

Minutes of the ENA General Assembly Meeting held on 30 January 2020
(09h30 – 14h00) at IPM trade show – room F (CC East) – **Essen** (Germany).

Present:

Patrick Svensson (LRF-T - Sweden), Maja Persson (LRF-T - Sweden), Romain Manceau (Val'hor - France), Zoltán Sinkó (MDE - Hungary), Markus Guhl (BdB - Germany), Luigi Pagliani (ANVE - Italy), Jan Veltmans (LTO - Netherlands), Albano Moreira da Silva (APPP-FN - Portugal), Henning Roed (DP - Denmark), Mateusz Milczyński (ZSzP - Poland), Grzegorz Falkowski (ZSzP - Poland), Val Farrell (IHNSA - Ireland), Umut Sakarya (SUSBIR - Turkey), Miray Engin (SUSBIR - Turkey), José Forcadell Gómez (Fepex - Spain), Dora Aebi (Jardin Suisse - Switzerland), Miet Poppe (AVBS - Belgium), Tim Van Hulle (AVBS - Belgium), Lucien Verschoren (AVBS - Belgium), Tim Edwards (NFU/HTA - United Kingdom), Dragana Skočajić (SLHS - Serbia), Jovan Topalović (SLHS - Serbia), Catherine Müller (Val'hor - France), Emmanuelle Bougault (Val'hor - France), Jyri Uimonen (Taimistoviljelijät ry - Finland), Tomi Tahvonen (Taimistoviljelijät ry - Finland), Maurizio Laponi (ANVE - Italy), Edoardo Sciutti (ANVE - Italy), Pavel Halama (SŠČR - Czech Republic), Helena Zahradníková (SŠČR - Czech Republic), Alex Venglovsky (AURI - Ukraine), Tatyana Boyadzhieva (BAOPN - Bulgaria), Stoil Nanovski (BAOPN - Bulgaria), Harm Horlings (ANTHOS - Netherlands, Certifications and Labels **WG Chair**), Leon Smet (Anthos - Netherlands, Promotion **WG Chair**), Willy De Nolf (AVBS – Belgium, **Treasurer**), Henk Raaijmakers (LTO - Netherlands, ENA **Vice-President**), Jan-Dieter Bruns (BdB – Germany, ENA **President**), and Josep M. Pagès (ENA **Secretary General** -SG in the text-).

1. President's Welcome.

President Bruns opened the meeting welcoming all delegates.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Marie Horakova, the Secretary of Czech Republic association, who passed away in August.

2. Apologies for absence.

László Orlóci from Hungary and Jaume Riera and Luis B. Martín from Spain had sent their apologies.

3. Agreement of the Agenda.

The agenda was adopted with the introduction of an exchange of opinions with Mr Art Anderson from the USA.

4. Minutes: Approval of the minutes of the previous GA meeting held on 1 July 2019 in Kyiv (Kiev), Ukraine.

The minutes of the last General Assembly meeting were agreed on and approved as a true and accurate record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes not included on the agenda.

SG informed that the discussion for membership options, to avoid conflicts with the same country members, was postponed to the next GA meeting.

6. Admission and withdrawal of members.

In a mutual agreement between Hungarian Nurserymen Association and their umbrella organisation Hungarian Interbranch Organization for Ornamental Horticulture, **Hungarian Nurserymen Association** requested to withdraw from ENA, and the Hungarian Interbranch Organization for Ornamental Horticulture applied for membership.

The **Hungarian Interbranch Organization for Ornamental Horticulture** was unanimously accepted as a member.

7. ENA 2019 finances update.

- a. To receive the annual statement of accounts for 2019.

The Treasurer explained that, because of the amount of accountancy work with the Green Cities project, that includes last-minute invoices and payments related to 2019, the final statement of 2019 accounts was not ready; although all necessary information for 2019 tax declarations was submitted to the external accountant before January 20, 2020.

As the General Assembly is the only body who can approve the previous accounts in a meeting, and it must be done before July 1st, it was agreed on to convene an extra General Assembly meeting in late April, with only this item on the agenda, just before the Secretaries meeting begins, and previously, to send the information to all members.

- b. To agree on the budget for 2020, including ENA membership rates.

As the costs of ENA were expected to be similar to those of 2019, and the costs of the Green Cities promotion project were going to be covered by the European Commission grant and the seven participating countries, it was agreed on keeping the same 2019 amount for the 2020 membership fees.

