

Minutes of the 16th *ecopa* General Assembly held at 12.30 p.m. on 22 September 2015 in Linz, Austria

Record of attendance:

- Lisbeth E. Knudsen (LK), University of Copenhagen, Denmark (President)
- Tuula Heinonen (TuH), FICAM, University of Tampere, Finland (Vice-President)
- Philippe Vanparys (PV), GENTOXICON BVBA, Belgium (Treasurer)
- Francois Busquet (FB), CAAT Europe, University of Konstanz, Germany (Secretary)
- Mardas Daneshian (MD), CAAT Europe, University of Konstanz, Germany (deputy Secretary)
- Erwin Roggen (ER), 3RsMC ApS, Denmark
- Adrian Smith (AS), Norecopa, Norway
- Francesca Caloni (FC), IPAM, Italy
- Costanza Rovida (CR), Reach Mastery, Italy
- Manfred Liebsch (ML), SET, Germany
- Thomas Hartung (TH) CAAT, Baltimore, USA
- Kirsty Reid (KR), Eurogroup for Animals, Belgium
- Ernst Hunziker (EH), 3R Research Foundation, Switzerland

Apologies for absence were received from:

Philippe Hubert (PH), Francopa
Marianne Norring (MN), Finland
Guillermo Repetto (GR), REMA
Isabella de Angelis (IA), IPAM
Patrizia Costa (PC), Italy

Agenda:

1. Approval of the notice of the Assembly and proxy votes
2. Approval of the agenda
3. Election of Chairman and Secretary for the Assembly
4. Election of two keepers of the minutes
5. Approval of the changes of the statutes
6. Election of board members
7. Annual report of the current Board
8. The accounts and Auditor's report
9. *ecopa's* Activity Plan and budget including membership fees for the coming period
10. *ecopa's* website
11. Upcoming activities
12. Granting authority to the Board for the coming period
13. Election of the Election Committee
14. Election of the Auditor
15. Proposals received

1. LK welcomed all attendees and asked them to present themselves. The notice of the Assembly was approved and there were no proxy votes. LK thanked CAAT Europe for their administrative support to *ecopa*.

2. The agenda was approved.

3. LK's suggestion to act as Chairman of the Assembly with FB as Secretary was approved.

4. CR and AS were elected to keep the minutes.

5. The draft statutes have been largely unchanged since their provisional approval at the General Assembly in 2014. PV has had the statutes checked by a lawyer for compliance with Belgian legislation. Two minor alterations have been made:

- Article 7, second paragraph, first sentence, has been amended to remove any doubt as to when the Board has a quorum. One representative from each stakeholder must be present, as well as either the President or Vice-President. Since the President and Vice-President are elected from among the Board members and their deputies, a quorum can be achieved with as few as four people present.
- In the first sentence, second paragraph of Article 10, the words 'by email' have been added. This is to provide a means of documenting that the invitations, agenda and relevant documents for the General Assembly have been sent out, in case of complaint.

With these two changes, the new statutes were approved. PV will now submit them to the Belgian authorities for publication.

6. Election of the new Board was carried out. Philippe Hubert was contacted by telephone during this item. The new Board of *ecopa*, for the next two years, is:

- Tuula Heinonen, President (academia)
 - deputy: Lisbeth Knudsen
- Philippe Hubert, Vice-President (government and regulatory authorities)
 - deputy: Manfred Liebsch
- Erwin Roggen (industry)
 - deputy: Costanza Rovida
- Kirsty Reid (animal protection and welfare organisations)
 - deputy: Marianne Norring

Philippe Vanparys continues as Treasurer for *ecopa*, and Francois Busquet as Secretary, with assistance from Mardas Daneshian.

7. LK presented the work of the Board during the last year. The Board has not had any physical meetings, but frequent contact by email and teleconferences. Revision of the statutes has been a major task during the last year. A questionnaire was sent to all NCPs (National Consensus Platforms) and other contacts to poll their opinion on the future of *ecopa*. FB presented the results, which were discussed by the Assembly.

AS reminded the Assembly that *ecopa* is, according to the statutes, to be spelt with small letters and in italics. This is to comply with an agreement made when

ecopa was founded. ER is requested to obtain the historical documentation for this from the first President of *ecopa*.

8. PV presented *ecopa's* accounts. The organisation has currently a surplus of over 41,000 €, largely because of income from the conclusion of FP7 projects with which *ecopa* was involved.

9. PV presented a suggestion for *ecopa's* budget for 2016 and the General Assembly discussed possible activities for the period. TH informed the Assembly of his willingness to arrange a new joint workshop involving CAAT and *ecopa*. A proposal for the workshop will be developed and presented to the Board. CR described her nomination for membership of a Partner Expert Group, as a representative of *ecopa*, in connection with the update of guidance issued by ECHA on skin sensitization and acute toxicity, the latter in collaboration with TuH. The General Assembly authorizes travel reimbursement, if needed. Until now, ECHA has always reimbursed travel costs for the participation in stakeholder's meetings. FB suggested preparing and circulating an operational plan document for year 2016 and 2017 and will ask for suggestions from the NCPs.

Due to the current favorable financial situation for *ecopa*, membership fees are to remain unchanged, at 100 €, for 2016.

10. *ecopa's* website is in urgent need of modernisation. LK has started this work but it needs to be completed. AS offered to take over this task, in collaboration with the present provider. The General Assembly agreed to allocate up to 2,000 € for this work, to pay a professional IT company. MD has successfully saved and transferred all the files currently on *ecopa's* website.

AS requested that *ecopa* and its members consistently spell the names of the National Consensus Platforms correctly. Some use capitals, others small letters. An accurate list of these names should be compiled.

11. The Assembly discussed specific activities for the organisation. It was decided to support the FRAME Training School which will be arranged in Norway in February 2016 with 3,000 €, so that the organisers can award travel grants to young scientists who wish to attend.

TH proposes a joint workshop between *ecopa* and CAAT. That may raise visibility. In the coming year, new strategies to increase the income should be established. Apparently, there is no constraint in accepting sponsorship for a workshop as long as it is clearly linked to a specific event.

LK will receive support for a joint *ecopa*, EEMS and NordEms meeting in Copenhagen August 14-18 2016 where the *ecopa* GA could be organized. LK asked for support to young scientist participation and presentation by providing travel grants for the workshop. LK will organize the meeting as past president of *ecopa* and TuH as current president is part of the scientific committee.

FC and CR have also potential activities in Italy in which *ecopa's* funding could be useful to extend a half-day workshop to a one-day workshop.

12. The Assembly granted authority to the Board for the coming period.

13. The Election Committee will not be needed before the next election in 2017, but the following members were elected:

- Philippe Vanparys
- Francesca Caloni
- Roman Kolar
- Thomas Hartung

According to the statutes, the Committee elects its own Head.

14. Manfred Liebsch was elected as Auditor.

15. It was proposed to organise the general *ecopa* assembly in rotation in the different member states in order to give the possibility to participate to a higher number of members. In the latest years, the *ecopa* general assembly was held in combination with the annual EUSAAT congress or the World congress. TuH proposed the *ecopa* GA 2017 to be held in Finland as a coming meeting with SSCT workshop.

LK concluded the business of the Assembly by thanking those present and wishing the new President success with the work of *ecopa*. New president TuH and ML congratulated the work done by past president LK. The Assembly was declared closed at 2:30 p.m.