

Minutes of the ENA General Assembly Meeting held on 27th June 2018

(10:30 – 16:10) at Jurys Inn Oxford, Godstow Road, Oxford, United Kingdom.

Present:

Henning Roed (DP - Denmark), Patrick Svensson (LRF-T - Sweden), Arttu Haverinen (TP - Finland), Ahmet Dündar (SUSBIR – Turkey), Umut Sakarya (SUSBIR – Turkey), Val Farrell (IHNSA – Ireland), Pat Farrel (IHNSA – Ireland), David Brown (HTA - United Kingdom), Albano Moreira da Silva (APPP-FN - Portugal), Dora Aebi (Jardin Suisse – Switzerland), Markus Guhl (BdB - Germany), Henk Raaijmakers (LTO - Netherlands), Mateusz Milczyński (ZSzP - Poland), Renata Fryszkowska-Madej (ZSzP - Poland), Stanislav Dontsov (UPIA - Ukraine), Jan Veltmans (LTO - Netherlands), Jaume Riera (Fepex – Spain), Zoltán Sinkó (MDE – Hungary), Miet Poppe (AVBS - Belgium), Maurizio Lapponi (ANVE - Italy), Edoardo Sciutti (ANVE – Italy), Luigi Pagliani (ANVE - Italy), Tatyana Boyadzhieva (BAOPN - Bulgaria), Dragana Skočajić (SLHS – Serbia), Leon Smet (Anthos – Netherlands, Promotion WG Chariman), Willy De Nolf (AVBS - Belgium - **Treasurer**), Jan-Dieter Bruns (BdB – Germany – ENA **Vice-President**), Tim Edwards (United Kingdom – ENA **President**) and Josep M. Pagès (ENA **Secretary General** -SG in the text-).

1. President's Welcome.

President Tim Edwards opened the meeting welcoming all the attendants and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Apologies for absence.

Maja Persson (LRF-T - Sweden), Caroline Föllmi (Jardin Suisse – Switzerland), Nikos Thymakis (HEPMEA – Greece), Jyri Uimonen (TP - Finland), Hatice Unal and Miray Engin (Susbir – Turkey), Boyana Vasileva (BAOPN - Bulgaria), Harm Horlings (ANTHOS - Netherlands, Certifications and Labels WG Chairman), Emmanuelle Bougault (Val'hor – France) and Luis Martín (Fepex – Spain) had sent apologies. SG informed that Dragana Skočajić (RS) and Pavel Halama (CZ) were arriving slightly late.

3. Agreement of the Agenda.

The President proposed to move the # 17 Elections to the very end, which was approved. The agenda was adopted.

4. Minutes: approval of the minutes of the previous GA meeting held on 25 January 2018 in Essen (Germany).

After answering a question from Albano Moreira da Silva (PT), the minutes of the last General Assembly meeting were approved and agreed as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes not included on the agenda.

The President explained that the SG had not produced a data summary of the movement of products for each category of the CN codes and asked to have it completed by the next GA meeting.



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6. ENA Articles of Association and Domestic Regulations:

President Tim Edwards reminded the GA that the Domestic Regulations are easily modified by the GA and that modifications to the Articles of Association need to be officially filed, with a cost. The President added that ENA is officially based at AVBS office and because AVBS has moved, ENA must formally agree on changing the Registered Office.

a. Modification of the Article 3 of the Articles of Association.

It was unanimously **agreed to modify** the article 3 of the Articles of Association as follows: "Article 3: Registered office. The **registered office** of the Association shall be located in Kortrijksesteenweg 1144 J, 9051 Sint-Denijs-Westrem, in the judicial district of Ghent."

b. Addition of article 4bis to chapter IV. Budget and Financial Management of the Domestic Regulations.

