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**Draft Minutes**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING**

16 March 2018 (9:30-17:00)

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| **Item No** |  | **Action** |
| **0.** | **Opening, welcome and apologies**  Present:  João Lázaro, President  Helgard van Hüllen, Vice President  Brendan Loughran, Treasurer  Leena-Kaisa Aberg, Executive Board Member  Livija Plančić, Executive Board Member  Gabor Veisz, Executive Board Member  Levent Altan, Executive Director  Aleksandra Ivankovic, Project Manager  Apologies:  None  The president opened the meetings and welcomed everybody, welcoming the idea of having the EB meeting hosted by a VSE member and suggesting that same should be considered also for the autumn meeting. | Aim to find out which other member might be willing to host the meeting in September |
|  | **Minutes of last meetings**  The draft minutes of the Executive Board Meeting of 7th December 2017 were approved.  The draft minutes of the General Meeting on 7th December 2017 will be sent to Members for Approval at AGM.  The minutes of the Management Team meeting of 10th November 2017 were shared with the Board. | Add page numbers to the draft AGM meeting before they are put for adoption. |
| **2.** | **Finance report**  The Treasurer noted that:   * In the last 12 months we achieved 200% increase in income * The amount of income corresponds to the amount of activity we are doing * The additional effort that needs to come into generating the income is increased with the staff turnover and the Board should beware of the pressure on the organization * The increase in income, and the related increase in effort resulted in greater spending. However, we managed still to increase our reserves to 195,000 € * The Treasurer suggested that a reserves policy is developed as previously agreed. He suggested that a formula for the use of reserves be developed, in order to make it possible for a structured approach to using reserves * The Treasurer also reported that for 2017 an unrestricted audit report was received, which shows healthy financial practices of the organization | Lev and Brendan to work to develop reserves policy |
| **3.** | **Staff**  Lev informed the Board that Sanjin would be leaving in April 2018.  New Finance Officer will be sought for asap, but in the interim Jeanette will look after the immediate finance issues, as she has background in finances. Sanjin took to ensure a takeover with the new person during a weekend.  Two other positions will be open in 2018 with funding secured through Operating Grant and projects. Communications officer will be employed at 50% and a policy officer full-time, with 50% working on Operating grant and 50% on projects  Lev updated the Board on the selection process for Deputy Director and informed the Board that a job offer was made to Paulo de Tarso Lugon Arantes.  The aim is to employ or at least identify the new staff in time for them to attend the May conference in Sweden  The existing system functioned well, with preselection done by staff in Brussels, first interviews organised with a mix of in-person and online attendances. However, an effort should be made that the final round is done face-to-face.  Interviews will most likely only be possible to have early in May  Lev informed the Board that he has secured an internship of a student from Boston University, who will come for 2 months in June.  Lev informed the Board that we will also advertise for a volunteer, as that is a commitment from the OG application | Job adverts for open positions to be published as soon as possible  First round interviews to be organised with a combination of in-person and online attendance  Final round to be organised with a preferred face-to-face attendance  Selection process to be scheduled to take place not later than early May, so that the selected candidates can attend Stockholm conference  An advertisement for volunteers to be published |
| **4.** | **Events**  Lev reported to the Board about a range of different meetings with the European Parliament and the European Commission   * Parliamentary hearing for the special committee on terrorism * Meeting with the MoI of the UK * An represented VSE in Ghana as a volunteer, for the UN manual on victims of terrorism * Lev met the UN regarding the international day of victims of terrorism * Lev reported about the global counter-terrorism strategy that is being reviewed and VSE’s attempt to have the victims’ rights included in the strategy * Lev attended a meeting in Denmark for the EU victims’ day * Brendan attended a conference in NI on victims of cyber crime * Lev had a meeting with the EC on victims of cybercrime. There as opportunity to use the EU to establish some best practices focused around issues, such as fraud, for example * Joao suggested that it’s time to move on to different groups of victims. We have been working on victims of terrorism, but new forms of crime should be in focus now: hate crime, trafficking, cyber-crime etc. * Joao suggested that we should have a list of upcoming events and for the Board to be more involved in representing VSE * Gabor represented VSE in Ankara * Leena-Kaisa participated at the Nordic meeting * Joao suggested that Board members inform the Secretariat about participating in meetings and the Secretariat will provide them with talking points * Gabor reminded about the discussion around the buddy system | Maintain a list of upcoming events by the Secretariat  Board members to inform the Secretariat when they want to represent VSE at a meeting, and the Secretariat will provide talking points  Focus on victims of different types of crimes through engagement in events |
