

## **EUROPEAN UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM**

**Minutes of the special single purpose meeting of the European Assembly of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ)** held electronically via Zoom on Thursday 20 April 2023 at 17H00 BST.

**Present:** EUPJ Chair Sonja Guentner and the other Honorary Officers and representatives of various Constituent Members and Associate Members of EUPJ, as well as invitees as follows: Leslie Bergman (EUPJ) United Kingdom, David Bernstein (PLJS) Switzerland, John Clark (Or Chadasch Vienna) Austria, John Cohen (EUPJ) United Kingdom, Jonathan Eaton (EUPJ) Netherlands, Fabio Benjamin Fantini (Beth Hillel Rome / FIEP Italy) Italy, Frantisek Fendrych (Jewish Liberal Union in the Czech Republic) Czech Republic, Anton Fishman (Leo Baeck College) United Kingdom, Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein (Liberal Judaism) United Kingdom, Deborah Grabiner (EUPJ) United Kingdom, Rabbi Alexander Grodensky (Liberal Jewish Community Luxembourg) Luxembourg, Peter Jossi (PLJS) Switzerland, Miriam, Kramer (EUPJ) United Kingdom, Ian Lancaster (Movement for Reform Judaism) United Kingdom, Paul Langsford (Movement for Reform Judaism) United Kingdom, Alexander Laugier-Werth (Communaute Israelite Liberale de Belgique (Beth Hillel) Belgium, Veronika Lederman (Beth Hillel-IJC) Belgium, Irith, Michelsohn (Union for Progressive Judaism in Germany) Germany, Andrés B. Mosquera (IJC Brussels) Belgium, Celia Naval (Keren Or) France, Daniel Schaban (Union for Progressive Judaism in Germany) Germany, Gordon Smith (EUPJ) United Kingdom, Ekaterina Solodkaia (Union for Progressive Judaism in Germany) Germany, Fredy Sussman (Kehila Bnei Israel) Spain, Rabbi Menno ten Brink (LJG / Stichting) Netherlands, David, Weis (Liberal Judaism Luxembourg) Luxembourg, Paul Winter (EUPJ) United Kingdom, Jonathan Wootliff (Ec chajim) Czech Republic, Dominika Zakrzewska (Beit Polska) Poland.

### **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Vice Chair Governance advised that a quorum was present. The President, Gordon Smith, welcomed everyone to the special single purpose meeting of the EUPJ European Assembly Meeting, held entirely online. The President mentioned that the meeting was being recorded for minute purposes and that the recording would be deleted as soon as the minutes were prepared. Apologies had been received from Rabbi Dr Jackie Tabick, Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild and Carole Sterling.

The President then introduced Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, who made the opening prayer. The Chair also introduced John Cohen (EUPJ Vice-Chair Governance) who explained the system of voting to be implemented for resolutions using the Zoom Polling System, with the kind assistance of Deborah Grabiner.

### **2. Approval of Minutes of the 2022 European Assembly Meeting held via Zoom**

The President advised that the minutes of the European Assembly Meeting held via Zoom on 8 September 2022 which had been attached (via a Link) to the Notice before the meeting. In response to his request, the President had not received any 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 President, the resolution to approve them having been proposed by Benjamin Fantini and seconded by John Clark.

### **3. Presentation of the Search and Nominations Report by EUPJ President**

The President advised that the full report and recommendations of the Search and Nominations Committee, together with the Profiles of the various nominees were attached (via a link) to the Notice before the meeting. The President advised that he

would supplement the Report with some brief additional comments and then he would take questions.

Gordon Smith reported that the committee was set up in September 2022 with Co-Chairs, Rabbi Thomas Salamon and Robert Weiner, but due to personal reasons Robert Weiner had to step down in the December from all his positions at the EUPJ. This left the EUPJ in a serious situation. Robert was chair of the Search and Nominations Committee so there was no one to drive the work of the committee forward, he was EUPJ's liaison with Liberal and Reform Judaism and thirdly he was Co-Chair with Sonja Guentner and was going to continue as Chair, if he had been nominated at today's meeting. The President thanked Miriam Kramer for agreeing to be nominated as Chair in Robert's place and thanked John Cohen for stepping up to jointly run the Search and Nominations Committee with him. The committee were also thanked for working very hard to produce the slate of nominations for the meeting. The President believed that the list of nominations was very strong and would help EUPJ's Management Committee to continue to grow after the meeting.

