

EUROPEAN UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the European Assembly of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) held at the Grand Hotel del Gianicolo, Viale delle Mura Gianicolensi 107, Rome, Italy on **Sunday 19 May 2019** at 13H00 local time.

Present: EUPJ Chair Sonja Guentner and the other Honorary Officers and representatives of various Constituent Members of EUPJ, as well as invitees as follows: Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim (Jüdische Liberale Gemeinde Or Chadash Zürich) Switzerland, Carey Bernitz (Beth Shalom Milano) Italy, Joyce Bigio (Federazione per Ebraismo Progressivo) Italy, Arthur Buchman (Shir Hatzafon) Denmark, John Clark (Or Chadash Vienna) Austria, John Cohen (EUPJ) UK, Noeleen Cohen (Alyth Synagogue) UK, Rabbi Tom Cohen (Kehilat Gesher) France, Rabbi Janet Darley (Kingston Liberal Synagogue) UK, Susanna Donato (Lev Chadash Milano) Italy, William Echikson (EUPJ Brussels) Belgium, Fabio Benjamin Fantini (Beth Hillel Rome) Italy, Rabbi Andrew Goldstein (Liberal Judaism) UK, Deborah Grabiner (EUPJ) UK, Rabbi Alexander Grodensky (Liberal Jewish Community of Luxembourg) Luxembourg, Miriam Kramer (EUPJ) UK, Gilbert Lederman (Beth Hillel Brussels) Belgium, Adam Miles Lewis (Lev Chadash Milano) Italy, Martina Yehudit Loreggian (Lev Chadash Milano) Italy, Celia Naval (Keren Or Lyon / EUPJ) France, Rabbi Joel Oseran (Beth Hillel Rome) Israel, Rabbi René Pfertzel (EUPJ/Kingston Liberal Synagogue) UK, David Pollak (EUPJ) UK, Karen Pollak (Mosaic Reform) UK, Dan Rattan (UpJ Germany/EUPJ) Germany, Anu Ristola (IJC) Belgium, Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild (Lev Chadash Milano) Italy, Rabbi Walter Rothschild (Beit Polska) Germany, Rahel Daniela Schneider (Shir Hadash Firenze) Italy, Gordon Smith (EUPJ) UK, Judy Smith (Alyth Synagogue) UK, Isabel Son (Nederlands Verbond voor Progressief Jodendom) Netherlands, Carole Sterling (WUPJ) Canada, Jay Sterling (WUPJ) Canada, Rabbi Jackie Tabick (EUPJ/European Beit Din) UK, Rabbi Menno ten Brink (Liberaal Joodse Gemeente Amsterdam) Netherlands, Sandro Ventura (Shir Hadash Firenze) Italy, Robert Weiner (EUPJ) UK, Ruth Weiner (Alyth Synagogue) UK, Robert Wolf (Liberal Jewish Community of Luxembourg) Luxembourg, Jonathan Wootliff (EUPJ/Bejt Simcha) Czech Republic, Rabbi Alexandra Wright (The Liberal Jewish Synagogue) UK.

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair advised that a quorum was present and welcomed everyone to the 2019 European Assembly Meeting, and thanked Beth Hillel for organizing the weekend Shabbaton and wished Beth Hillel mazeltov on its 5th anniversary.

The Chair reported apologies had been received from Ruth Cohen and Leslie Bergman, Honorary Life Presidents, as well as from Michael Reik, Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris, David Bernstein, Marek Jezowski, Peter Jossi, Rabbi Danny Rich, Ron van der Wieken, Hannah Verhulst, David Weiss, Marc Konczaty and Tamas Grof.

2. **Approval of Minutes of 2018 European Assembly Meeting held in Prague**

The Chair advised that the minutes of the European Assembly Meeting held in Prague on 29 April 2018 were included in the EUPJ Annual Report for 2018 ("the 2018 Report") which had been made available on the EUPJ website before the meeting. In response to her request, the Chair received no comments or suggestions for changes to the Minutes, which were duly accepted as a correct record of the meeting and were then signed by the Chair.

