EUROPEAN FORUM OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS
Minutes of the 17th Annual General Meeting held in Tallinn, Estonia

18 September 2009

1. **Welcome from the President**.
   1.1. Maya de Wit, efsli president, welcomed the delegates to the 17th efsli AGM and thanked those present for their timely arrival.
   1.2. A special welcome was extended to first time attendees and warm welcome back was wished to long time supporters of efsli.
   1.3. Participants attending through the support of the Special Attendance Fund (SAF) were introduced and welcomed: Aleksandra Kalata-Zawlocka, Barbora Kosinova and Daniela Miler.
   1.4. Representatives of the Estonia association welcomed attendees.

2. **Housekeeping**
   2.1. The president asked that items for Any Other Business be submitted to Zane Hema prior to the lunch break.
   2.2. Delegates were asked to bear in mind that not all participants use English as their first language and to be mindful of this when making a contribution.
   2.3. Arrangements for the SAF raffle were announced, with the meeting informed that it was hoped that this year's raffle would exceed the €700 was raised last year.
   2.4. The minutes of last year's meeting were sent to the full members in advance of this meeting and the minutes would therefore be taken as read.

3. **Appointments**
   3.1. Darren Byrne (Ireland) was approved by the members as the external minute-taker.
   3.2. The election tellers were appointed - Yvonne Jobse (The Netherlands), Andrea Rohrauer (Austria) and Lieve Roodhooft (Belgium)

4. **Introductions**
   4.1. The members of the efsli board introduced themselves.
      - Marinella Salami – Training Department
      - Elke Schaumberger – Promotion Department
      - Zane Hema – Vice President and Treasurer
      - Maya de Wit – President and responsible for the internal and international department

   4.2. Introduction to the nominees for the elections today

- Elvira Vega Lechermann – Germany
- Stéphane Gobert – France
- Maya de Wit for Re-election

5. Quoracy and Attendance

5.1. The president welcomed the newest full member of the association, the Polish Association (STPJM)

5.2. The members were informed that two other applications for full membership were being processed, one from Slovakia and another from Romania. The meeting was informed that the efsli board anticipated that these associations should become full members over the coming months.

5.3. Apologies were received FILSE (Spain). The meeting was informed that the FILSE proxy vote would be casted by ASLI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

5.4. A list of associations not in attendance was to the meeting:
- ANIMU(Italy)
- ARILS (French Speaking Switzerland)
- JOSZ (Hungary)
- Slovenia (ZTZJ)

5.5. A total of 17 full members (including proxy votes) were in attendance with the number of delegates in parentheses:
Czech Republic (2), France (2), Denmark (2), Sweden (2), Finland (2), Belgium-Flanders (2), Estonia (1), the Netherlands (2), Greece (1), Poland (1), Austria (2), ASLI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) (1), SASLI (1), Switzerland-bgd (2), Norway (2), Germany (2), Italy-ANIOS (2) – Proxy Spain

5.6. Observers were present from: Slovakia, Lithuania, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria, UK, Flanders Belgium, USA, Finland, Croatia, Scotland, France, and Israel.

5.7. The president outlined that two-thirds of the total full members (15 members out of 22) must be in attendance for a meeting to meet with quorum requirements. As 17 members were present, the meeting was deemed to have a quorum, and businesses commenced.

6. Voting rights

6.1. It was explained to the meeting that each country had two votes, except in cases where a country was represented by more than one association, in which case they shared the two votes (such as Italy or the UK); in countries where different sign languages were used however (such as Switzerland) the associations that used different sign languages had two votes each.

6.2. The president outlined the procedure that would apply should a recount be called for. A minimum of 51% of the votes must support a recount. With a total of 33 votes available, a recount would require a minimum of 17 votes. In a case where an equal number of votes were given for and against a proposal, the president held the casting vote.

7. Topic of the conference

7.1. The president invited the conference organisers to introduce the theme of the conference. Representatives from EVKTÜ outlined that the focus of the conference was interpreters, their mental and physical health, and the legislative and other protection available to interpreters.

