



## Minutes of the General Assembly of 20 May 2023 in Sofia

Chairman:	Gion Gross
Protocol:	Jeannine Jehl
Excused:	<b>Honorary President</b> Urs Freiburghaus, <b>Honorary Members</b> Micky Tompers, Esther Huwiler, Peter Mickmann, Hans Ove Christiansen, Hans Schipper, Hermann Stroblmair, Dietmar Kleditsch As well as Mark Rudd,
Guests:	
Start:	08:35 h

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## **Introduction**

"Wise decisions

Dear delegates, dear colleagues

We want to make wise decisions here in Sofia. And we are in the right place to do so. Because the name Sofia comes from the Greek and means nothing other than wisdom.

Wisdom is also needed when it comes to negotiations, as our Advisory Council is currently doing with the responsible EU Commission. A wise, albeit stubborn, approach is also needed when we campaign for a vaccine against bird flu. But it is not at all wise to get angry and rant about any laws and overzealous animal rights activists - that only costs unnecessary energy that we would much better use for our concerns. There is still a lot to do in the next few years. Energy and wisdom are needed! Therefore, let's not waste time and get to work!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the 84th General Assembly of the Entente Européenne! With about 130 delegates and companions from 32 countries, the registration is very pleasing. This shows the great interest in our Entente Européenne. It is therefore a great honour for me to declare the 84th General Assembly of the EE open.

The agenda for today's General Assembly was sent to everyone or could be downloaded from the website."

The President asked if there were any suggestions or requests for the agenda. There were none, so the agenda was adopted unanimously.

### ***Decision: The agenda was adopted unanimously.***

#### **1. Opening, welcome**

The President, Gion Gross, also extends a warm welcome to the Honorary Members, Delegates and Friends of the Entente Européenne who are present.

And sincerely thanks the Bulgarian Association for organising this meeting. So far, everything has worked out very well.

Unfortunately, some comrades will not be able to attend our General Assembly this year due to health reasons. We wish you a good recovery and look forward to welcoming you back in good health at the next meeting.

Unfortunately, death has once again torn gaps in our ranks in the past year. Members who have worked for our cause for years, even decades, have left us forever. Representative for all of them is the chairman of the Standard Commission Birds, Heinz Hochuli, who shortly before his sudden death asked us to book the trip here for him.

We remember with gratitude all our deceased members and rise briefly from our seats.

***Friends are like stars - they are always there and shine even when they are dead.***

A big thank you goes to our translators Urs Lochmann and Jean-Louis Frindel. Thanks to them, simultaneous translation is once again possible!

## **2. Determination of the presence**

Voting cards have been distributed at the entrance.

There is one voting card per section of a country

All voting delegates have drawn their voting card.

Voting proxies may only be made for the sections of one's own country.

Distributed voting cards: 83

Absolute majority: 42

Total votes: 83

Total present: 130

At the same time, the EE medals have been handed in at the entrance.

Up to 5000 members per section= 1 medal

Over 5000 members per section= 2 medals

If anyone has not yet received these medals, they are requested to do so immediately after the meeting.

Election of the tellers:

Michel Bovet

Peter Zuffa

***Resolution: Adopted unanimously.***

## **3. Minutes of the EE meeting of 28.05.2022 in Konijk**

The transcript was written by Jeannine Jehl and published on the website.

There is no remark and no comment.

***Decision: The minutes were adopted unanimously.***

Many thanks to Jeannine for the prompt completion.

## **4. Report of the President**

The President, Gion Gross, informed the members present about the progress made with regard to the articles of Regulations 2016/429 and 2020/688, but also about still unresolved problems. On the one hand, the collective transports are counted as one lot, but the animals have to return to their place of origin.

The Advisory Council on Health and Animal Welfare still has a lot to do. This body is currently the most important pole of the EE. Its chair, Erik Apperlo, will tell you more about it.

He had received several invitations to the national shows. Everywhere a very nice reception, very nice shows. The federations and the breeders are honoured by the coming of EE representatives.