3. **Approval of Minutes of Special European Assembly Meeting held in Brussels**

The Chair advised that the minutes of the Special European Assembly Meeting held in Brussels on 11 November 2018 were included in the 2018 Report. In response to her request, the Chair received no comments or suggestions for changes to the

Minutes, which were duly accepted as a correct record of the meeting and were then signed by the Chair.

4. **Welcome by WUPJ Chair**

The Chair introduced Carole Sterling (CS), the chair of the WUPJ, and welcomed her to her third EUPJ European Assembly Meeting and also welcomed her husband, Jay, and thanked him for all his support. CS, who expressed her pleasure in attending the meeting and weekend Shabbaton, thanked the Chair for her leadership and commitment. CS said that one of the goals of the WUPJ was for Jews to lead meaningful Progressive lives wherever they live and wished mazeltov to Beth Hillel as an example of what it means to build a community. CS highlighted the WUPJ activities - youth & young adult programmes and summer camps, the sharing of education, leadership training and best practice through the Saltz, Beutel and Bergman seminars, as well as rabbinic recruitment. CS pointed out that certain EUPJ communities could get support for this through the Roswell Fund. In addition, rabbis would soon be ordained in Moscow and a seminary has been established in Buenos Aires. CS was proud of work done in building rabbinic leadership. WUPJ also worked with IMPJ to ensure our values are expressed in Israel.

5. **Chair's Report**

The Chair referred the meeting to the Chair's Report included in the 2018 Report, which was read and noted. The Chair added the following items – (a) EUPJ Newsletter – the Chair advised that the EUPJ newsletter had been discontinued as its readership was very low and it was expensive to put together and these funds could be more effectively utilised. The Newsfeed on the website is now up to date and all events will included in this feed. The Chair advised that she was working on a new communications strategy to make EUPJ accessible to its members, to be new, exciting and relevant, and to embrace social media and other similar methods. She invited members and their representatives to get involved with the communications team by contacting her. (b) Geneva Conference 2020 – The Chair advised that this conference would coincide with GIL's 50th anniversary. The conference would focus on youth and the team was collecting ideas for all aspects of the conference. The Chair invited members to contact David Pollak or Alex Dembitz with any suggestions regarding the conference.

6. **Annual Accounts for 2018**

The Chair introduced the Vice-Chair Finance/Treasurer, David Pollak (DP), who referred to the Accounts, Independent Examiner's Report and his own Treasurer's Report included in the 2018 Report, which he summarised for the meeting with detailed slides. DP supplemented his report with the following – (a) Affiliation fees, which had not been increased for 10 years, had been increased. Cash was about £5K lower than the previous year but these funds were used to support communities. (b) The accounts showed increased expenditure for the Brussels Office, which would in time become self-funding on the receipt of grants. (c) DP gave special thanks to Betty and Arthur Roswell for providing the funds to support so many activities in certain EUPJ countries, now expanded to include Italy and Spain. (d) DP explained the funding for and costs of running the European Bet Din, and advised that a copy of the EUPJ statutory accounts was available for anyone to read. (e) DP advised that he had met with a small group of ManCom members to look at alternate ways of raising funds for EUPJ, in particular for special projects.

DP opened the European Assembly Meeting to questions – (1) Rabbi Walter Rothschild asked whether there would be any impact as a result of Brexit, particularly on the transfer of funds between Sterling and Euros. DP advised that, whilst exchange rates may be impacted, these had already been discounted and there would be no change to affiliation fees. The Chair pointed out that EUPJ also had a

foundation in the Netherlands which could be used to manage funds, if necessary. (2) Joyce Bigio said that, on the basis of reported affiliation fees, she estimated that there were about 14 000 Progressive Jews in Europe. DP said that this amount was much higher – firstly the two UK movements paid a negotiated fee, secondly many unions and synagogues recorded family units for fee purposes and not individuals, and sometimes it was difficult to calculate the exact number of members in a community. Robert Weiner asked if there was a more accurate way to track membership numbers and DP said that he relied on what was reported by EUPJ members and had no other way to obtain this information.

DP thanked the outside accounting firm Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP, and its partner Jeremy Harrod for providing the statutory examination of the 2018 Accounts without charge and also thanked his fellow Officers and the EUPJ Administrator Deborah Grabiner for their support during the year.

