**EE-Congress – Minutes of the section pigeons in Sofia (Bulgaria), 19th May 2023**

**Item 1) Welcome**

President Gustl Heftberger opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed delegates and guests. A special greeting was addressed to the honorary members: Jean-Louis Frindel (president of the ESKT), Istvan Rohringer (vice-president of the EE), André Legrand, Zdsizlaw Borawski, the president of the council for animal health and protection Erik Apperlo, as well as the representatives of the host country, Bulgaria. The delegate of the Bulgarian association, Dr. Boris Velev, warmly welcomed the delegates to Sofia and wished them a fruitful meeting. In his speech he mentioned the changes within the Bulgarian association.

Due to the cancellation of the EE exhibitions, the positive effects in the member countries are absent. Our thanks go to the two officials, Jürgen Weichold and Jean Louis-Frindel, for their hard work in drafting the annual minutes which can be published in three languages.

The minutes will be checked and completed, then sent to the delegates in the three languages, together with the ESKT minutes, and will also be published on the website.

Unfortunately, the creation and publication of the planned newsletter has been delayed for various reasons. I hope we can realize it soon.

For the translation during the meeting in French, the president of the ESKT, Jean-Louis Frindel, volunteered. Lars Van Droogenbroeck volunteered for the English translation.

I would like to express my anticipated gratitude for their availability.

The agenda was sent to all delegates in due time (provided the addresses are correct). Nations whose information is not up to date in the database will not receive information.

Due to the very early preparation of the agenda, there can always be changes or additions that will be incorporated later.

The Chairman of the Council for Animal Health and Welfare, Erik Apperlo, reports at the beginning of our meeting as he wishes to participate in other sectoral meetings, on the current situation in this area. The report is appended.

**Item 2) Verification of attendance:**

According to hotel registrations, 30 people are attending the meeting. It is particularly pleasing to note the large number of participants from 15 countries. Present: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, France, Croatia, Netherlands, Austria, Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia, Hungary, Belgium, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain. Representatives from Kosovo and Turkey also attended as guests.

Currently, 27 associations are affiliated to the "pigeons" section of the EE.

Excused absences: Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Sweden, as well as Italy (due to bad weather, they were unable to attend).

Due to high travel costs, some countries are unable to fund this. It would be desirable to organize meetings more centrally.

Unexcused absences: Lithuania; Ireland left the EE; no contact with the racing pigeon association; Macedonia has again expressed its interest in membership. The structure of the association is not yet fully established in Kosovo.

At this point, President Gion and General Secretary Jeannine arrived at the meeting.

The chairman said:

The sections are the heart of the EE. Valuable work and great challenges in the field of animal protection. The need to continue the fight in this area in the countries and the European Union. The Advisory Council on Animal Health and Animal Welfare is therefore the most important council at the moment. He explained the reasons for the cancellation of the EE shows and referred to further information at the General Meeting. Finally, he thanked all the delegates for their work.

General Secretary Jeannine added:

Please always send the data of all member countries up to date (correct name of the respective association and addresses of the presidents).

She emphasised the changes needed to the EE statutes.

**Item 2a) Minutes of the 2022 meeting (Bosnia-Herzegovina)**

The minutes of the sectoral meeting in Konjic were published on the EE website. By putting them online, delegates were able to read them and distribute them in their respective countries. No requests for amendments have been received to date, which means that the minutes can be approved. The minutes were then approved by the delegates without objection. Secretary Jürgen Weichold was warmly thanked for his work on the minutes.

The section's minutes should be given a higher profile within the national associations. Breeders who do not have access to the Internet can also access them via the national websites or association newspapers.

**Item 3) Communications from Presidium meetings**

An online meeting of the Presidium was held on 5 October 2022.

The agenda included a number of items:

Croatia's opposition to the suspension of its membership of the EA, which was accepted. Reduction of EE expenditure and possible reduction of the Presidium - the proposal was withdrawn.