As it is currently not possible to guarantee the holding of a European show with all species, it was decided that in 2024 a European show will be held in the Czech Republic, where only rabbits and guinea pigs will be presented.

And when the situation clears up for sure for all sections, and when a country has the opportunity to hold a European RE show, everyone, Presidium members as well as breeders, are happy to be able to participate.

Willy Littau, our treasurer for 28 years, is not standing for re-election, so a new one has to be elected. This is presented under another item. Gion Gross only mentions that Willy took over the treasury with very little money at that time, and now the EE can look well into the future.

Istvan Rohringer, the Vice-President, asked the assembly if there were any comments on the report. There are not.

***Resolution: the President's report was adopted unanimously.***

## **5. Report of the General Secretary**

European Congress from 25 to 29 May 2022 in Konjic / Bosnia and Herzegovina. A very nice and well organised congress. The organisers with Edin at the helm had invited us in a beautiful green landscape. Damir and his team took care of the 104 delegates and their companions from the EE member countries during the whole stay. A big thank you to them.

After a meeting of the Presidium and the Standard Commissions of the different Sections, the annual meetings were held in the different Sections. The presidents of these sections were re-elected at their general meetings and these elections were confirmed by all members present at the EE AGM.

Michel Bovet was appointed honorary member of the ES for his commitment to the EE, as well as to the work in numerous offices in his home country, Switzerland. When Jean-Louis Frindel excused himself for this Congress, Michel immediately agreed to take over the translation of the GA. Gion Gross, on behalf of the Presidium, thanks him very much for his commitment.

New members were admitted to the Entente Européenne:

Estonia, Poultry section

North Macedonia, Poultry section

The Ukraine with its umbrella organisation could not come to the AGM due to the current situation in the country. The Presidium is very positive about their admission. They will be admitted when circumstances allow.

Also because no one was physically present, Kosovo's motion was adjourned.

Due to the application of a new federation in Croatia and the lack of agreement with the old federation, the AGM decided to suspend Croatia until an agreement is reached.

Outside the sessions, many discussions took place, and everyone appreciated the social moments as well as the excursions offered by the organisers. For those present, the visit to Mostar was also a highlight of this Congress.

Urs Lochmann and Michel Bovet did an excellent job with the simultaneous translations. Many thanks to both of them.

I have represented EE at:

- The Federal Rabbit Show in Kassel / D
- The Rassekaninchen exhibition, from the LV-Baden / D
- I visited the rabbit and pigeon show in Leipzig.
  - During the rabbit judging training, we expressed our understanding to our breeding friends from Poland for their withdrawal for the organisation of the EE European Show due to the events near their country.
- As well as the show for the 125th anniversary of the Norwegian Rabbit Association in Rakkestad, together with Wolfgang Vogt.
- I represented the EE at the general assemblies of the ZDRK, the state of Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden, as well as at the 100th anniversary of the Small Animal Association of Luxembourg.

With Eric Apperlo, we represented EE at the Congress for Breeding and Conservation of Old Breeds of Domestic Animals in Bonn / DE.

Congratulations to the organisers and a big thank you for the warm welcome.

In February, the Presidium held a face-to-face meeting in Sofia. Four other meetings were held by video conference.

Exchanges and other telephone conversations also took place.

A big thank you to the organisers of the Bulgarian Federation for the preparation of our current Congress. A special thanks goes to Sasho Sarandev.

At our 2022 Congress, I had provided you with the contact details on an Excel list. Many of you sent me back the changes in your lists. I thank you very much for that. Please feel free to send me any changes throughout the year. We can then react very quickly to the various communications.

The website needs to be decalcified and made a little more attractive.

The Facebook page is a great success. It enables the rapid dissemination of information and exchange between breeders from all over the world.

Thank you all for your help and the exchange we have. It is very helpful and enriching for me. Please do not hesitate to contact me, I always try to answer you as soon as possible.

I wish you a successful breeding season 2023/24, many show visits and a good comradeship among the breeders.

There is no comment or remark.

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***Decision: the report of the secretary is adopted unanimously.***

## **6. Report of the Section Chairmen (Poultry, Pigeons, Birds, Rabbits, Caviar)**

### **Poultry: Andy Verelst**

Andy reviews a year where again, many shows were without present "feathered animals".

