

European Sociological Association General Assembly - Minutes

The General Assembly was held online through Zoom on Friday, September 3, 2021, at 14:15 CET and had a duration of 02:43:00min.

1. Marta Soler, ESA President, opens the Assembly

- Explanation of the development of the meeting.
- Presentation of the procedures for voting.

2. Presentation of the President's Report (Marta Soler, ESA President)

- MS summarizes ESA2021 Conference's highlights: Largest ESA Conference: +3850 attendees, 74 countries, +3500 papers presented, +900 sessions, high engagement throughout the Conference.
- MS summarizes the President's Report (see report).
- **Decision on the next Conference postponed;** decision to be taken by the next Executive, taking into account the new reality.

3. Presentation of the sub-committee reports (Milica Antic Gaber, ESA Exec):

- MAG summarizes the different sub-committees reports on behalf of the Executive Committee (see reports).
- **ESA RN Committee** has increased flexibility for RNs to organize themselves, including deadlines application for funding. Involvement of RN members in The European Sociologist (TES).
- **NA Council:** A Semi-Plenary session has been organized on behalf of the NA for the first time at the ESA Conference, and also for the first time, NA have representation in the ESA Nominations Committee.
- **Policy Committee:** preparation of proposals for the code of Conduct for ESA Executive Committee (ExeC) members & employees and guidelines for ESA journals.
- **International relations:** ESA is an institutional member of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and the European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH), participating actively in these organizations.
- **Publications Committee:**
 - Involve the editors of ESA journals in all relevant debates.
 - Elaborate clear & transparent criteria for ESA's publishing strategy.
 - Introduction of the Best Article Award for both ESA journals.
- **Post graduate committee:**
 - Organization of 2 PhD Summer Schools (Ljubljana, 2020; Barcelona, 2021) in hybrid mode. Students from Europe and abroad.
 - Introduction of a Young Scholar Award.
- **Comments:**
 - There is a suggestion that the stepping down of four ESA ExeC members shall be included in ESA's report. President MS points out that it has been included in the President's report.
 - MS (ESA President) explains that for the correct development of the meeting the chat will not be read, but it will be saved for the record (ESA archive). She invites members to raise their hands instead and participate in the discussion.
 - E (ESA member), AMA (RN07) and OB (RN14) ask about the resignation of the 4 ExeC members. MS (ESA President) says that this is explained in the president's report and had already been clarified in the previous reporting. Four members decided to resign after disagreement with the majority on a voting. To resign was part of their rights.

- LP (ESA ExeC) suggests moving on with the meeting since the mentioned decision is linked to other aspects to be discussed in the Finance & Publications report.
- LH (ESA member) asks why the reports were shared this morning. MS (ESA President) acknowledges it was late and reminds that if members have not been able to see the reports, they can decide to approve or not to approve them.
- **Approval of Reports by President and Executive Committee:**
 - 1st voting is cancelled because the third option (I abstain) did not appear. It will be repeated at the end of the meeting (2nd voting).
 - Adhoc results of 2nd voting:
 - 118 responses:
 - 69 approve
 - 36 do not approve
 - 13 abstain

The Reports by President and Executive Committee have been approved.

4. Approval of Treasurer Report (Teresa Consoli, ESA ExeC)

- Efforts to promote transparency and accountability:
 - Establishing a payment authorization protocol (ESA did not have one before).
 - Creation of a prototype for the Conference budget.
 - Reinforcement of the ESA Administration with Esmeray Yogun (Executive Secretary).
 - Availability of all documents to all elected Exec members.
 - Public ESA budget (for the first time) available to all ESA members; clear budget lines to help future Executives to make informed decisions.
- Presentation of ESA's expenses for 2020.
- Lowest cost for Conference fee (lowest in ESA's history) and highest number of delegates (close to 4000) Highest number of ESA members in history: 3030 members.
- **Comments:**
 - LN & EL (ESA members) ask for a clarification of the administration costs and particularly about the legal fees. TC (Treasurer) explains that the legal fees are included in different points, for instance, legal support was required in the preparation of the Conference due to the pandemic; all legal expenses related to personnel are included under that heading.
 - TC (Treasurer) explains that the ESA buffer has also been increased by 50K for each of the savings of the ESA.
 - KK & LN (ESA members) ask for the budget for the whole period (including 2021), as a requisite to relieve the current ExeC. TC (Treasurer) clarifies that the conferences is ongoing and thus the budget is not closed. It will be the task of the next ExeC to approve the current 2021 exercise, as it has been the regular practice in ESA. The approval is for the 2020 budget. There is only a provisional budget for 2021.
 - MS (ESA President) clarifies that the 2020 budget will be public on ESA's website and that when the 2021 exercise will close it will also be available if the next ExeC decides to continue in this transparent way.

