



Draft Minutes of the ESSDA AGM 2023

Held on-line, on Sunday 20th August 2023 –09:30 BST

Board Attendees (4 votes): Davy Brocatus, Corentin Normand, Tom Dane, Diana Vinke

Membership attendees (13 votes): Lorraine Altendorff, Crista Pearce- Altendorff (represented by Lorraine Altendorff), DVET (represented by Jörg Jüngling and Thorsten Reulen), EqualityDance Switzerland (represented by Judith Wildi), Kerstin Kallmann, Cornelia Wagner, Dörte Lange, Ingeborg Petersen (represented by Dörte Lange), Pink Ballroom/TSA der Turngemeinde in Berlin von 1848 e.V. (represented by Cornelia Wagner and Kerstin Kallmann), UKEDC (represented by Tessa Cleaver), Janina Dobberschütz

The meeting was opened at 09:30 with Davy Brocatus in the chair and the minutes were taken by Diana Vinke.

(1) Opening

(a) Apologies: Mark Hebell

(b) Confirmation of AGM being quorate and properly convened

It was confirmed that the AGM was quorate as 17 votes were represented out of total membership of 36 votes. Therefore, the threshold of 5% of members required for an AGM and 25% of members to amend the constitution were met.

(c) Approval of the minutes

The Minutes of the 2022 AGM (draft minutes attached) were taken as read and unanimously approved without amendment.

(2) Reports

(a) Board's Annual Report

The president presented the secretary's report (Appendix 1) as the Annual Report.

Tom Dane announced that a new set of competition rules had been finalised and published on the ESSDA website. They will be applied for the first time at the EuroGames in Vienna (2024). Teams and showdance couples are invited to go through them and can get in touch with Tom Dane if they have any questions.

The board's Annual Report was approved and passed unanimously.

(b) Financial Report

The president presented the financial report (Appendix 2). He briefly explained why two EuroGames Championships were included in one financial report.

The financial report was approved and passed unanimously.

(3) Approval of the annual and financial reports and discharge of the ESSDA board for 2022/2023

The ESSDA Board was discharged for 2022 / 2023 unanimously.

(4) Elections (Appendix 3)

The election of Board members was conducted through an online vote with two thirds of paid-up members voting.

(a) Elections for the open positions on the ESSDA board

Davy Brocatus was re-elected unanimously.

Tessa Cleaver and Janina Dobberschütz were new candidates standing for election. Both were voted in unanimously.

(b) Confirmation of Diana Vinke, co-opted member of the ESSDA board

Diana Vinke was standing for confirmation having been co-opted to the Board since December 2022. Confirmation was unanimous.

(c) Approval for the ESSDA Board to co-opt further Board Members

As a result of the election the ESSDA Board will include six board members. The board will try to co-opt a 7th member and asked formal approval from the AGM to co-opt to nine members. This approval was given unanimously.

(5) Budget for 2023/2024 (Appendix 4)

The Budget for 2023 / 2024 was briefly presented, with the following points being noted:

- The license fee for the EuroGames Championships in 2024 will also be EUR 500,-. If the number of participants exceeds 150, the fee will go up.
- Transport costs for the ESSDA representative used to be included but have now been handled as a separate cost for the EuroGames.

(6) Vote on annual membership fee

This topic was introduced by a brief account of the Finances and Funding Working Group. The main objective of this WG is to explore ways of increasing the revenues to provide sustainably for the costs that ESSDA incurs for the support and assistance of organisers of European / World championships. One way is to adjust the membership structure and membership fees. The following points were raised:

- The WG only had one online meeting. The proposal is to postpone the decision on the annual membership fee to early December 2023 and to have an online referendum. If no decision has been taken by 31 December 2023 the membership fee will not change. This proposal was approved.
- The question was asked, given there were around 130 participants in Bern, why are there so few individual ESSDA members? Most participants are a paid-up member of a local or national club or association that is a group member of ESSDA, so they are 'indirect' ESSDA members and therefore most don't feel the need to also be individual members of ESSDA.
- Local / national associations may be willing to pay a higher fee for an ESSDA group membership if the number of votes they get increases proportionately.
- Currently the WG comprises Janina Dobberschütz and Diana Vinke with further members being sought.
- This WG should be chaired by the Treasurer following the allocation of roles by the new Board.

