

## EUROPEAN UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the European Assembly of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ)** held electronically via Zoom on **Thursday 31 August 2023** at 17H00 BST.

**Present:** EUPJ Chair Miriam Kramer and the other Honorary Officers and representatives of various Constituent Members and Associate Members of EUPJ, as well as invitees as follows: Jai Anguita (Comunidad Judía Progresista Bet Shalom de Barcelona) Spain, Rabbi Charley Baginsky (Liberal Judaism & Board) UK, Steven Beck (WUPJ), Israel, Yael Cobano (Comunidad Judía Reformista de Madrid), Pierre Elkaim (EUPJ Board Elect) France, Jonathan Eaton (EUPJ Board) Netherlands, Andre Falcao (Ohel Jacob) Portugal, Benjamin Fantini (Federazione Italiana Ebraismo Progressivo - FIEP) Italy, Dr František Fendrych (Židovská liberální unie - ZLU), Czech Republic, Anton Fishman (Leo Baeck College) UK, Sergio Fraile (Comunidad Judía de Valencia Bnei Sefarad) Spain, Paul Gompes (Netherlands Verbond voor Progressief Jodendom (NVPJ) Netherlands, Deborah Grabiner, (EUPJ) UK, Rabbi Alexander Grodensky (Liberal Jewish Community Luxembourg In Esch/Alzette) Luxembourg, Tamas Gróf (EUPJ Board) Hungary, Katherine, Gundolf (Or Chadasch Vienna) Austria, Michal Hron (Liberec) Czech Republic, Peter Jossi (Platform of Liberal Jews Switzerland - PLJS) Switzerland, Stanislaw Krajewski (EUPJ Board and Ec Chaim - Synagogue and Centre for Progressive Judaism of the Jewish Community of Warsaw) Poland, Ian Lancaster (EUPJ Board) UK, Paul, Langsford (Reform Judaism) UK, Veronika Lederman (Beth Hillel, Brussels/IJC/EUPJ Board) Belgium, Rabbi David Maxa (Ec Chajim Praha) Czech Republic, Irith Michelsohn, Union Progressiver Juden in Deutschland (UpJ), Andres Mosquera (EUPJ Board) Belgium, Rabbi Lea Muehlstein (EUPJ Board Elect) UK, Celia Naval (EUPJ Board – France) France, Monique Nilfsors (Progressive Judaism in Stockholm) Sweden, Eliza Panek (Ec Chaim, Warsaw) Poland, Carlo Riva (Federazione Italiana Ebraismo Progressivo - FIEP) Italy Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild (European Rabbinic Assembly) UK, Daniel Schaban (Union Progressiver Juden in Deutschland - UpJ) Germany, Fredy Sussman (Bnei Israel Galicia) Spain, Rabbi Dr Jackie Tabick (European Beit Din) UK, Rabbi Menno ten Brink (Netherlands Verbond voor Progressief Jodendom - NVPJ) Netherlands, Rabbi Drs Edward van Voolen (EUPJ Board /Abraham Geiger Kolleg) Germany, Jesse Weil (Sim Shalom) Hungary, David Weis (Liberal Jewish Community Luxembourg In Esch/Alzette) Luxembourg, Jonathan Wootliff (Ec Chajim Praha) Czech Republic, Dominika Zakrzowzka (EUPJ Board elect), Ariel Zavala (Comunidad Judía de Valencia Bnei Sefarad) Spain.

### 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair advised that a quorum was present and welcomed everyone to the 2023 European Assembly Meeting, saying she would have preferred to have met in person but welcomed participants from all over Europe. She hoped that the next meeting of the European Assembly could be held in person or on a hybrid basis. The Chair mentioned that the meeting was being recorded for minute purposes and that the recording would be deleted as soon as the minutes were approved. No requests had been received to include any items to the Agenda and so she would only allow matters under Item 12 (AOB), if time permitted. The Chair reported that she had received one proxy from a delegate who was unable to attend, instructing her to attend and vote in their place. Apologies had been received from Rabbi Sergio Bergman (President WUPJ), Phyllis Dorey (Chair WUPJ), Leslie Bergman (Honorary Life President), Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, Sven Parsser, Gordon Smith, Paul Winter and Rabbi Alexander Grodensky.

The Chair then introduced Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild, Chair of European Rabbinic Assembly (ERA) who shared a study session and prayer for those who busy themselves with the needs of the community. The study sheet would be circulated after the meeting. The Chair thanked Rabbi Rothschild for the very fitting and thoughtful study session.

