contributions should be shown in the budget. The Board will discuss this point; probably a concept can be worked out until the next annual conference.

8. Membership issues

Roman Juriga applied for a renewal of membership of the Orthodox Academy Vilémov/Czech Republic. He presented the centre being in a process of reconstructing. The assembly welcomed The Orthodox Centre Vilémov as a new member of Oikosnet Europe by acclamation.

9. Projects under the umbrella of Oikosnet Europe

9.1 Project ideas (Emerging projects)

9.1.1 Irmgard Ehlers presented a project idea about „Demography“. She reported about her Bad Boll experiences. The idea refers to the paper of 8 Academies of Science in Europe. She asked: Where do you encounter the issue in your work? Do you have examples of good practice?

She herself gave three examples: a) public traffic, b) support for vocational training for young people, and c) villages offering elderly a positive environment.

9.1.2 Alf Linderman and Sofia af Geijerstam reported about the EFMRD project (European Forum for Media, Religion and Democracy) and about RISECI (Religion in the Shaping of European Cultural Identity) funded by EU cultural programme; both projects ended May 2014.

The question is: what will follow?

The idea is to organise a vision workshop on the potential role of religion in shaping society and cultural identity of Europe. What can be the role of academies in this process?

Sigtuna foundation intends to invite for a workshop to make the vision concrete in May 2015 in Sigtuna.

9.1.3 Rüdiger Noll reported about his experiences in visiting centres especially in Eastern Europe. As a consequence of his visits, he proposed an exchange program between centres and academies. He distributed a road map as to how such exchanges of staff could be linked to EU programmes, such as. "Erasmus+" (additional information: probable deadline for applications by institutions from the sending country: 17 March 2015).

The discussions of these ideas in three groups were appreciated as very constructive.

9.2 Reports from existing projects

9.2.1 EFMRD project

Alf and Sofia gave a more detailed report about EFMRD project. There were several conferences in cooperation with different Oikosnet partners in Europe and a concluding conference in Sigtuna May 2014.

The assembly was strongly impressed by the professional realisation of this project as well as about the overview about the results. Some members of not involved centres would have wished that communication had reached them more clearly during the last years, also since a number of them were not present at the previous Annual Conferences where regular updates about this project were given.

9.2.2 History and Transformation project

A paper from Walter Lüssi presented the evaluation of the survey (attached).

The Board will discuss the results in its November meeting.

9.2.3 Dialogue for Peaceful Change

Jaap van der Sar reported about the DPC programme in the last year. He mentioned that the programme has started 10 years ago. Now more than 1.000 people have participated

in the Training of Facilitators. The last training took place in Ghana, just before the meeting of Oikosnet International.

9.3 Proposal on seed funding

Rüdiger Noll presented the paper of the Board about 'Criteria for supporting projects by Oikosnet members through Oikosnet Europe' (see attachment).

One of the future priorities for Oikosnet Europe lies in supporting projects, which involve several of its members on themes with a European dimension. As the previous days in our conference in Villigst made clear, the Annual Conferences are offering a good platform for Oikosnet members to discuss trends and developments, future ideas, co-operations and, in the best of all cases, potential new projects which involve members from different parts of Europe.

Oikosnet Europe stands ready to support joint initiatives and projects of its members; not only by offering a platform for exchange, but also financially. To do this the Annual Conference in Villigst established a budget line for Central and Eastern European centres to meet around common project ideas (see above).

The proposal of the Board regarding the provision of support for members for common projects was accepted unanimously. As a consequence members are invited to bring proposals to the Board before each Board meeting takes place. The first date for applications is 15 November 2014, since the Board meets about one week later in Northern Ireland.

10. The place of the Oikosnet Europe secretariat in the future

Jaap van der Sar presented the process which led to the final Board decision.

