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Minutes AGM Bucharest 7th September 2014

Chairperson Edith Lommerse, UWE President

1. Opening and report by the President

The President *Edith Lommerse* opened the UWE Assembly at 13.30 and welcomed the delegates and members of the NFAs. She thanked the Romanian Federation for the hospitality and great work for the UWE conference. She emphasized the role of UWE in Europe to endorse lifelong education for women and girls by advocating for the advancement of the status of woman and encouraging them to apply their knowledge and skills in leadership and decision making. UWE was installed for the purpose to participate in the building of a European Civil society in 1981.

She presented the current members of UWE board: the Vice-presidents *Vera John-Mikolajewski* and *Marie-José Jarczy*, plus the Treasurer *Auli Ojala*.

The President *Edith Lommerse* thanked them for their excellent work and their engagement in all those years.

The President emphasizes that at the Istanbul meeting in 2013, for the reason of time constraints, not all procedures could be taken into account as a part of the delegates left the meeting in between to go to the IFUW meeting. So if we have decided on the quorum at the start of the meeting we will not recount it. All delegates are asked to name their NFA and their alternates. There will be two question rounds each subjects convened by the chair. After two rounds the chair will propose a conclusion or a vote. Each delegate receives their voting papers and signs them off. At the start of the AGM in the outside hall they have identified themselves and if necessary - in case the delegate is not the official CER- shown their proxies.

2. Introduction remarks on procedures

The UWE bye laws state that every NFA which have paid the dues in time have the right to speak and vote. A decision of the board was made in July to allow a delayed deadline of 31 of August as final term for payment, so the President summarizes.

Next the Vice-president *Marie-José Junky* outlined the voting procedures also recalling that red card means against, green card means in favor, yellow card means abstention (also meaning against) . The quorum (voting strength) is 35 votes and that the vote will be taken by majority, meaning 18 votes at least.

• **Attendance** the following member federations: Finland, Slovenia, France, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, Romania, Netherlands, Great Britain, Spain, Sweden, Italy. And approx. 30 observers.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was accepted and approved unanimously as tabled. 2

4. Minutes Istanbul 2013

No additions or corrections were made and the minutes of the 33rd UWE General Assembly, (August 18th, 2013 Istanbul, Turkey) were approved unanimously. There was a deadline of two weeks after the AGM 8 September for remarks concerning the English. No remarks were received date September 2014.

5. Jans Gremmée award

The president *Edith Lommerse* first touched upon the need for the UWE to reinforce its networking system. She highlighted the importance of the JG Award to promote UWE's fundamentals laid down in the constitution of the UWE in relation to European themes. She regrets to say that, unfortunately, the JGA-Committee didn't receive any application in reply to the call for nominations. The Vice-president *Marie-José Jonczy* underlined the importance of putting forward new potential candidates for the next award also clearly recalling the JGA criteria for nomination meaning that any woman which has contributed to the women's cause and Europe can and should be nominated.

6. Reports

a. Vice Presidents

Vera John-Mikolajewski as UWE Vice President since September 2008, reported on her commitment at the Council of Europe where she was an active member watching, observing, and debating gender issues which were also discussed at National and Regional meetings. Her work was particularly addressed on the following issues: gender equality, health, ethical, human rights and security, gender and education, health and culture / religion, discrimination, domestic violence, implementation of the gender perspective into medicine, especially with regard to pharmaceutical therapy and research. She recalled the many activities which have been passed since the adoption of the Istanbul Convention and particularly highlighted UWE's initiative with regard to the human rights and security as well as its close involvement in the Council of Europe Committee for the conflict situation in all spheres and at all levels of society. She hoped that the UWE would address the issues of gender equality to improve the current situation on the basis of existing law. Vera John-Mikolajewski concluded by stating that she views the enhancement of gender issues of the woman and girls all around the world as an extraordinary instrument for intercultural communication and for peace and growing international cooperation. She finally wish a very high-quality effort for the future work to which she promises her advice and guidance.

Marie-José Jonczy, in charge as Vice-President of the UWE since September 2008 and Member of the Board and of the Executive of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), referred to a number of activities, including those undertaken in partnership with EWL, which had been organized during her mandate. She stressed the effectiveness of the involvement of the UWE community and the EWL in planning common actions such done working against prostitution, violence, extending maternity leave duration, education and research. She announced that the next EWL AGM meeting will be held in Lisbon, Portugal. She also reported on the cultural exchanges referring in particular to a cultural agreement on gender issues between France and Italy undersigned in Syracuse in May 2013, Italy. In conclusion, *Marie-José Jonczy* expressed the belief that all these efforts should empowered in the future and that she will continues to give her support. 3

The President *Edith Lommerse* thanked the two Vice-Presidents for their vital support within the executive board, for their effectiveness, efficiency and spirit of co-operation demonstrated in all circumstances.

