

Minutes of the ENA General Assembly Meeting held online on Thursday 27 January 2022 (10h00 – 11h45 CET).

Attendees:

Miet Poppe (AVBS - Belgium), Yuliana Popova (BAOPN - Bulgaria), Tatyana Boyadzhieva (BAOPN - Bulgaria), Václav Hurt (SŠ ČR – Czech Republic), Torben Leissgard (DP/ Danske Gartneri - Denmark), Jyri Uimonen (Taimistoviljelijät ry - Finland), Tomi Tahvonen (Taimistoviljelijät ry - Finland), Emmanuelle Bougault (Val'hor - France), Jocelyne Kerjouan (Val'hor - France), Catherine Muller (Val'hor - France), Markus Guhl (BdB - Germany), Jan-Dieter Bruns (BdB - Germany), Alex J. Carlos (HEPEXIA - Greece), Nikolaos Thymakis (HEPEXIA - Greece), Julianna Csikor (MDSS - Hungary), Niamh Brennan (IHNSA - Ireland), Val Farrell (IHNSA - Ireland), Maurizia Castellari (ANVE - Italy), Luigi Pagliani (ANVE - Italy), Jan Veltmans (LTO - Netherlands), Grzegorz Falkowski (ZSzP - Poland), Renata Fryszkowska-Madej (ZSzP - Poland), Paula Vilanova (APPP-FN – Portugal), Albano Moreira da Silva (APPP-FN, Portugal), Jovan Topalović (SLHS - Serbia), Dragana Skocajic (SLHS - Serbia), Luis B. Martín (Fepex - Spain), Maja Persson (LRF-T - Sweden), Patrick Svensson (LRF-T - Sweden), Miray Engin (SUSBIR - Turkey), Umut Sakarya (SUSBIR - Turkey), Charles Carr (HTA – United Kingdom), Lucien Verschoren (AVBS – Belgium, Attracting Young People **WG Chair**), Leon Smet (Anthos - Netherlands, Promotion **WG Chair**), Willy De Nolf (AVBS - Belgium, **Treasurer**), Tim Van Hulle (AVBS – Belgium, ENA **Vice-President**), Henk Raaijmakers (LTO - Netherlands, ENA **President**), and Josep M. Pagès (ENA **Secretary General** -SG in the text).

1. President's Welcome.

President Raaijmakers welcomed all participants, wished for peace in Ukraine, and invited all country delegates to speak out if there were any concerning issues.

2. Apologies for absence.

Maurizio Laponi (ANVE - Italy), Jaume Riera (Fepex - Spain), Stanislav Dontsov (UPIA, Ukraine), Caroline Föllmi (Jardin Suisse - Switzerland), Dora Aebi (Jardin Suisse - Switzerland), and John Kitantzis (HEPEXIA - Greece) had sent apologies.

3. Agreement of the Agenda.

The Agenda was agreed on, with the participation of the Secretary General of Growing Media Europe to talk about peat.

4. Approval of the minutes of the previous GA meeting held on 2 September 2021.

The last version of the circulated minutes of the previous General Assembly meeting was approved and agreed as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes.

The President asked the German delegates about their progress in the compensation fund for the nurseries impacted by quarantine pests. The Humboldt University in Berlin is carrying out a research

project, and they expect the results by summer; Markus Guhl (DE) will inform about it in the following GA meeting.

6. Promotion WG

a. Green Cities project 2021-2023 update.

Leon Smet informed all that the Year 1 Deliverable Reports had been submitted to REA (EC), and the technical and financial reports were in preparation. He highlighted the joint video to use in the entire campaign, the Green Cities Award ceremony in which Nantes (FR) won, and that B2B activities were running, both online and face-to-face and tailored to each country. He remarked that the cities' increasing awareness of the importance of having plants and trees to live in harmony.

b. Besides Green Cities, new campaign targeting final consumers.

The WG chair made an overview about the idea **to launch a consumer's campaign**, with the aim to create awareness for the nurseries that are active on the consumer markets, as a complement to the current strong position in the amenity market. The rough idea would be to prepare the proposal in 2023, to start the campaign in 2024 and, meanwhile, to plan the finances and contributions (20%) with retailers' organisations. The consumer campaign should promote themes and not single plants or types of plants; trying to convince the public that plants provide functionalities and ecosystem services. A small working group was set up and began the discussions. Leon Smet invited **those countries' organisations with interest and willingness to find co-finance, to initiate talks.**

The President encouraged all countries to support this proposition to make a solid European-wide application for a campaign that, at the same time, would be personalised to the needs of each country because each one is different.