| **5.** | **Constitution**  Joao informed the board that a great deal of work on the amendments of the Constitution has been delivered by Lev  A task force has been appointed, with Helgard and Gabor, who will finalise the proposal for the AGM  Some key issues   * The Constitution as it is now, is confusing. It was made in Switzerland, then the seat was moved to London, became very British and then came back to Belgium. Some of the provisions were inconsistent and over time amended through various bits and pieces, forcing us to have two VPs, for example. * Constitution has now been cleaned up and updated * Lev expressed concern about full members and the difficulty for organisations to attain the status of a full VSE member. For that reason, the new Constitution opens up the Board to associate members * Associate members who become Board members come in only by invitation and have to be legal persons   Adoption of the text was suggested, only with suggested changes to be noted, other text adopted as proposed:   * Proposed new text point 3.1(a) – Gabor expressed concern about the phrasing ‘to drive change’. Amended to read: ‘drive forward improvements’ * At Helgard’s proposal, items B and C were merged * At Gabor’s proposal point E was agreed to read: ‘it may also work globally’ and cut the rest of the sentence. * In the provision about termination of membership change the reference to a ‘verifiable written notice’. The same text to be added in other appropriate sections when referring to notices * On page 9, the payments to Board members are now being left to the Board to determine * Page 10 – introduce a line saying ‘VSE may establish regional offices or other bodies to support it in the delivery of its objectives’ – Lev to draft the line and send it to the Board for approval * Another line was added in respect of management team and secondment of additional members – LEV HAS WORDING * Add text about head office – LEV HAS WORDING * Definition of regional office to be added: ‘any dislocated office with a staff member’ * Page 10 – powers and duties of the Executive Board   In paragraphs B and C to add reference to ‘any other office’, and in G ‘head office or any other office   * Elections – check the Belgian legislation regarding terms of board members, quorum requirements etc. * Page 12, item 3: new drafting proposed for term of EB members (LEV HAS WORDING) * Article 16.3 on page 42 – Gabor expressed concern about wording ‘active members’ – change to ‘eligible to vote’ * Paragraph on page 13 and reference to resignation was mentioned by Livija and process of vacation through resignation, which is no longer necessary – delete reference to resignation   Any other comments are to be e-mailed to Lev  **Elections in May**  Mark officially resigned from the Board, as he’s left Victim Support E&W  Announce all vacant board positions when we announce the AGM  Mention in the invitation that there’s changes in Constitution pending, so two VPs will probably not be required  **Signature for VSE**   * Currently, President’s signature is required for anything * In the management policy there’s a provision allowing Lev to sign things, but that is not really in line with the constitution * Legal advice should be sought re. what is the best resolution to declare the constitutional changes – the new constitution or constitutional amendments?   **Next meeting of EB**  26 and 27 September in Belfast | Lev to provide the Board with text of the amendments adopted to the proposal of the Constitution  Aleksandra to contact DLA Piper to see if they can check the Belgian legislation regarding term of members and quorum required  Lev to announce vacancies with the invitation for the AGM, one month ahead of the meeting  Any comments to be e-mailed to Lev |
| **6.** | **Annual conference**  Lev reported on registration status: 78 registered, 11 from Sweden, 10 from other parts of the world and 57 from Europe. Registration at this time of year looks better than this time last year. At 160 registrations the conference will run at a profit.  Programme seems to be on track, with an additional effort needed to have a less focus on children, so adjustments are due to make it more balanced  UN Victims’ Advocate agreed to attend, but her travel might turn out to be costly.  Agreed to cover travel costs of up to 1500 euros  Leena-Kaisa suggested not to be too general when talking about victims of trafficking, but to focus on pragmatic issues and get victims talk about how to get help, access to justice and other practical problems  Lev reported on the idea on keeping discussion on elder abuse on the panel. He’ll contact AGE Platform and check if they can still provide a speaker on people in care. Possibly get Eurport to speak, but making sure that it is not too focused on children victims.  A speakers’ corner will be put into place as an opportunity for the participants to discuss issues  One session needs to be checked – the Dutch suggested a street worker to come and talk about issues specific for street workers.  Joao expressed his concerns about the content of such talk, as we need to know in advance what the position of the speaker is. We cannot allow ourselves to have too extreme views expressed about contentious subjects, such as a presumption of coercion to prostitution.  Agreed to find someone else to present victims’ perspective on obstacles  Helgard suggested a German programme to be presented.  