

Eajs General Meeting - 19 July 2023 - Unapproved Minutes*

Eajs General Meeting
Location: SKW 1+2
Date & Time: Wednesday 19 July, 18:00 – 19:30

Chair: Professor François Guesnet (FG) – Eajs Interim Secretary

Minute Taker: Dr Simon Mayers (SM) – Eajs Administrator

Preamble: FG introduced himself as Eajs Secretary. FG explained that the Eajs is a UK-based charity and as such it is legally obliged to follow certain steps and procedures during a General Meeting (GM).

1. Approve Minutes from previous General Meetings

FG explained that members were recently sent the minutes of the previous GMs that had occurred in July 2018 (Krakow) and in July 2022 (London). FG asked if anyone had any questions or corrections that they wanted to discuss for these minutes. There were no questions nor corrections for these minutes. The minutes of the GMs in July 2018 and July 2022 were approved by the GM.

2. Matters arising from minutes

FG explained that various matters arising from the minutes will be dealt with soon in the Eajs Secretary's report. FG asked if the members had any other matters arising from the previous minutes that they wanted to raise. No other matters arising from the previous minutes of the GMs were raised by the membership.

3. Accounts

FG presented and explained the slides for the 5-year condensed summary. FG explained that the report was a 5-year summary rather than the usual 4-year summary due to the need to delay the congress by one year.

FG explained that the finances for the Association are healthy. According to FG, there is enough money in the Eajs account to follow our activities with reserves. However, FG did also explain that whilst the final balance in the 5-year report shows that the Eajs currently has a lot of money to hand, there are significant outstanding expenditures still pending for the

* These minutes will be formally reviewed by the next Eajs General Meeting

Conference Grant Programme, which if not fully used, will need to be returned to the EAJS's core funder, the Rothchild Foundation Hanadiv Europe (RFHE).

According to FG, the most significant expenditure in the report is the salaries, in particular that of the part-time staff doing most of the administrative work for the EAJS.

FG asked the members if there were any questions regarding the slides.

As he had in 2018, Sacha Stern, the EAJS Secretary from 2002 to 2010, stated that he was pleased to see the healthy balance of the Association, but asked what it was to be used for. He also asked FG to elaborate on the need to return a significant portion of this to RFHE.

FG explained that the need to return some of the money to RFHE did not arise from a formal enquiry from our core funder. The money that will need to be returned to RFHE is the under-expenditure for the CGP caused by the pandemic. FG said he was optimistic that a way forward will be found with our core funder.

According to FG, at the conclusion of today's meeting, there will be a new set of trustees who will be responsible for the EAJS's future finances.

FG directed members to the Charity Commission website where the full end of year accounts and trustee reports can be found for previous years. These are the end of year accounts required by law in England and Wales for a charity.

SS stated that it was not healthy for the EAJS to sit on a very large balance and not to do anything with it.

FG explained that RFHE's funding for the EAJS's core activities will go down sharply over the next four years and thus we are not looking at a future which is entirely safe (the core funding from RFHE is expected to be as follows; 2022: £42,000; 2023: £38,000; 2024: £32,500; 2025: £28,000).

4. EAJS Secretary's report

FG started his report with a vote of thanks to Sarah Pearce (SP) who withdrew from the role of EAJS Secretary on 31 December 2022. According to FG, SP adapted the organisation of the EAJS to the changing requirements for British charities, worked with our core funder, RFHE, and navigated the Association through the extremely difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic. SP also reviewed and made important updates to the governance structure and Articles of Association (enabling greater flexibility and electronic GM meetings in the future), and oversaw the complex demerger operation with the Looted Art Research Unit (LARU). FG expressed his gratitude to SP for her service to the EAJS.

FG reported on the decision to postpone the EAJS Congress from July 2022 to July 2023, and the impromptu General Meeting, organised by SP, that had to be held in July 2022 in order to extend the terms of office of the trustees and executive committee members until the EAJS Congress in July 2023 (with most of the votes being submitted by proxy votes).

FG reported on the progress and status of the Conference Grant Programme, informing members that several events from 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 had to be postponed,

restructured or cancelled due to COVID-19 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. FG thanked Simon Mayers (SM) for his work overseeing the CGP during these difficult and complex years. FG also reported on the WCJS travel bursary programme organised by the EAJS during 2022.