The Chair thanked DP for his work and invited the meeting to approve the Accounts. The proposal to do so was made by Rabbi René Pfertzel and seconded by Arthur Buchman and, on a show of hands, the Accounts were approved without objection.

7. **Appointment of Examiner**

The Chair reminded the European Assembly 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 2018 Report. Joyce Bigio seconded by Adam Lewis proposed the resolution to ratify the appointment of Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP as Independent Examiners of the annual accounts for 2018 and to re-appoint them as Independent Examiners for EUPJ's accounts for 2019. On a show of hands the resolution was approved without objection.

8. **Resolution to ratify the decision to admit Or Hadasz Progressive Jewish Community of Krakow to Associate Membership.**

The Chair referred to the proposed resolution in the 2018 Report and reminded the meeting that, at the European Assembly in Prague in 2017, the EUPJ Constitution was amended to give the Executive Board the authority to decide all applications for membership, subject to ratification by the European Assembly.

The Chair advised the European Assembly Meeting that EUPJ had not had a member in Krakow in Poland since the 2017 European Assembly and that the good news was that an application was received from **Or Hadasz Progressive Jewish Community of Krakow (Or Hadasz)** for Associate Membership. The Chair advised that the EUPJ ManCom carried out a full due diligence and review in respect of Or Hadasz and asked its members responsible for Poland to visit and assess this community, which was visited by Rabbis Andrew Goldstein and Janet Darley. EUPJ consulted with Beit Polska, our Constituent Member in Poland, which endorsed this application and also obtained a recommendation from ERA in respect of Or Hadasz. The EUPJ was also provided with all the documentation and information which EUPJ normally requires from prospective members. The Chair then advised the European Assembly Meeting that the EUPJ ManCom unanimously endorsed this application and that the Executive Board, at its meeting on 4 February 2019, unanimously voted to admit Or Hadasz as an Associate member.

The Chairman invited the European Assembly Meeting to ratify the decision of the Executive Board to admit Or Hadasz as an Associate Member and the proposal to do so was made by Miriam Kramer and seconded by John Clark. On a show of hands,

the resolution to ratify Or Hadasz being admitted as an Associate Member of the EUPJ with effect from 4 February 2019 was unanimously approved.

Rabbi Grodensky asked why Or Hadasz was admitted directly as an Associate Member of EUPJ when there was already a national body in Poland, Beit Polska. The Chair advised that Beit Polska, which was established in 2008 by Poland's then only Progressive Jewish community, had a constitutional framework that new Progressive communities in Poland found too centralised and are not prepared to be absorbed within. She stated that this decision reflected the reality on the ground and that EUPJ had consulted with and had the approval of Beit Polska for Or Hadasz being a direct member of EUPJ.

9. **EUPJ Officers and Board Members**

The Chair introduced the Vice-Chair Governance, John Cohen (JC), to deal with this item. JC explained that, in terms of the EUPJ Constitution, each country in Europe in which there are EUPJ communities/organisations with full EUPJ membership is entitled to nominate individuals to membership of the EUPJ Executive Board (EB), and the constitution states how many board members each country is entitled to nominate. A nominee would normally be appointed by the local union of Progressive Jewish communities or by the sole member in that country if there is only one country member. However, if there is more than one country member but there is no union of communities, then the constitution gives the EB the discretion to appoint (or not to appoint) a representative/s for that country after consultation with the Constituent Members in that country.

JC went on to explain a that number of country nominees were appointed to the EB during 2017, and these appointments were for an initial period of 3 years, with the option for a further period of 3 years. However, when the EUPJ Constitution was amended in Prague in 2018, board terms were shortened to 2 year periods, with the option to serve for a total of three 2 year terms. Therefore the first term of office of a number of members of the EB expired at this meeting and JC dealt with them on a country by country basis –