President Tim Edwards explained that the ENA financial year ends in December and that, by law, by the end of June, the General Assembly should have met and approved the accounts. He added that the accounts were usually approved in the winter GA meeting but with the new European project, the accounts would not be ready by the end of January, and furthermore, the summer meeting has been previously held in the beginning of July. For these reasons, ENA needed a way of approving the accounts before the summer General Assembly meeting, if it were going to be held after 30th of June. It was proposed to the GA to add the following article after article 4 of 'chapter IV. Budget and Financial Management of the Domestic Regulations': "4. bis. If at the time of the General Assembly meeting the annual accounts of the preceding financial year were not fully processed for the reason that a specific project, in which the General Assembly has authorised ENA to participate, had a large volume of financial information to process, the General Assembly may delegate the approval in the Board of Directors, provided that the annual accounts have been previously audited by an external professional auditor and that the audited statements have been shared with ENA members. This article will only apply to the financial accounts directly related to the specific project and won't apply to the general accounts or the general budget."

The French organisation had sent amendments to the proposed article to have an electronic approval to guarantee the involvement and the speech of ENA's members. The President defended that clearly the GA must have been circulated with the information so, if there was a problem with it, the members would have the opportunity to object. SG added that ENA members should feel secure because there will also be an external audit as an additional guarantee. **The proposed text was unanimously approved.**

8. Environmental and sustainable certifications and labels.

The President explained that Harm Horlings (Certifications and Labels WG Chairman) had been leading a proposal in which France and Italy had shown an interest. SG summarized the dedicated meeting held on 7th of June in Brussels in order to have a unified label that might allow nurseries to send plants to all counties avoiding a certification for each country. Several options were discussed at that meeting

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and the decision was to ask FSI for cooperation. Some countries had shown interest in having a common certification and other countries would prefer to leave it to each nursery's decision.

It was agreed that ENA members would be informed of the new developments and that ENA was open to host the discussions when having a proposal.

9. Promotion Working Group: "Green Cities for a Sustainable Europe" project 2018-2020.

Leon Smet, Promotion WG Chairman, informed the GA about the meeting held the previous day with the participants (BE, BG, DE, DK, FR, NL, UK). He also informed the GA about the VAT situation of ENA: it's unclear whether ENA can apply for the deductible VAT system as any commercial company and he added that a meeting with a Belgian tax authority was forecasted for early July. Regarding the project, he showed the new campaign logo, the website layout, explained that some B2B activities had already been executed in some countries and that a zero measurement had also been executed to allow the European Commission to evaluate the project upon completion. He said that a report and the website with all B2B activities shown on a calendar will be shared with ENA members and he explained that a small discussion had already started on applying for a new project 2021-2023, open to all ENA countries if allowed by the EU rules.

President Tim Edwards emphasized that this kind of project would be an asset for ENA and its members, and that working together, instead of making small campaigns in each country, we might get important financial aid from the EU. He stressed that some lessons were being learnt on the management of the project that would be useful for the future applications with more countries.

The GA participants agreed that these kinds of projects were the ones that ENA should be involved with. As President Tim Edwards was going to step down at the end of the meeting, he proposed that the new board and the GA should decide the direction to go and the way to do it.

Henk Raaijmakers (NL) advised that it is necessary to do the things that have a real purpose for all members and that it's good to combine actions in different countries, although he recommended to be cautious on employing people and making a big structure organisation, to keep the ENA costs low and affordable for all its members. He also defended the positive message given by the Green Cities project and pointed out that this is outstanding in agriculture. Stanislav Dontsov (UA) suggested that sharing the data about the market for plants, obtained by GfK, might be very useful for all members. Markus Guhl (DE) defended the benefits for all our entire sector and for each ENA member in promoting green cities, including the advantages that are given to us in lobbying politicians at all levels. He proposed to get more money for the overhead in the future.

It was agreed on including the "direction of ENA" discussion in a future General Assembly.



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10. EU Legislation Working Group:

a. IAS Invasive Alien Species.