Search for other sources of income following the cancellation of EE exhibitions. Sponsorship: Urs Freiburghaus has resigned, no replacement has been found, only two sponsors are still available (Mifuma, ring manufacturer, Stengel). A request has been made to the delegates to find other sponsors among the member countries.

Costs for the new website - the employee is not working in our interests - search for a new webmaster.

Protection of the EE logo on rings - unfortunately not possible (costs too high and annual registration). The rabbit section is requesting a loan of €15,000 to purchase an EE standard, as the old standards are sold out.

**04.02.2023 Items on the agenda for the Presidium meeting in Sofia**:

Discussion and organisation of the EA meeting with Bulgarian association officials, cost plan,

EA meeting with election of chairman and treasurer; BDRG chairman Christoph Günzel did not agree with the EA proposals. New proposal: Chairman G. Gross to stand for another 2 years, Hansjörg Opala to stand for Treasurer and then President.

EU Regulation 688: thanks to Dr Andy Verelst and Dr Erik Apperlo, the Traces certificate has been made more flexible. Public transport only needs one full certificate (see committee report).

EE 2024, the Czech Republic association is not in a position to organise a full European exhibition. However, they would be prepared to organise an EE rabbit and guinea pig show. The proposal was accepted, but it would be preferable to organise a full European show in the future if possible.

Harmonisation of the EE statutes; as each paragraph and detail has to be looked at individually, this will take more time. Amendments have yet to be incorporated, so no completion has been achieved - deferred to 2024.

The membership database is used unsatisfactorily or not at all by many countries. There is a lack of updating, particularly of personal data. As a result, a list is circulating, and updates are being requested.

**Report on the online meeting of 23.03.2023:**

Several phone calls were made with Bulgaria regarding the EA meeting.

**General Meeting with election of President and Treasurer.**

The EA's proposal for the two posts submitted was rejected by BDRG President Christoph Günzel. After lengthy discussions, a solution was finally found.

Gion Gross will remain Chairman until 2025, and Hans Georg Opala will become Treasurer until 2025, when he will stand for election as Chairman.

Approval of the EE rabbit and guinea pig show in the Czech Republic.

The membership database is used unsatisfactorily or not at all by many countries. Please contact the General Secretary and report any changes.

However, the new member data collection is only as good as the data provided by the national associations. Unfortunately, according to the General Secretary of the EE, many countries do not provide support, and it is a pity that those responsible are so little involved.

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However, the new member data collection is only as good as the data provided by the national associations. Unfortunately, according to the EE General Secretary, many countries do not provide support, so it is very difficult to find a solution:

A total of 33 countries sent 150 delegates/participants to Sofia.

Admission of new member countries:

Membership application form:

- Macedonia once again showed an interest in joining the EA; once the documents had been submitted, membership would be possible in 2024.

- In Kosovo, adjustments need to be made to the association's structures in the pigeon section; if the documents are complete, there is nothing to prevent their admission at the General Meeting.

- According to the statutes, the travel expenses of the members of the Presidium are clearly regulated; those who are not compensated by their national association receive reimbursement of their travel expenses from the EA.

- In Croatia, there were problems with an EC exhibition for English Boulants. Club championships were not possible, and an unauthorised breeder had been appointed as PR (publicity officer). In general, the rules for breed specific European shows must be followed, judging cards without the EE logo cannot be used, two or more clubs in Europe for the same breed are not possible, please report any changes immediately to the pigeon section manager.

- Willy Littau is proposed as substitute reviewer.

- Future meetings of the EE:

- EA meeting from 8 to 12 May 2024 in the Czech Republic.

- EA meeting from 28 May to 1 June 2025 in Romania.

- EA meeting from 13 to 17 May 2026 in Spain.

- EA meeting from 5 to 9 May 2027 in the Netherlands.

- EA meeting from 24 to 28 May 2028 - open.

- EA meeting from 29 May to 2 June 2029 - open.

