



Minutes of the General Meeting of Saturday, September 13, 2014

at the Radisson Hotel in Antwerp

The meeting opened at 9:00 am

Item 1) Greeting the participants

President Werner Dossler welcomed participants to the General Assembly of the EATA: Mrs Elisabeth Müller (VDA), MM. Erich Bühlmann and Robi Guggenbühl (SDAT / Switzerland), Thierry de Coulon (ARCAT / Switzerland), Jean-Jacques Eckert (FFA / France), Yvan Detry (ICAIF), Eddy Selderslaghs and Marc Thelissen (BBAT / Belgium), Stefan Hetz and Werner Witopil (VDA / Germany)

Excused: Austria (ÖVVÖ), Czech Republic (AKVACZ), Netherlands (NBAT)

He then wants to say a few words in honour of Elisabeth Müller, who will soon be 90 years old. It recalls her activities in the fishkeeping hobby scene, the foundation of ATI in 1972. In 1999, when EATA was founded, Elisabeth Müller was still there to support it. She also played an important role in fishkeeping associations in Belgium and the Netherlands. He thanked her for everything she has brought to the fishkeeping community.

Item 2) Minutes of the meeting of October 2013

The minutes were accepted (as modified by Robi Guggenbühl) without further comment.

Item 3) Activity Report 2013/2014 First Chairman Werner Dossler

Werner Dossler's health is better, he is slowly recovering from his heart problems.

Werner Dossler excuses the representatives of the Czech Republic, who considered the way to Antwerp to be too far. He gives some explanation about the organization of the meeting in Antwerp and the visit to the Zoo. He also informs about contacts with Portugal and various people working in the field of aquariums and terrariums. In France, a fish hobbyist was prosecuted for having marketed coral cuttings (protected by CITES). On this basis, Werner Dossler wrote to the EU to find out who we should talk to about it - no answer yet.

Most associations publish a newspaper and send it to Werner Dossler - he reads whenever possible. On some of these publications EATA was mentioned inconspicuously, but this should have been fixed in-between. An EATA roll up is presented - each association will be able to let it be printed for themselves, EATA will provide the master. Robi Guggenbühl recalls that the possibility of a sponsorship was mentioned in the 2013 minutes and wonders if anything was done about it. Werner Dossler answers that he has taken contact with potential sponsors (JBL, Tetra, et...). There are discussions with the representative of JBL for a sponsorship. Vitakraft does not seem interested, Tetra is now owned by an American consortium and does not have a lot of freedom, but he will also try. VDA also notes that the members of our organizations are customers of the OFI, so we might also ask them for a sponsorship. Once something has been negotiated, Werner Dossler we notify us.

Item 4) Report of cashier 2013/2014 by the cashier J. J.Eckert

The account shows 1909.85 Euros in 2014. There was little expense. There are actually 32 Euros more that should go back to the account (a contribution to the organization of the general assembly costs).

Considering this situation, it is decided that the subscription is maintained at € 50.00 per association.

Item 5) Re-election of the committee.

Six out of nine associations are present at the meeting. The question arises of whether to elect the committee for three years or every year. Robi Guggenbühl suggests to elect the comity for a year, until the three-year rule becomes valid next year.

Jean-Jacques Eckert is re-elected as a cashier for a year (Werner Witopil continues to bring his help).

Thierry de Coulon is reappointed as secretary.

In absence of Anton Lamboj, his re-election is accepted subject to his acceptance.

Werner Dossler is re-elected as president for a year.

Item 6) By-laws of EATA

The discussion returns to the question of by-laws. For EATA no by-laws exist, only "Arbeitsrichtlinien." It is essential to write real byways, which would address the issue of elections, but must also be compatible with European law (e.g. the requirement for a general meeting, not a meeting of delegates).

Robi Guggenbühl intends to write a first draft of the by-laws (with the help of Erich Bühlmann and Werner Witopil), that he will then submit to us in $\pm\frac{1}{2}$ year.

Werner Witopil suggests that the chairmanship should move from one association to another and that the General Assembly should be held in the country of the chairman. This is only a proposal which has yet to be discussed in the associations.

Others expressed a fear that it would be a loss to remove chairman who does his job well only because the rule requires a change of the chairing association. Another risk is to have a chairman who has accepted the position but does not work effectively. It is also mentioned that the chair can be a "title" that does not require a complete change in the committee.

Werner Dossler made the suggestion that it could be the vice-president who would be elected in the various associations.

Item 7) Nachzuchtliste (List of breeders)?

Werner Dossler asked Anton Lamboj in the past what was going on with the Database, but got no answer yet. He wonders if this list is really necessary. Erich Bühlmann points out that SDAT absolutely needs one, but that it does not seem that Anton Lamboj has progressed in that area. From this year, in Germany, every buyer of an animal must receive a document with key information about that animal. The VDA asked if the Information sheet they use for their fish markets (Fischbörse) would be adequate, and it seems to be the case. These sheets are generated from a Database maintained by VDA. This database also make it possible to generate a list of species that can be bread (which could be useful in case of positive lists). In France, it seems that many breeders are afraid to be included in such a list for financial reasons (fear of taxes).