SG informed that, since the last general assembly, ENA had been accepted as a member of the European Commission Working Group on IAS, in which ENA is represented by Dr Marco Hoffman. SG emphasized that environmentalists were the majority in this WG and that it's easy to include a plant species in the Union list of IAS, quite difficult to prevent its inclusion and very difficult to remove a species from the Union list. One of the reasons is the lack of social and economic information about the species that may concern nurserymen. The President reminded that the EU is continuously working on the update of the Union list and that ENA needs to stay involved and ready to react to any proposal.

President Tim Edwards also encouraged all members to apply for a seat in the EC Working Group on Invasive Alien Species, as there was a new call, to have some more influence in the WG.

Henk Raaijmakers (NL) pointed out that the inclusion of plant species in the Union list is very well prepared, although sometimes new species are added even without having solid scientific evidence, and on the other side, we don't have the tools and the information to prevent it when a species may be of interest for nurseries.

Albano Moreira da Silva (PT) claimed that the EC should also focus on controlling that EU member states control the IAS and receive appropriate funding. SG indicated that the plans to remove IAS are carried out at the MS level.

Jan-Dieter Bruns (DE) asked about the ENA influence on the discussions and the President replied that, being in the WG, ENA has some influence (i.e. *Pennisetum setaceum*, sterile cvs.). Henning Roed (DK) advised not to argue against the list and focus on producing plants that don't damage the environment and that each organisation should work to include IAS in the National Lists instead of the Union List. Henk Raaijmakers (NL) warned that the inclusion of a plant in the Union list means the prohibition of its production and trade, resulting in immediate economic loss for the nurseries. Markus Guhl (DE) observed that our sector doesn't have the socio-economic evidence necessary to avoid the inclusion of some plants on the list and suggested to ask for compensation for the nurseries that may have to destroy the plants after the inclusion in the Union list; lobbying for it should make politicians aware of the value of these plants. Albano Moreira da Silva (PT) suggested to be careful in our actions to avoid sending the wrong message to the public, which is very sensitive to this issue. Jan Veltmans (NL) supported to lobby for a compensation for nurseries, to spread the knowledge of nursery business involved among politicians and even advocated to file a lawsuit against the EC if necessary.

It was agreed on notifying all ENA members about the opportunity to include more people in the EC IAS WG before the 6th of July.

It was agreed on finding out if the economic loss suffered by nurseries that must destroy plants after being included in the IAS Union list would be entitled to compensation, similarly to the plants destroyed under the plant health Directives and, if so, on how to lobby for compensation.

b. Plant health: *Xylella fastidiosa*.

Edoardo Sciutti (IT) gave an update on the Italian situation, explaining that the Demarcated Area (DA) in Salento was moved 20 km up to the North. He emphasized that monitoring in the free regions is being done well and that their authorities are making more controls than in other countries. Despite the information spread by ENA, Edoardo Sciutti (IT) mentioned the miscommunication problems with growers in the UK and opened a discussion. Tim Edwards (UK) defended the right of UK growers to assess and mitigate their own risks, mentioning the fact that the DA is spreading. Edoardo Sciutti (IT) defended that the plants in all regions, except the DA, were really free from *Xf* and that only in the DA, the plants were not destroyed. He also complained about the inaccurate news published in professional magazines regarding the situation in Italy and defended their authorities performing a double control and strictly following the rules in the *Xf* free regions.

Henk Raaijmakers (NL) added that no organisations are forbidding their members to buy plants; they are just informing their members about the risks and asking them to manage them. He mentioned that he had received an angry letter from the Spanish association and asked for comprehension because they had already suffered the destruction of nurseries due to a quarantine pest. Luigi Pagliani (IT) added that Italian farmers have a different point of view from nurserymen and that their organisation is fighting against them to make the authorities comply with the regulations. President Tim Edwards pointed out that the low destruction rate of infected plants in Italy is what makes European nurseries worried and asked the Italian organisation to push their administration to act according to the law. Edoardo Sciutti (IT) asked all delegates to be careful with their communications and messages to their members. The President supported that the message to the nurserymen should be understanding that *Xf* is a threat and every nursery should be looking at their own business trying to establish the size of that threat and then they should be trying to mitigate it, which will be different for each nursery, even if it means that they are not going to buy from high-risk zones. Henk Raaijmakers (NL) introduced that the extra-certification drafted by a WG in the XF-actors project might be a solution.

