

Bureau Meeting 6 February 2021 MINUTES

This Bureau meeting was supposed to take place in person in **Brussels, Belgium**. However, due to the travel restrictions with regard to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the requirement to avoid travel when possible, the time and place of conducting the meeting had to be adapted and the meeting will be held online.

Present: Antoaneta Asenova (AA), Dan-Aria Sucuri (DAS), Marten Porte (MP), Marina Sedlo (MS), Ida-Maria Skytte (IS), Ines Holzegger (IH), Laia Comerma (LC) and Bălint Gyévai (BG) + Benjamin Fievet (BF) joined for 15 minutes at 12 h 45.

Meeting starts at 10 h 05

Agenda:

1) Finances - 15 minutes - MP

a) Audits

- Internal Audit took place and it went very well. Auditors are happy and we implemented the necessary suggestions;
- MP explains that there are some outstanding issues from past years, systemic errors in the way processes were done. There has been a general lack of deep understanding of the system, there is need for professional support because of a not very sustainable situation. Current external auditors didn't spot some mistakes surprisingly.

We would therefore create an external brain for the organisation, that can make handovers possible and provide proper insight - maybe a firm or someone we can hire for this task. It's especially important regarding the closing of the financial years on the long-term.

The Bureau agrees that we would consider this external support.

- External Audit takes place next Thursday. BG and the auditor will be present in-person in the office and MP through Zoom. We will look into all aspects and solve what needs to be solved.

b) MO fees 2021

- MP explains that all MOs have been invoiced but 1, MS' input was needed on that one, MO figures changed a lot for that organisation. She asked the representative but no clear reply so far;
- BG explains that 17/58 invoices have been paid already so far.

c) Interns contract extension

- BG explains that both our current assistant and policy intern are interested in this possibility (3 additional months with LYMEC);

- BG adds that there is a financial impact, their compensation would go from 900 to 950 EUR since the previous Bureau decided on this process and the increase in amounts.

The Bureau agrees to extend both of their contracts for 3 months. They are doing really great jobs and we would then spare time on recruitment and training. It's well deserved for both to stay. It would also be more difficult to recruit with the current circumstances for LYMEC.

d) EC grant 2020 report + 2021 grant

- EC 2021 grant application was accepted so we will receive 40 000 EUR in April/May;
- EC 2020 grant report to receive the last 10 000 is now due. BG to work on it in the coming weeks and share with MP and LC for comments before submitting on 26 February.

2) Congress - 40 minutes - BG/MP/AA

a) Registrations and timeline

- Registrations should open on Monday for two weeks so that we have the participants selected before the "8 weeks deadline" to Congress (26 February);
- Openslides/Resolution tool to be launched 6 weeks before Congress (12 March);

b) Renew grant application:

- It has to be submitted by Tuesday (9 February) with projections of the budget, list of events and request letter;
- The final shape of the budget we apply for depends on the decision to take regarding the format of the event.

The Bureau decides that we will use all money on one event for the 2021 Autumn Congress.

c) Openslides: pricing and opensource

- MS and IH noticed that they increased their fee from 250 to 500 EUR/month. A solution might be 'opensource' (use it for free if you pay for/rent the server), we need someone to set it up - one day work most likely. We would need to pay maintenance and monthly fees but not the tool anymore.
- Overview of the prices:
 - Server price - 50 EUR to 300 EUR/month
 - Set up - 200 EUR once (4 hours)
 - Maintenance - 100 EUR/year (2 hours)

The Bureau would want to see a proper offer first before we decide but the open source option seems to be way cheaper than the current arrangements with the new rates, so it looks interesting. We need a comparative offer for the servers. We need to take the decision and start setting up the platform by the end of the month.

d) Deadlines

They need to be respected so please remind relevant member organisations about them - application for MO fee and debt reductions but also membership applications. BG to send a calendar invite to the Bureau members about the deadlines to ease the process.