8. EU Legislation Working Group:

- a. **EU plant health legislation and new Plant Passport: problems, issues, doubts and concerns in the Plant Passport implementation in each EU country + CH.**

The Vice-president argued that ENA cannot change the Regulations, but can influence the uniform application of the Regulation, and polled each country to explain their situation, offering support and information in the implementation process.

BE: most growers and traders were using PP, labelling in different ways depending on the clients, and traders had difficulties to keep commercial confidentiality of the origin of the plants; the demand of Plant Passports PZ increased.

BG: the country authorities were not fully ready to proceed authorising professional operators, posing problems to issue Passports.

CH: they had good discussion with their Federal Office on how to prepare for it. They could group plants in one label as *Plantae* for non-high-risk plants, making it easier, although they are not exporters to the EU.

CZ: they are ready; authorities are accepting PP for ornamental plants on paper (invoice or packing list) but PP labels must always be on fruit plants, including the fruit label (yellow for CAC).

DE: the association had been in contact with the authorities and sharing information with nurseries, and the Passporting process was working smoothly. They agreed on the increased risk of traders when mixing deliveries.

DK: nurseries were routinely issuing Plant Passports.

ES: no major problems reported.

FI: only some confusing details at the beginning because of the lack of proper communication from authorities. Nurseries had a substantial cost to adapt to.

FR: a few growers were not ready yet. Their main issues were with the interpretation of the “trade unit” and “traceability” concepts. The authorities and the sector are going to have a discussion to evaluate the system at the end of 2020.

HU: their authorities gave late and insufficient information, therefore big companies were prepared with Plant Passport, but small companies had difficulties to adapt to.

IE: working well with professional producers; issues with Garden Centres asking for 1 label on each plant unit; problems with labels on large imported orders, although authorities agreed on keeping the traceability simple.

IT: nurseries were Passporting normally. Nurseries had a different interpretation of “final consumer” from their authorities, for which anyone with a VAT number is not a final consumer. Nurseries understand that professionals are those who trade or have a plant business only; the rest, i.e. a hotel, are a final consumer, despite having a VAT number. How traders issue Passports is also a concern; should they keep the original Passport or issue a new one?

NL: Plant passporting was running well; their authorities had been solving all issues on time. When traders mix plants from different growers, they were advised to keep different Passports instead of combining all plants in one Passport, to reduce the risk in case of a pest detection.

PL: working well, similar problems with definitions, ‘final customer’ (is a city a final customer?), ‘local sales’ and ‘local markets’. Producers had to pass two exams. Expensive costs on computers and printers in large nurseries.

PT: the nurseries had adapted, and they were issuing Passports for export markets, although not many in the internal market.

RS (non-EU): although not in the EU, they have a similar control system.

SE: no relevant problems on issuing PP.

TR (non-EU): a PP similar system was used for some plants and for sales to growers (producer to producer) only.

UA (non-EU): in their internal market, they didn’t use a Plant Passport.

UK: minor problems with the definition of ‘sales unit’ were solved; cash&carry operators were not ready to properly issue PP, or even Garden Centres, when selling to ‘professional operators’ because of the interpretation of the term. UK might have new changes in 2021, as a non-EU country.

It was agreed to produce a document with common guidelines on the practical application of the Plant Passport, to give the EC practical answers to the PP implementation questions they receive from national authorities, and if possible, meet with the EC Plant Health authorities for discussion.

b. Insurances against plant health risks (two presentations from insurance companies).

The Vice-president explained that nurseries might survive in case of a severe problem with quarantine pests, including *Xylella*, if they were insured. Two presentations were received, from Mr Christian Senft, Member of the Board of Gartenbau-Versicherung VVaG, an insurance company in Germany, and Mr Alessandro Meoni, CEO of AIB All Insurance Broker, an insurance broker in Pistoia, Italy.

Both explained their insurance policies to cover nurseries against plant health risks.

It was agreed on sharing their presentations and contacts with all ENA members, and to share information with both companies to help them offer their insurance to new countries.

c. Research Projects participation (H2020 call)

ENA had been involved in the preparation of two H2020 projects, as discussed and agreed in the last ENA Secretaries meeting, and the proposals were already submitted because the deadline expired the week before this GA meeting.

- i. **BeXyl**; about *Xylella*. ENA participation is intended mostly at the beginning to give some orientation on the species to work with, and later and at the end of the project spreading the information generated. 25 different organisations, academic institutes, official NPPOs, research agencies, and also private companies, participate in the project. The total budget was almost 7 million euros and it's 100% financed by the EC.
- ii. **Growers@yourService**; intended to put together existing research, and disseminate and exchange among nurseries the information on the use of plants for ecosystem services and in the cities.