SG explained that the situation in France had not changed since last year although they have had a few outbreaks this year on ornamental plants but inside the DA, which has not increased.

Jaume Riera (ES) informed about the situation in Spain, in which the Balearic Islands were declared a containment zone, although there is no-risk because plants are not leaving the islands, and mentioned that outbreaks were declared in Alicante on almond trees, in Madrid on olive trees and in Andalusia on *Polygala myrtifolia*, apparently arrived from Portugal, with eradication measures



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taking place. Albano Moreira da Silva (PT) said that in Portugal everything is under control and plants analysed, adding that the growers must pay for the analysis. Henk Raaijmakers (NL) indicated that the *Polygala* could have arrived from other parts of Spain. Albano Moreira da Silva (PT) also explained their experiences with *Phytophthora ramorum* detections on *Camellia* and the reaction of foreign and national plant health authorities.

Ahmet Dündar (TR) explained that *Xf* is also a quarantine pest in Turkey and that their country is free from *Xf*, adding that they have no problem importing plants if they comply with the legal phytosanitary requirements listed in the Turkish law; including an insecticide treatment before the imports and tests that should be made and written in the Phytosanitary Certificate.

Henk Raaijmakers (NL) asked for the opinion of each country about banning production and trade of *Polygala myrtifolia*, as it was under discussion in the European Commission because it is the highest risk plant. The United Kingdom and Belgian delegates supported the idea; Italy, Portugal and Spain will ask their growers and Bulgaria is not producing but importing them.

It was agreed that each organisation would ask their members about banning *Polygala* and to inform ENA about their position.

Henk Raaijmakers (NL) continued his explanation on the assurance scheme that is being drafted by a WG in the XF-actors; 'Voluntary System Preventing Pests' focused on doing the best possible management to avoid *Xylella fastidiosa* and other pests, but that is not a guarantee. Following this VSPP, nurseries within the DA might produce and trade plants. He asked if everyone was in favour of this protocol and defended it as a tool to help exporters. ENA had been participating in a VSPP meeting, ENA members had received the document but ENA had not received any comment from them. Mesh size, propagation material orientation and protocol use in the *Xf* buffer zone were concerns mentioned. **It was agreed on supporting the idea behind the VSPP and to work on further details on the development of the protocol**, although it was not agreed that using this protocol in the Demarcated Areas were enough guarantee and ENA couldn't support this.

Henk Raaijmakers (NL) asked to put together the insurance options in each country. The delegates from Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Italy informed that they were working on having insurance schemes. **It was agreed that all members would inform ENA if they were investigating insurance schemes for plant health purposes, to produce a useful summary.** Henk Raaijmakers (NL) suggested to add the national compensation and contributions for insurance in the report and, after having all the information, to look if the CAP 2020 might include this, as risk management will be one of the big issues.

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11. BREXIT and Plant Health Standards in the UK: consequences for importing plants.

David Brown (UK) explained the official UK position to the group: UK is still in negotiations, it seems that UK will adopt the EU plant health regulation entirely and that they will work with plant passport, at least during the interim period.

Jan-Dieter Bruns (DE) suggested lobbying to avoid quarantine periods for the nursery stock imported in the UK and he showed his confidence in the Tim Edwards' influence in the UK. Tim Edwards (UK) thought that the UK is going to adopt the new EU regulations, but the interpretation of those will be up to the UK, although they didn't think quarantines might be implemented for EU plants. He added that plant production in the UK will probably slowly increase and nurseries are going to apply the HTA protocol on pest prevention to mitigate the plant health risks on imported plants.

