

Minutes

ESA Extraordinary General Assembly

The Extraordinary General Assembly was held online through Zoom on Thursday, April 7, 2022, at 13:30 CET and had a duration of 02:03:00min. 143 members participated in the EGA.

1. **Lígia Ferro, ESA President, opens the Assembly**

- Brief statement on the war in Ukraine: the ESA Executive Committee, the Research Networks Coordinators, the National Associations and the members stand in solidarity with those affected by the war.
- Introduction of the solidarity measures to Ukrainian scholars implemented by the Executive Committee in collaboration with the Research Network coordinators: i) conference fee waiver to scholars displaced from Ukraine for the ESA 16th Conference; ii) collect and advertise on ESA's website opportunities to Ukrainian scholars; iii) sensitising European Universities and agencies to develop initiatives for hosting Ukrainian Scholars through collaboration with the European Alliance of Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH).
- Discussion and work on this matter continues: the war will be part of the agenda for the Executive Committee meeting to be held on April, 11 and as the main point of the agenda for the meeting with the National Associations to be held on April, 12.
- Summary of some activities: highlighting the Summer School to be held in September in Dubrovnik, Croatia; the publication of the European Sociologist; the transition to open access publication; and the organization of the 16th Conference. Members and bodies of the Association have been very active in these activities. The Executive Committee thanks the members, RN and NA for the participation and constant support.
- Justification of the call for an Extraordinary General Assembly online based on: i) overlapping of ESA and ISA major events now and for the future because the ISA decided to reschedule the ISA World Congress from 2022 to 2023. This fact would cause financial stress and schedule difficulties to the ESA members, having a potential negative impact on ESA as some members would have to choose between two big events.
- Presentation of the results of the on-line consultation on the postponement of the 16th ESA Conference to 2024: 1285 members out of 3122 members (41,2%) voted. 1029 respondents agreed with the postponement (80,1% of the respondents), 196 respondents did not agree with the postponement (15,3%) and 59 respondents abstained (4,6%). The results indicated clearly that this matter is important for the ESA members. Taking the results into account, the Executive Committee decided to call for an Extraordinary General Assembly, following also the consultation with the Research Networks and legal advice.

- The agenda of the meeting and the changes to the Statutes were announced 12 weeks in advance. Several meetings with the Research Networks and the National Associations were held and the different bodies of the Association were involved in the discussion.
 - The members were informed of the General Assembly and received explicit instructions to participate and vote.
 - Explanation of the agenda and development of the meeting.
 - Congratulations on the inter-collaboration between the RNs, NAs and the Executive Committee.
- 2. State of Conference Preparations** (Gary Pollock, ESA Vice-President & Chair of the Conference Committee)
- Presentation of the Conference theme: *Tension, trust and transformation*. Conference abstract in preparation.
 - Information on the two applications received at the ESA's office: Kazan, Russia and Porto, Portugal.
 - Explanation of the criteria used for the selection for the next location of the ESA's conference. Both applications were strong. The application from Porto presented a LOC including stronger representation of academics and a more convincing budget in terms of revenue for the association. At the same time, comparatively Porto has excellent transport connections that benefit the overall logistics (visa exception for most of the conference participants, shorter and more frequent flights, including low cost flights). Porto was selected to host the next ESA 16th Conference.
- 3. ESA forecast and financial sustainability** (Tiziana Nazio, ESA Treasurer):
- Brief financial consideration on the postponement due to the recurrent coincidence of ISA and ESA events.
 - Explanation of the importance of the ESA Conference to the financial sustainability of the association, underlining those memberships increase at the time of the conference.
 - Presentation on the ESA conference participants' demographics, indicating that a large part of the members is PhD students or early career researchers.
 - Reflection on the impact that the overlapping of big events in terms of memberships and new enrolments may have on the ESA, as some members would have to choose where to participate.
 - Conclusion on how the coincidental date of major events may jeopardise the production of early researchers and PhD Students.
- 4. Question explanation to be voted** (Kaja Gadowska, ESA Vice-President and Chair of the Policy Committee):