FG reported on the Digital Forum (DF). According to FG, the DF offers support to European scholars and digital initiatives, seeks to foster teaching and training as well as methodological reflection and debate, and facilitate productive links between Jewish Studies and Digital Humanities (DH). Its steering committee, chaired by Professor Daniel Ezra Stoekl, meets every month. It provides consultancy to EAJS members, and hosts a series of presentations, reports and lists of digital resources.

FG reported on the Nahmanides Forum. According to FG, this Forum funds workshops addressing specific issues and problems relating to the teaching of academic Jewish Studies in Europe. For next year's iteration (2024-25), the EAJS has already put out a call for applications for workshop proposals related to "Artificial Intelligence and Teaching Jewish Studies in Europe" (the call for applications is currently on the EAJS website and recently went out as a newsflash). FG noted that there will also be a call for applications in 2025. FG pointed out (in reply to Sacha Stern's earlier question) that this will be one of the ways that the EAJS will spend some of the money currently available in the EAJS's unrestricted funds.

FG also mentioned the Small Research Grant Programme (SRGP), a scheme which plans to support PhD students and emergent scholars to help support their research, though FG was unable to go into detail about this at this time as it is still in development.

FG reported on the EJJS. According to FG, the EJJS recently saw a change of guard of its editorial team. FG thanked the founder and former editor-in-chief, Giuseppe Veltri, and his team, for their service and welcomed on board the new editorial team: Marcin Wodziński (editor-in-chief), Laura Almagor, Katja Šmid, Adam Stepnowski, and Bart Wallet. FG also thanked the publisher, Brill, for their ongoing support.

FG reported on Southeastern European Jewish Studies Network at the EAJS Congress, and thanked Dr Noémie Duhaut for her work and service organising this.

FG reported on the Ukraine Membership Waiver. According to FG, the EAJS introduced a temporary membership waiver scheme in 2022 to help Jewish Studies scholars based in Ukraine during the Russian invasion. In this scheme, the EAJS agreed to waive the membership fees for new and existing members based in Ukraine. The EAJS also introduced a grant for Ukraine-based scholars to attend the EAJS congress. FG expressed his gratitude to the many EAJS members who generously donated to this Ukraine grant programme which has facilitated the participation of EAJS members from Ukraine at the congress. FG extended a very warm welcome to Ukrainian scholars attending the congress.

FG reported on the Online Directory of Jewish Studies. According to FG, a project was completed in 2022 to perform an update of the information held in the EAJS membership database and Online Directory. This will have to be followed soon by a major overhaul of the database software.

FG reported on ongoing AJS cooperation and mutual recognition, and a proposal for similar cooperation proposed by the European Association of Israel Studies.

FG gave a round of thanks to various people for their service to the EAJS. FG thanked the EAJS President (Elisabeth Hollender), EAJS Treasurer (Annelies Kuyt), and their team of congress volunteers for their enormous achievement to organise the EAJS Congress. FG also

thanked Giuseppe Veltri and the outgoing EJJS editorial team, and the new editor-in-chief Marcin Wodzinski and his team of editors, for their willingness to take on the task of managing the EJJS. FG also thanked all the members of the EAJS Digital Forum and the outgoing Executive Committee team for their important work. FG also thanked the EAJS Administrator (Simon Mayers), and those who have supported him (Noémie Duhaut, Kinga Migalska, and Kerry Maciak), for their important contributions to the activities of the EAJS, and for providing a stable administrative framework for the Association. According to FG, it is expected that their expertise and understanding will be crucial for the EAJS's future success.

FG closed his report by inviting the members at the GM to honour the memory of Jewish Studies scholars who had passed away since the previous EAJS Congress – including Jim Aitken, Evelien Gans, Zuzanna Krzemien, Michael Rand, Ada Rapoport-Albert and Johann Maier, and any others whose names are not known at this time – with a moment's silence.

FG opened the floor to comments and questions from the members present at the GM.

A student member in the GM asked if there were any plans to use the EAJS's resources to support MA students.

FG explained that the association did support students and early career scholars, but primarily at a PhD level or beyond. As an example, he noted that the EAJS strongly encourages, and in some cases earmarks, grant funding specifically to PhD students and early career scholars. According to FG, whilst the EAJS does not currently fund MA students, this is a matter that the new Executive Committee will consider.