Henk Raaijmakers (NL) asked for the possibility to synchronize the protocols developed by HTA and the XF-actors project. Tim Edwards (UK) explained that the UK protocol is more management oriented and is looking to mitigate the risks, although they might become aligned at the end. UK has 120 plant health inspectors in the register and each nursery must have accredited plant health professionals. In the UK they are preparing the courses for more inspectors, they also want the garden centres and landscapers to have plant health professionals and Tim Edwards advocated to have plant health professionals in all nurseries across Europe. He finished by showing his optimism that trade between the EU and the UK will continue.

12. Employee exchange program proposal.

President Tim Edwards explained that an idea to share young workers to have some overseas work experience was developed in ENA; it was not successful due to bureaucratic reasons although he recognised that it's a great idea and that the job for ENA would be to put growers and young people together. He added that the ErasmusPlus program -which has offices in all EU and some non-EU countries- might facilitate the young people exchanges (< 30 years old). Jan-Dieter Bruns (DE) added that ENA organisations should facilitate the contacts in their countries' nurseries.

Luigi Pagliani (IT) pointed out that ErasmusPlus is only for young people but with previous university training; he added that any worker training at a nursery should have a working permit and a contract, which is not easy for foreign people.

Umut Sakarya (TR) defended their exchange proposal and summarized that the aim is to increase global knowledge on nursery production. Jan-Dieter Bruns (DE) defended that these exchanges used to be easy between nurseries' owners. Albano Moreira da Silva (PT) recommended to contact an international organisation that works with this kind of exchanges, to match the offer and the demand, but he didn't specify the name. Val Farrell (IE) added that they have a labour shortage in our sector and general agriculture sectors and that they are having workers from Ukraine and other 3rd countries. Henk Raaijmakers (NL) proposed to ask each country if they have a few nurseries interested in having a trainee. Dragana Skočajić (RS) also showed her interest in this project.



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It was agreed that Turkey, or any other ENA member organisation interested, will write down their proposal, including the specifics of the training they are interested in; ENA would circulate the proposal to all members and each country organisation would identify which nurseries might be willing to participate.

13. ENA reception in Brussels, next autumn.

Markus Guhl (DE) explained to the GA two options to have an ENA reception in Brussels:

- 1) An open meeting with a chairman from the European Parliament (EP), inviting as many MEPs to discuss our European problems; the location could be, for instance, an Embassy of a member state. The problem would be the impossibility to know how many MEPs would participate and ENA doesn't have the means to be a big player in Brussels.
- 2) To invite two or three MEPs and experts from the European Parliament to discuss our issues (like CAP, IAS, etc), including the possibility to organize this meeting in a room of the EP. That would give a more intimate atmosphere and he thought that we surely could get the attendance of a couple of MEPs.

It was agreed on giving to Markus Guhl (DE) the freedom to organize the event in the best possible way, including a maximum of 3 discussion points to have a focused meeting agenda. All ENA members will be invited to this event that, most likely, will be held in November 2018.

14. State of Industry.

See report.

7. ENA new members.

The President Tim Edwards excused the presence of the Czech delegate, Pavel Halama, due to an emergency on his way to the meeting and proposed to decide about their application for membership.

b. To decide on the Svaz školkařů ČR, z.s. (the Nursery Association of the Czech Republic) application for membership.

SG informed the GA that the membership application and all necessary information had been received, determined to be correct and proposed to the GA to accept their membership application. The Svaz školkařů ČR, z.s. (the Nursery Association of the Czech Republic) was unanimously accepted as the 22nd ENA member.

15. Date of Next General Assembly Meeting.

It was agreed on having the next **General Assembly meeting on Thursday 24th of January 2019 at 09h30 at IPM in Essen (Germany)**. The ENA President thanked BdB for also organising the **European Nurseries Reception the previous evening (Wednesday 23rd of January 2019)**.

Miet Poppe (BE) invited all delegates to attend a reception at the AVBS stand at IPM on Thursday (24) evening.