- Comments on the solidarity statement of the ESA with Ukraine and the solidarity measures proposed to support those affected by the war
 - Announces that by the first weeks of June, the Policy Committee will open communication with RN and NA to collect issues, impressions, and information to use for the comprehensive review of the Statutes that were requested and voted favourably on at the last General Assembly.
 - Explains the provisions to be voted: i) Amendments to Article 5 of the ESA Statutes: The General Assembly, including a clause contemplating the possibility of holding the GA online; ii) Amendments to Article 6 of the ESA Statutes: The President and the Executive Committee, including a clause contemplating an extension of a year on President and Executive Committee office period; iii) Amendments to Article 2 of the ESA By-Laws: ESA Conferences, including a clause for eventual postponement of a year in exceptional circumstances; iv) Conference postponement, an extension of the term of office and prolongation of membership for one year at no extra costs.
5. **Lígia Ferro, ESA President** Opens discussion, and points to the agenda:
- OD (RN24) questions if this postponement vote implies future postponements in all conferences.
 - LF (ESA President) explains that what is voted is the inclusion of a provision in the ESA Statutes, but each postponement shall be voted at the General Assembly. Explains that the three initial votes are for the inclusion of provisions on the Statutes, and the fourth is related to the 16th ESA conference.
 - TN (ESA Treasurer) remarks that this vote is to realign events from now on, and avoid overlapping between big academic events.
 - KG (ESA Vice-President) explains that in the case of being accepted, the next conference will take place in 2024 and the next after two years (2026).
 - DL (ESA Member) asks if the ISA reported plans to reschedule their meetings as usual, making overlapping events again.
 - LF (ESA President) explains that if everything continues as expected every two years, ESA will have its conference and the new executive team.
 - KG (ESA Vice-President) informs that the ISA took this postponement as a new permanent schedule, which is why ESA reacts to avoid collision of events. New provisions would allow an eventual reschedule in case of alteration of the new calendar.
 - ER (ESA Member) requests clarification on how exceptional circumstances could be defined.
 - KG (ESA Vice-President) indicates that it applies to extraordinary or exceptional cases such as a new pandemic, war, or natural catastrophes. Underlines that this inclusion is a means if the context requires only.
 - SH (ESA Member) interrogates on the reason behind postponement, and questions if it was due to the pandemic or as a reaction to the ISA rescheduling.

- LF (ESA President) explains that the ISA did reschedule their main conference, now colliding with ESA Conference. This put members in difficulties to participate in the events, due to financial or academic stress. Underlines that the ESA conference is an important on boarding for the new sociologists, at the same time that it is the moment when ESA generates revenue and guarantees activity in between conferences.
- TN (ESA Treasurer) explains that the pandemic was the reason for ISA to reschedule and underlines that before this move there was a perfect alignment between both events. Points out that by rescheduling the ESA would regain the lost alignment.
- KG (ESA Vice-President) ratifies that ESA voting is the result of a chain of events that concludes with the possibility of fixing the balance between ISA and ESA conferences.
- MP (ESA Member) express disagreement with ESA's will to reschedule the conference, as he identifies this request as a consequence of a third organization (ISA). He reflects on the repercussion and impact of moving dates, and the importance of hybrid modes. In his view colliding big events does not represent an exceptional circumstance.
- LF (ESA President) stresses that avoiding overlapping is aligned with the ESA's best interest. She accentuates that ESA's on boarding and revenue increases by the time of the conference and rescheduling would guarantee ESA's interests and would back the growth of the association.
- KG (ESA Vice-President) refers that the postponement of the ISA was decided democratically at the beginning of the pandemic. She stresses that the decision for postponement of ESA's conferences relays on the members and it is to be voted on by the General Assembly, respecting the democratic and collective procedures. She brings to attention the considerations by TN (ESA Treasurer) in terms of financial sustainability, and the positive advice of the members to postpone in the poll carried out in December 2021.
- ML (ESA ExeC) highlights that the ISA took their decision without considering the ESA's interest, but if ESA doesn't reschedule the competition would be repeated every period. He comments that many researchers receive funding for a big conference per year, even if they are online.
- MP (ESA Member) says that all this process was decided by members of another organization. He wonders how many conference delegates are members of both organizations.
- TC (ESA Member) comments that the ISA's decision was taken in the curve of the pandemic, and that they reported that information to the previous Executive Committee, but she reminds that it is needed to work towards the ESA's interests. She digs into the semantic of "exceptional circumstances" to comment that what is articulated is the need to incorporate tools that help ESA to be ready in the case of unexpected situations and big changes. She stresses

that the important is not the word, but to guarantee the place for discussion, transparency, and dialogue. She acknowledges the cooperation that the ESA is performing with the ISA, understanding this cooperation as a strength and not a weakness.