(7) Any other business

(a) Grand Slam proposal (see section 6 of the Board report)

The Grand Slam proposal was briefly discussed, with the following points being raised:

- The Board asked whether the Grand Slam could start with the first competition to come (Nordic Open) or after Vienna 2024. The general feeling was that it would be best to start as soon as possible, even if it meant missing out the Nordic Open this year.
- The DVET representatives said that they were fine for the Berlin Open to be in the Grand Slam, but not the German Championship as it is already a sizeable competition. They will confirm in due course a second German competition for the Grand Slam.
- It was noted that in 2024 the Nordic Open will not be in the summer but probably around New Year.
- A condition for the start of the Grand Slam is that people know well in advance which competitions are included.
- The UK Equality Open should be the first competition.

(b) Discussion re how to increase competitor numbers

- A discussion was held as to how to increase competitor numbers, particularly beginner and C/D level dancers, and male dancers. The following points were noted:
 - o The number of competitors has decreased dramatically, from around 500 to 130. There are some new female entries but the number of male couples continues to fall. There are hardly any D Class couples.
 - o In Germany, fewer men are in training than women. There are signs of improvement, but it is not clear whether this will feed through to the number of male competitors.
 - o There is a perception that some men don't want to compete because they won't win, particularly at A class. This 'winning mentality' is less marked

outside the A Class where the motivation to compete is a combination of wanting to win and being part of the event.

- The number of people participating in dance sport is going down in general.
- In Switzerland the dance community is quite small. For male dancers it seems to be more difficult to find a dance partner with similar motivation and level than for female dancers.
- The level of D Class has gone up so much that it has gone way beyond the beginner level.
- There is a separate class for starters (see competition rules) but not many competitions include this in their program due to the level of dancers registering for competitions.
- The senior age group is quite large. Linked to age and the lack of gender-neutral Classes this may create generational differences and reduce the appetite of people to compete.
- In the course of the discussion, several actions were suggested for the Board to consider further:
 - Translation of the Starter's Guide into other European languages to make the guide more accessible.
 - Resetting the level of D class to be a genuine beginner class, e.g. through explaining to adjudicators, having the MC count the start of the dance
 - Reviewing how to include "queer" dancers.
 - Facilitate a discussion of national/local organisations on how to increase the number of dancers and connect to people.
 - Consider sharing testimonials from people who worked their way up through the classes

(c) EuroGames Championships 2023 in Bern

- Judith expressed many thanks to everyone who came to Bern, and a big thank you to Dörte and Thorsten, also on behalf of Helena. It was a good competition.
- Tom gave Judith, Willy, Greg and the other Bern team members a huge thank you.

The AGM was closed at 11.30 CEST.



Annual Report of the ESSDA Board presented at the AGM on 20 August 2023

(1) ESSDA Board

During the year to 20 August 2023 the ESSDA Board comprised.

Name	Nationality	Role	Date elected/co-opted
Davy Brocatus	BE	President	29.08.2021
Diana Vinke	NL	Vice-President	20.11.2022 (co-opted)
Corentin Normand	FR	Treasurer	29.08.2021
Mark Hebell	DE	General Secretary	20.08.2022
Tom Dane	UK	General Board Member	20:08.2022

At the 2023 AGM, Davy will stand for re-election, Diana for confirmation and Corentin will stand down. Janina Dobberschütz and Tessa Cleaver will stand for election for the first time.

(2) ESSDA Board Meetings

The ESSDA Board has held five online meetings since the ESSDA AGM 2022. These meetings took place on:

- 24 September 2022
- 20 November 2022
- 29 January 2023
- 2 April 2023
- 11 June 2023

Critical matters discussed:

Recurring topics at the board meetings included the preparation, organisation and evaluation of international competitions (EuroGames/ESSDA European Championships and Gay Games), progress of the three Working Groups (Competition Rules, Finance, and Inclusion and Diversity), the redesign of the ESSDA website and the Grand Slam. These topics are briefly discussed below.