16. Summer meeting 2019.

Stanislav Dontsov (UA) presented to the GA the details of the next summer meeting, to be held from the 30th of June 2019 until the 3rd of July 2019 in Kiev, Ukraine. The **General Assembly** meeting was scheduled for **Monday the 1st of July 2019**, WG meetings (i.e. promotion) might be held in the afternoon of Sunday the 30th of June and a short and long program of visits to nurseries will follow. He handed out a printed version of the program and informed the GA of some practical aspects (i.e.: airports, no visa needed for European countries' citizens, hotel is booked, delegates will be invoiced by the Ukrainian organisation, etc).

Jan-Dieter Bruns (DE) invited ENA to have the **summer 2020 meeting in Bavaria (Germany)**. It was recapped that in summer 2022, the meeting will be held in the Netherlands (at Floriade) and that delegates may offer suggestions for the 2021 summer meeting.

18. Press release.

President Tim Edwards summarized that the result of the elections would be the main part of the Press Release.

19. AOB (any other business).

- Regarding the new Plant Health Regulation, Edoardo Sciutti (IT) explained that each nursery will need to have a person responsible for Plant Health, that traceability and analysis will be required, that nurseries can follow the voluntary management of pest risk, and he asked to discuss and share information in the Legislation WG about the Regulation application. He also suggested to have a meeting with the EC to discuss the practical application of the Regulation. The President proposed to ask each country's authorities and put this information together. Edoardo Sciutti (IT) proposed to share guidelines on traceability of nursery stock. SG informed that the very next step was the discussion with stakeholders of the Implementing Regulation on High Risk Plants and that ENA will participate in the next meeting with the EC.
- Edoardo Sciutti (IT) asked for the interest on having an informal meeting at Flormart in Padova (Italy). It was counted that four countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Italy) had planned to be there.
- Jaume Riera (ES) commented that the state of the nursery industry looked like a weather report and, as we cannot fight the bad weather, asked if anybody has been using social media (FB, Instagram, youTube, etc) to sell plants. Stanislav Dontsov (UA) explained that they had some experience and that these are good tools for the general market but not useful to sell directly. Umut Sakarya (TR) pointed out that nursery products are mostly a commodity product and not brand named; therefore, social media would help to enlarge the market but not increase the sales of a nursery. President Tim Edwards added that this could be included in a promotion project.



- Henk Raaijmakers (NL) asked for a recognition for Marc Van Hulle, who has been doing a great job as Chairman of the Legislation WG but unfortunately couldn't be in the last GA meetings. **It was agreed that the ENA President would write him on behalf of all delegates, wishing him well.**

17. Elections to Board of Directors.

President Tim Edwards explained the election procedure that is stated in the Domestic Regulations of the Association. He began acting as Chairman of the Voting Office and he proposed Patrick Svensson (SE) and Arttu Haverinen (FI) to act as Counters.

As Chairman of the Voting Office, he informed the GA that Vice-president Jan-Dieter Bruns put himself forward to serve as **President** and asked if there were any other nominations. As it was the only nomination, **Jan-Dieter Bruns was elected** by a show of hands.

Regarding the **Treasurer** position, the Chairman thanked **Willy De Nolf** for his offer to continue and, not having any other nomination, he **was re-elected** by a show of hands.

Finally, the Chairman nominated Henk Raaijmakers for the Vice-president position and asked if there were any other volunteers. **Henk Raaijmakers** was the only candidate and **was elected Vice-president** also by a show of hands.

Tim Edwards stepped down as President, saying that it had been a great honour to serve and handed over the Presidency to Jan-Dieter Bruns.

Jan-Dieter Bruns assumed the Presidency, gave a short history of the European Nurseries' meetings and thanked Tim Edwards for his service and for excelling in the Presidency. President Jan-Dieter Bruns proposed to **renew Josep M. Pagès as Secretary-General** and the GA unanimously agreed on it. President Jan-Dieter Bruns showed his satisfaction for having Henk Raaijmakers as Vice-president. Vice-president Henk Raaijmakers said that he was very passionate about ENA and looking forward to work for all European nurseries.

The President thanked all for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 16h10.