- *8 weeks deadline is on 26 February*

No statutory changes are to be expected since they were done last time and the new statutes were just registered successfully to the authorities. Regarding a request at the last Congress, the Congress rules are specifying the statutes on voting majorities and rules, the Bureau has nothing to add (see previous minutes).

- *4 weeks deadline is on 26 March*

MS will draft the new IFLRY motion by the deadline. The policy book clean-up will be submitted also by then as discussed during the Digital Assembly.

The Bureau decides on the IFLRY motion that it needs to be taken between the two organisations and then approved by Congress. We will ask our MOs for input before and then we can check with IFLRY ahead of the deadline to submit it on our side. No amendments will be allowed at the Congress.

Deadline for ideas from MOs will be open until 8 March (email with google doc for inputs + link to existing text in the policy book) and then it will be subject to agreement between the organisations.

e) Paris bookings and timeline for decisions / COVID and logistics FOR DECISION

Looking at the current situation, the threat of the pandemic and restrictions in Europe and the world are high:

- AA explains that there is too much risk at the moment;
- LC adds that she is skeptical about the possibility for Congress and that it could happen in Paris seems to be difficult. We should plan on a Congress in Autumn instead;
- DAS comments that we should have it online, following a responsible approach;
- BG gives his account from the office side, more predictability than past year is suggested so that work can be done better and we can plan ahead;
- MS expresses that as LC said, we should first focus on a smaller event to restart with in-person meetings. We aren't far enough in the medication/vaccination process to make this happen;
- MP stresses that it is pretty impossible to do anything before summer - perhaps the June events we could have a little hope with hybrid formats. We could reassess the situation in April but Congress should be online;
- IS emphasizes that we all agree, the situation is unclear and it's pretty sure people won't be able to travel safely;
- IH concludes that it's the right thing to do to move online for this but we might be able to do something in May already.

The Bureau decides to have the Congress online: mutations, young people last to be vaccinated, news on closing borders and restrictions, unpredictability about 100 people brought in the same place and impossibility to restrain close contact are the main reasons.

- BG will take the lead and negotiate to move the Paris Congress to the Autumn with the hotel and Skopje will be for Spring 2022;
- Repartition of the participants kept like last time 5 for full MO + 3 for associate MO;
- We should livestream the opening with guest speeches to give more visibility to the event;
- The Programme should be as follows: Friday afternoon (16 h to 19 h) and then Saturday the whole day (10 h to 18 h with 1 h break);
- Surprise package for the participants to be sent ahead of the event. BG to ask for the address of people in the registration form to make this happen.

3) ELF book event - 15 minutes - LC/BG

a) Concept and call

The call is open now and it will be until 19 February, we will this time choose the participants based on their proposals instead of a whole contribution. We will ask them to write their essay after the selection but they need to deliver it before the event. Topics were communicated so we can streamline the process.

b) Timeline and process

The event is planned for the last weekend of March. We will work on an updated programme and see how we can reallocate the budget (put more on the post editorial part).

c) COVID and logistics

FOR DECISION

The event is set to take place fully online, the programme and budget need to be adapted as a consequence of moving the event online.

The Bureau decides that there will be no in-person events until the 1st of May but we will decide at the beginning of April about the events that take place after that (May/June) depending on the evolution of the pandemic.

4) Young Liberal Women Summit - 15 minutes - LC

- Registrations and programme updates

- We have so far a lot of interest and applicants (around 30);
- The programme is finalised, we have 3 out of 4 speakers confirmed;
- We invited Kaja Kallas as the last speaker. As an alternative Sophie Wilmes could be invited, we are waiting for responses;
- IS suggests that Emma Wiesner might also be an option, she is a new MEP. We would rather have her for the YCA as an ambassador.

5) Digital Assembly - 15 minutes - AA/BG

a) Feedback and evaluation

- It went very smoothly with the right amount of reporting from the Bureau;
- Procedure done very nicely - thanks to the office and Marina. Big thank you to Marina for managing so well.

b) Policy and follow up

- Lucasta is preparing the overview table and the minutes are ready and uploaded on the website for information;
- MS explains that the policy book process has to go faster and we should take advantage of the time that we are online and do another rotation before the deadline ahead of this Congress. That would allow us to start next time with Chapter 3 then and finish Chapter 2 now.