Luis Martín (ES) compromised to transmit the information about the new campaign to the Spanish organisation. Leon Smet announced that **the next steps would be to add interested countries, investigate whether it is possible to finance the 20%, and later together to prepare the strategy.**

Paula Vilanova (PT) asked about including cut flowers in the campaign. The WG Chair answered that it should be the entire group who discuss it, although cut flowers and plants are different segments in the market and it might not be wise to submit a mixed proposal to Brussels because cut flowers don't align with the values explained about plants. Tatyana Boyadzhieva (BG) stressed that our core business is plants and pointed out that they didn't have a good experience with the inclusion of cut flowers in the multi-country campaign they participated in.

Using political influence in Brussels to support this proposal was considered premature at this stage, and essential to follow the EC guidelines to prepare a sound proposal. The non-EU

countries were informed that the EU Regulation on promotion has not changed, and therefore we'll propose to focus the campaign in the internal market. Finally, the President reminded all members that even the countries that don't participate in the Green Cities campaign could use the materials produced by ENA.

7. Attracting young people WG.

Lucien Verschoren, the WG Chair, summarised the first meeting of the WG (*report already sent to ENA members*) and finalised proposing to have a meeting at Floriade inviting teachers, and thinking about the preparation of a Erasmus+ project.

The President thanked Lucien Verschoren and the WG for their work, acknowledged that they had come up with good ideas, and advised that holding another high-level meeting in the same week as the GA in Floriade would be difficult to reconcile. He suggested looking for another time and seeking the financial resources **to organise this education conference.**

It was agreed on having a **WG meeting in April to look for funding and the EU programs** like Erasmus+.

8. Legislation WG.

The SG informed about two EU legislation updates that are going on.

The revision of the **Plant Reproductive Material and FRM legislation** is still open for consultation. It was agreed that **ENA would prepare a draft**, following the ideas of the previous statements ENA had submitted to the EC, to be shared **with all members for discussion** and opinion before **submitting it to the EC** in March.

Regarding the revision of the EU **Plant Health Regulation**, on official controls and plant passport, ENA sent the feedback last summer. The EC published their conclusions last December, which captures quite well the thinking that ENA delegates had expressed over the two years. The EC proposals to the EP and the Council, which should not entail major changes, will be known in February or March. We will be informed afterwards and will have the opportunity to give our opinion.

9. Sustainability WG.

PEAT

The President welcomed Ms Cecilia Luetgebrune, the Secretary General of **Growing Media Europe (GME)**, the industry association of the growing media producers. She explained that there are **two**

legislation initiatives at the EU level that could have a significant impact on the use of peat, although none of them is saying that peat should be banned immediately.

The first one is the EU Green Taxonomy, which is basically a positive list of economic activities considered sustainable because they contribute to at least one of the six environmental objectives defined in that regulation. If an economic activity is not on the list, it doesn't mean that it's banned or not sustainable. However, banks and investors seeking to make their portfolios green might decide not to support these activities. The Green Taxonomy will be an EC Delegated Act, and the Platform on Sustainable Finance has a draft report that defines anything that has peat in it as not sustainable. **Growing Media Europa is trying to influence** this Platform and **the EC, with a letter co-signed by Copa-Cogeca, ENA, Union Fleurs, Plantum, and maybe two more organisations.** The last draft letter will be shared with ENA within a day.

The second EU legislative initiative that threads peat uses is the LULUCF Regulation Revision (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry). Three Committees in the EP deal with this file and GME is lobbying them. The idea of LULUCF is that the member states have to meet a certain national target and decrease their greenhouse gas emissions from the land use, land use change, and forestry sector, to become carbon neutral in this sector by 2030. GME is afraid that some MS might decide to stop peat extraction to get closer to their national target, despite the fact that emissions from peat extraction, compared to the overall emissions from that sector, are minimal. GME is lobbying the EP Committees, and ENA might support their position.