**Section information:**

The Stengel company will produce blue rings with black writing for 2024, offering better legibility. A solution is being sought to replace the grey colour of the rings (light green - turquoise from 2026). Pigeons wearing rings without the EE symbol will not be evaluated at shows and will be marked NA (out of competition). Such rings are produced in several countries, for example in China. Instead of EE, the symbol EU is printed on the rings. The head of the section expressed his sincere thanks to the Austrian breeders led by Arnold Tuider and Richard Weiß for their exemplary organisation of the international judges' meeting in Vösendorf. These thanks also go to the other speakers at the meeting. Many thanks also to our dear friend Jean Louis Frindel (in French) and to Lars Van Droogenbrock (in English) for their faultless translation. The head of the section, G. Heftberger, also thanked the participating countries for their high turnout (around 70 people) at this judges' meeting.

Several breeders and fellow judges presented the 14 Austrian breeds in the cages, allowing the theoretical part to be compared with the practical.

ESKT President Jean Louis Frindel gave a presentation on some of the different interpretations of the standards and explained assessment using the EE standards as an example with Texas pigeons. These training sessions are also important in the future to avoid errors or differences in interpretation, as happened at the 28th European Show. It is only through such international judges' meetings that breeds and assessment criteria can be harmonised.

In all sections, judges should be properly informed through correct comments on the judging cards regarding extreme breeding (over-valuation).

Our international judges' training course this year will take place from 15 to 17 September in Jagodina (Serbia). Please register with the organiser. The focus will once again be on over-valuation and animal protection. Ronald Bube (ESKT), in collaboration with the associations, is preparing a joint list on this subject.

The agenda for this meeting was presented by Milan Brkic of ESKT and drawn up in collaboration with Jean-Louis. The documents will be distributed to all association members in June.

This international judges' meeting will again be held in collaboration with the poultry section.

There are 3 other requests to organise this judges' training course in 2024, from BIH, E and D. The following decisions were taken:

Due to the cancellation of the European Show in the Czech Republic, the International Judges' Training will take place from 20 to 22 September 2024 in Suhl, Germany.

2025: BIH - 2026: Spain.

**Item 4) Agenda for the AGM on 20 May**

The agenda items were distributed to everyone in the meeting packs.

Hansjörg Opala (D) presented himself to the delegates as a candidate for election as Treasurer of the EE at the General Meeting.

**Item 5) Approval of the European breed-specific exhibitions**

16-19 November 2023: Silesian Boulants Hofheim (Germany) - approved

19-21 January 2024: Chinese Owl Roßtal (Germany) - approved

12-14 January 2024: Balkan breeds at 74260 Tešanj, BIH - pending

2-5 November 2023: Spanish breeds in Spain

27-28 January 2024: European specific exhibition for Roller pigeon breeds in Hungary (previously postponed)

The RBES (European Breed Specific Exhibition) which has not yet been approved was approved by the delegates at the section meeting.

**Item 6) Review of the 2022/2023 European Breed Shows**

Unfortunately, due to avian flu, many European Breed Specific Exhibitions (BSE) had to be cancelled this season, including 4 in France. This is a shame.

The RES for Swiss pigeon breeds (1050) and Italian cravats (195) in Interlaken (Switzerland) was perfectly organised by Urs Freiburghaus and his team. The panel of judges was also international.

In addition, a RES for Balkan breeds was very well organised in Sombor by Milan Brkic and his team. Around 500 pigeons were registered for the RES. Just before the evaluation, training on the basic rules of the EE evaluation system took place at this RES. This is the right way and the goal for the application of a uniform evaluation system. In future, it would therefore be desirable for a RES manager and judges to be present, familiar with the EE assessment system.

**7) Requests**

A request from France proposes the inclusion of turtle doves in the pigeon section (requires coordination with the poultry or bird section). No decision was taken for this reason.

**Item 8) Report from the Pigeon Standards Commission (ESKT)**

a) Report of the ESKT (Jean-Louis Frindel):

- Principles for the creation of European clubs

- Addition of breeds to the EE breed list

- Three Serbian breeds added to breed list

- Presentation of three Bulgarian breeds using pigeons:

o Brünner Cropper (Standard)

o Triganino (image)

o King (image)

- Harmonisation of the standard from the short beaked of Prague.