- **Approval of Treasurer Report**

- Adhoc results of the voting:
 - 219 responses:
 - 120 approve
 - 53 do not approve
 - 43 abstain

The Treasurer Report has been approved.

5. ESA publication strategy (Ludger Pries, ESA ExeC)

- In Manchester GA, the outgoing president, SS, announced that ESA would shift all journals to a new publisher (Bristol University Press) and open a 3rd scientific journal in full Open Access. This was challenging because:
 - There was no specific plan for this 3rd journal.
 - The editors of the two already existing journals were not involved in any discussion about this, including the unique selling point of the new journal.
 - The legal contract with Taylor&Francis (T&F) did not allow a fast termination except by 100,000 Pounds, which surpassed ESA's financial possibilities.

The Publication Committee managed this situation by:

- Including all journal editors in the discussions and creating a democratic and transparent work atmosphere. More than 10 meetings were held over the 2year period.
 - After extensive debates in the Publications Committee and Exec, the ESA President signed an addendum to ESA's contract with T&F that gives ESA full sovereignty to finish its commercial relationship with Taylor & Francis in December 2023 without any payment, and T&F is obligated to pass all information on subscription, etc., without which we would not be able to maintain the journals.
 - Four Exec members did not agree with this, one resigned from the Publication Committee, and later on, they resigned from the ExeC.
- The next ExeC will have all the liberty to deliberate with the editor's team, with T&F, and with other publishers about the future of the two ESA journals and a possible 3rd journal after 2023.
 - The editorial team of T&F was renewed, and the Best Article Award was introduced in the two journals.
 - The Publications Committee elaborated specific criteria and recommendations for ESA's publications strategy in order to move the two journals to full open access by 2024. Four criteria were defined regarding the scientific quality of the journals, inclusiveness and transparency, editorial professionalism and financial sustainability. Recommendations have been made for the next ExeC.
 - **Comments:**
 - EL (editor of EJCPs in 2019) wanted to clarify that as an editor she was aware of the tender process of the former ExeC with Bristol University Press.
 - LN (ESA member) voices based on the chat that the resigners did not resign because of the publications.
 - LP (ExeC member) clarified that they did not get any information from the previous Committee on any specific strategy.
 - MS insists on talking only about the current term, not about what the previous Executive did.

6. **Proposal of modification of Articles 6.4, 6.8 and 14 of the Statutes** (Kaja Gadowska, ESA ExeC)

- During the current period the ExeC has discussed which is the organizational structure of ESA could better fit the 21st Century needs of our association.
- The Policy Committee makes a proposal of changes (articles 6.4., 6.8. and 14 of the Statutes).
- Following the Statutes on May 7th the ExeC unanimously accepted the proposal and univocally recommended it to membership. Following the ESA Statutes, such changes were announced 12 weeks in advance (on June 11th, 2021) on the website to be voted during the General Assembly. In the announcement there was also a link to provide comments; no comments have been made. Approval requires 51% majority of ESA members in good standing to take part in the vote.
- The proposed changes would facilitate flexibility in the administrative structure of ESA, adjustment of administrative support, and be aligned with similar organizations such as the ISA.
- **Comments:**
 - LH (ESA member) points out that further in the agenda there is a point for a more comprehensive revision of the ESA statutes and questions the order in the agenda. MS (ESA President) explains that the concerns that these changes reflect have come from different members, in different moments and different meetings and the rationale was well presented. Each proposal is a different vote.
 - PS (ESA member) states that there are other articles in the Statutes that need revision and suggests postponing the approval of changes in statutes to the next GA.
 - IB (ESA member) refers to Torino, in which there was a similar scenario.

- **Vote on Changes in ESA Statutes:**
 - Adhoc results of the voting:
 - 265 responses:
 - 117 approve
 - 102 do not approve
 - 45 abstain

The Changes in ESA Statutes have not been approved.

7. Proposal of modification of Ethical Guidelines

- MS invites AV (Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence in Universities) to present the rationale for the proposal of the new Ethical Guideline.
- AV proposes to face sexual harassment, revictimization and Second Order of Sexual Harassment in the ethical guidelines of ESA, to include this issue explicitly and to foster bystander intervention by recognizing these.
- **Comments:**
 - JH and TV (ESA members) question technical issues in the voting procedure and suggest a new point of order, to verify that people are not voting more than once. MS (ESA President) explains that the voting will be checked later (verifying membership and eliminating double votes), and that the procedure is an improvement regarding votings in former ESA GA.
 - BB (ESA member) asks for clarification of the outcome of the previous voting. MS clarifies the change of statutes was not approved.
 - OB (RN14) says that being from a feminist network she would like to include a sexual harassment code in ESA, but because she does not think that the GA operates in ethical ways and feels this vote is out of place.
 - PH & ZS (ESA members) propose a group of members to be proposed as vote checkers who are not members of the current ExeC. MS says it is a good idea if the GA agrees.
 - MS asks for comments only on the issue of addressing sexual harassment in ESA Ethical Guidelines. No comments.