The President reminded the meeting that at the next Annual General Meeting to be held in August 2023 that there will be three vacancies: Chair, Vice Chair Finance and President. Gordon Smith had been elected, in some capacity, to the Management Committee for the past twenty years and it was time for him to retire. The meeting noted that there will be no UK representation on the committee bearing in mind that with the recently announced partnership of the two UK movements that it will become the largest synagogugual movement in Europe. Both the President and Miriam Kramer asked the meeting to return to their communities and organisations to search for new nominations for these vital and important vacancies. There were no questions raised from the floor.

**4. Resolution 4a:** To extend the period during which the Search and Nominations Committee will operate

The President, Gordon Smith, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that the period during which the Search and Nominations Committee (as established by the 2022 EUPJ European Assembly Meeting) will operate, be extended to the date of the 2023 EUPJ Annual European Assembly meeting. by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by David Bernstein and seconded by Celia Naval. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

**Resolution 4b:** To appoint Miriam Kramer as Chair of the EUPJ.

The President invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Miriam Kramer be and is hereby appointed as Chair of the EUPJ, subject to the proviso that this appointment shall end at the 2023 EUPJ Annual European Assembly Meeting by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by John Clark and seconded by Gordon Smith. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

Gordon Smith then invited the newly elected Chair to take over the meeting. Miriam Kramer thanked the meeting. She would address the meeting after the business of the meeting had been completed.

**Resolution 4c:** To extend the term of office of Gordon Smith as EUPJ President

The Chair, Miriam Kramer, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that the term of office of Gordon Smith as EUPJ President, which should have ended at the meeting, be and is hereby extended and shall now end at the 2023 EUPJ Annual European Assembly Meeting, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by

Benjamin Fantini and seconded by Miriam Kramer. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

Miriam Kramer thanked the meeting and was delighted that Gordon Smith would remain as EUPJ President until the 2023 Annual European Assembly Meeting.

It was noted that each of the following appointments to the Management Committee would take effect at the end of the meeting and the first term of such an appointment would be until the 2025 European Assembly Meeting so that they run for the same period as all other appointments.

**Resolution 4d(i):** To appoint Jonathan Eaton as the new Vice Chair Governance of the EUPJ

The Chair, Miriam Kramer, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Jonathan Eaton be and is hereby appointed as a member of the EUPJ Management Committee as Vice Chair Governance and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual European Assembly, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by John Cohen and seconded by Gordon Smith. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

**Resolution 4d(ii):** To appoint Dominika Zakrzewska-Oledzka as Vice Chair Communications of the EUPJ.

The Chair, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Dominika Zakrzewska-Oledzka be and is hereby appointed as a member of the EUPJ Management Committee as Vice Chair Communications and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual European Assembly, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by John Cohen and seconded by Gordon Smith. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

**Resolution 4d(iii):** To appoint Ben Fantini as the Vice Chair Israel of the EUPJ

The Chair, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Fabio Ben Fantini be and is hereby appointed as a member of the EUPJ Management Committee as Vice Chair Israel and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual European Assembly, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by Celia Naval and seconded by David Bernstein. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

**Resolution 4d(iv):** To appoint Rabbi Alexander Grodensky as the Vice Chair Interfaith of the EUPJ

The Chair, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Rabbi Alexander Grodensky be and is hereby appointed as a member of the EUPJ Management Committee as Vice Chair Interfaith and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual European Assembly, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by David Bernstein and seconded by Gordon Smith. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

It was noted that each of the following appointments to the Executive Board would take effect at the end of the meeting and the first term of such an appointment would be until the 2025 European Assembly Meeting so that they run for the same period as all other appointments.