With Erik Apperlo, the Advisory Council for Animal Welfare and Health Oath has achieved a success, but there is still much to do.

A judge training in Trenčín with a lot of participants. One question, can the training be carried out well if there are too many participants?

In 2024, a European show with rabbits and caviar only will be organised in the Czech Republic. However, it would make more sense to wait a year and then do a normal EE European Show with all sections.

In order to bring the EE well into the future in these difficult times, it would be appropriate for a working group, with members from all sections, to think about finding solutions for a good administration of our association.

He wishes all delegates that they will be able to exhibit their "feathered animals" in the late year.

### **Pigeons: Gustl Heftberger**

Gustl reports on the Judges' Meeting 2022 in Vösendorf which, thanks to the organisers, was a success. One topic was, among many others, the over-typing of different breeds.

This year the judges' meeting will be held together with the poultry section in Jagodina, Serbia.

Many breed-related European shows have been cancelled for the 2022/23 season due to avian influenza.

One had taken place in Croatia, unfortunately it had not been approved by the EE. There were evaluation certificates that came from another country. This kind of thing must not happen again.

Several breed-related European shows are planned for this year, in the hope that they can be held.

### **Birds: Klaas Snijder**

Klaas remembers the late Hans Hochuli, Vice-President of the Standards Commission.

One issue, raised in conversation with the Advisory Board Chair, Erik Apperlo, was the over-typification of some breeds.

The Birds section would also like to expand to other countries. Only together we are strong.

The European show in Austria had to be cancelled.

The COM standard for exotic animals and parakeets is still being worked on.

In 2024, a Dutch championship will be held as part of the small animal show "Nordschau".

A list of active EE judges and further arrangements for the appointment of judges should be drawn up.

In the section, the positions "Vice-President" and "Secretary" were swapped, so Sven Pukat becomes Secretary and Jan van Loy Vice-President.

### **Rabbits: Wolfgang Vogt**

Wolfgang Vogt is pleased about the presence of 29 delegates from 15 countries. The joy of finding everyone healthy again is somewhat dampened by the official regulations and animal welfare which make it difficult for us to practise our hobby, the high average age of the breeders and rising inflation.

There are no new applications in the rabbit section.

The judges' training in Pezinok / SK was a success with 117 participants. A big thank you to the Slovakian federation for the smooth running of the event. The next training will take place in 2024 in the Czech Republic.

As there are no more standards on sale, the Standards Commission is working on a new version that will be presented in 2024.

The European Show 2024 in the Czech Republic will only be held with the divisions Rabbit and Cavia.

The accepted breed-related European shows will be displayed on the website.

Erik Apperlo reports, among other things, on the prevention of over-typing in some breeds.

Kaninhop has increased again since the end of the Corona pandemic. Wolfgang Vogt wants to support this sport, because it is beneficial for our hobby.

### **Cavias: Lena Tysk**

4 divisional meetings have been held online since Konjic's AGM.

Erik Apperlo, confirms that the Animal Welfare Council has no problem with skinnies in principle. But they could be disturbing to the public at exhibitions.

Spain and Ukraine would like to join the EE.

It was decided that, for skinnies exhibitions, the room temperature should be between 15 and 25 degrees.

Adjustments have been made in the standard.

The judges' training will take place in Affligem / BE.

The European Show 2024 will take place in the Czech Republic. Andrea will forward the details later.

The President expresses his sincere thanks to the section Chairmen, their secretaries and the members of the Standard Commissions for their great and important work.

## **7. Report of the Chairperson of the Animal Health and Welfare Advisory Board**

Our advisory board chair, Erik Apperlo, has already been fully challenged and has had and done a lot of work. He reports.

Since the last Annual Congress in Bosnia and Herzegovina in May 2022, our Advisory Board consisting of: Hristo Lukanov (BU), Eduard Gendrin (FR) Wim Halsema (NL), Gunther Anthonissen (BE), Peter Supuka (SK), Andy Verelst (BE) and Erik Apperlo (NL), addressed a number of issues. We consulted in 4 digital meetings. In addition, a lot of time and effort was put into addressing these issues.

