

EUROPEAN UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) held at Beit Shmuel, 6 Elihayu Shama Street, Jerusalem, Israel on Friday 19 May 2017 at 11.45 am.

Present: Chairman of EUPJ Miriam Kramer and the other Honorary Officers and representatives of various Constituent Members of EUPJ as follows: Mr Paul Yuval Adam (Arzenu) Germany, Mr Jai Anguita (Bet Shalom Barcelona) Spain, Rabbi Ruven Bar Ephraim (Or Chadash Zurich/EUPJ) Switzerland, Mr Stéphane Beder (AJL) France, Mr Leslie Bergman (EUPJ) UK, Mrs Julie Bergmann (Or Tamid) Czech Republic, Mrs Joyce Bigio (Lev Chadash Milan) Italy, Ms Madelon Bino (LJG Amsterdam) Netherlands, Mr Hartmut Bomhoff (School of Jewish Theology) Germany, Mr John Clark (Or Chadash Vienna) Austria, Ms Yael Cobano (Reform Jewish Community of Madrid) Spain, Mr John Cohen (EUPJ) UK, Mrs Noeleen Cohen (Alyth Synagogue and Leo Baeck College) UK, Mrs Ruth Cohen (WUPJ) Israel, Mr Harvey Cohen (Kehillat Raanan) Israel, Mr Alexander Dembitz (GIL Geneva) Switzerland, Mr Josh Dubell (Alyth Synagogue London) UK, Mr Pierre Elkaim (Kehilat Geshar Paris) France, Mr Fabio Fantini (Beth Hillel Roma) Italy, Mr Frantisek Fendrych (ZLU Prague) Czech Republic, Mr Edward Gold (Alyth Synagogue and Jewish Interactive London) UK, Rabbi Mark Goldsmith (Alyth Synagogue London) UK, Rabbi Andrew Goldstein (EUPJ/LJ) UK, Mrs Sharon Goldstein (Northwood & Pinner Liberal) UK, Mrs Deborah Grabiner (EUPJ) UK, Mrs Jane Grabiner (Finchley Reform Synagogue London) UK, Mr Michael Grabiner (Finchley Reform Synagogue London) UK, Ms Sonja Guentner (EUPJ/UpJ) Germany, Rabbi Walter Homolka (Abraham Geiger College) Germany, Rabbi Harry Jacobi (Liberal Judaism) UK, Mr Peter Jossi (PLJS/Migwan) Switzerland, Dr Alex Kagan (WUPJ) Israel, Dr Ivan Kohout (Bejt Simcha) Czech Republic, Mr Marc Konczaty (MJLF) France, Mr Gilbert Lederman (Beth Hillel Brussels) Belgium, Mr Jean-François Levy (MJLF) France, Mr Robert Ley (MJLF) France, Mr David Maxa (Abraham Geiger College) Germany, Mrs Judita Maxa Bergmannová (Or Tamid) Czech Republic, Mrs Jaroslava Maxová (Jewish Liberal Union Prague Jewish Community of Liberec) Czech Republic, Mrs Irith Michelsohn (UpJ /Jewish Community Bielefeld) Germany, Mr Robin Moss (Liberal Judaism) UK, Dr Verena Muehlstein (Beth Shalom Munich) Germany, Dr Jan Muehlstein (Beth Shalom Munich) Germany, Mrs Celia Naval (Keren Or) France, Mr Neil Nerva (Belsize Square Synagogue London) UK, Mr Mikhail Orel (Bet Shalom Barcelona) Spain, Mr Paavel Orlov (Bet Shalom Barcelona) Spain, Rabbi Joel Oseran (WUPJ) Israel, Mr David Pollak (EUPJ) UK, Mrs Maria Prieto (Bet Shalom Barcelona) Spain, Mr Michael Reik (EUPJ) UK, Rabbi Danny Rich (Liberal Judaism) UK, Mr Haim Sanchez Casas (LBC/Keren Or) UK and France, Mr Gordon Smith (EUPJ) UK, Mrs Judy Smith (EUPJ) UK, Mr Joe Smoczynski (Beit Polska/Beit Warszawa) Poland, Mrs Carole Sterling (WUPJ) Canada, Mrs Deborah Tal-Ruettger (UpJ) Germany, Rabbi Menno ten Brink (LJG Amsterdam) Netherlands, Rabbi Natalia Verzhbovska (LJG Cologne) Germany, Mr Robert Weiner (Reform Judaism) UK, Mr Jonathan Wootliff (Bejt Simcha/ZLU/Or Tamid) Czech Republic.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman reported apologies received from Jeffery Rose, Honorary Life President.

2. **Approval of Minutes of 2016 European Assembly Meeting**

The Chairman advised that the minutes of the European Assembly Meeting held in London, United Kingdom on 17 April 2016 were included in the EUPJ Annual Report booklet for 2016 ("the Booklet") which had been circulated and which was also made available on the EUPJ website before the meeting. In response to her request, the Chairman received no comments or suggestions for change to the Minutes, which were duly accepted as a correct record of the meeting and were then signed by the Chairman.