Brendan suggested victims’ advocate programme which is dedicated to special needs of victims  Lev explained the issues regarding budget and the initial unclarities regarding VAT status  There is a possibility that the US DoJ will be able to finance report writer for the symposium  There will probably be some funding from the EC for the compensation seminar, which can cover a part of the costs  Brendan reemphasized that statement of income and statement of expenditure should be easy to achieve and need to be kept. We need to operate on certainty, not on hope  Joao asked about the possibilities to get corporate sponsors.  Lev responded that some outreach has been done, but without much success  Joao – try to have a VOCIARE meeting parallel to the events in Stockholm  Lev mentioned social probramme and the arrangement to have a reception at the Nobel museum and the city hall, as well as a boat trip in the city  **Seminar on compensation**  Lev reminded the board that we have in our WP to work on cross-border compensation and that we will cooperate with Mme Milquet in the next period to update the EC position on compensation. To that end, VSE should come up with its own official position on compensation to put it in the forefront of our expectations from the EU  Leena-Kaisa added that these types of position papers are important for national level as well, as at national level they can be used for advocacy. There should be some sort of membership participation in the drafting of the paper, since it will be used for national advocacy input too  Lev emphasized that in the next four years the goal is for the VSE to be moving towards seeing the organization as the key European policy actor  Members will be consulted through a survey  Joao expressed concern about too many surveys and increased expectations for input from members and our capacity to manage the input we receive in return.  There is also a concern regarding data protection which needs to factored in.  Leena-Kaisa suggested that a workshop is organized during the conference on data protection. Lev expressed concerns about funding for such a workshop  Joao noted that data protection should be one of the topics for next year’s conference | Lev - Maintain conference budget based on certainty  Lev - Remove workshop on the victimization of sex workers and introduce another topic  Lev – to include data protection into next year’s conference programme |
| **7** | **Work programme**  **General engagements**  Lev reported about the obligations in terms of contacts with organisations and events  In terms of contacts, some of our priorities are working with Europol on cybercrime and terrorism and joining up with Eurojust  Lev also emphasized how it would be important to receive consultative status with the Council of Europe  Key events in 2018 are annual conference and autumn conference  For autumn conference best idea would be to keep the topic of cybercrime  **Regional knowledge exchange**  In 2018 we are due to organize regional knowledge exchange. This year this will be happening in Eastern Europe  Lev also emphasized that we need to develop a training module on cybercrime. The idea is to approach our annual work topically. Each year we chose a topic around which we build up our work.  We will also work to improve our annual report and aim to adopt it before the conference in future, so that we can distribute printed copies at the annual conference already.  We will also this year collect different types of information from our members, in order to create a sort of infographic with figures  Helgard mentioned that she’ll have an event in Berlin, where she intends to present our work on victims of terrorism, so we should provide her with some paragraphs on that.  **Mapping EU laws**  Another objective for this year is to start a three-year process of mapping the EU laws and policies on victims. This year we need to do the first step in this process, which is to develop the methodology.  **Strategic litigation**  Aleksandra will work on preparing a strategic litigation paper for the members  **Accreditation**  Livija confirmed that Bijeli krug is well ahead with their accreditation process and that within the next few months they will meet the expectations set through the process they have gone through with An.  Joao suggested that we think about creating a self-assessment tool for organizations to use and check how well they comply with the requirements |  |

**Summary of actions**

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| **Item No** | **Action** | **Owner** | **Deadline** | **Status** |
| 0 | Find hosting for September | Lev |  |  |
| 1 | Finalise draft AGM meeting | Lev |  |  |
| 2 | Develop reserves policy | Lev and Brendan |  |  |
| 3a | Job adverts for open positions to be published as soon as possible | Lev and Jeanette | Asap |  |
| 3e | Publish ad for volunteers | Lev | Asap |  |
| 4a | Maintain a list of upcoming events | Jeanette |  |  |
| 4b | Inform the Secretariat when they want to represent VSE at a meeting | Board |  |  |
| 4c | Focus on victims of different types of crimes through engagement in events | All |  |  |
| 5a | Amendments to Constitution | Lev |  |  |
| 5b | Check Belgian legislation regarding term of members and quorum required | Aleksandra |  |  |
| 5c | Announce vacancies with the invitation for the AGM | Lev | 23 April |  |
| 6a | Maintain conference budget based on certainty | Lev |  |  |
| 6b | Finalise conference agenda | Lev |  |  |
| 6c | Include data protection into next year’s conference programme | Lev |  |  |