- **Vote on Changes in ESA Ethical Guidelines:**

- Adhoc results of the voting:
 - 172 responses:
 - 138 approve
 - 10 do not approve
 - 23 abstain

The modification of ESA's Ethical Guidelines has been approved.

8. Adhoc proposal "Voted options during the General Assembly shall be revised by ESA members not in the current Executive"

- **Vote:**
 - Adhoc results of the voting:
 - 126 responses:
 - 82 approve
 - 35 do not approve
 - 9 abstain

The Adhoc proposal "Voted options during the GA shall be revised by ESA members, not in the current Executive" has been approved.

9. Proposal of a comprehensive review of Statutes during 2021-23

- MS invites LH (ESA member) to present a motion that has been put forward by RN02, RN05, RN06, RN23 and the 2019 Advisory Board. LH explains that this requests the next ExeC to conduct a comprehensive review of ESA Statutes, including a consultation process with the RN Council, the NA Council and as far as feasible with the members. This review should be available at the

very latest in Spring 2023 or 4 months before the General Assembly to allow for sufficient discussion.

- **Comments:**
 - DS (ESA member) expresses that the GA should be null because of how it was organized. MS (ESA President) explains that all things to be voted were posted on the website two months in advance and announced to all members, no comments were submitted. It was announced as well at the RN council meeting in May 2021. The reports of the President and the Reports of the Committees were placed this morning. The agenda was placed 6 weeks in advance.
 - AT (ESA member) suggest voting on having a new or extended GA. MS (ESA president) explains that the Statutes must be followed and that the GA has to take place during the Conference with all the points of the Agenda. If members want, as part of the revision of Statutes, changes on the process of the GA can also be proposed.
- **Vote:**
 - Adhoc results of the voting:
 - 131 responses:
 - 82 approve
 - 40 do not approve
 - 8 abstain

The proposal of a comprehensive review of Statutes during 2021-23 has been approved.

10. Results from the Elections (Thomas Kostelecky, ESA ExeC)

- The election started on August 19th, 2021 and finished on September 2nd, 2021. All ESA members in good standing could vote. The turnout was 36,8% (1124 voters) highest number in turnout compared to previous elections.
- In the elections for RN Council, the elected Chair is Bernadette Brereton, and the NA Council elected Chair is Maria Carmela Agodi.
- For the Executive Committee, the fourteen candidates with the higher number of votes were the ones below, with representation from both genders, as well as representativity across Europe:

ESA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2021

Teresa Sordé Marti, Spain	435	41.3
Loukia-Maria Fratsea, Greece	413	39.3
Ana Cristina Santos, Portugal	405	38.5
Perti Alasuutari, Finland	390	37.1
Tiziana Nazio, Italy	377	35.8
Ana Vidu, Spain	370	35.2
Kaja Gadowska, Poland	342	32.5
Maggie O'Neill, Ireland	335	31.8
Marilena Macaluso, Italy	328	31.2
Nilay Çabuk Kaya, Turkey	323	30.7
Michalis Lianos, France	302	28.7
Krešimir Žažar, Croatia	291	27.7
Gary Pollock, UK	267	25.4
Luigi Pellizzoni, Italy	267	25.4

- For the new ESA President, the results are:
 - Ligia Ferro - Portugal 565 (52.6%)
 - Laura Horn - Denmark 296 (27.6%)
 - Pertti Alasuutari - Finland 213 (19.8%)
- **Comments:**
 - LF (New ESA President) addresses the ESA members and the newly elected ExeC colleagues saying that she will do her best for ESA and that she counts on the participation and creativity of all the ESA members.

11. Floor open for proposals for ESA Governance (Apostolos Papadopoulos, ESA ExeC)

- AP (ESA ExeC) expresses that ESA is a democratic association on the basis of transparency, accountability, integrity and good governance and management, which should be followed in all procedures and everyday activities of the organization. Since these principles are used by both those against and those for democracy, the actions and practices of people are the basis for putting forward these principles. The current ExeC & President have done many efforts to emphasize these basic democratic rules and making possible that higher transparency, accountability and good governance are among the priorities in ESA. According to the Statutes the mandate relies on ESA's elected ExeC, and the GA is the body to approve or disapprove the actions by the ExeC.
- PC (RN32) points that the timing of the Conference coincided with the ECPR which proved problematic for members in her RN to participate in both events. She requests some coordination for the next Conference in order to avoid overlap in the future.

12. End of meeting at 16:58 CET