

Minutes of the ELI Membership Meeting 9 September 2020, Remotely

Chair: Christiane Wendehorst (ELI President)

Keeper of the minutes: Tomasz Dudek (ELI Secretariat)

The meeting commenced at 13:00.

I. Welcome and Opening Address

- (1) Christiane Wendehorst opened the meeting by welcoming those present. She began by saying that the Executive would have preferred to meet all Members in person in Budapest, as initially planned, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic this was not possible. She further explained that ELI is trying to make the best out of the available technology. Wendehorst then expressed her appreciation for the great work the Secretariat was doing to organise the Annual Conference.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the 2019 Membership Meeting

- (2) **The 2019 Membership Meeting minutes were approved.**

III. Report from the President and Executive Committee

- (3) Wendehorst said that the Executive is very much aware of all sorrow and distress the pandemic has brought to ELI Members and that their thoughts are with Members. She was grateful to those who helped to carry on with projects. She emphasised that going digital had some positive consequences, the Executive was able to meet more often, the Council also discussed the possibility to have more meetings using the technology.
- (4) She reported about the ELI Principles for the Covid-19 Crisis, published in April. She emphasised that the Executive was hesitant at the beginning, but then overwhelmed by the feedback received. Based on the success experienced in the Spring, the Council discussed how to make use of such format in the future and engage with European institutions and public.
- (5) She referred to the written report, available to the Members, with regard to the external relations and underlined that indeed strengthening relations with institutions from other continents is ELI's priority, but due to the pandemic this was postponed to 2021.

IV. Brief Report from the Treasurer

- (6) Denis Philippe reported about the finances. He thanked Zuzana Fačková for her conscientious work on finances. He went on to explain the three sources of funding that ELI has and that there are currently many savings in the absence of travel and accommodation costs (Covid-19). In 2019 the net profit amounts to EUR 32.000.
- (7) Because of the Covid-19 pandemic it was decided not to send reminders regarding unpaid fees, but to postpone that to late September 2020. He invited participants to get in touch, should they know of law firms that could further support ELI.
- (8) Philippe reported that there are two scenarios for the 2021 ELI budget forecast, one with and one without an EU Operating Grant for 2021. He reassured that, as ELI has some buffer, it could manage even without the Grant.

V. Overview of Projects

- (9) Lord John Thomas reported that ELI is continuing on delivering important projects. This year the Model Rules on Online Platforms and the Protection of Adults in International Situations projects were finalised. ELI and UNIDROIT are nearing completion with regard to the European Model Rules of Civil Procedure and we hope that the Tax Law project will also be completed this year.
- (10) He then informed that some of the projects are going very well, including the one on Common Constitutional Traditions in Europe. It will focus on freedom of expression and is nearing completion. This also applies to the Business and Human Rights, which is timely given the developments in Brussels, and should be completed early next year.
- (11) Concerning Principles for Data Economy, a project undertaken with American Law Institute, he emphasised that the Reporters are extremely innovative in their thinking and that this should be finalised next year. He informed that there is progress also in Blockchain Technology and Smart Contracts and Access to Digital Assets projects. Further, he reported that ELI started preparing principles for the use of Artificial Intelligence with its new project on AI and Public Administration.
- (12) Lord Thomas then reported that there are several new projects and feasibility studies on the way. He thanked the Teams who were working so hard and the Assessors who provided criticism along the way.

VI. Report on Hubs and Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

- (13) Anne Birgitte Gammeljord continued with presenting the developments in Hubs and SIGs. She emphasised how very important these groups are for the ELI. She reminded those present that the membership in ELI is automatically a membership in a Hub, if it exists. The last one that was established is the Belgian-Luxembourg Hub. She encouraged everyone wishing to establish a Hub to contact the Secretariat.
- (14) Concerning SIGs she stressed that the Environmental SIG will have its first meeting in November 2020 and that the Council also discussed the Food and Farm Law SIG. She further revealed that Robert Bray wanted to relaunch the EU Law SIG.

VII. Report of the Membership Committee

- (15) Pascal Pichonnaz emphasised the importance of the diversity of membership in the ELI. He reported that currently ELI has 1555 Individual and 112 Institutional Members (as of September 2020). He then mentioned the sustaining membership and encouraged everyone to join that scheme, as it supports ELI. He also encouraged members to set up a SEPA mandate, because this facilitates the collection of fees.
- (16) Pichonnaz went on to explain the focus on new members. In order to ensure a good balance, ELI should have more members from Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. He stressed that more action is required to ensure diversity also in terms of vocational background and areas of expertise. He thanked the Secretariat and in particular Zuzana Fačková for her terrific work.
- (17) Wendehorst thanked her colleagues on the Executive and said it would not have been possible to act as a President of ELI without them. She then said that the organisation is deeply indebted to the Secretariat staff. She thanked Bea Verschraegen for acting as the Interim Secretary General during the maternity leave of Vanessa Wilcox and all members of the staff who worked day and night for making this online conference possible. She emphasised the huge amount of work needed to organise such an online event, expressed her gratitude that the Team managed everything to remarkably well, and stressed that other organisations tried to avoid that challenge and postponed their meetings, whereas ELI wanted to have the meeting with Members.
- (18) A lively discussion with Members followed.

The meeting ended at 14:00.