At its meeting in March 2014, the Board decided, after consultation of the Annual Conference 2013, to organise a re-location of the Oikosnet Secretariat. After carefully checking the criteria for this, a Terms of Reference was prepared and sent to two members. It was known to the Board that these members were willing to consider the hosting of the Oikosnet-secretariat in their offices. By the end of August 2014 two options were available and the Board decided, in its meeting before this Annual Conference, to accept the proposal from Sigtuna Stiftelsen. As a consequence some fine-tuning has to take place to get a proper and clear divisions of tasks and responsibilities between the secretariat, the Executive Secretary for Ecumenical and European Affairs (Rüdiger Noll) and the Board.

Expectations are that from December 2014, the new Secretariat in Sigtuna will be the "first post in the chain" for contacting Oikosnet Europe, for making inquiries and suggestions. The Secretariat can best be contacted via

Email: office@oikosnet.eu or phone: +46-8-59258900. All contact information will be shared to all members. This will inform about contact details for the secretariat, for Rüdiger Noll as well as for the Board, represented by Jaap van der Sar.

11. Oikosnet international

In Ghana a Board meeting of Oikosnet International took place in August 2014. Oikosnet Europe was represented by Marielisa von Thadden, Rüdiger Noll and Jaap van der Sar. Mariliesa von Thadden gave a report about the meeting.

Due to Ebola only Ghanaian and European participants could take part in the conference. The planned Annual Conference of Oikosnet Africa wasn't allowed to take place. This influenced both the DPC-training as well as the meeting of the Board of Oikosnet International.

Information about the situation of Oikosnet International:

It is expected that the North American centres---organisation will not stay as member of Oikosnet International. It is unclear to which extent the association from Latin America stays within the Board of Oikosnet International. No clear oversight is available for the situation in Asia in this regard. The situation for our colleagues in the Middle East is very unclear, if not very life---threatening.

One reason for this development is the lack of resources. Since 2009, no income has been generated for Oikosnet International. There is just a small amount left from previous years. The Board meeting concluded in Ghana that the availability of finances cannot and should not be the only reason to continue the existing relations. Still existing financial resources can be used for African – European meetings in relation to Board meetings, not excluding others. However, if no other regions show up, the Africa---Europe relations should continue or even be strengthened.

12. Communication Strategy

Sofia af Geijerstam reported about the first issues of the newsletter which Sigtuna Stiftelsen has edited for Oikosnet Europe. First responses were very positive. The aim is to share information from Oikosnet and between the centres and thus to strengthen the identity of Oikosnet Europe.

She suggested to have information from the Board meetings in the newsletter. More about the activities in the centres should be published, likewise ideas about projects. Designated persons in the centres should feel responsible to feed the newsletter from their centres.

As next steps it is envisaged to re---vitalize the Oikosnet Europe website and to be present in social media.

13. Visit to Brussels

Rüdiger offers a visit to Brussels and the European Institutions for members of Oikosnet Europe. A date is not yet fixed.

He asked, whether Oikosnet members were interested in such a visit, and, if yes, which issues should be addressed during the visit and which contacts should be foreseen.

14. Report about the pre---conference of the Gender and Justice Network

Elisabeth Reichen gave the report (see attached).

15. Annual Conference 2015

Shona Bell invited Oikosnet Europe for the next Annual Conference 2015 to Corrymeela (North---Ireland).

The Gender and Justice pre---conference will work on „stand---up---stories“; an option is to have also a DPC--- training before the Annual Conference takes place.

16. Annual Conference 2016

For 2016 Prague is proposed to organise the Annual Conference. The Academy Prague will clarify whether it's possible.

17. Evaluation of the Annual Conference

- The great hospitality of Evangelische Akademie Villigst was gratefully appreciated by all participants of this encounter.
- As well people appreciated the excursion through the Ruhr-area as typical for Germany and important for Europe.

- Positive mentioning was about the strong presence of Eastern European centres. (“Lost centres come back!”)
- The good atmosphere was noticed as a motivation for the own work – and a challenge for Corrymeela; („It was an atmosphere of productive looking into the future.”)
- A proposal for the next conference: Let’s start with a short presentation about the situation we are coming from.

Minutes were made by Hermann Düringer, Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

For the minutes:

Co---signer:

Jaap van der Sar
President

Nils Ivar Agoy
Norwegian Academies
Elected by the Conference