- Luxembourg - Rabbi Alexander Grodensky's term of office ended at this meeting and JC, on behalf of the chair, thanked him for his contribution. JC advised that David Weiss was nominated by Communauté Israélite d'Esch-sur-Alzette, our sole community in Luxembourg, to the EB;
- Netherlands - Ron van der Wieken and Hannah Verhulst's terms of office ended at this meeting and JC, on behalf of the chair, thanked them for their contributions. JC advised that the Verbond, the union of our communities in the Netherlands, has nominated Isabel Son and Sven Parsser to the EB;
- Belgium - Gilbert Lederman was jointly nominated by our two communities in Belgium, Beth Hillel and IJC, to represent them on the EB, and his first term of office comes to an end. JC advised that both Belgian communities have again nominated Gilbert to continue representing them on the EB;
- Switzerland - David Bernstein and Peter Jossi were nominated by PJLS, to be the Swiss representatives on the EB, and their first terms of office come to an end. Both David and Peter have indicated their willingness to continue in these capacities, as has PJLS, but this

decision can only be ratified when the PLJS board meets later in May 2019;

- Austria – John Clark was nominated by Or Chadasch, our only community in Austria, to represent them on the EB, and his first term of office comes to an end. Or Chadasch has again nominated John to continue representing it on the EB;
- Hungary – Tamás Gróf was jointly nominated by our two communities in Hungary, Sim Shalom and Bet Orim, to represent them on the EB, and his first term of office comes to an end. JC advised that both Hungarian communities have again nominated Tamás to continue representing them on the EB;
- France – Marc Konczaty and Celia Naval were nominated by AJL, the French Assembly, to be the French representatives on the EB, and their first terms of office come to an end. Each of Marc and Celia have been nominated by AJL to continue representing it on the EB. In addition, as France is entitled to three representatives on the EB, AJL has also nominated Stéphane Beder to represent it on the EB;
- Denmark – Arthur Buchman was nominated by Shir Hatzafon, our only community in Denmark, to represent it on the EB, and his first term of office comes to an end. Shir Hatzafon has again nominated Arthur to continue representing it on the EB;
- Czech Republic - Jonathan Wootliff was jointly nominated by our two communities in the Czech Republic, Bejt Simcha and ZLU, to represent them on the Executive Board, although Bejt Simcha had subsequently no longer supported this appointment. His first term of office comes to an end and Jonathan has indicated his willingness to continue in this capacity. The EUPJ Management Committee unanimously recommended that Jonathan remain in this capacity on the EB.

JC advised that all these appointments were rights under the constitution and only required ratification by the EB, except in regard to the Czech Republic, which was a board decision. JC proposed that (a) all the above appointments be ratified as far as required; (b) the appointment of the Swiss nominees be ratified subject to EUPJ receiving the formal notification from PJS, and (c) that Jonathan Wootliff be appointed as the board representative for the Czech Republic. JC asked if there were any objections to this proposal and none were forthcoming. Robert Weiner and Gordon Smith proposed and seconded these proposals which were unanimously approved by the meeting.

JC then handed back to the Chair, who –

- again thanked those board members standing down for their commitment to EUPJ, as well as congratulating those continuing to serve on the EB or serving on the EB for the first time;
- advised that Rabbi Jackie Tabick, who had served an initial two years on the EB, remains on the EB ex officio by virtue of being the Convenor of the EBD and a member of the Management Committee, and the Chair thanked her for her work with the EBD;

- advised that David Bernstein had also been appointed as an alternate board member for Rabbi Deborah Kahn-Harris, representing Leo Baeck College when Rabbi Kahn-Harris is unable to attend meetings;
- referred to Item 9A on the meeting agenda, which was contained in the Amendment to the Notice of Meeting dated 19 April 2019 and this was the proposal to elect John Cohen, whose one year term ended at the meeting, for a further period of one year. The Chair suggested, as this matter was unopposed, that John be so appointed by acclamation and the meeting unanimously said “Aye” and the Chair declared him duly elected on the basis of the acclamation received.

10. Any Other Business

The Chair 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 and that the time allocated for the meeting had now run its course.

The Chair then thanked John Cohen and Deborah Grabiner (the EUPJ Administrator) for all their work in organising this meeting and the meeting of the EB to follow. She also urged anyone with any questions or queries to contact the EUPJ Management Committee. The Chair thanked all present for attending the 2019 European Assembly Meeting and declared the meeting closed at 14:30 pm.

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Chair of the European Assembly Meeting