- MCA (ESA Chair NA Council) stresses the importance of solid cooperation with ISA to guarantee the representation of the different sociological voices of Europe within ISA. She appeals for rescheduling to guarantee the participation of European delegates in both events in alternation to guarantee the diffusion of European sociology and help early careers on their academic journey.
- TN (ESA Treasurer) points out the impossibility to compute how many members belong to both organizations. She stresses the importance of participating in international conferences for early career and PhD students and their substantial share among ESA's conference participants, with the disruption on their journey if ISA and ESA conferences overlap. She calls for voting thinking on this large share of members too.
- EP (ESA RN25) stresses the value of the processes undertaken by ESA, underlining its collegiate, collective, democratic values. She points that this process started with an external decision undertaken by the ISA without considering the ESA. Nevertheless, she comments that the ESA proved flexible, strong, and democratic to accommodate to the situation to avoid overlapping. Also, she stresses the importance of consideration for young researchers, early careers, and PhD. She concludes by affirming that the ESA will take the best decision, but that the ESA has no other choice than to try to find a solution.
- DI (ESA Member) questions on the difference between Q2 and Q3 to be voted. He points out the difference between the Statutes and the By-laws and the need for a General Assembly or Extraordinary General Assembly to vote on future postponements of conferences.
- KG (ESA Vice-President) explains that currently ESA is governed by the Statutes that need a thorough revision; and by By-Laws, considered as lower regulations. She comments that as it was commanded on the last GA on 3 September 2021, a comprehensive review of the Statutes is on the go, being needed to transfer all the concerned By-Laws regarding the conferences to the Statutes. She emphasizes that during the process all RNs and NAs will have the chance to review and suggest alterations to the ESA Statutes.
- LF (ESA President) reminds that all the changes proposed were revised by legal advisors on French law. She mentions that the comprehensive revision of the ESA Statutes will be a collective wilder process involving members, RNs, NAs.
- KG (ESA Vice-President) stresses that By-Laws do not regulate the GA, reason why it was not added any provision. She reinforces the need for introducing this in the comprehensive review of the Statutes.
- LF (ESA President) clarifies that the rules regarding mid-term conferences continue the same, either the 16th Conference is organized in 2023 or 2024.

- DI (ESA Member) asks if it was possible to include the validation by voting on the Q3, setting precedent for future situations.
- KG (ESA Vice-President) informs that the changes to voting in the GA were suggested by the Executive Committee, in prevision to a near future comprehensive review of the Statutes. She stresses that these changes meet an imminent decision regarding the upcoming conference. She refers that as per the current Statutes changes must be advertised within a minimum of 12 weeks in advance, the reason why alterations were unable.
- LF (ESA President) emphasizes the compromise of reviewing the Statutes in this term in a comprehensive way and proceeds to the voting.

6. Voting:

- LF (ESA President) explains the process of vote.
- LF (ESA President) emphasizes that members must use the email used to log on the ESA website as previously communicated by the ESA office. She summarizes the information shared via the usual communication channels of the ESA.
- LF (ESA President) informs that the system will only consider members in good standing.
- **Voting:** Amendments to Article 5 of the ESA Statutes: The General Assembly
Question 1 Do you approve the new wording of Article 5 of the ESA Statutes?

Article 5.

The General Assembly shall meet during the Conference of the European Sociological Association and shall be held at least every four years.

In exceptional circumstances, the General Assembly may be held outside the time of the Conference.

The General Assembly may be held by video conference or other virtual format.

The General Assembly may be recorded by decision of the President.

The documents (the minutes; any amended Statutes; etc.) may be signed electronically at the end of the meeting.

Results of the voting:

- 144 responses:
 - 95 approve
 - 1 do not approve
 - 1 abstain

- 47 invalid votes

Amendments have been approved.

- **Voting:** Amendments to Article 6 of the ESA Statutes: The President and the Executive Committee.

Q.2 Do you approve the addition of a clause 6.3 to the ESA Statutes, allowing, in exceptional circumstances only, the President and the Executive Committee to serve ESA for an extended period of up to one additional year?

6.3. In exceptional circumstances, the term of office of the President and the Executive Committee may be extended by a maximum of one year.