An important topic that has been discussed several times concerns avian influenza. It is known to be endemic in Europe, i.e. it occurs in nature all year round, and therefore poses a threat to kept AI-susceptible birds. To cope with this new situation, hopes are pinned on a vaccine that offers protection. This is being worked on at full speed and the first tests of the first vaccines seem positive, but it may be a long time before vaccines are actually available for our animals. Furthermore, for the exhibition of animals, the vaccine must not only protect the animal at home, but also provide enough security to allow transports and reunions of animals again.

Apart from bird flu, we also discussed a number of topics with regard to a future European Show. For example, during this event we started to develop husbandry advice for the different animal species in order to prevent possible animal welfare problems due to incorrect housing or care by providing the right advice in advance.

As you know, at the 2021 Congress in Denmark, a power was passed for our Advisory Board to decide, in consultation with the main jury per species, to exclude animals from the event. This is due to compromised animal welfare caused by excessive over-typing or other traits. To clarify this, we want to talk to the standard bodies about whether detrimental traits are reflected clearly enough in the variety descriptions so that it is clear to breeders reading the standard what is acceptable and what is not.

Examples of social threats from member countries were also reviewed. These include, for example, positive lists of the animal species permitted to be kept. It often happens that a number of animal species kept in the EE are not listed here, which means that they can no longer be kept. Attacks by animal welfare organisations also occur in various countries and are very difficult to combat. Already last year, the ZDRK pointed out in the Rabbit Section that a media attack on re-breeds had started in Germany. With a lot of effort and by refuting empty arguments with facts, research and literature, the ZDRK succeeded in refuting these accusations. In the Netherlands, draft laws are being prepared to prohibit the slaughter of one's own animals. This can also make our hobby very difficult.

The most important efforts have been made by the Council in the area of European legislation, where the 429 Regulation requires more registrations and the biggest problem is the 688 Regulation, which requires additional requirements for pigeons



and poultry during cross-border transport. At the time of the last conference, a public consultation was underway, with necessary input from our side. This public consultation has given thought to those responsible in Brussels and, as a first consequence, it has been considered which exemptions from the 429 Regulation should apply. Without us being aware of it, the public consultation was also an occasion for the European Commission to implement a relaxation of the 688 Regulation, which allows the collection of animals from February this year, so that larger groups of animals can be issued with a separate TRACES certificate instead of each individual breeder. This saves a lot of costs.

To address another problem of the 688 regulation, Andy Verelst and Erik Apperlo met in Brussels on 6 February. There, in a technical meeting with the officials, it was pointed out that it is very detrimental for our European shows that animals are not allowed to leave for another country when they are sold. They seem to have succeeded in making this clear and exposing that this poses many great risks. The first signals from the subsequent consultations between the European Commission and representatives of national governments indicate that the arguments from our discussion are being taken seriously. Hopefully this will lead to the sale being possible again in the future. The transport of animals is always accompanied by a TRACES certificate. There is no discussion about this.

As can be heard in this short report, the Advisory Board is fully active and will need to remain active to help preserve the future of our hobby.

## **8. Report of the Treasurer and the Auditors**

Willy Littau reports on the EE treasury. The financial year shows the profit for the year 2022.

Revenue:	17 935,09 €
Expenditure:	15 205,68 €
Balance at 31.12.221	143 965,56 €
Balance at 31.12.2022	146 695,78 €
Profit:	2 730,22 €

He underlines that even though no EE European Show has taken place since 2018, still have a good cash box.

There are no questions or comments on this.

Word to the auditors: Klaas von der Hoek and Thom Laming have audited the cash register. There was a small clerical error which was corrected. The cash register was kept excellently, and all documents were available. A big thank you to Willy for his excellent work.

There are no questions or comments.

***Resolution: the treasurer's report is adopted unanimously***

Many thanks to Willy and the auditors.

Gion Gross shows the liquidity plan to the assembly. If we continue to be so frugal, we will have enough liquidity to look calmly into the future.