The Vice-president emphasised that the costs of both projects, if selected, were going to be completely covered by the H2020 grant; that the Growers@yourService project was aligned to the Green Cities project, and that both were going to bring more information to all ENA members.

d. Brexit

Tim Edwards (UK) informed the GA that from February 1st, 2020, until the end of December 2020, a transition period was established and, therefore, there are no changes in the ways to move plants between the EU and the UK. During this period, the UK will discuss their Regulations to apply from January 1st, 2021, and a deal between EU and the UK.

e. French legislation on prior information to be provided to purchasers of plants liable to be harmful to human health.

Romain Manceau (FR) explained that the French Ministry of Solidarity and Health had notified the EC of a new French regulation, in preparation, relating to prior information to be issued to purchasers of plants likely to affect human health. Because 1) this regulation can affect the free movement of goods in the internal EU market, 2) this measure is inappropriate and disproportionate to protect the people, and 3) the lack of a methodology to establish the plants list; the French organisation will submit their remarks against the regulation and asked the cooperation of ENA to also send feedback to the EC against this regulation.

The GA participants informed that no other countries had similar legislation.

It was agreed on submitting an ENA feedback against this legislation, and sending the members a template letter to send from each country their direct reaction, to try to stop the proposal.

9. Talk with Mr Art Anderson, General Manager and Chief Operations Officer at J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co., Portland, Oregon, USA.

President Bruns introduced Mr Anderson, who gave a brief introduction about the nursery industry in the US.

(A transcription of his talk will be available to ENA members in a separate document.)

10. Sustainability Working Group:

a. EU Green Deal

SG summarized the EU Green Deal, a political measure from the new European Commission, aimed to stimulate growth based on sustainability. It's expected that this policy, with a budget of 1 trillion euros, will have a significant positive impact on our sectors, benefiting green cities and biodiversity.

b. ENA sustainable development goals.

Harm Horlings, WG Chair, explained that a third proposal to ENA GA, a proposal for a sustainability ambition, had been distributed before this meeting and no questions had been asked, assuming the ideas were fully supported by ENA members. Since the proposal outlined the basic ideas, participants were asked to work on it in order to discuss it further at the summer GA meeting. It was mentioned that markets begin to demand 100% sustainable products quicker than expected. ENA members were asked to support and work on the development of the proposed ideas, and NL, DE, BE and FR delegates volunteered.

It was agreed on publishing the sustainability proposal document on ENA website.

11. Promotion Working Group.

a. 'Green Cities' promotion project (2018-2020), 2019 summary

Leon Smet, WG Chair, gave an update on the status of the Green Cities campaign. 2019 was the 2nd year of the campaign, and events, PR and promotion activities were organised in the 7 participating countries. There were some issues with the website, a key element of the

campaign, that needed to be improved. He mentioned that local and national governments are now much more sensitive to the functionality of green. A coordination meeting was scheduled for the same day, after the GA meeting.

b. Proposal for the next call (2021-2023)

WG Chair explained that a new call for promotion programs had been officially opened by the EC and proposals can be submitted until April 2020. Thirteen ENA countries (BE, BG, DE, DK, FR, GR, HU, IE, IT, NL, PL, PT, SE) had been participating in the preparation of a new application, and an external consultant had been hired to write the proposal. The GA agreed on submitting the promotion proposal to CHAFEA, with ENA as the proposer and only beneficiary.

12. European nurseries statistics update.

SG thanked the countries who had sent information to ENA, but because not enough data had been received, it was agreed on updating the data for the summer GA meeting.

13. Umbrella Green Sector organisation.

President Jan-Dieter Bruns summarised the last meeting with ELCA and IFLA-Europe held the previous week in Brussels, where it was decided to have regular contact and meetings, to use a “so’Green” logo, to invite more international organisations to join the future meetings. It had also been agreed on participating in the European Green Week on the first week of June 2020 in Brussels, organising a day conference dedicated to our sector. ENA involvement had no cost for this year, individuals own traveling expenses only.

14. ENA priorities and future organisation.

After letting each country-delegate to vote on the different items of a priorities’ document, the Vice-president summarised some basic ideas:

- Financially:
 - o To keep the membership fee at the same level, as previously agreed on.
 - o Projects done by ENA should be paid by each project, not from ENA general funds.
- Structure:
 - o To add, to the current small board, a few people (at least three) to support the board on making decisions; for example one from Eastern Europe, one from the South and one from a third country, because they are not directly represented in the board right now. They would work mostly by email, and at most, participate in the Secretaries Meetings.
- Newsletter:
 - o Once or twice a year.
- To look at important issues (i.e. plant health, environmental sustainability, EU Green Deal) and new ones that might come.