This extension must be approved by a majority of the General Assembly, i.e. 51% of the ESA members who took part in the vote.

Results of the voting:

- 144 responses:
 - 85 approve
 - 6 do not approve
 - 6 abstain
 - 45 invalid votes

Amendments have been approved.

- **Voting:** Amendments to Article 2 of the ESA by-law: ESA Conferences

Q.3 Do you approve the addition of an extra clause 2.1 to the ESA By- laws, allowing, in exceptional circumstances only, the Conference to be postponed by no more than one year?

2.1. In exceptional circumstances, the Conference can be postponed by a maximum of one year.

Results of the voting:

- 144 responses:
 - 85 approve
 - 6 do not approve
 - 6 abstain
 - 47 invalid votes

Amendments have been approved.

- **Voting:** Conference postponement, extension of the term of office and prolongation of membership

Q.4 Do you approve a postponement of the ESA Conference from 2023 to 2024, an extension of the term of office for the current President and the Executive Committee by one year and prolonging the membership of ESA members in good standing for one year at no additional cost?

- Results of the voting:
 - 144 responses:
 - 85 approve
 - 6 do not approve
 - 6 abstain
 - 47 invalid votes

Motion has been approved.

7. Comments

- PV (NA DE) confirms voting and waiting for the confirmation mail.
- LF (ESA President) informs that emails may take some time, especially if they are institutional emails with strong firewalls and other protection dispositive. Emphasizes that the vote was counted in case the email used was the same utilized to log in on the ESA website and thus will match the database. Also invites to print proof of vote directly from the website.

8. Announcement

- LF (ESA President) presents the results of the voting and confirms that the 4 proposals were approved by the participants in the EGA.
- She points out that the Executive Committee will implement these changes.
- She states that the place for the 16th ESA Conference will be in Porto in 2024.

9. Other matters

- LF (ESA President) opens the floor for other matters.
- BB (ESA Member) in light of the war in Ukraine compels Russian sociologists to tell how the situation for them is at the moment.
- LF (ESA President) reinforces the solidarity measures and statements by the ESA.

- IT (ESA Member) reports that her colleagues in Russia face difficult times, with hard fines and the possibility to face prison. She reports a military context with special surveillance on academia. She reports that individually people can sign the petitions to stop the war. She reports that hundreds of colleagues are dismissed from their jobs based on their opposition to war and the regime.
- BB (ESA Member) empathize with those colleagues in Russia who are against the war.
- IT (ESA Member) remarks that the investigations against academics opposing the war have just started, and nobody knows what is next. She underlines that many colleagues are still inland and they have had not the chance to run away.
- ML (ESA ExeC) asks about the possibility to have feedback from Russian colleagues to coordinate a better response beyond statements. He asks IT if she knows what happened to the colleagues in St. Petersburg who signed the statement in opposition to the regime.
- MO (ESA ExeC) brings the different statements and actions already undertaken by the ESA and suggests looking at the different efforts already driven by the RNs and the NAs.
- LP (ESA Member) suggests the elaboration of special issues on the European Sociologist that contribute to giving visibility to the research undertaken by the colleagues in Ukraine.
- LF (ESA President) informs that the CFP to the next European Sociologist is already in circulation but that it will be dealt with by the NAs and the RNs as it encourages the participation of the different organs of the ESA. Members will submit their proposals to the NAs and the RNs and a first selection will be done by the RNs coordinators and NAs Committees.
- LP (ESA ExeC) confirms that the CFP is in circulation; the submission deadline is June, 15. It is expected to publish in September, or in a reasonable time depending on the number of submissions.
- MA (ESA NA Council) invites NA representatives to the next meeting and congratulates all participants for listening to all voices, giving room for those who defend freedom and those who suffer from the war.
- IT (ESA Member) appreciates the social science interest, and asks for thinking on the Ukrainian colleagues who are suffering.
- LF (ESA President) invites the Ukrainian colleagues to speak.
- OM (ESA Member) from Ukraine appreciates the ESA's support.
- LF (ESA President) thanks the Ukrainian and the Russian colleagues for sharing their thoughts and ensures that the ESA will continue to work to support those affected by the war. Closes the assembly by appealing for suggestions and participation from the ESA members and thanking for the participation.

10. End of the meeting at 15:33 CET.