Membership number

As at 16th August 2023 there were 22 paid-up individual members and 8 paid-up extraordinary members. This compares to 24 individual members and 7 extraordinary members the previous year.

(3) International Competitions

- **EuroGames/ESSDA European Championships 2023 (Bern)**

2023: EuroGames Bern was a very well organised and successful competition. We are extremely grateful to everyone who made it a success including the competition organiser, Willy Beutler; Eurogames Bern and especially Greg Zwygart; Equality Dance Switzerland; the adjudicators; scrutineers Dörte Lange and Stephan Rath; Chairperson, Thorsten Reulen; DJ, Stephan Frehner; master of ceremonies, Thomas Marter; and all the volunteers, audience members and competitors.

In total, 132 dancers registered for Bern which is in line with EuroGames 2022 in Nijmegen, but considerably lower than the numbers before the covid-pandemic. The numbers were especially low for the male competitions. In the next year, the ESSDA Board will consider what could be done to increase numbers and to attract new starters and couples. The Board will be engaging with our member clubs and associations on this.

The final report of EuroGames Bern will be presented at the Annual General Assembly of EGLSF in March 2024.

- **EuroGames/ESSDA European Championships 2024 (Vienna)**

Roswitha Wetschka is responsible for the organisation of the EuroGames dancesport event in Vienna and we have been in correspondence with Roswitha with regard to awarding the European Championship licence to EuroGames Vienna. We are close to signing the licence agreement with Eurogames Vienna, on terms similar to those agreed with Eurogames Bern.

- **EuroGames/ESSDA European Championships 2025 (Lyon)**

Formal communication with EuroGames Lyon 2025 will start after we have finalised the agreement for 2024. There have however been some initial informal discussions with Patrice Naudier who will be responsible for organising the dancesport event in Lyon.

- **GayGames 2023 Guadalajara**

The GayGames will take place in Guadalajara, Mexico from 3 to 11 November 2023. The dancesport competition at the games has been designated an International Federation of Same-Sex Dance Associations (IFSSDA) World Championships. Benjamin Soencksen, Chair of the North American Same-Sex Dance Association (NASSPDA) has been the IFSSDA representative liaising with the GayGames team.

The ESSDA Board has been in close correspondence with Benjamin since November 2022 to provide input into the arrangements for the GayGames in Guadalajara. There have however been a number of delays while local representatives were appointed in Guadalajara and a suitable venue found.

A venue for the dancesport event has been confirmed and the officials are being appointed. We understand that the local municipal authorities are supporting the Gay Games, including providing financial support. We believe that while the numbers for the dancesport event are likely to be low, the organisational structure is in place for a successful event.

- **GayGames 2026 Valencia**

We will start formal discussions with the organising team for Gay Games Valencia after the conclusion of the GayGames in Guadalajara. Given the event is in Europe, we would expect ESSDA to lead discussions on behalf of IFSSDA. We have already had some informal discussions with the Valencia organising team at the EGLSF AGA and during EuroGames Bern.

(4) Working Groups

(a) Competition rules WG

The working group on Competition Rules comprises Tom Dane (UK; ESSDA board member and working group chair), Mark Hebell (GER; ESSDA Board Member), Kerstin Kallmann (GER; Pink Ballroom), and Thorsten Reulen (GER; DVET Board Member).

The group has had one in-person meeting on 1st May and several online discussions as well as exchanging correspondence.

The main work of the group has been to revise the rules for teams and for showdance couples. A revised set of rules was approved by the ESSDA Board on 11 June 2023. The rules are available on the [ESSDA website](#) along with an explanation of, and the reasons behind, the changes. The new rules will apply from 1 July 2024 and any comments or questions should be addressed to [Tom](#).