The Bureau agrees if she finds the time to do it before the deadlines.

6) "From our MOs 2020" - 10 minutes - LC/BG

a) Updates and comments on received inputs

- LHG submitted one good proposal so far. We are expecting more by the deadline;
- IS clarifies that it can be whatever they did before as a new activity/concept as a response to the crisis;
- LC adds that anything innovative due to COVID, LC available for questions, 3 organisations working on it as we speak;
- AA advises that we should start looking at what our own MOs were doing, SM boost is necessary;
- IH proposes not a fixed deadline but rather a rolling format;
- LC adds that a second deadline is needed to have an end point and send out something to our MOs as planned.

The Bureau decides that we will have two deadlines: 15 Feb 2021 and then a second one after.

7) Libertas - 15 minutes - LC/DAS

a) New design and branding

DAS explains that we outsourced the work for the new logo, social media frames. The work is on-going on that, we received a good offer, the deadline is mid-February to have everything.

b) Call for editors and writers

LC comments that we have a great team of 9 editors. The kick-off call will be next Thursday, roles and responsibilities will be assigned. We also have a team of writers as well (around 20 people). We started creating their profiles already on the website to update the Libertas page. Skills in visuals were also in the desired targets for these calls. The aim is to have better quality of articles and a more consistent timeline for contributions. There are now clear guidelines as well and the approach is more professional.

c) Latest updates of the reform process

We will invest some money to reach out to people who like the LYMEC page. DAS will make a look alike platform to reach out to the people that are part of our target.

IS fears that boosting the articles might be an issue with the new Facebook rules. It might not be possible to reach the people that are outside of Belgium.

DAS needs to look into this.

8) New website - 15 minutes - BG/IS/IH

- Latest updates, progress and timeline

- The contract with the company is now signed;
- We have the first draft of the homepage agreed upon;
- Other pages proposed and under comments now;
- We move forward following the timeline.

As an additional point, our current website again charged us a lot for a small task, we made the good decision in moving forward with a new one.

- MS reminds that the policy index should be incorporated on the new website
Change proposed: add "Policy and Documents" on top and add a Policy "+" with a link to another page with the alphabetic policy index. Make Policy "+" the first on the page.

9) LYMEC Outreach - 20 minutes - IH

a) Bulletin:

- It would consist of 4-5 points/highlights and a link to the minutes of each Bureau meeting;
- She proposes to draft this in order to inform the MOs better;
- Always a Bureau member drafting and then posting it in the Facebook group with International Officers;
- Comments:
 - LC underlines that it is difficult to implement because of time constraints and that our members already receive a lot of emails/communications;
 - BG stresses the point of having more discipline on validating the minutes and ensure their publication on time;
 - DAS adds that it's not that much work and we should try it out and see;
 - MS explains that they did this at LHG and Julis and it helps, we will be more transparent than ever before, it's better in terms of communication too;
 - IS would see this as very informal but would be good to have it because very few people read our minutes;
 - MP adds that he had the same with JD, it's a nice idea.

The Bureau decides to move forward with this proposal since it's not something adding up to the work of the office. IH will take the leadership on this, to be posted on the IOs Facebook group, we will be then adding it to the newsletter as well. It will take place 1 time/month following the meetings.

b) LYMEC podcast:

- IH explains that we could reach out to many people through this. We could use Spotify or Apple podcasts and also Soundcloud. We could research synergies with Libertas. We need one host and a guest talking about a certain topic with an expert from the liberal network. It would be 30 to 40 minutes every time;
- IS comments that a lot of softwares could help - some we have to pay for and some are for free. It would be a way to invite MEPs also for example and have it recorded on Spotify. It could be a way to get a high profile speaker to join us for a talk;
- AA adds that we should try first with some tests with lower profile people. Kick-off should happen a bit more casual maybe;
- DAS thinks that we could have a big opening for the kick-off to give it a proper launch;
- IS reminds that quality is very important, we need a few episodes ready when we launch so that we test before a higher profile speaker;
- AA agrees and adds that it's important to announce to membership that we ask for their questions in advance of the podcast;
- MP highlights a general remark on not forgetting how busy we are/will be when back to in-person setting.

