

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EUPHORBIA SOCIETY HELD SEPTEMBER 8, 2012

On September 8th, 2012 the eight Annual General Meeting of the International Euphorbia Society was held on occasion of the Europese Landen Konferentie (ELK) at Blankenberge, Belgium. Present were eight I.E.S. members, two National Representatives (Giuseppe Orlando, Spain; Emmanuel Porte, France) and six Committee Officers (Volker Buddensiek, Editor, Thomas Cammaerts, Publicity Officer, Jaap Keijzer, Curator of the Reference Collection, Pjotr Lawant, Secretary & Asst. Editor, Bob Potter, Treasurer and Rikus van Veldhuisen, Chairman). Notice of absence was received from François Charrier, Diny Winthagen, Tim Marshall (Membership Administrator) and Walter Minuth (Vice-Chairman & Web Officer).

1. Opening. The Chairman of the I.E.S, Rikus van Veldhuisen, opens the Annual General Meeting and welcomes the I.E.S. members and officers as present. He apologises for the absence of the I.E.S. Officers Tim Marshall and Walter Minuth, next he welcomes Thomas Cammaerts as our new Publicity Officer.

2. Minutes. The Chairman asks the members as present for approval of the Minutes of the former AGM of September 10th, 2011, as published on the website: put to the vote they are unanimously agreed by the meeting.

3. Constitution. The Chairman asks the members as present for approval of the in September 2011 newly written Constitution, as published on the website: put to the vote it is unanimously agreed by the meeting.

4.1. Report of the Chairman. Rikus van Veldhuisen notes that to this AGM all I.E.S. members have been informed in time through the I.E.S. website, the more, all European members are personally invited by email or letter (see 4.2). He recalls to mind that to the end of March the amount of subscriptions still proved to be alarming low, but an immediately raised reminder campaign by the Secretary, repeated in July, resulted in a moderate increase of membership subscriptions (see 4.4). Thanks to the efforts of our Editor, Volker Buddensiek and our Journal Dispatcher, Tim Marshall, the December 2011, April 2012 and August 2012 issues of EW were distributed punctual on time to the members of the I.E. S. In December 2011 our Website Officer, Walter Minuth and his wife Anke started to renew and update the I.E.S. website, they are both much thanked for their efforts. In February and in May problems with paying by PayPal turned up, but they were successfully solved by our Treasurer, Bob Potter. Our Journal Dispatcher, Tim Marshall, reported on March, 30 on the dramatic raise of the UK postage prices, so other Committee members searched for cheaper postage rates in their own countries; next, the printer of Euphorbia World was asked by the Editor, Volker Buddensiek, about the possibility of sending the journal from Slovakia (see 4.5). On August 31 we learned with much regret about the wish of our Membership Administrator and Journal Dispatcher, Tim Marshall, to step down from his position because of an overload of work duties; his professional work is taking too much time to execute his I.E.S. position properly (see 6). Of course we owe Tim many thanks for his work meticulously done for so many years.

4.2. Report of the Secretary. As mentioned by the Chairman in his report, because end of March only 68 members (a 30% compared to 2011) had renewed their subscription for 2012, a reminder campaign regarding the 158 people who still did not, was initiated by the Secretary, Pjotr Lawant. All National Representatives were informed; if not represented by a Representative, people were personally approached by the Secretary by email or letter. Also 43 people who did not subscribe for the consecutive years 2011+2012, got a letter or email inviting them yet to do so. In the course of time most National Representatives reported to the Secretary about their efforts to win subscribers, and a lot of people who had been personally approached by the Secretary, reacted positively. At the moment the definitive figures are: 203 members paid for 2012, and 47 members did not, although they were a member in 2011 or before. This is a loss of 20 %.

The invitation and agenda of the upcoming AGM was sent on July 7th by email or letter to 145 European members who paid for 2012, but also to 38 European members who did not, nevertheless welcoming them to attend the AGM.

While in November 2011 the editors of French *Terra seca* and Italian *Piante Grasse* wrote to the Secretary they did not longer wish to continue the exchange for EW, we agreed in January to exchange EW for *Cactus & Succulentes*, *Journal of the Amis du Jardin Exotique de Monaco*, and also for *Avonia*, *Journal of the German Fachgesellschaft andere Sukkulenten*. Besides these two, we now exchange EW against *Aloe (RSA)*, *Blumea (Holland)*, *Cactus&Co. (Italy)*, *Kaktusy i Inne (Poland)*, *Quepo (Peru)* and *Succulenta (Holland)*. Topics considered of interest for the I.E.S. members are regularly reviewed in EW. In 7 cases the journal is sent as a complimentary copy.

4.3. Report of the Treasurer. Bob Potter reports about the actual financial status of the I.E.S.; for the moment he considers our finances healthy. The I.E.S. has sufficient finances in cash to have printed and dispatched the *Euphorbia World* issues for December 2012 and April 2013; however, regarding the rest of the year 2013, all depends whether we can keep the renewals for 2013 sufficiently coming in. For the record, the Committee discussed the price of back volumes, namely at a reduced GBP 20 / € 22, but with a backlash of one whole year in case one is not entitled as a new subscriber.

4.4. Report of the Membership Administrator, Tim Marshall, worded by the Secretary. Although Tim Marshall announced his wish to step down from his position, he produced an updated members' list per September, 2012. His data list, at the moment accounting for 203 paying subscribers, shows for 2012 (compared to 2011) the greatest loss in Thailand (60%), Australia, USA and Italy (all 30%), South Africa (25%) and Germany (15%) despite the commendable efforts of our National Representatives. Czech Republic and Belgium score the best with no loss in amount of subscribers (2011, 2012)

4.5. Report of the Editor. Volker Buddensiek reports that, besides about papers for EW, he is most concerned about acquiring pictures to fill in the centre-fold "In Habitat" pages in EW.