There are no questions or comments.

## **9. Elections:**

### **9.1 Election of the President**

Gion Gross has announced his retirement for the year 2023 or 2025. Various circumstances have led him to stand for election once again today.

Vice-President Istvan Rohringer took the floor for the election of the President.

After Istvan asked if there was another candidate, as there was not, and no wish for a secret ballot, Gion Gross was unanimously elected as President.

***Resolution: Gion Gross is elected as President by a majority.***

### **9.2 Election of the Treasurer**

Willy Littau resigns as Treasurer today, this will be discussed later.

Hansjörg Opala was the only candidate nominated for this office by the Zentralverband deutscher Rassekaninchenzüchter ZDRK.

Peter Kalugin, a ZDRK representative, briefly introduces Hansjörg Opala.

Again, there was no other candidate and no motion for a secret ballot, so Hansjörg Opala was elected Treasurer.

***Resolution: Hansjörg Opala is unanimously elected as Treasurer.***

Gion Gross congratulates Hansjörg Opala on his election and looks forward to a pleasant and fruitful collaboration.

Hansjörg Opala accepts the election.

### **9.3 Election of a substitute auditor:**

Klaas van der Hoek resigns as auditor. The auditors in 2024 are Thom Laming as first and Georg Sattlecker as second auditor.

The President proposes Willy Littau as substitute auditor.

Willy Littau was elected unanimously.

***Resolution: Willy Littau is unanimously elected as substitute auditor.***

## **10. Regulations for General European Shows**

Originally, the Presidium wanted to propose another amendment. However, it has waived this amendment, which is why we can skip this item of the agenda.

## **11. Honours**

This is, of course, the most beautiful item on the agenda of our General Assembly.

However, we do not want to appoint honorary members just so that we can do justice to this conference item and are not proposing anyone to you this year for the award of honorary membership.

And yet we want to honour someone:

Laudation to Willy Littau

Willy is known by all delegates, as he has been the EE treasurer for 28 years. When he took up the post, the treasury was empty. Thanks to his persistence and a loan from the Danish federation, he brought the EE to today's good position.

Willy always has good advice but is also open-hearted. Every year Willy and his wife Hanne receive the delegates of the different sections to check the payment of the dues.

Willy was also with the organisers of 2 EE European shows in Denmark. The first in 1985 and the second in 2018, both in Herning. Both were excellently executed.

He still volunteers in many posts, most notably with the Orpington Special Club.

A big thank you from the President and the Presidium for the long cooperation and his friendship. The President elevated him to Honorary Treasurer of the EE and presented him with the unique golden badge of the Treasurer.

The assembly rose for a long standing ovation.

## **Applications**

No motions have been received from the countries. The Presidium did not make a motion either, which is why we can go straight to the next item on the agenda.

## **12. Admission of new members**

Before we come to the happy meeting point of admitting new members, we have to come back to a decision of the 2022 General Assembly.

After a second federation was founded in Croatia and the two federations were in dispute, the Presidium of the 2022 General Assembly requested that Croatia's membership be suspended until the two federations had come to an agreement again. The General Assembly agreed to this motion.

The Croatian federation used a lawyer to fight against this decision.

Reason: Our bylaws do not provide for suspension of membership and the motion had not been properly announced, i.e., not listed on the agenda.

Both are correct, i.e. the Presidium should not have proposed this and the General Assembly should not have approved the proposal.

We apologise for this error!

We therefore propose that the General Assembly revoke its decision of last year and restore the rights of the previous member association.

No question or comment.

***Decision: the proposal to reinstate the old association from Croatia is accepted by a majority.***

The previous member association is entitled to vote again with immediate effect!

However, we implore the two associations to start negotiations and come to an agreement, so that all Croatian small animal breeders can once again benefit from all the advantages of EE membership! The most beautiful pastime in the world should not be hindered by disputes!

San Marino request

From the umbrella organisation San Marino Federation "Federazione Allevatori Sammarinesi Animali Domestici (F.A.S.A.D.)" David Montanori is present, representing the President, who has sent his apologies, and presents the Federation.

