# Minutes of EDF Executive Committee Online

# 13th May 2020 10:00 am- 13:30 pm

Present: Pirkko Mahlamäki, Humberto Insolera, Klaus Lachwitz, Nadia Hadad, Ana Pelaez, Maureen Piggot, Gunta Anca, Pat Clarke, Rodolfo Cattani, Albert Prévos, Yannis Vardakastanis

In attendance: Catherine Naughton, Muriel Da Via, Raquel Riaza

1. Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda

The President welcomed the participants and pointed out that it was the second online meeting of the Executive Committee. He expressed his wishes for everyone to be well. The agenda was adopted with two points of any other business.

* The European Disability strategy (proposed by the Director)
* Informal discussions of the Board (proposed by Pirkko Mahlamäki)

The President also confirmed that advocating work to create a Women’s Committee at IDA was a good idea but that this item should be prepared and discussed a future meeting; he committed to continuing to advocate this point towards IDA.

1. EDF Annual General Assembly – overview of results- verbal presentation

The President gave the floor to the director who recalled that at the last meeting Executive Committee meeting it was decided to propose to the Board that the AGA become an online procedure. She recalled that the deadline for receiving votes was on Monday.

The Director explained that the online procedure was reviewed by a lawyer from White and Case, and that the invitations to the Board were revised to reflect the new procedure. She added that the Board unanimously adopted this approach, that the documents were issued for the AGA, with one week for questions and comments, and many were received, adding a great deal of details by members, to the Covid-19 resolution which became very heavy and detailed.

The Director explained that all efforts had been made to incorporate key issues for members and that this process took place in close discussion with the EDF President. The President advised to keep comments and inputs which were in line with the positions adopted till now by EDF on Covid-19.

The Director explained that the results of the voting were that the 2019 Annual Report (DOC-AGA-20-05-01) was adopted unanimously with one abstention, the 2021 Work Programme (DOC-AGA-20-05-02) was adopted unanimously, the 2021 Budget (DOC-AGA-20-05-03) was adopted unanimously, the 2019 Audited Financial Accounts (DOC-AGA-20-05-04) and Board discharge was adopted unanimously with one abstention, the appointed Internal auditors for 2021 (DOC-AGA-20-05-05) were adopted unanimously and the update on EDF address, the Director management and Board Member list (DOC-AGA-20-05-06) was adopted unanimously.

Finally, she mentioned that the Resolution on Covid-19 and Persons with disabilities (DOC-AGA-20-05-07) was adopted by majority with 4 abstentions including one from the Estonian National Council, EUD and from the Belgian National Council that was accompanied by a letter which they would like to be disseminated. The Director specified that the BDF did not accept the language on drastically reducing the number of people in residential institutions and that they asserted that now there will be serious risks to all services and that there was a need for caution on this.

The Director added that the legal advice from White and Case allowed to adopt the resolution as a simple majority was needed.

She also informed the Executive Committee members that the minutes would be drafted by Muriel Da Via and revised by the Secretary as usual before circulation.

1. Covid-19 Internal issues
   1. Risk assessment 2020 (DOC-EXEC-20-05-01)

The President gave the floor to the Director who explained the document that was outlining the new risks facing EDF as an organisation in light of Covid-19. She went through all the risks identified in the document with regards to health (no travel, physical meetings cancelled), statutory risks (most of them are solved, the Board in Berlin still be decided on, evaluation of risks when organising physical meeting), with regards to Finances (risk on missing income for 2020 and for following years), with regards to work programme (insure the full contracted work programme is performed).

On Health and Safety, it was acknowledged that the risk was not only about health but also about capacity due to the risks of staff getting sick and the results this would have on EDFs work, specifically for key roles which are hard to replace, such as the Finance Manager.

The treasurer also reminded that a risk related on Finance was also about the amendment to the budget that needed to be approved by the European Commission.

The Director confirmed that travel insurance was solicited to ensure the lowest cancellation costs. She confirmed that an item about Membership fee would be included in the risk assessment document. She confirmed that the European Commission had no flexibility on the level of Co-financing (that would remain 20 % of the overall EC Grant).

The Executive Committee decided to cancel the meeting that was foreseen in Portugal in June and to keep the deposit valid for next year (possibility until June 2021).

Decisions and actions:

* The Director to update the risk assessment
* Executive committee meeting in Portugal in June cancelled for now
  1. Finance 2020 + 2021 (DOC-EXEC-20-05-02)

The President gave the floor to the Treasurer who presented the Financial projections based on what we foresee from now till the end of the year.

She explained that, on the expense side, we expected to spend generally less than foreseen and that within Budget headings:

* staff costs remain the same (staff working as planned and paid within EU Grant),
* Travel and subsistence costs will show underspent (this has no consequence on the EU Grant),
* Costs for services will be increased (mostly due to the organisation of more webinars, more development of the website and an additional publication on Covid-19 (this requires to be communicated to the EC Grant Manager so that we are able to take this into account for our final reporting),
* Administration costs will slightly increase but within a reasonable percentage or might even not increase at all.

She explained that, on the income side, the co-funding requirements should be met mostly with:

* member’s contributions (membership fees, Once contribution),
* Contribution to regular donors (Siteimprove, Wellspring, etc.)
* Project admin funding (Sight Savers, Leonard Cheshire, etc.)