8. Topical Reports

8.1. Members were invited to choose a time for the presentation of their topical reports.

9. Minutes of the Previous AGM

9.1. The meeting was informed that the minutes of the efsli meeting in Voorschoten had been circulated to the full-members in advance of this AGM. The board had requested that members provide feedback in relation to the minutes in advance of the meeting, however no feedback had been received. The president then asked the members present if there were any outstanding errors or omissions that needed to be addresses. None were raised.

10. Annual Report

10.1. The efsli annual report was presented by the president. Members were then afforded the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification in relation any matters arising from the discussion.

10.2. Germany: The extra efsli school that took place during the year was held at rather short notice. Some people who would have liked to attend were not able to do so in light of the short notice that was given.

10.3. efsli Board (Marinella): It was explained that this was the first time two schools had been run in the same year and the efsli thought it best to do this because of the expression of interest in running both schools. However the Board stated that there may be a need to develop a different schedule for future schools.

11. Proposals

11.1. Special Interest Groups

11.1.1. A proposal was put forward by the efsli Board to establish special interest groups that related to areas such as:

- Trainers of sign language interpreters
- Referral centres/agencies
- Video/remote interpreting
- Artistic interpreting

efsli Board: Are there any questions or clarifications in relation to this proposal?

ASLI: Is there a strategy that would allow for the closure of any of these groups should they become inactive?

efsli Board: The number of groups are not limited and should there be interest in another group then it can be established – it does not mean that one of the groups listed today must be closed first.

BGSD: We would like to see groups covering the following:

- Interpreting for Deaf children
- Interpreting in Mental health (this group is also of interest to the delegates from the Netherlands)

SVT: How would one go about becoming a co-ordinator for one of these groups?
efsli Board: Any individuals interested in co-ordinating a group were asked to contact the efsli board.
BGD: A proposal was put forward for an additional group:

- Professional Health / Health and Safety in the Workplace.

efsli Board: The members were also advised that the co-ordinator will act as a link between the group and the efsli board.
This proposal was voted on by the members: The results were 33 votes for; 0 against. Proposal carried unanimously (33 votes).

11.2. efsli Research Fund

11.2.1. It was proposed that an efsli research fund be established. The meeting was informed that there is a lack of research into different aspects of the interpreting field in many areas. It was explained that this fund was seen as an opportunity to support this much needed research. In addition to proposal before members, the efsli board advised that the rules of operation, and the structure of the fund covered by this proposal were quite well developed.

efsli Board: Nominations were requested that nominations for the application committee who will be responsible for considering the direction that the research will take, and for deliberating over applications, be submitted by interested parties, or by individuals who know someone who may be suited to this task.
ASLI: Christopher Stone advised the board that he was happy to be a member of the committee. In relation to proposed fund, it was asked if there would be the possibility that those who carry out research under the efsli research fund to have the opportunity to present at an efsli conference?
ANIOS: The lack of a university based training programme was raised as a concern in that may lead to difficulties in applying to the fund. The board was asked if it was envisaged that research could be carried out on a local scale, or was it planned that the research be Europe-wide research? A further question was asked with regard to where the funding was likely to be sourced?
efsli Board: It was explained that local research was seen as beneficial and it that should not be excluded from this fund. In relation to where the funding would come from, the meeting was advised that there are often various funding streams available and that efsli would continue to look at this. A comparison was drawn with the work that has been achieved by the SAF, even though it did not have a great deal of funding available to it initially.
STTF: The board was asked who should be contacted if someone is interested in being involved in this project?

efsli Board: Interested parties were requested to contact Maya de Wit by email at president@efsli.org