3. **Welcome by WUPJ Chair**

The Chairman introduced Carole Sterling, the chair of the WUPJ, to the meeting, who in turn welcomed EUPJ delegates to the WUPJ 2017 Biennial Conference in Jerusalem. Mrs Sterling referred to her report in the Booklet and confirmed that the WUPJ, and especially she and Rabbi Daniel Freeland, were working hard to involve European communities in the work of the WUPJ. She advised that they both looked forward to working with and supporting EUPJ communities.

4. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman referred the meeting to the Chairman's Report included in the Booklet which had been circulated, which was read and noted. The Chairman added the following items – (a) She informed the meeting of the recent death of Raymond Goldman, a pillar of the Reform Movement in the UK, Israel and beyond and said he would be missed. (b) She advised that since the publication of the Booklet, certain of the Spanish communities had agreed to form a Spanish federation and hoped that all the Spanish communities would join and that it would become a member of the EUPJ. (c) The next EUPJ Biennial Conference would be held in Prague from 26 to 29 April 2018, with the next Annual Assembly being on 29 April at that conference.

5. **Annual Accounts for 2016**

The Chairman introduced the Honorary Treasurer David Pollak who referred to the Accounts, Independent Examiner's Report and his own Treasurer's report included in the Booklet, which he summarised for the meeting and then opened the meeting to questions. (a) Alex Dembitz referred to affiliation fees, which had not been increased for at least 6 years, and suggested they be increased (possibly on a two tier basis) to fund EUPJ costs, especially to allow young people to attend events. The Treasurer pointed out that EUPJ does assist young people where possible, but would consider the possibility of increasing fees. Ruth Cohen urged the Treasurer to try to build up reserves for EUPJ. (b) The Treasurer was asked what funding opportunities were available to young people, and advised that the EUPJ website and monthly newsletters would show this, but that he would see if this could be made available in other formats and confirmed that he could be contacted to provide full details at any time. (c) Rabbi Celia Surget queried whether EUPJ should be employing a full time professional manager and the Treasurer reported that the current administration system was fully functional and did not require further full time resources at this stage.

The Treasurer thanked the outside accounting firm Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP and its partner Jeremy Harrod for providing the statutory examination of the 2016 Accounts without charge and also thanked his fellow officers and the EUPJ Administrator Deborah Grabiner for their support during the year.

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his work and invited the meeting to approve the Accounts. The proposal to do so was made by Rabbi Danny Rich and seconded by Joyce Bigio and, on a show of hands, the Accounts were approved without objection.

6. **Appointment of Examiner**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that as EUPJ is a UK registered charity, the UK Charity Commission requires its annual accounts to be examined by an independent qualified accountant who issues a report. Accounting firm Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP had provided a clear report, included in the Booklet. Jan Muehlstein seconded by Joe Smoczynski proposed the resolution to ratify the appointment of Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP as Independent Examiners of the annual accounts for 2016 and to re-appoint them as Independent Examiners for EUPJ's accounts for 2017. On a show of hands the resolution was approved without objection.

7. **Resolution to Amend the Constitution**

The Chairman advised the meeting that the EUPJ Executive Board (Board) and Management Committee (ManCom) had recommended that the EUPJ Constitution be amended by increasing the membership of the ManCom to include the EUPJ President, the Convenor of the European Beit Din and the Chairman of the EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly. Detailed reasons for this proposal were set out in the Booklet, which also contained a draft Deed of Amendment, and were read to the meeting.

Gordon Smith proposed the resolution that the Constitution of the EUPJ be amended on the basis provided for in the Deed of Amendment contained in the Booklet, and Michael Reik seconded the proposal. The resolution was put to the meeting and, on a show of hands, was passed unanimously, there being no objections or abstentions.

8. **Proposal to admit Federazione Italiana per L'Ebraismo Progressivo to Membership.**

The Chairman referred to the proposed resolution in the Booklet and advised the meeting that the EUPJ had received an application from Federazione Italiana per L'Ebraismo Progressivo (the newly established Italian Assembly known as FIEP) requesting to be admitted as a Constituent Member of the EUPJ. The Chairman told the meeting that ManCom consulted with representatives of the Italian Progressive Jewish communities as well as with rabbinic advisors and was provided with all the documentation and information which EUPJ normally requires from prospective members.

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Board and ManCom consider that FIEP meets all the requirements to become a Constituent Member and recommends that it be admitted as a Constituent Member of the EUPJ. The Chairman notified the meeting that the resolution to admit FIEP as a Constituent Member is subject to the condition that if (i) an EUPJ Constituent Member (Joining Community) joins FIEP and resigns its membership of EUPJ and (ii) FIEP subsequently ceases to be a member of EUPJ; then in such case the Joining Community shall be entitled to be re-instated as a Constituent Member of EUPJ provided that at such date the Joining Community meets EUPJ membership criteria.