A member in the GM commented that there were no PhD student members of the EAJS on the ballot for the executive committee, and that this was unfortunate as a PhD student on the executive committee could be valuable in determining the direction of the Association. FG agreed that this is a matter that the new Executive Committee should consider.

A member of the GM pointed out that a lot of Israeli scholars attended EAJS congresses and asked why no Israeli candidates were nominated for the executive committee. He suggested that the regulations should be changed to allow this. FG noted that this suggestion had arisen before at earlier congresses, but the EAJS is an Association focused on specifically European Jewish Studies. According to FG, Israeli colleagues can be on the executive committee if they are currently based at European universities.

FG thanked members for their questions.

FG mentioned the idea discussed by the outgoing executive committee for a series of annual online conferences funded by the EAJS, noting that this was another way that the EAJS can spend some of its money.

5. Elections

FG pointed out that one of the comments made during the governance review was that the charity would benefit from having more trustees.

Elections of Trustees

The nominations from the outgoing Executive Committee for trustees, including the President-elect for 2027-2031, were as follows:

- Miri Rubin, Professor, Queen Mary University of London, UK
- Miriam Rürup, Director, Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies, Professor, Potsdam University, Germany [nominated for President-Elect]
- Marzena Zawawska, Associate Professor and Vice-Dean, University of Warsaw, Poland

Miriam Rürup introduced herself.

No other nominations were received. The matter was put to a vote, and Miriam Rürup was duly elected as trustee and President-elect (President for July 2027 – July 2031), and Miri Rubin and Marzena Zawawska were duly elected as trustees, with an overwhelming majority. There were no nay votes.

Elections of Honorary Officers

The three honorary officer positions within the EAJS are the EAJS President, EAJS Secretary and EAJS Treasurer.

Dr Javier Castaño, Senior Research Scientist at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in Madrid was duly elected to the position of EAJS President, with the expectation that his presidency would begin in July 2022. Due to COVID-19, the EAJS Congress was postponed from July 2022 to July 2023, and the tenure of the Honorary Officers elected in 2018, including the EAJS President for 2018-2022 (Professor Elisabeth Hollender), were extended by one year at the 2022 General Meeting. Therefore, as of this meeting, Professor Elisabeth Hollender stands down as EAJS President, and Dr Javier Castaño begins his presidency (and is, ex officio, an EAJS Trustee and member of the Executive Committee for 2023-2027).

The nominations from the outgoing Executive Committee for the other two honorary officer positions for 2023-2027 were as follows:

- **EAJS Secretary:** François Guesnet, Professor, University College London, UK
- **EAJS Treasurer:** Pablo Torijano, Associate Professor, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain

No other nominations were received. The matter was put to a vote. There was one abstention. There were no nay votes. François Guesnet and Pablo Torijano were duly elected as EAJS Secretary and EAJS Treasurer respectively (and are thus ex officio EAJS Trustees and members of the Executive Committee for 2023-2027), with an overwhelming majority.

Elections of Executive Committee

Professor Elisabeth Hollender (Goethe University Frankfurt) was the duly elected EAJS President from July 2018 until this meeting. As the former President, Professor Elisabeth Hollender is ex officio, a member of the Executive Committee for 2023-2027.

The nominations from the outgoing Executive Committee for the rest of the Executive Committee were as follows (biographies circulated to members via newsflash):

- Vladyslava Moskalets, Associate Professor, Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv, Ukraine
- Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, Professor, École Pratique des Hautes Études, PSL, Paris, France
- Bart Wallet, Professor, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Milan Žonca, Lecturer and Vice-Dean, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic

Nominations from Professor Jan Willem van Henten at the University of Amsterdam were also received for the following candidates (biographies circulated to members via newsflash):

- Ortal-Paz Saar, Assistant Professor, Utrecht University, Netherlands
- Lieve Teugels, Associate Professor, Protestant Theological University Amsterdam, Netherlands

No other nominations were received. The matter was put to a vote using a ballot paper circulated to eligible voting members of the EAJS. The votes were collected. Due to the number of votes submitted, these will be counted after the meeting and the results announced this evening or tomorrow morning via the congress application.

Eva Frojmovic made a comment after the votes, suggesting that in future the candidates should be asked to say more about their intentions for the EAJS rather than just a condensed CV or biography.

6. Any Other Business

EH expressed her thanks to all the participants at the Congress who supported the attendance of Ukrainian members via the fund organised for Ukraine-based scholars