She said that we expected to receive less income with regards to the organisation of governing bodies (contributions from Croatia and Germany) but that this was still under negotiation (based on the possibility to still organise an alternative event).

She explained that, as far as membership fees were concerned, the Secretariat had foreseen to send payment reminders before the summer and that, until to date, we have received 110 000 € out of the 180 000 € foreseen.

The Treasurer said that we targeted to end the year with a balanced result. The Treasurer explained that the split of membership fees income was related to the need we had to consider part of this amount as co-financing and part of it as unrestricted funds. The Treasurer also confirmed that amendment to the budget was possible towards the EC and that the procedure was foreseen by the EC.

Ana Pelaez reminded that we should refer to Grant from Once Foundation and not Once Grant. She also confirmed that all efforts would be made so that Once Foundation could be granted this year although some uncertainty remained.

The Treasurer concluded that these projections would be reviewed regularly until the end of the year. The President confirmed that a further review would take place in September.

The Director explained that the budget for 2021 was already approved by the AGA and that we should examine the details in the course of July.

* 1. Human resources (DOC-EXEC-20-05-03)

The President gave the floor to the Director who recalled that

* Working from home was still recommended in Belgium,
* The office space and the building were available and kept safe for staff who wishes to use it and that the Human Resources Officer was organising the presence of the office in such a way that distancing is could be possible,
* Public transport was still to be avoided and if not possible, mask wearing was made compulsory,
* 2 team meetings per week take place, completed with regular smaller meetings and update with the Director,
* Holidays had been organised to be taken by the staff (alternatively in order to remain open) during the summer in view of a very busy autumn,
* 2 Maternity replacements had been put in place in agreement with the Executive Committee,
* Work place regulations already included clear rules and guidelines on teleworking.

The Director confirmed that the office will not be closed during the summer and that staff would go on holiday alternately in order to keep part of the team available throughout summer, that the work related to Covid-19 would continue over the summer.

1. COVID 19 EDF work planning (DOC-EXEC-20-05-04)

The President gave the floor to the Director who presented the document on Covid-19 workplan. She said that the document would be reviewed after the meeting before being presented to the Board.

She highlighted the huge changes in work, personal lives and in all aspects of life the Covid-19 situation had and how this situation was evolving and changing quickly. She said that we need remain flexible considering this evolution. She presented work done so far, described in the document, including our impact so far.

She also explained that the 4 webinars organised on the subject helped members to deal with all aspects of the situation. She announced a fifth webinar for members on women with disabilities to take place in June. She added that elements related to the exit of the crisis was also being drafted.

She explained the work done and foreseen in the various areas: Human rights monitoring, Women with disability, influencing the EU, strengthening the response of the Disability movement, communication to the public, international cooperation.

She proposed some budget reallocation with regards to the conception (expert costs) and publication (design and printing costs) of a human rights report on the Covid-19 instead of the foreseen human rights report on political participation (that could be postponed to the following year). She also encouraged members of the Committee to propose subjects for future webinars, actions on EU policy influencing and other suggestions.

The Executive Committee agreed on the production of a report on Covid-19 and encouraged the Secretariat to continue producing thorough analysis documents (including short and long term good practices, consequences of the economic crisis) and webinars that are very useful (a webinar on Women with disabilities with the participation of the European Women’s lobby was suggested, on mental health, on passengers and travel). The need to include a specific focus on Covid-19 in all areas of work was acknowledged.

The Director confirmed that a concept note on the report would be prepared and submitted to the Executive Committee members. She specified that the report would be based on recommendations to Member States on how the situation has been addressed and how it should in the future. Executive committee members highlighted a range of important issues to consider for the report, including the social and economic crisis which we will face and which will impact persons with disabilities for yeas to come.

The President thanked the Executive Committee members for their comments and for encouraging the work we have started related to that crisis. He outlined the effects of this crisis affecting all areas of life and especially within the democratic dimension. He highlighted the huge number of disabled people who died from the disease and the need to consider this in our view and vision of the crisis. He insisted on the need that leaders take the good decisions and that would determine the future of people including people with disabilities. He suggested that the publication we are preparing should also make reference to more dynamic language, such as a Manifesto and be focused on dignity and security of people and that this manifesto could be used by our members as capacity building tool.

The Director concluded that a concept on the development of the report would be drafted taking into account all suggestions expressed by the Executive Committee.

Decisions:

* EDF human rights report on Political participation is postponed, and this years human rights report will be on COVID 19 which also implies reallocation of Budget.
* Next executive committee meeting will be on May 28th with 2 core items- the human rights report concept note as well as the European Disability Strategy EDF position.

1. Overview of governing body meetings and other meetings 2020 (DOC-EXEC-20-05-05)

The President gave the floor to the Director who asked for input in case meetings were missing. No meeting was added by the Executive Committee members.

1. AOB

* EDF executive will review the position on the European Disability strategy on May 28th
* At a future Board meeting, board members who wish to discuss informally afterwards will be welcome to stay at the meeting- Pirkko Mahlamäki will discuss the idea she has with the director in order to develop the idea of an informal discussion of the Board members.

Decisions:

* The Director to update the risk assessment based on the executive discussions
* Executive committee meeting in Portugal in June cancelled for now
* EDF human rights report on Political participation is postponed, and this year’s human rights report will be on COVID 19 which also implies reallocation of Budget.
* Next executive committee meeting will be on May 28th with 2 core items- the human rights report concept note as well as the European Disability Strategy EDF position.