**EUSJA PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

**Saturday, March 29, 2014 Vienna**

Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

This is a report tinged with sadness as it will be the last I present as president of EUSJA. As many of you know, I decided last year in Prague that this would probably be my last year. I did hover over this decision but now family events have overtaken me. I have two new grandchildren, three in total whom I am looking forward to spending more time with. I am also resurrecting my writing career and have some exciting projects awaiting me so I am afraid I have little time for EUSJA - which is increasingly taking much of my time.

When I took up my position I said my aim was to raise EUSJA’s profile across Europe. This we as a board have done and are continuing to do. We are continually being asked about our organization and invited to represent science journalists at numerous events. When the EU launched its Russian Year in November, EUSJA was consulted from the outset and our vice- president, Viola Egikova played a prominent role.

Science journalism is changing but still plays an increasingly vital role in our quickly changing technological age. We must change with it in order to survive. This has been uppermost in the minds of board members and I am incredibly proud of the achievements we have made over the past year and cannot praise enough the dedication of the board. Just look at what we have done.

Firstly we have attracted 271,000 euro through our involvement in EU projects. This is down to co-opted member, Menelaos Sotiriou who has worked tirelessly through the piles of paperwork required to fulfill all criteria. Menelaos will run through these projects later in the meeting. This money is now coming into our account . Earlier this year we offered freelance work for three members, and another three posts will shortly be decided upon and successful candidates will be notified. There are also more to come. We have funds to pay for freelance work, study trips – for instance we gave the Swiss association 3000 euro for its event earlier this month -and to increase our activities. A big thanks is due to treasurer, Priit Ennet whom I am certain didn’t expect to have to juggle and account for so much additional money when he agreed to take on his post.

We had a hugely successful presence at the excellent World Conference of Science Journalists in Helsinki. We gave scholarships of 700 euro each to Klaartje Jaspers from the Netherlands, Anthony King from Ireland and Michele Catanzaro from the Catalan Association. We took part in four sessions and secretary, Wolfgang Goede worked hard to not only plan the sessions but to follow them up, generating further publicity for EUSJA. As a result of his work we have been invited to run a session at the PCST 2014 in Salvador, Brazil and hope that some of you will be able to be present. Wolfgang has involved us in the endorsement of a project of Latin American SciJourns – Fiesta Ambulante – which is supporting regional efforts for more profound journalism about science and technology across the whole of South America. This work is in close conjunction with the World Federation of Science Journalists with whom we are proud to have a firm alliance and continue to support .

We also have had the green light for a session on nanotechnology accepted for the forthcoming ESOF meeting in Copenhagen, again all due to the efforts of Wolfgang and Menelaos. EUSJA, thanks to increased funds, is financing a science journalism picnic in ESOF’s Science in the City programme, an initiative proposed to us by Jacopo Pasotti from SWIM. And last but not least we will be able to revitalize the EUSJA Investigative Science Journalism Fund which has been tossed around during our two year term without any concrete steps taken.

We had a great session at the European Health Forum Gastein EHFG (Health Forum) in October where 10 members were able to join the board to present to the organisers what science journalists expect from and can offer to such conferences. It was heartening to see how valued our contributions were received and to be invited by this respected body to take part. Next year EUSJA could be very well invited to deliver science journalistic trainings to the participating colleagues. Wolfgang has just returned from a conference in Thessaloniki where he gave a keynote address and mentoring on science journalism at the first such conference the country has organized. In his contribution he nailed down the EUSJA strategy for the next years in nine commandments which can also be found on the EUSA web site.

More than 100 members have attended a dozen study trips this year. All information about the trips is posted on the web site. However, it is worth mentioning that these would not have happened without the dedication of Viola Egikova. How she has the patience to deal with the minutia of such administration beats me but she has done it. The majority of these trips were generated by the board as a result of enquiries made to us under the umbrella of us raising our profile. This is wonderful but it is not really how it should be. We expect members to organize study trips every three years or so in their own countries. The Swiss and Austrians have just done this and Priit Ennet organized a worthwhile visit in Estonia following the World Conference and has planned another but these are the only ones. I urge you all to address this with your members.

We continue to issue a newsletter. Warm thanks to editor, Anna Nolan for her dedication in ensuring an interesting and accurate publication which is very well received. And thanks too to Menelaos for stepping in mid-term, editing and re-vamping EUSJA News.

I and the board are also grateful to Jan-OIiver Loefken from Germany and Jesper Odde Madsen from Denmark for doing so much work on our EU Projects Working Group. Not only have they worked alongside Menelaos on the projects they willingly scrutinised CV’s from our members applying for freelance work. Thanks go also to our auditors – Kaianders Sempler and Ricardo Garcia and to our election committee, Railli Leino, Merce Piqueras and Jacopo Pasotti.

I am keeping this report of our activities brief as I remember how long and tedious some reports have been in the past with every single action by the board being listed. It is sufficient to say look at and read our web site. I am also aware there is much to be discussed at this meeting so I am trying to be relatively brief.

There has been criticism that our EU projects are science communication, not straight science journalism. This is far from true. Look at them. Menelaos Sotiriou has also been singled out as being a science communicator whose day job concerns various EU work. It his knowledge and expertise in this area which has proved so valuable to us. Without him we would be financially struggling and unable to offer freelance work and support to you all. However, let’s not be dogmatic and ideological, but pragmatic about our profession! It is also worth reminding you that a least year’s GA, the majority of you said that science communication and training were playing an increasingly major part of your jobs.

The EU action plan is not the only thing that has occupied us throughout the year. Far from it. We have fulfilled what we set out to do and have prepared our document for referral to the membership. We have also made contacts with other funding directives for Horizon 2020. Throughout we have gone to great lengths to stress it is the future of science journalism we are striving to protect and enhance.

In addition we have continued with our profile-raising and have been working on attracting new members. I must say a big welcome here to Nina Kristiansen from Norway. And hopefully soon we shall have Iceland on board as we are helping its science journalists form an association. We are also discussing how to welcome and accommodate groups like the Balkan science journalists group to join us. But this will entail a decision of the established EUSJA member organizations in the region and if agreed upon will obviously mean re-writing the constitution (but this is an overdue task and needs to be done). I know that our efforts have laid down the foundations for an exciting future for the strengthening of European Science Journalism. Our action plan is in place.

What else can I say now except a huge thank you to my fellow board members and to our Austrian colleagues for hosting, so superbly, this GA and the preceding study trip. I have some fantastic memories from my time with EUSJA . I have made many friends who will stay friends and I look forward to hearing how you proceed.

I hope our election for a new board is carried out courteously and fairly. I look forward to hearing from all of the candidates and I hope that support is given to the new board in order for EUSJA to continue on its upward path.

Barbie Drillsma