The Praesidium proposes to adopt the proposal of San Marino, of.

***Decision: The inclusion of San Marino was adopted by a majority with one vote against.***

Cavia Division, the association from Norway.

Tom Erik Feragen presents the Association. The Presidium proposes that the motion of be accepted.

***Resolution: The inclusion of Norway Cavia Division was unanimously approved.***

Cavia Division, there is no delegate from the Federation of Spain. So the adoption is postponed.

Representatives of both federations are present from Kosovo. Discussions have taken place beforehand and both federations have clearly stated their will to join forces. A presentation is shown.

***Resolution: The admission of the merged association was unanimously approved.***

**13. Information EE Meetings**

2023 18- 21	May	Bulgaria
2024 09 - 12	May	Czech Republic
2025 29.05- 1.06	June	Romania/Roumanie/Romania
2026 13 – 17 05	May	Spain Mallorca

## **Information on the 2024 European meeting in the Czech Republic**

The 2024 European Conference will be held in the Czech Republic. More details later.

The European meetings from 2026 onwards are therefore still up for grabs. We are looking forward to receiving applications. It is important that the conference hotel is close to the airport so that long shuttle journeys can be avoided.

### **14. Revision of the Articles of Association**

According to information from the competent Luxembourg authorities, some points need to be added and/or changed when revising our Articles of Association.

So instead of having you approve a text that we have to process again later, we write it properly right away before we submit it to the authorities. This point will therefore be reviewed next year.

### ***Resolution: adopted unanimously***

### **15. Suggestions and wishes**

This is actually the most important business of this General Assembly, namely the meeting item on the associations.

Milan Brkic presents the poultry and pigeon judge training in Jagodina/RS.

### **16. Miscellaneous**

Milan Brkic asked whether it would be possible to use a Balkan language in addition to the three official languages - German, French and English. The different languages have a lot in common and so the delegates who do not follow the official languages so well could also follow the sessions well.

This will be proposed at the next Presidium meeting.

Before closing today's General Assembly, the President has a few concerns:

Again and again, we find that not all the information you have received here is then actually passed on. It is not helpful if they simply spend a few pleasant days here. Now take the information you have received here to your associations, write a report in your association newspaper and orientate yourself at meetings of your associations.

Be sure to support our advisory board in its efforts to pass small animal-friendly laws and regulations and respond to its questions.

Visit [www.entente-ee.com](http://www.entente-ee.com) regularly for the most important information.

Yes, our website is only as up to date as the information we receive from the sections. You have to invest some time if you want to keep it up to date.

Our membership administration is a perennial problem, and it too is only as up to date as you keep it. With round e-mails, dozens keep coming back because the address is wrong, the person is no longer in office or has even died. No one should complain if he or she has not received a message. Then the address is wrong. Our general secretary is happy to give information on how to log in if the password is missing and so on!

In conclusion

If there are delegates who are attending a meeting for the last time this year because they are stepping down from office, they are asked to stand up now so that we can bid them a dignified farewell.

He thanked you once again for the numerous invitations to your events, which he accepted if possible or forwarded to a member of the Presidium. The earlier such invitations come, the greater the likelihood that a member of the Presidium will be able to accept them. Such meetings are important, promote mutual trust and offer the opportunity for bilateral discussions.

And he also expresses his sincere thanks for the delivery of the association's magazines. He can read them all - I can only understand some of them. But just seeing the pictures of the animals bred in the different countries is almost always a pleasure.

And he expresses his sincere thanks to the Bulgarian Association for organising and hosting these meetings.

He asked at the end if there were any objections to the conduct of the meeting or the voting.

No comments and dissenting voices

We are confident that we will be able to organise exhibitions with all our sections again this year and wish you good luck and much success.

And he wishes all the presenters, also in the name of the Presidium all the best, good luck in the chicken house, in the bird aviary, in the pigeon loft, in the rabbit hutch and in the caviar enclosure and above all the best of health.

The 2023 General Assembly is closed.

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### **Closing of the meeting: 11:35 a.m.**

The President



Gion Gross

The Secretary



Jeannine Jehl