The Chair then introduced Jonathan Eaton (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 2023 Special meeting of the European Assembly held via Zoom**

The Chair advised that the minutes of the Special Meeting of the European Assembly held online via Zoom on 20 April 2023 were included in the EUPJ Annual Report for 2022 ("the 2022 Report") which had been made available on the EUPJ website before the meeting. In response to her request, the Chair 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 Chair, the resolution to approve them having been proposed by Tamas Gróf and seconded by Celia Naval.

## **3. Welcome by WUPJ President and Chair**

The Chair introduced Steven Beck (SB), WUPJ Senior Vice-Chair. He brought warm greetings from the WUPJ Chair, Phyllis Dorey and WUPJ President, Rabbi Sergio Bergman who regretted not being able to attend but Steven was thrilled to be at the meeting, virtually from Israel. He congratulated the new Chair, Rabbi Lea Mühlstein and the rest of the new board. WUPJ appreciated Rabbi Mühlstein's important contribution to the WUPJ's board and for continuing on the Executive Board in a new role as Chair of the EUPJ. WUPJ also thanked Miriam Kramer for her term as EUPJ Chair and long standing commitment to the WUPJ. SB thanked everyone for their support to the World Union Ukraine Crisis Relief Fund which continues to support projects in Ukraine, Europe and Israel. These funds, collected by EUPJ will be used to support summer camp participants, welcoming Ukrainian refugees, relief payments to families impacted by this continuing war. And helping with some resettlement efforts in Israel, among others. WUPJ also appreciated those that were able to join at Connections and continue the online activities and discussions. WUPJ looks forward to marking our centenary birthday in London with EUPJ. He looked forward to working with the EUPJ and their continued close relationship. The Chair thanked SB and it was her pleasure to meet him electronically.

## **4. Chair's Report**

The Chair referred the meeting to the Chair's Report included in the 2022 Report at page 6. This report was submitted by her predecessor as she was not in office at that time. No questions were raised by the meeting.

## **5. Annual Accounts for 2022**

The Chair confirmed that the Finance Report was included with the Annual Report, starting on page 8 and must be read with the 2022 Examined Annual Accounts, which had been made available in a separate document. It was noted that Paul Winter, who sent his apologies for this meeting is stepping down as Vice-Chair Finance today. The Chair thanked him for the work he had done. He will be replaced by Pierre Elkaim, who is eminently qualified for this role, as a member of Kehlat Gesher in Paris and a board member and treasurer since 2015. He is also a member of Arzenou France and Treasurer since 2017.

The Chair advised that the Finance Report and 2022 Accounts were quite detailed but invited questions before putting them to the meeting, for approval.

As there were no questions, the Chair invited the meeting to approve the Accounts. The wording of the resolution was posted on the Zoom Polling System and the resolution was proposed by Veronika Lederman and seconded by Benjamin Fantini. All delegates were given the opportunity to vote using the Zoom Polling System, which showed that the Accounts were unanimously approved.

## 6. 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. The 2022 accounts have been examined by accounting firm Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP, led by partner Jeremy Harrod on a free of charge basis. The Independent Examiner's Report is at page 4 of the Certified Accounts. The report shows no criticism of the accounts and that they comply with the UK's Charity Commission rules. The EUPJ Management Committee and Executive Board appreciated the services provided by Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP and wished to appoint them to examine the 2023 Accounts.

The Chair invited the meeting to approve the resolution to ratify the appointment of Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP as Independent Examiners of the annual accounts for 2022 and to re-appoint them as Independent Examiners for EUPJ's accounts for 2023. The wording of the resolution was posted on the Zoom Polling System and the resolution was proposed by Ian Lancaster and seconded by Jonathan Wootliff. All delegates were given the opportunity to vote using the Zoom Polling System, which showed that the resolution to appoint Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP to examine the 2022 Accounts of EUPJ and the appointment of Grant Harrod Lerman Davis LLP to perform an examination of the 2023 annual accounts for the EUPJ had been ratified and approved.

## 7. EUPJ Succession Planning Proposal

The full report and recommendations of the Search & Nominations Committee together with the Profiles of the various nominees were attached to the Notice of this meeting. The meeting noted that Gordon Smith had spent most of the last year heading the Search and Nominations Committee, which was an extraordinarily complex task. The meeting paid tribute to him, in his absence on holiday, and were very grateful for his work and attention to detail that he made to submit the report and its nominations. The Chair pointed out that this proposal had been unanimously accepted by the Management Committee and the Executive Board. There were no questions raised.