B. Financial (material on the website) election of auditor's 2014.

The President *Edith Lommerse* invited the Treasurer *Auli Ojala* to present the balance and to explain UWE finances step by step. The statement was posted on the website late due to internal matters. After the presentation of the figures the AGM asked clarification of the 860 Euros of AGM costs, the disappearance of the Travel Fund in the statement which was earmarked money and asked for clarification of the administrative costs. The treasurer at that time could not explain and asked the auditor Mrs. Niculescu to assist. The delegates discussed the issues on the budgetary and financial information provided and found the answers unsatisfactory. The President *Edith Lommerse* remarked that it was clear that it was difficult to get the needed information which was needed. This also was the case in the Board during the preparatory board meetings. For this reason the President has asked British Federation Past President Jenny Moreley to head a Commission of Inquiry to clarify things before the AGM.

Jenny Morley was assisted by Terry Oudraad and they met with the Treasurer early on Saturday morning the 6 th of September. Also in this meeting the needed transparency was not achieved Jenny Moreley reported. It had however shed light on several issues including the need for transparency and the need to establish closer relations within the board on financial matters by adopting the protocols of good practice. Many members addressed the need to

increase transparency and to explain better 'in' and 'out' income on the statement which were not very clearly elucidated. After two rounds of questioning and answers the President proposed a vote to accept the UWE balance sheet, the results were: 26 against, 3 in favor, 6 abstentions. The UWE balance sheet was not accepted by AGM.

The President *Edith Lommerse* invited a proposal from the AGM to solve the issue. The AGM invited the Treasurer *Auli Ojala* to re-submit by the 30 of November an appropriate balance along with clarifications about 'administration, travel expenses, annual meetings'. The statement will be audited by Terry Oudraad and Monica Potenchi from Romania. This proposal was accepted almost unanimously except for Finland who didn't vote. The President also remarked that the recommendations suggested by *Jenny Morley* along with other members would be useful for planning the work of UWE finances in the future and would also ensure greater effectiveness. She thanked Jenny for her time and effort. The President *Edith Lommerse* thanked all the members for their support and advice during this agenda item.

7. UWE Action plan 2015-2017

The President introduced the UWE Action plan after the report of the President. On the site there will be an overview published. In short the year 2012-2013 was a much better year than the year before. The new website which was published at the end of the AGM in Istanbul now has over a 100 posts and over a 1000 views. The board engaged in several activities besides the representation at EWL and Council of Europe. There were concept letters written for the signing and ratifying of the Istanbul Convention. A Meet and Greet was organized in Amsterdam and the start of the Draft UWE action Plan.

Also the President worked on improving relationships with IFUW of which some results are seen already in this conference. She familiarized herself with the proceedings in the Council of Europe and went to the Gruntvig Meeting in Bucharest as part of a preparatory visit for the UWE Conference in Romania. The visits were paid by the President as a support to UWE. On a more personal note the President conducted a workshop on Female Leadership at the IFUW conference, went to Marbella for the Spanish Federation and did a lecture on Gender and Afghanistan which she also held for the International Women's Contact and the Dutch VVAO in Amsterdam.

The President aims to have a UWE that is active, cooperates and achieves unity and cohesion amongst its members to have a greater impact on women's issues throughout Europe. The proposal to work on certain themes, do twinning and have working groups is part of this ambition. During the conference in Bucharest, the whole Saturday was dedicated to the four proposals of the UWE action themes. Taskforces will be started based on the work done in the workshops held the previous days. The consultation will be done via digital means, the president emphasizing the need for a coherent and joint plan of action to have more impact. UWE can and should be more than representation. If we wish to have an impact in civil society we need to join forces on national, European and international level. More and more decisions are made in Europe while the status of women in Europe is not improving to say it gently. 5

The topics/subjects are:

- Gender-sensitive Parliaments
- Women in decision making positions
- Support the implementation of the Istanbul Convention
- Cooperation and Communication within UWE and with partners

The AGM supported the idea of a joint plan of action. No question arose on the matter.

8. Proposals for next "Meet and Greet" meeting and AGM

- 8.1 "Meet and Greet" would be held on or around the 9th May, "Day of Europe", as was done in Amsterdam this year. It was a successful gathering to inform members of the work UWE is doing in COE and EWL and besides give members in the country in which it is held the opportunity to meet UWE at a lower cost.

Two invitations were received: Helsinki, Finland and Nuremberg, Germany. However Germany was postponing the invitation at the time of the meeting for health reasons.