Further to a query raised at the 2022 ESSDA AGM, the working group also tried to look at the detail of how the marks for the team showdance event were calculated at EuroGames Nijmegen. Unfortunately, the detailed scores of the individual adjudicators had not been retained and so no further investigation was possible.

In 2023/2024 the working group plans to look at the proposals for changes to the dresscode rules discussed at the 2022 AGM, primarily with a view to ensuring the safeguarding of those under eighteen and other vulnerable people. The group will also look at the setting of the senior age category and will work with the diversity and inclusion group on the competitive aspects of their discussions. Finally, the group will look at the rules for a Grand Slam competition (see below).

Anyone who would like to join the working group or who has suggestions for topics for the group to discuss should contact [Tom](#).

(b) Finance WG

The Working Group on Finances & Funding comprises Corentin Normand (FR; ESSDA board member), Janina Dobberschütz (DK; PanDance), Diana Vinke (NL; co ESSDA board member); Tom Dane (UK; ESSDA board member) joined the first meeting. Finance WG has met once online followed by email correspondence.

At the 2022 AGM it was noted that revenues have decreased in recent years, due in part to substantially lower numbers of competitors, while costs are increasing. The main objective of this WG is to consider how to increase revenues to better support organisers of European / World Championships by sustainably financing the costs which are not covered by the current level of license fee. Such costs include site visits, providing oversight during the competition and provision of medals/trophies. This will help ensure the standard of the competition and potentially lower the dance fee for the games, which directly benefits ESSDA members.

The Finance WG has considered some ways to increase revenues by exploring how the membership fee can be increased, particularly for member clubs as their members benefit from our deal with EGLSF which grants access to reduced registration fees for the EuroGames. Another consideration was to broaden our target group by including social dancers, and thus increase the number of ESSDA members. These ideas need to be explored further, but it seems clear, that membership fees alone will not generate enough income to provide sustainably for the costs that ESSDA incurs for the support and assistance of organisers of European / World Championships. Other sources of revenue such as sponsorship will therefore need to be considered.

By the end of November 2023, the Finance WG aims to draft and put to a vote of the ESSDA members a concrete proposal on how to increase revenues.

(c) Inclusion and diversity WG

At the 2022 ESSDA AGM it was agreed that a working group should be formed to look at issues of gender representation in ESSDA. This arose from the votes at the AGM to change the constitution to move from male and female co-presidents to a president and a vice-president. As part of this, the change was made to require Board members to represent at least two different genders rather than having at least one man and one woman.

Mark Hebell (DE, ESSDA Board Member) offered to chair the working group and several members expressed an interest in being part of the working group.

To date, the working group has not yet been formally convened and this will therefore be the top priority for the Board after the 2023 AGM.

(5) Website

At the end of March 2023, the ESSDA website was redesigned and moved to a new hosting provider to make it easier for the site to be updated and to help make it easier to meet the various regulations around data security.

The Board would like to thank Frank Morche for all his help with the website over many years and for hosting the site.

Following the changes, the competition calendar on the website has been fully updated as have the constitution, bylaws and other rules. The website remains a work in progress however and any comments or suggestions for improvement should be sent to publicity@essda.eu.

(6) Grand Slam

The Board has discussed the running of a Grand Slam to encourage competitors to take part in more of the smaller competitions throughout the year and to encourage people to travel to competitions in other countries.

The detailed rules for the Grand Slam are yet to be written, but it would follow the format of the Grand Slam held in 2017. The results from four out of six competitions would be combined to give an overall ranking for each of standard ballroom and Latin in both male and female categories. There would be no senior category as not all the competitions have a senior category.

The competitions proposed to be included are:

- The Nordic Open
- The UK Equality Open
- Pink Jukebox Trophy
- Rendez-Vous de Paris
- German Championship
- Berlin Open (or another German competition if the German Championships are held in Berlin)

The proposal would be to award the Grand Slam at the EuroGames as that is when we have the largest number of dancers together in one place. The EuroGames itself would not however be part of the Grand Slam as the intention is to support the smaller competitions.