## 8. Resolution to ratify the Appointments to the EUPJ Executive Board

The Chair handed over the baton to the Vice Chair Governance to run this part of the meeting.

The meeting noted that appointments to the EUPJ board and other offices are for two-year terms, with a maximum of three two-year terms in any one role. Some appointments need to be by election, some are ex officio appointments and, some are made by the Executive Board, itself.

The following members of the board were standing down at the end of the meeting:

- **Gordon Smith** - member of the Management Committee as President
- **Paul Winter** – member of the Management Committee as Vice-Chair Finance
- **David Bernstein** – representative for the Platform of Liberal Jews of Switzerland (PLJS)
- **Arthur Buchman** – representative for Shir Hatzafon in Denmark
- **John Clarke** – representative of the Jewish Liberal Congregation, Or Chadasch
- **Tamas Gróf** – representative of both Bet Orim, Reform Jewish Congregation and Szim Salom Congregation in Hungary
- **Peter Jossi** – representative for the Platform of Liberal Jews of Switzerland (PLJS)
- **Celia Naval** – representative of AJL, the French Assembly
- **Miriam Kramer** – member of the Management Committee as Chair of EUPJ

As Gordon was unavailable to thank Miriam for her commitment and contribution to EUPJ on behalf of the current committee, he had prepared a brief video, which was played to the meeting.

#### **8a. Resolution to ratify the appoint of a new President**

As Gordon Smith was retiring as President at this year's European Assembly, the meeting thanked him for his contribution to the movement and would be replaced by Miriam Kramer.

Miriam was eminently qualified for this role, after a stint on the RSGB (as it then was) board she became involved with Leo Baeck College. Initially, she formed and chaired a committee to organise events to mark the College's 50th anniversary in 2006 and then chaired the College for four years. After a brief respite, she was approached to chair EUPJ and she did this for six years. At the end of last year, she was approached to return as Co-chair and then took over as Chair – with the stipulation that she would not hold office for no more than six months following the meeting on 20 April. This appointment as President was unanimously recommended by the Management Committee and Executive Board.

The Vice-Chair Governance, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Miriam Kramer be and is hereby appointed to the Executive Board and Management Committee in the position of President of the EUPJ, and that the first terms of this appointment shall end at the 20205 Annual Assebly.by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by Veronica Lederman and seconded by Celia Naval. The resolution to the appointment of Miriam Kramer was approved.

#### **8b. Resolution to ratify the appoint of a new Chair**

As Miriam was stepping down as Chair at this year's European Assembly, the meeting thanked her for her contribution to the movement and would be replaced by Rabbi Lea Mühlstein.

Rabbi Lea Mühlstein was eminently qualified as acting Chair of the UK Zionist Federation; 2022 to date, Board member of the London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism; 2017 to date member of the Board of Governors and the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Israel; 2017 to date Member of the Expanded Executive of the WZO and member of the Vaad Ha-poel; 2017 to date International Chair of Arzenu; 2011 to date Member of the organising team of the Jewish Christian Muslim Conference and was unanimously recommended by the Management Committee and Executive Board.

The Vice-Chair Governance, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Rabbi Lea Mühlstein be and is hereby appointed to the Executive Board and Management Committee in the position of Chair of the EUPJ, and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 20205 Annual Assebly.by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by Miriam Kramer and seconded by Tamas Gróf. The resolution to the appointment of Rabbi Lea Mühlstein was approved.

#### **8c. Resolution to ratify the appoint of a new Vice-Chair Finance**

As, Paul Winter was stepping down as Vice-Chair Finance at this year's European Assembly, the meeting thanked him for his contribution to the movement and would be replaced by Pierre Elkaim. Pierre had been introduced to the meeting at point 5 and was unanimously recommended by the Management Committee and Executive Board.

The Vice-Chair Governance, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Pierre Elkaim be and is hereby appointed to the Executive Board and Management Committee in the position of Vice-Chair Finance of the EUPJ, and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual Assebly.by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was

proposed by Miriam Kramer and seconded by Ariel Zavala. The resolution to the appointment of Pierre Elkaim was approved.

#### **8d. Resolution to ratify the appoint of Vice-Chair, UK Reform and Liberal Movements Liaison**

The Vice-Chair Governance introduced the new role, Vice-Chair, UK Reform and Liberal Movements Liaison for which Ian Lancaster was eminently qualified as he has been a member of North West Surry Synagogue (NWSS) since 1989. He has twice served as Chairman at NWSS, as well as a warden. He has been a member of the Movement for Reform Judaism's (MRJ) Board for four years and chaired the joint MRJ/Liberal Judaism Working Group on Rabbinic Training; He is also one of two MRJ nominees to the Board of Leo Baeck College. He was unanimously recommended by the Management Committee and Executive Board.