He stresses that members must not hesitate to submit their *Euphorbia* experiences to the Editor. If needed, help can be given, e. g. about text structure, correctness of names and citations, formal aspects and a final correction of the English raw version by our President, Susan Carter, to provide the author with a good English text quality.

4.6. Report of the Publicity Officer. Thomas Cammaerts reports he has initiated a Facebook page in the interest of the I.E.S.

According to a suggestion of our President, Susan Carter, to have more advertisements in other journals, he is now searching for possibilities to advertise I.E.S. (and EW) in periodicals in the field of succulents, investigating if we can afford the costs of advertising.

As Curator of the succulent collection in the Botanical Garden in Meise, Belgium, he will have a look if events can be organised to interest visitors concerning the I.E.S.

4.7. Report of the Web Officer, Walter Minuth, worded by the Chairman.

Thanks to the efforts of Anke Minuth, the website has been thoroughly updated, but suggestions by members remain much welcome.

Next, the Chairman, Rikus van Veldhuisen, presents a power point presentation of the new website to show to the members as present how the website does look upon.

4.8. Report of the Curator of the Reference Collection. Jaap Keijzer reports that all is well.

5. Member's questions about the foregoing reports. On request of members, into some topics mentioned in the reports, is gone in more detail.

Guiseppe Orlando, National Representative for Spain, will consider whether he can provide our Editor with an "In Habitat" picture series.

Regarding publicity options the Editor, Volker Buddensiek, suggests we might offer texts already published in Euphorbia World as a kind of payment for advertisements in those succulent journals that usually would charge us for advertisement.

6. Composition of Officers. Now Tim Marshall, I.E.S. membership Administrator and Journal Dispatcher has expressed his wish to put his position available at short notice, see 4.1., this position has become vacant. On a request of the Chairman, Rikus van Veldhuisen, nobody from the public is instantly willing to execute the job, therefore members are urgently invited to join the Committee for this important position.

In the meantime, Tim's load of dispatching the journal could be lightened, when the printer of EW in Slovakia takes this job. Therefore the Editor, Volker Buddensiek, investigated the matter and reports he just got a positive reply: provided the Committee supplies the address labels, they will do it for € 914 First Class (priority) rate or € 661 Second Class rate. If airmail is included in the second case, must be investigated. Our Treasurer, promises to consider these prices in comparison to the postage rate as needed otherwise.

But there remains the vacant job of composing and updating the member's list regularly. Maybe Tim will still do it for a while, relieved from the load of dispatching journals, is suggested by the meeting.

7. Raised UK postage rates. The Chairman reports about the answers he got from investigations about the costs to have the journal posted from other (European) countries. There prove not to be remarkable differences in postage rate. Therefore the way to do it as mentioned above (see 6), may be the best solution. The Committee will consider this matter in due course.

8. How to increase the number of subscribers. When asked the public as present about how to increase the amount of subscribers, the following is said in a lively discussion:

(a) to incite subscribers to renew their subscriptions, this is particularly a responsibility of the National Representatives. Emmanuel Porte, National Representative for France, and Giuseppe Orlando, National Representative for Spain, report they regularly remind the subscribers in their region about renewing their subscription, by email or post; especially Emmanuel Porte considers this personal touch much successful.

(b) Less is known about the particular interests of the average I.E.S. member, whereas knowledge about this could bring members together. How to find out? Maybe the I.E.S. website is a medium to have the respective interests recorded, it is said. Facebook may be used in this respect very well, according to Thomas Cammaerts, becoming an interactive medium to exchange pictures for identification of plants and tips on cultivation.

(c) Volker Buddensiek thinks an on-line “I.E.S Newsletter”, open to all, could be much informative; for instance, the FGaS is experimenting with such a newsletter to communicate their credo “what we do”, inviting people to become a member.

(d) He also suggests to approach nurseries that sell plants by mail whether they would be willing to add a copy of Euphorbia World with a subscription sheet into the parcels for those customers that show a clear interest in euphorbias; given that there might be hundreds of back issues in store we could give without objections single copies away for free to get new subscribers.

(e) The Chairman, Rikus van Veldhuisen, thinks we could offer a service to the members by (e)mailing them the first description of newly published species of succulent euphorbias.

9. Other activities of the I.E.S. About publishing the book “Jatropha” by the late Albert Pritchard, all depends on finances. The Treasurer, Bob Potter, reports the I.E.S. cannot afford the costs of printing. However, the Editor, Volker Buddensiek, proposes he will investigate if there exist possibilities of producing the book “on demand”, that is, one can subscribe to the book beforehand, and when sufficient subscribers are registered, the book may be printed. Another possibility is suggested from the public to have the book published in separate parts in EW, in each consecutive issue a couple of species on a fixed (limited) number of pages. The Secretary, Piotr Lawant, will approach Daphne Pritchard about these options.

10. Any other business; questions. No further comments or questions are raised.

11. Conclusion and closure of the meeting. The Chairman of the I.E.S., Rikus van Veldhuisen, summarizes the decisions of the meeting. At the next AGM in 2013 the Minutes, as soon as approved by the Committee and posted on the I.E.S. website, will be presented for approval. He thanks all present for their contributions and invites them to attend a live quiz “could you identify these euphorbias”, trying to win a beautiful prize, namely a remarkable specimen of a variety or form of just one species, *Euphorbia francoisii*....

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