Question:

- Budget issue of costs associated with the meeting, e.g. having to support travel and accommodation costs of delegates by NFAs twice a year?
- Need to repeat that no formal decisions can be made at the Meet and Greet, only at the AGM
- Wish expressed to focus on AGM

Answer by President: participation at "Meet and Greet" is voluntary. It is no obligation and no formal decisions will be taken. It is a possibility for a country to host a Meet and Greet and introduce UWE to its members. It is like a friendship tour with a day of workshops on UWE and far less work than a UWE Conference. The President proposes a vote in order to decide on the principle of having the possibility of a Meet and Greet in the annual activities of the UWE.

Vote on the principle of holding a "Meet and Greet" event as part of the UWE year plan.

In favor: 24

Abstentions: 5

Against: 0

Finland didn't vote. Conclusion the principle of having a Meet and Greet as part of the UWE activities is accepted underlining it is not an obligatory meeting for CERs.

Next is the question of the location of the Meet and Greet:

Proposal Finland:

- the meeting in Helsinki would take place at the same time as the European-funded *Grundvig* project Conference involving several NFAs members of UWE, on violence against higher educated women
- The offer by the German NFA cannot be confirmed on this day as the German member who is from the region of Nuremberg, present at the meeting, suffers unfortunately from bad health at the meeting.

Vote on the location of the next Meet and Greet event in Helsinki:

In favour: 0

Abstentions: 0 6

Against: 28

Finland didn't vote. The vote for Germany wasn't taken as the delegate fell ill.

The President expresses the feelings of the delegates thanking Finland for this initiative. It is a generous offer especially after organizing the AGM in Helsinki in 2012. Possibly the participants could still have the possibility of attending the final conference of the European project in Helsinki remains, for those interested. In the meantime several NFA's are thinking of hosting a Meet and Greet, however no official invitations so far.

No invitation was received ahead of the meeting.

The representative of the Irish Federation states that she'll put the proposal forward at the next NFA Council meeting in October. Answer pending. Invitations are welcome.

9. Orientation for the future of UWE in relation with IFUW

The President of IFUW honored us with her presence at this UWE Conference and spoke on Saturday on the activities of IFUW and the relationship with UWE. Also IFUW conducted a workshop on increasing membership for the NFA's on Saturday the 7th September. This in itself is an improvement of the relationship. In the presence of Catherine Bell, IFUW President and guest of UWE, Eileen Focke-Bakker expresses the impression that European countries have their own specific problems with regard to women's issues. She'd like IFUW to take European issues a bit more into account, getting a better global view.

By exception, Ms Bell is allowed to speak, as normally only delegates and alternates can take the floor at the AGM.

She says IFUW is aware of the need to get a global and regional view and shares the impression that in the past one could feel that sometimes there was more of a focus on developing countries as she already had discussed with the UWE President. She will take the remarks back to the IFUW Office in Genève.

Catherine Bell is thanked by the President for accepting the invitation by UWE and attending the whole conference and AGM. IFUW will react to the questions concerning the due structure for lesser developed countries also in Europe by January.

10. Budget

Because in the first part of the meeting, the financial statement was not approved; the President asks the delegates if the budget can nonetheless still be initially approved. The decision is made to move forward with the budget as preliminary budget and to confirm it after approval of financial statement. The representative of the Netherlands NFA asks several questions. The meeting is adjourned to allow for distribution of the budget sheet which was attached to the AGM agenda on the UWE website but was not printed by all participants.

The President explains that the 2015 Budget is kept as low as possible, with a due of 0.46 cents per capita based on the number of members in 2013. An important element of the budget is the support to the 4 new taskforces, called "action plan projects". If these projects are taken off possibly the budget will increase but then it will be based on clear activities.

11. Results Elections

There were two candidates for two vice-presidency positions.

Results of votes:

35 votes

Elena Flavia CASTAGNINO BERLINGHIERI 32

Isabelle TRIMAILLE 33

The two candidates are both elected vice-president.

10. Budget continue

The sheet of the provisional budget for 2015 is distributed to all and the part of the meeting about the budget resumes. The President answers several questions by the Dutch NFA 's representative. Adoption of the budget is proposed.

Vote:

In favor: 28

Abstentions: 0

Against: 0

Finland didn't vote, Germany fell ill. Conclusion: The 2015 and fee is approved (see attachment)

11. Thanks to the two Vice–Presidents by the President, at the end of their mandate

- Vera is nominated Chair of the Task force on Gender-sensitive Parliaments, as she initiated and chaired the workshop.
- Marie-José is appointed UWE Ambassador to go to European countries' NFAs who have not joined UWE yet.

There was no "any other business" on the agenda and the AGM ends at 1800 hours.

The Romanian Association were thanked for hosting the meeting. The President was thanked for chairing a complex and lengthy meeting.

Date: 9 oktober 2014/ revised July 2015.