The Vice-Chair Governance, invited the meeting to approve and ratify that Ian Lancaster be and is hereby appointed to the Executive Board and Management Committee in the position of Vice-Chair, UK Reform and Liberal Movements Liaison of the EUPJ, and that the first term of this appointment shall end at the 2025 Annual Asseby.by using the Zoom Polling system. The resolution was proposed by Ariel Zavala and seconded by Veronika Lederman. The resolution to the appointment of Ian Lancaster was approved.

#### **8e. To confirm representative appointments of the Executive Board**

The following appoints to the Executive Board by Constituent Members for new representatives or for those appointed for a second of third term. These are rights granted under the constitution so no vote was required but were announced to the meeting:

- By Liberal Judaism in the UK – Rabbi Charley Baginsky for her second term
- By AJL, the French Assembly, Stéphane Beder for his third term and Michel Kahn for his second term and Anne Sebbag for her first term.
- By the Liberal Jewish Community of Luxembourg – David Weis for his third term
- By the Executive Board in respect of Hungary, Péter Árvai for his first term.
- By Or Chadasch Synagogue in Vienna – Katherine Gundolf for her first term
- By the Executive Board in respect of PJLS, the Platform for Liberal Judaism in Switzerland, two nominations will follow at the next Executive Board meeting
- By the Executive Board in respect of Denmark, a nomination will follow at the next Executive Board meeting.

It was noted that board representation for countries with more than one member and no national union, are made by the Executive Board and that the appointments in respect of Spain will be dealt with at a future board meeting.

#### **9. Rabbinic Matters**

The Chair advised that full reports from the European Rabbinic Assembly (ERA), the European Beit Din (EBD) and the Central European Beit Din (CEBD) were included in the Annual Report on pages 15, 17 and 18 respectively. No questions were raised at the meeting. The Chair thanked the rabbis who headed these organisations for all the work they do for EUPJ and felt that all of us were in debt to them.

#### **10. EUPJ Stichting/Foundation**

The Chair advised that a full report on the activities of the Stichting (Foundation) was included in the Annual Report on page 11; the Chair pointed out that this was the annual assembly meeting of the EUPJ and not that of the EUPJ Stichting/Foundation. However, the Chair invited questions which would be answered by members of the Foundation who were present at the meeting. No questions were raised at the meeting. The Chair thanked her European colleagues for all the work they had done to date.

### **11. Any Other EUPJ Reports**

The Chair advised no other reports had been received.

### **12. Any Other Business**

The Chair advised that, no member notified the Vice-Chair Governance by the due date of any matter or issue to be put on the agenda to be dealt with at this meeting. The Chair reminded the meeting that one could put any point to the Management Committee at any time by email to the Chair, Vice-Chair Governance or Deborah Grabiner, our Administrator.

Miriam Kramer (MK) as out-going Chair said it had been a pleasure to Chair the movement twice and she knew under the very capable leadership of Rabbi Lea Mühlstein that the movement would go from strength to strength. Miriam handed over the meeting to the new Chair, Rabbi Lea Mühlstein.

The Chair, Rabbi Mühlstein, thanked Miriam for all her work at EUPJ and for chairing this meeting so efficiently and looks forward to count on her wisdom as President. She also thanked Jonathan Eaton, Vice-Chair Governance, for running this meeting and to Deborah Grabiner, for organising this meeting. The Chair then opened her era as Chair as a new beginning for her and all those that had been newly elected to the Management Committee and Executive Board. She looked forward to working with them over the next two years. The Chair invited everyone to let her know how they would like to see EUPJ grow and develop in partnership over the next two years, together. She described her familiarity with the struggles that some of you are experiencing of fighting the good fight for recognition and she can share how it feels when things get better. She is Senior Co-Rabbi of a large North London Synagogue whose Emeritus Rabbi, Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, is also past Chair of EUPJ some years ago. Rabbi Lea Mühlstein looked forward to learning from him and to progress many new ideas and to look forward to the future. She shared her favourite teaching from Pirkei Avot, it is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it. We probably will not finish the work together but we will all work in the spirit as Rabbi Rothschild shared in her study of serving the congregation, of serving the public and hopefully, we complete this with faithfulness.

The Chair declared the meeting closed and she looked forward to seeing everyone at next year's meeting, hopefully in person.

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Chair of the European Assembly Meeting