The Chairman invited the meeting to approve the resolution and the proposal to do so was made by Leslie Bergman and seconded by Rabbi Ruven Bar Ephraim. On a show of hands the resolution to admit FIEP as a Constituent Member of the EUPJ with effect from the close of the meeting was approved without objection. The Chairman introduced Joyce Bigio and Ben Fantini of FIEP to the meeting and Joyce Bigio thanked Miriam Kramer, David Pollak and John Cohen for their help in getting FIEP admitted as a EUPJ member, and then thanked especially Rabbi Joel Oseran for all his help in getting FIEP established.

9. **EUPJ Officers and Board Members**

The Chairman advised the meeting that when the EUPJ Constitution was amended in Jerusalem in May 2013, one of the amendments was to provide that the Board, in addition to having members appointed in the "traditional" manner, should also have representation from each of the countries in Europe in which there are EUPJ members and that this resulted in the addition of Appendix 2 to the Constitution, which provides that each country in Europe with at least one Constituent Member is entitled to at least 1 representative on the Board.

However, the Chairman pointed out that very few appointments were made as a result of this amendment and so last year ManCom requested that the Honorary Secretary canvass the leadership of EUPJ communities across Europe reminding

them of this right and requesting nominations to the Board. The Chairman expressed her pleasure in the very positive outcome of this exercise and advised that at the Board meeting in Lyon in December 2016, 12 new members were appointed to the Board, making it much more representative.

The Chairman advised the meeting that these appointments now needed ratification by the European Assembly, but first she expressed her thanks and appreciation to Jonathan Lewis and Deborah Hofer, who retired from the Board during the year, and to Rabbi Mark Goldsmith, whose second term as a member of the Board ended at this meeting.

The Chairman then advised the meeting that Item 9 of the Notice convening the meeting (which can be found at page 63 of the Booklet) read with the Amendment to that Notice (which can be found at page 78 of the Booklet) set out the names of the new members nominated to the Board. The Chairman suggested that, rather than asking for a formal vote on each and every nominee, these appointments be dealt with by acclamation and that she would read out the name of each nominee and asked all those in favour to say "Aye". The Chairman then read out the names as follows –

- Representing Austria – John Clark
- Representing Belgium - Gilbert Lederman
- Representing the Czech Republic – Jonathan Wootliff
- Representing Denmark – Arthur Buchman
- Representing France – Marc Konczaty and Celia Naval
- Representing Hungary – Tamàs Gróf
- Representing Italy for the period from 1 December 2016 to 31 May 2017 – Joyce Bigio
- Representing Italy for the period from 1 June 2017 to 31 December 2017 – Fabio (Ben) Fantini.
- Representing Luxembourg – Rabbi Alexander Grodensky
- Representing Reform Judaism UK – Robert Weiner
- Representing the European bet Din – Rabbi Jackie Tabick
- Representing the EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly – Rabbi Ruven Bar Ephraim.

Each Board member present at the meeting stood after his or her name was called and all present acclaimed each appointment. The Chairman, on the basis of the acclamations received, declared the nominees duly elected as members of the Board.

The Chairman then said that EUPJ will keep on working to ensure that the Board is fully representative of our communities in terms of the EUPJ Constitution. However, the Chairman announced some good news, which was that Board nominations had now been received from from the Netherlands and Switzerland – these arrived too late for inclusion in the agenda for the meeting, but will be included in the next Board meeting in July and will be put to members next year in Prague for formal ratification. These nominations are – to represent the Netherlands, Ron van der Wieken and Hannah Verhulst, and to represent Switzerland, Peter Jossi and David Bernstein.

10. **European Beit Din**

Rabbi Andrew Goldstein gave a brief update on the activities of the European Beit Din (EBD). He explained that it sat in those EUPJ territories which did not currently have their own batei din, being Spain, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria and Poland. The EBD also works in conjunction with the Reform Bet Din in London and its convenor is Rabbi Jackie Tabick. The most recent sittings of the EBD have

been in Krakow, Barcelona and Florence and he said that they needed to be held in a place where EBD could use a Mikveh.

11. **Any Other Business**

The Chairman advised that the Honorary Secretary had not been notified by any Member within the relevant time period of any matter or issue to put before the European Assembly but invited comments, questions or statements from the meeting.

11.1. Leslie Bergman advised that he and other EUPJ representatives had met with EU officials in Brussels responsible for religious affairs. He stressed that it was important that EUPJ and Progressive Judaism have a voice at the EU and that he was investigating setting up an EUPJ representative office in Brussels.

11.2. Rabbi Bar Ephraim advised the meeting that he and other rabbis attending a kallah in Brussels, as well as the first annual general meeting of ERA, had also met the same EU officials and supported an EUPJ presence at the EU.

The Chairman then thanked David Pollak (the Honorary Treasurer), John Cohen (the Honorary Secretary) and Deborah Grabiner (the Administrator) for all their work. She also welcomed Rabbi Danny Freeland to the meeting but could not ask him to address the meeting as time had expired.

The Chairman thanked all present for attending the 2017 European Assembly meeting and declared the meeting closed at 12:45 pm.

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Chairman of meeting