**Resolution 4.e(i):** To appoint Fendrych Frantisek to the Executive Board as a Vice President of the EUPJ

The Chair invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Fendrych Frantisek be and is hereby appointed as a member of the EUPJ Executive Board and as a Vice President and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual European Assembly, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by Gordon Smith and seconded by John Cohen. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

**Resolution 4e(ii)** To appoint Sven Parsser (who is already a member of the Executive Board) as a Vice President.

The Chair invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Sven Parsser continue as a member of the Executive Board and also be appointed as Vice President and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual European Assembly, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by David Bernstein and seconded by Gordon Smith. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

**Resolution 4e(iii):** To appoint Andres B. Munoz Mosquera as a member of the Executive Board as Vice President

The Chair invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Andres B. Munoz Mosquera be and is hereby appointed as a member of the EUPJ Executive Board and as a Vice President and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual European Assembly, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by Miriam Kramer and seconded by Gordon Smith. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

It was noted that the following appointments were lifetime appointments in recognition of their contributions to EUPJ and Progressive Judaism and of the esteem in which they are held. They join Leslie Bergman in this honorary role.

**Resolution 4f(i):** To appoint Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein as an Honorary Life President of the EUPJ.

The Chair invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein be and is hereby appointed as an Honorary Life President of the EUPJ, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by Miriam Kramer and seconded by Gordon Smith. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

**Resolution 4f(ii):** To appoint Rabbi Menno ten Brink as an Honorary Life President of the EUPJ.

The Chair invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Rabbi Menno Ten Brink be and is hereby appointed as an Honorary Life President of the EUPJ, by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by Miriam Kramer and seconded by John Cohen. The resolution was approved by the meeting.

## 5. Chair's Address

The Chair, Miriam Kramer, welcomed everyone, both new and existing members of the EUPJ Team. She was thrilled to have you all on board. Now that the meeting had endorsed the new committee, it fell to her to say a few words. Miriam thanked the meeting for having confidence in her to act as sole Chair for the next six months. She saw herself as a continuity person, as well as a transitional one. At the next Annual

European Assembly, she hoped that there will be a new Chair of this wonderful organisation. The next expression of gratitude went to Sonja Guentner and Robert Weiner who Co-Chaired EUPJ before she took over. Their dedication, and despite the travails of Covid and other obstacles, the EUPJ was able to maintain its programmes and give support to our communities. The composition of the new Management Committee and Executive Board is due to the diligence of the Search and Nominations Committee. Initially, undertaken and chaired by Rabbi Thomas Salamon and Robert Weiner, to whom she was very grateful, it continued with John Cohen and Gordon Smith and a handful of people throughout the movement. She hoped everyone would agree that they have done an excellent job.

John Cohen who started out as Honorary Secretary, but evolved in the Vice Chair Governance, was so knowledgeable about the EUPJ constitution, charity law and much else that she suspected that he could write a book on all of them. Thanks seems so inadequate to express for all we owe you, but nonetheless, thank you.

She was very grateful that Gordon Smith had agreed to continue as President for the next six months. She confirmed that they worked well together and that was good news.

Miriam thanked EUPJ's Administrator, Deborah Grabiner. She is the public face of the organisation, the one that keeps us all on the straight and narrow, who finds the solutions to the most difficult challenges and is essentially the glue that keeps EUPJ together. Miriam thanked Deborah in a host of European languages

Miriam reminded the meeting of EUPJ's mission to foster and support Progressive Judaism throughout Europe. We all have a part to play in that ambition and she looked forward to working, as a team, to realise it.

The search and Nominations Committee were given the task to find new members of the Management Committee and Executive Board and to bring to the table diversity. She determined that this had been achieved. In previous reincarnations, those panels were justifiably criticised for being Anglo-centric. As the Management Committee now stands with each member holding a specific portfolio, there is only one 'Brit' on it, 'her'. The Executive Board also reflects the full European membership of the organisation and this was something that we should be very proud.

In conclusion, Miriam reminded the meeting that EUPJ's Treasurer had expressed his wish to retire, but has kindly agreed to remain in post until a new one is identified. We hope this will be before the next Annual Assembly and as she had already mentioned, she will be retiring in October so a new Chair has to be found. She echoed Gordon's plea to work through your communities to identify suitable candidates for both positions. Gordon Smith's term of office has been extended to work on this task and he would welcome any recommendations. Miriam reminded the committee that all of them could always contact the Management Committee members or Deborah, at any time, preferably on email.

Miriam thanked the meeting for listening to her and she looked forward to working together.

The meeting closed at 17:49 (BST).