Finally, he asked the participants to send him additional ideas they might have after the GA Meeting, and to send to ENA proposed names for this board support committee.

The proposals were agreed on by the GA, and the next GA will decide on the advisory committee composition and names.

15. Digitisation of the technical characteristics of nursery products.

The President gave the floor to Fons van Wezel (NL), who explained his proposal to have the widest range of plants using a uniform codification across Europe, a computer code for each plant variety, size, presentation and additional characteristics, to facilitate communications, logistics and B2B commerce. BdB (DE) pointed out that they already have a codification system, which is widely used. It was agreed on forming a Working Group, and delegates from NL, SE, DE, UK, CH, FR and BE volunteered to participate in it. The President closed the discussion asking them to find a way to combine specifications.

16. 2021-2025 international plant names list.

SG recapped the history of the International Plant Names List, and shared the proposal from Dr Marco Hoffman, chair of the WG, to produce the new lists 2021-2025.

ACTION	WHO	FINAL DATE
Sending of new names and/or proposals for changes of names for inclusion in ENA-List	ENA member countries	June 30
Putting together ENA Plant Names Working Group	ENA	August 31
Compile and distribute list of proposed taxonomical changes	Chair of the Working Group	September 30
Comments on list of proposed changes	ENA Plant Names Working Group	October 31
Compile & send concept results & decisions on taxonomical changes	Chair of the Working Group	November 30
Discussion difficult matters (e.g. border cases of taxonomical changes)	ENA Plant Names Working Group	December 20
Compile & send final results & decisions on taxonomical changes	Secretary Working Group	December 31
Publication of new ENA List of woody plants	Naktuinbouw	March 15 (2021)

ENA will concentrate the efforts on the woody plants list and ISU on the perennials, although ENA members can participate in both working groups. The communication of the WG members will be done by email, and there is no foreseen cost for ENA.

The GA agreed on updating the list.

17. Next meetings

a. Secretaries meeting in Ghent, Belgium (29-30 April 2020).

Miet Poppe (BE) summarised the meeting details of the Secretaries meeting to be held in Ghent, including the participation at the opening of Floralties, invited by Belgian nurseries organisation, and the visit of Floralties.

b. General Assembly summer meeting 2020 in Rain am Lech, Bavaria, Germany (1-4 July).

Mr Jan-Dieter Bruns (DE) presented the program for the summer meeting, advising to fly to Munich airport, from where transfers will be organised. On 1st of July in the afternoon, a coordination meeting of the Green Cities project will be convened, the GA meeting will be held on 2nd of July in the morning, partners will have a parallel program of visits, and a full program of visits to companies in the area, both garden centers and nurseries, were scheduled.

GA agreed on both meeting plans.

18. AOB (any other business).

Umut Sakarya (TR), brought to the GA their concerns about the requirements and prohibitions to import plants into the EU, and informed that Turkish NPPO had submitted to EC four dossiers of high-risk plants. The Turkish sector wanted to avoid retaliation by their authorities, because their own sector would be damaged, and he requested ENA to approach the EC in order to know what is best to do (to trade bare-root plants only? to apply a chemical treatment? any other options?).

SG reminded that ENA had sent feedback to EC on the Draft Regulations, advocating for removing the prohibition of any soil with the plants, but without success, and the high-risk plants list was asked to be as short as possible. He also mentioned that it would not make sense if the Turkish Government retaliates because, with the new EU Plant Health and Official Controls Regulations, the EU grown plants will have their health more controlled than ever. Italian delegation suggested to recommend the EC the use of a systematic approach.

The Vice-president explained that a lot of pressure was being made on the EC, and looking at every possibility to find a practical solution to bring in plants from diseases.

It was agreed on analysing the options and pressing the EC to find solutions.

Albano Moreira da Silva (PT) posed a question regarding the VAT in exports; their tax authorities require two documents to prove the export to another EU country was really made: the paid invoice and a transport document (i.e. CMR); but when the transport is made by the buyer with their own means, there is no transport document. Delegates from PL, CZ and BG mentioned they have the same requirement, while for IT authorities require the invoice only.

It was agreed on making the consultation to an international tax advisor.

The President thanked all for their participation, and adjourned the meeting at 14h00.