EATA should provide people to help maintain and translate the database that the VDA has already developed. Data entry is made by a few people - direct access from breeders causes too many mistakes in data entry. Werner Witopil will send an email with more technical details about access conditions.

The question whether to continue working with the Scottish based data (about which we have no information) will be examined (Stefan Hetz will contact the maintainer).

Item 8) EU Regulations and possible changes

Marc Thelissen informs that there a lot of changes in the EU, too many to mention.

There is a huge lobbying groups of animals protectors, which have a lot of power (Eurogroup for Animals). They have a lot of money and it is very difficult to fight against them (they can afford the services of 10 lawyers).

European veterinarians also have considerable power and are supported by the EU.

In Belgium, the responsibilities were regionalized, Animal Welfare in Flanders and within the Ministry of Agriculture in Wallonia. There are positive lists for mammals and a list is being prepared for reptiles. The lists were prepared by the administration without scientific support.

The Netherlands are preparing lists for mammals and birds. In Germany there are laws in some states - lists diverge.

France has no positive list for now, neither does Switzerland, and as far as we know neither has Austria.

Lists are being discussed at the EU level, a decision is may be made in 2016 (more information in the presentation of Gerald Bassleer).

There are also some negative lists (Example given by the Ampularia case, list of plants in Belgium), in the UK there is a law on prohibited fish species in ponds, canals and rivers. This list of invasive species should soon be extended to prohibit keeping these species in aquarium.

CITES is also constantly having changes - too many to mention.

Item 10) What to do

- a) Gerald Bassleer OFI, The Ornamental Fish Industry under Threat in Europe "PPT

Gerald Bassleer is president of OFI organization, representing the complete aquarium industry chain (200 members in 44 countries). Their purpose is to inform about their activities, but also to identify what the expectations of consumers.

This industry is threatened by the idea, popular in our countries, that we should leave the animals in the wild. The consequence is that it is felt that keeping fish is bad - these opinions aren't supported by any scientific evidence. We must demand that these charges are proven.

The OFI funded a study that lists the benefits brought by the aquarium industry has to the regions from which these species are captured.

Pressure is brought to bear from # Votes4animals, lists of invasive species, White and Black lists, and even the project of payment of rights on the genes of animals to their countries of origin.

Votes4animals, by the Eurogroup for Animals, collects funds with the ultimate goal to ban all imports of wild animals.

It is essential that fishkeeper associations react, otherwise the decisions are made - whenever there is a reaction, politicians tend to move back from extreme decisions.

There is also the "against-campaigns" at Twitter. In the countries of origin of our fish, there are several initiatives to better educate fishermen and to demonstrate that trade in ornamental fish provides an economic and social contribution to the populations. An effort is being made in South America to gain support from WWF. In India too the trade is being supported by the government.

EATA must inform fishkeepers that supporting a member of the Eurogroup means supporting # Act4animals.

ENDCAP is another organization of animal protectors that advocates positive lists (white lists).

Invasive species are a topic that will become important in the coming years. It is very important that fishkeeper organizations educate their members and teach them that no organism from their aquariums should ever be released in the wild.

The Callisto project is a struggle aiming to reduce specific zoonoses such as Salmonella in reptiles and fish.

Nagoya Protocol: This is an agreement that grants rights to a country on the genome of organisms that come from it - Breeders would be expected to pay a fee to the country if the breed animals originating from that country.

The conclusion is that we must be proactive: specialized industry and aquarium associations must ensure that neither the aquarium shops or hobbyists themselves give ammunition to our opponents by their misconduct.

- b) In Switzerland, too, information sheets must now be distributed to buyers of animals. Currently two law projects are being reviewed: one concerning pollution from animal husbandry (four categories 0-1). As a reference, albinism is considered "light pollution" ("leichte Belastung"). Problem: this information must be controlled by the "breeder association". SDAT is not a breeder association.

Other laws are in project about the fitting out of aquariums.

Certificates of competence for fish over 1m: This course is now necessary to keep sturgeons.

Item 11) Information from associations.

VDA has completed a certificate for reptiles. They also created in their association a department "Conservation and species" (Naturschutz und Arten) in order to be recognized as an association for nature conservation. Werner Witopil also would like associations to provide lists of people who can work with/for EATA but which are not present at meetings.

Updating the address list: thank you to each association to send Werner Dossler an updated list of committees in charge, as well as logos with good resolution.

Item 12) Date of meeting 2015

Provisional date set: Saturday, September 12, 2015 / organized or VDA (via Werner Witopil/ Naturschutz und Arten Referat). If this is not possible ask ÖWÖ.

Meeting ended at: 2:50 pm.