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European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment - ENPE

Meeting of the Board of Directors

16 January 2025

10.30hrs – 12.30 hrs CET

MS Teams

Attended: Rob de Rijck (Chair, FP, Netherlands); Anne Brosnan (EA, England, UK); David Smith (EPA, Ireland); Lars Magnusson (REMA, Sweden); Aisling Kelly (Microsoft, Ireland).

Apologies: Antonio Vercher Noguera (FM, Spain); Jean-Philippe Rivaud (MoJ, France).

Secretariat: Shaun Robinson (EA, England, UK).

Minutes

1.0 Minutes and actions from last Board meeting (12/04/24)

All Actions were complete apart from the request from Jean-Philippe Rivaud to assist with the AFME proposed conference in December 2024, which had been superseded:

ACTION - J-PR to ask AB & SR how ENPE can contribute, all thoughts welcome

For the same item (item 8.0) AB noted the Reason for Hope project's recent newsletter reporting that 8 Northern Bald Ibis had been killed and investigations were ongoing.

ENPE will support any prosecution, an offer which has been gratefully received.

2.0 ENPE AISBL - updated AoA, Directors, membership, UBO

RdR confirmed the updated Articles of Association (AoA) had been submitted to the relevant office – Moniteur Belge – The Belgian office Gazette. These changes had noted and are shown in their records. Director changes do not need reporting.

SR updated on the Bulgarian General Prosecutor's Office being approached for membership. They had been sent an application form but reply had been received as yet.

NEW ACTION – SR to check Bulgarian prosecutor who attended the air pollution workshop in Sofia in 2018

RdR confirmed that ENPE had even prior to the Board meeting of April 12, 2024 submitted additional information for the UBO fine appeal and were awaiting a reply. It was expected that the appeal case would be lost.

Ongoing Action – RdR/ ENPE accountants – Troef (whose address the UBO contacts were using) to keep the Board updated of any responses

3.0 ENPE funding position current & forward look (2025-27)

SR provided the ENPE finance position including the ENPE KBC Business account balance and what payments were expected in and out for the remainder of the 2022-24 Specific Action Grant (SAG) funding and 2024 Specific Operational Grant (SOG) funding.

SR shared the outline funding application 2025-27. All funding would be via a Specific Action Grant (SAG) application.

Approximately €472,000 would be sought over three years.



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Volunteer hours of around €11500 (RdR in the first instance with the possibility of other Board members and Working Group Chair also contributing), would be recorded using timesheets, together with cash payments of around €12,400. This, together, would be used to fulfil the ENPE contribution (5%).

The Board supported the application including the figures at this time, noting flexibility to move funds between the different categories as needed.

It was noted by AB that personnel costs for the project manager were provided through Anne Brosnan's team budget at the Environment Agency and reimbursed by ENPE.

Anne had declared her role on the ENPE Board to the Environment Agency, recorded as a formal 'Declaration of Interest'.

NEW ACTION – SR to check the conference and workshop cost estimates based on the recent annual conference costs (Cork, Ireland) and illegal pesticides workshop in Vienna. [Adding 10% on to these to account for additional delegates and inflation would be reasonable] to check that the funding allocation was realistic]

NEW ACTION – SR to confirm threshold limit of €500k for additional EU audit

4.0 DG ENV/ Ecocrime Directive

RdR discussed the new Environmental crime (Ecocrime) Directive (ECD) and what would be expected of ENPE by DG ENV. A questionnaire had been shared by IMPEL ahead of the 4 Networks conference to gauge the network members readiness, and areas where support would be needed.

RdR acknowledged that the ECD and associated topics was the most important part of ENPE's work over the coming 3-year funding period (2025-27).

Ideas for supporting ENPE members included providing an example template for the strategy, as required by each Member State (MS). DS endorsed this idea.

Aisling Kelly announced that she would be relinquishing her role on the ENPE Board, due to increasing competing commitments. She would wish to remain an ENPE Supporting Member.

Everyone present offered their thanks for all her work, and support to AK in her decision. The Board would consider who might be interested in replacing AK on the Board. AK had suggested a possible replacement. At this point AK left the meeting.

NEW ACTION - SR to organise a meeting with AK to handover/ update, including notifying the relevant Belgian Government office (s) and the ENPE bank.

NEW ACTION – SR to check if a formal letter of resignation is needed and if so, assist with processing this.

5.0 ENPE Working Groups update meeting – 2nd half Feb & x4 IMPEL projects [outputs]

SR noted that the Waste & Illegal pesticides workshop in Vienna had received positive feedback. AB and RdR endorsed this view.



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Wildlife crime – LM confirmed that not much had progressed. New group members had joined but there had not been much work completed. SR noted the new Vice-Chair (Bart Van Vossel) and that LM's CITES presentation from Cork had been very well received.

NEW ACTION – SR to arrange a meeting for the WLC WG and use LM's Cork presentation as an example for sharing (WG output).

NEW ACTION – LM would share a related case from Sweden to be shared, similarly.

The IMPEL projects (x3) were discussed with reference to potential interaction with WGs:

- ARTIC (Artificial intelligence – Pasquale Fimiani & Italian colleague)
- TIGDA – Groundwater project (Pollution WG?)
- GIECA – Geospatial project (TBC)

NEW ACTION – SR to arrange the WG Chairs after 22 February.

The Vienna workshop could be used as an example for future activities. Also the ECD requirements could be discussed to guide activities as well as the 4 IMPEL projects. How DS suggested check-ins and task lists to keep the WGs live, which was well received.

NEW ACTION – SR to ask Maksym Popov (Ukraine ENPE Member Permanent Representative) for feedback on the LM presentation.

6.0 Events Forward look

- RdR & AB had sat as panellists on an IEEP webinar on ECD and possible divergence by the UK. It was well-received (with good feedback on LinkedIn).
- ERA training February 2025 (AB, Vienna); March, Bulgaria (ENPE member sought).

AB noted that ERA now contact ENPE members directly for these events - a good thing.

NEW ACTION – SR to ensure all ERA/ ENPE interaction is reported to DG ENV

- 18 March 2025; TAIEX DG ENV Multicountry flagship workshop ECG Forum (RdR to attend)
- 4Networks Conference, Slovakia 21-22 May 2025. AB noted the possibility of a Chinese delegation attending a(as before in 2016, 2017 and at the joint ENPE/ Eurojust event in 2022?)

SR noted that ENPE had been asked to consider presenting on some of the 'prosecutor/ prosecuting' articles of the ECD as identified by the 4N Steering Group (4NSG)

NEW ACTION – SR to ask the 4N SG if the Chinese delegation can attend.

It was agreed not to have the ENPE AGM in the margins for this, instead, it would be organised separately online via MS Teams.

7.0 AOB & Close (11.30 hrs)

SR noted the Euronews contact who were seeking ENPE cases for their programme. DS confirmed that the Irish EPA would be in contact with the Euronews reporter to discuss possible cases.

Jean-Philippe Rivaud was offered congratulations for his new position in Lille. It was agreed that perhaps the next 'in-person' Board meeting could be in Lille.