It is therefore suggested that the Grand Slam is held first in 2024/25, but this will be discussed at the AGM 2023 under Any Other Business.



Financial Report 2022/2023

Start Balance 20/07/2022	€ 4.402,31	
Membershipfees 2022 Bank	€ 230,00	
Membershipfees 2023 Bank	€ 360,00	
Membershipfees 2023 Cash	€ 0,00	
Donation EC 2022 – UKEDC	€ 200,00	
Licence Fee EC 2023 – BERN	€ 500,00	
TOTAL IN	€ 1.290,00	
Bank Costs		- € 48,23
Membership EGLSF		- € 250,00
Membership FGG 2023		- € 51,23
Medals EC 2022 Nijmegen		- € 255,00
Representative ESSDA Nijmegen (hotel – transport)		- € 518,57
New Website ESSDA		- € 177,00
Medals EC 2023 Bern		- € 255,00
Representative ESSDA Bern (Balance transport & costs)		- € 215,50
TOTAL OUT		- € 1.770,53
End Balance Bank 04/08/2023	€ 3.921,78	

Candidates standing for election

Davy Brocatus – standing for re-election



- Ballroom dancer since the age of 15
- Professional International Ballroom Dancer (1995-2000)
- International Judge since 1996
- Organisation team EuroGames Antwerp 2007:
- Press and PR Coordinator for Golf and Dancing
- EuroGames Antwerp 2007 Main profession: Official Advisor for Sport City of Antwerp
- Alderman Ludo Van Campenhout
- Media : different programmes and also judge on the Belgian Television Series of “Strictly Come Dancing”

Tessa Cleaver – standing for election for the first time



Tessa has danced all her adult life. She discovered ballroom and latin dancing in the early '90s at classes at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, and has been social dancing ever since. She was briefly a member of the Pink Dancers, and in the last few years has been competing on the same-sex/equality circuit. It is through same-sex dancing that she found her family and her community and wants to do what she can to ensure that the same warmth and strength of community can be there for others. She is particularly interested in addressing the gender and non-binary agenda to ensure that nobody feels excluded.

Janina Dobberschütz – standing for election for the first time



I am a 39 year old German, who has been living in Denmark for the last 9 years. Professionally, I am an accountant, but in my freetime I love to dance. Attracted by the social activities and the inclusive approach, I became a member of the Danish PanDance Association, which is organising the Nordic Open Dance competitions in Copenhagen. In 2021, I joined the organisational team for Eurogames 2021 which led to me being responsible for the Social Media (FB+website) and the registration for the Nordic Open 2022.

Although, I dance socially/non-competitively in a mixed couple, I see myself as a supporter of same sex-dancing. The steering committee of PanDance endorses my interest in being considered as an ESSDA board member.

Diana Vinke – standing for confirmation following being co-opted to the Board.



Dancing is and has been a connecting experience for Diana. Though she is more of a social than a competitive dancer, the Gay Games of 1998 introduced her to the excitement and inviting atmosphere of same-sex dance competitions.

Diana has explored various sides of same-sex dancing: being a member of the board of Equality danceE, being a volunteer at the European Championships in Budapest in 2012, joining the ESSDA Board in 2012, and supporting the organisation of various EuroGames dancesport competitions.

Diana rejoined the ESSDA board in December 2022 and took on the role of vice-president.

APPENDIX 4 – Item (5)



Budget 2023/2024

Start Balance /2023	€ 3.921,78	
Memershipfees 2023/2024		€ 500,00
Licence fee Vienna EC 2024		€ 500,00
TOTAL IN	+ € 1.000,00	
Bank Costs		- € 50,00
Membership EGLSF		- € 250,00
Membership FGG		- € 50,00
Visit Vienna EC 2024		- € 300,00
Medals EC 2024 Vienna		- € 255,00
General Assembly EGLSF 2024 participant		- € 250,00
TOTAL OUT	- € 1.155,00	
Balance 2024	€ 3.766,78	