Markus Guhl (DE) was pessimistic about the LULUCF implementation in Germany, and expressed his concerns about banks not giving loans to nurseries using peat if it's not considered a sustainable activity. Jan Veltmans (NL) also supported GME and explained that a two-persons action group (peat-free) is pushing their government. Val Farrell (IE) informed all that in Ireland, where the government already banned peat extraction, they are working with GME and other organisations to change the legislation.

The President expressed the ENA full support to GME; he will sign the letter, and asked for her guidance to lobby the EU on this. Cecilia Luetgebrune thanked ENA for the support, and suggested sharing information and influencing the contacts in DG AGRI that will participate in the Inter-Service Consultation (ISC).

PLASTICS

The President reminded all that the EU Directive 2019/904 (the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment) is currently being implemented in the EU member states.

In Germany, the implementation leads to the replacement of most plastics in the sector, as Markus Guhl (DE) described. The President alerted that it might become a severe problem for our sector and asked all to share their countries' concerns and legislation changes with ENA. Jan-Dieter Bruns (DE) warned that the garden centres will request in the future less plastic and fewer peat products

because it is a demand from their customers, influenced by the green ideas, even if the prices are higher.

It was concluded that ENA should look **for a European industry organisation** to dialogue and cooperate in lobbying.

Finally, President Raaijmakers called for three or four **volunteers to work on these issues (peat, plastics, water availability) in the Sustainability WG.**

10. So'Green update.

The SG summarised that the movement, integrated by ELCA, IFLA, EILO, EFB, IOB and WUP, was working on **the vision document** (*shared with ENA members*) and not yet on specific actions.

The following activity of SoGreen will be participating in the EU Green Week 2022, which will take place in Brussels and online from 30 May 2022 until 5 June 2022. ENA had invited the SoGreen participants to join the Green Cities conference in Floriade, and a SoGreen meeting was planned in Galabau (14 - 17 September 2022, Nuremberg, Germany).

Finally, the SG invited the ENA delegates **to review the document and give their opinions and ideas.** The President pointed out that ENA would not have SoGreen costs in 2022 because they were paid by ELCA, except for our travel costs to the meetings.

11. Next meetings.

a. 2022 Floriade, the Netherlands (last week of June).

Leon Smet (NL) presented a preliminary program of the 2022 summer meeting, to be held at **Floriade in Almere, from 29 June until 1 July 2022.** Wednesday 29 June will be focused on the **Green Cities Conference**; on Thursday 30 June the General Assembly meeting will be held in the morning, followed by visits to companies in the area. They recommended the airport and train station at Schiphol -Amsterdam- and stressed the need for early reservations because the hotels are highly demanded for that time, and hotel rooms cannot be guaranteed after 1 March.

The participants gave their initial intention of participation through the online chat to help with the organisation (country and number of rooms: RS 2, FI 1, UK 1, DE 1, FR 1 or 2, SE 2, IE 1 or 2, IT 2 or 3, BE 4, PL 2, ES 1 or 2, DK 1, BG 1, ENA 1).

b. 2023 Turkey (June).

Umut Sakarya (TR) and their organisation plan to meet in Istanbul near the Marmara region, a key production area, in June 2023.

c. 2024 Candidates?

The President asked if any country would like to organise the 2024 ENA summer meeting. The idea of going to Paris, where the Olympic games will be held, was launched by Jan-Dieter Bruns (DE).

Miet Poppe (BE) announced that in Ghent, Belgium, they are organising Floraliën (www.floralien.be). She invited ENA to have a Secretaries' meeting there, and participate in a networking event on Saturday, 30 April, 2022. Belgium will pay for the hotel costs of the ENA delegates.

12. AOB.

The SG informed that the 2021 financial statements would be ready for approval for the next GA meeting; the external financial audit will begin next week, and he thanked all organisations, with the exclusion of Greece, for having paid the 2021 membership fee. The President urged Greece to pay their outstanding membership fee ASAP.

The President asked about the Xylella research proposal mentioned in the previous meeting minutes. The SG informed all that in April 2022, we should be notified whether REA (EC) is going to finance the project or not.

The Belgian delegation is planning to join the IPM Essen summer edition 2022. Some associations already mentioned that they were not going to participate (France, Poland and Spain), and it was agreed on sending the question to all ENA members.

President Henk Raaijmakers wished everyone an excellent season and good health, thanked all for their participation in this meeting, and adjourned the meeting.