IH to send out the concept and information about costs involved to the Bureau. We need one or two months to test everything before we adapt it for a launch.

The Bureau decides to make some tests and consider this for the future but first we need a proper concept and a budget outline.

10) Invitations - 10 minutes

- Europe GYBN - biodiversity framework feedback session + discussion with policy-makers.
- There is interest in the second meeting with policy-makers. We will ask if we can expose our positions properly and have Marina join then.
- ELF policy network - expert group with MPs and MEPs.
- We will try to get a spot for each session (3 in total). MS for the first then AA then LC.
- Paddy Ashton - 27 Feb online event.
- We will help with the dissemination.

11) News from MOs and IMS - 5 minutes

- a) LC explains that the cooperation project that wasn't selected between JNC and Young Liberal Greece is going forward. They ask for our help to send out a call to IOs and tag us on Social Media for a report. They also ask if they can use our logo on the communication materials.

The Bureau agrees.

- b) AA explains that there will be parliamentary elections in Bulgaria on 4 April 2021 - very special campaign;

- c) IS emphasizes the importance of updates from the Bureau on members of our MOs that get elected so that we can showcase that;
- d) MS adds that LHG has elections of the Board. Felix is re-running as IO. Same President probably.

12) Reporting back from the IFLRY representative and on the LYMEC-IFLRY meeting - 15 minutes

- Benjamin Fievet (IFLRY representative) is attending the meeting for this point.

AA explains that the meeting yesterday happened between the two leaderships. AA and Amanda had a short bilateral meeting before that. There is an agreement that we divide between global and European issues between the two organisations. We would of course evaluate case by case but the general direction is set in dividing the fields of actions. AA also emphasized the importance of appearing with masks and protective measures on public pictures and events.

BF gives his report: 2 Bureau meetings that were very technical took place first, tasks and responsibilities were allocated. Action plan was also discussed. He also took part in the handover meeting, which he attended partially. Earlier this week another meeting starting off the actions of the new Bureau took place. They want to take into account comments and suggestions from MOs and deliver on the promises. Some MOs questioned the importance of being part of IFLRY, they will try to show added value beyond LYMEC. IFLRY wants to increase relationships with its regional organisations. Programme manager positions were allocated. BF sent an email with more details with his summary.

Additional points:

- Regarding the YFJ elections: BF to be involved until both Bureau's confirm the common candidate. Nickolas Pagonakis interested in becoming a common candidate;
- Guidelines on communication and exchange around the websites will be done between the two organisations.

LC asks about the list of portfolios - we could explore cooperation in regional responsibilities but also different focuses between the two organisations. It could be interesting for many portfolios at a lower level to be in touch with their counterparts. Any update about the trainers of trainers programme?

- BF replies that the Programme manager for the pool of trainers has been selected and there will be 3 co-managers. He will facilitate contact between LC and them.

IH advocates for the same process with Nickolas as with Simon last year. There will be a call scheduled and the LYMEC Bureau is set to receive his application before hearing him.

IS adds that it's good to start cooperating more in communication and social media campaigns. BF to facilitate connection.

Existing issues in miscommunication have been discussed and clarified for the future between the Bureau and IFLRY representatives for efficient and positive representation of LYMEC's interest.

13) AOB

BG brings up the Vesna action and the situation in Russia:

As LYMEC, we want to do more and we will ask Vesna if that is a good idea to send their letter to the EU ambassador of Russia. Vesna and LYMEC would sign for all young liberals of Europe.