- Request from Germany for recognition of the Andijan pigeon as a new breed.

- Development of a common guide for EE breeders and judges.

- Reflections on the breeding of short-billed pigeons and similar breeds The full report will be published on the EE Pigeon Section website.

b) Report on the international judges' meeting in Austria in 2022 (Arnold Tuider): 13 countries represented with 70 participants; presentation of 14 Austrian breeds; written version given to each participant; the agenda was drawn up in collaboration with the ESKT; the event was considered a success overall.

c) international judges' meeting in Serbia in 2023, on 15 and 16 September (Milan Brkic): venue in Jagodina, about 100 km from Belgrade. Hotel costs: € e220 for a double room and € 260 for a single room. Cheaper pensions are also available. Registrations must be sent to Milan by July 2023. The registration form and agenda will be provided at a later date.

d) International Judges' Meeting 2024 (Thuringia, Germany)

e) International Meeting of Judges in 2025 (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

f) International Meeting of Judges in 2026 (Spain)

g) The minutes of the international judges' training course in Vösendorf (Austria) were approved.

h) The breeding of short-billed pigeon breeds and their reproductive behaviour are studied scientifically by the German WGH.

i) Lars Van Droogenbroeck (B) was unanimously elected by the delegates as a new member of the ESKT.

j) Jean-Louis Frindel presented a proposal for the creation of European clubs for certain breeds or groups of breeds in the pigeon fancier section: - There must be an EE standard for the breed or group of breeds concerned. - All SV (specialised clubs) and existing clubs in European countries should be included. - There should be only one EC (European Champion) for the breed or breed group concerned. Delegates approved this proposal.

**Item 9) List of pigeon breeds**

For various reasons, the EE breed list has not yet been updated. Therefore, the bulletin has unfortunately not yet been created. The ESKT will complete this task. The Panuka pigeon will be moved from the tumbler group to the trumpeter-group.

**Item 10) Exhibition calendar 2023/24**

Nations are invited to send their national or larger shows to the secretary of the EE, Mrs Jehl Jeannine (generalsekretärin@entente-ee.com). It is extremely important to update all data of national association officials such as judges and standards committees in the EE database. The organisers of various events depend on this data for invitations.

**Item 11) Overview of the 30th European Show in the Czech Republic**

Unfortunately, due to EU regulations, the Czech association is unable to organise a full European exhibition. Avian flu is an obstacle to our Europe-wide exhibitions. The Czech association's proposal to organise an EE-show for rabbits and guinea pigs only was approved by the EE-board. In the future, it is difficult to organise EE shows for all sections, but this should remain the goal of the EE. Due to the current situation, we may consider EE-pigeon shows. Candidates are sought.

**Point 12) Exhibition calendar 2024/25**

As I no longer receive annual declarations, I do not have any documents concerning national shows. If the national exhibitions are to be published on the EE website, delegates must provide me with the data by e-mail so that I can forward it to the webmaster.

**Item 13) Requests and reports from countries**

The applications submitted concern only international judges' meetings. The Romanian association has applied to organise the international judges' meeting in 2027.

**Item 14) EE judges' badges**

At the international judges' meeting in Vösendorf, 7 EE judges' badges were awarded to fellow judges. The next badges and certificates will be awarded in Serbia in 2023. The relevant regulations and the required form can be found on the EE website in the pigeon fanciers' section (www.entente-ee.com). Applications must be sent by e-mail to the president of the section concerned before 31 August.

**Item 15) Miscellaneous**

Active candidates are sought for the 2025 elections in the fancier section (president) and in the ESKT (only judges and members of the national standards commissions may stand for election).

**Item 16) Group photo of participants at the section meeting**

End of section meeting: 12.10 p.m.

Gustl Heftberger, president of the section

Jürgen Weichold, secretary