12. Plan of action for the next year

12.1. Department updates

12.1.1. Each department head gave an update on the developments in their departments.

12.2. Treasurer:

12.2.1. Online banking

12.2.2. Looking into external audit

12.3. Membership Department

12.3.1. Increase the number of members

12.3.2. Attracting new member groups

12.3.3. Review membership fees

12.4. Promotion and development

12.4.1. New conference proceedings

12.4.2. Brain

12.5. International Department

12.5.1. European Association of Service Providers to People with Disabilities (EASPD).

12.5.2. EUD presentation

12.5.3. WASLI – Marco Nardi is the WASLI European Representative

12.5.4. AIIC

12.5.5. EULITA – European Association of Legal Interpreters and Translators Association meeting will take place in November 2009 in Antwerp. Maya has been asked to join the board of EULITA to represent SLI here.

13. Special Attendance Fund (SAF)

13.1. Astrid Jørgensen from Denmark presented information about the SAF.

13.2. The members of the SAF were introduced: Camilla Eurenius (Sweden), Hanna Boesch (Austria), Maya de Wit (The Netherlands), Zane Hema (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), and David Wolfenden (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). The meeting was informed that David Wolfenden was unable to attend as he was on his honeymoon and was congratulated on his recent marriage.

13.3. Special thanks were given to organisations; events and individuals that had provided support and donations to the SAF.

13.4. The meeting was advised that applications to the SAF for 2010 would open immediately after the conference, in preparation for efsli 2010.

13.5. The three individuals who had been supported to attend the AGM and conference were introduced (delegates from Poland, the Czech Republic, and Croatia). The meeting was also informed that it had been intended to support a Bulgarian delegate to attend, however they unable to attend. Finally, the meeting was reminded that donations are always welcome and will assist the further development of the SAF.

14. Proposal for project partnerships

14.1. A proposal was brought before the meeting for the establishment of an efsli partnership project. It is intended that this would allow for more structured interaction between the members. Organisations will be able to join forces and work on projects of shared interest, perhaps with one of the organisations supporting the other in an area that is familiar.

NBTG: A question was asked as to whether participation in the partnership project was compulsory for efsli members, or whether it was possible to opt-out. Also, would it be possible for the countries to be on an equal footing or must one organisation receive assistance from a more developed organisation?

efsli Board: The Board explained that this process should not be seen as compulsory, so it will be up to members to opt-in. It was also noted that the scheme is not just for countries that are in the process of developing, but will be open to any member organisation that seeks support from another.

ASLI: It was suggested that perhaps a joined up approach would be useful, for example, allowing organisations that are working together on a partnership project to apply to the efsli research fund as a partnership.

CKZTJ: A hope for feedback on any research that takes place was expressed. In the past, research has been carried out on countries like the Czech Republic, and member organisations have co-operated, however a desire to have access to the results of the research or to have access to the completed research was highlighted.

efsli Board: The Board noted the benefit of this and expressed a desire to find a system that ensured that the information was passed back to the participants.

This proposal was voted on by the members: The results were 33 votes for; 0 against. Proposal carried unanimously (33 votes).

15. Treasurer's report:

15.1. The Treasurer outlined the accounts for the 2008 – 2009 and presented the breakdown of the income and expenditure for the period.

BGSD: A query was raised in relation the communication department of the accounts, specifically the unexpected costs entry and whether this related to the change of internet hosting company.

efsli Board: It was explained that this section relates to some additional charges that were levied by the internet hosting company that were not made known in advance. These unexpected charges are a part of reason for the change in the website hosting arrangements.

SASLI: An enquiry was made with regard to the expected costs for the upcoming year's internet (website) hosting.

efsli Board: It was explained that this matter would be covered in the next section of the Treasurer's report however it would be necessary to complete the discussion of the accounts for this period first.

The financial report was voted on by the members: The results were 33 votes for; 0 against. The accounts were carried unanimously (33 votes).

15.2. An outline of the financial situation for the period 1/1/09 until 31/5/09 was provided by the Treasurer.

ASLI: It was noted that even though the period of this financial statement covers almost half of the year, the expenditure is not yet half of what was originally expected for 2009. Is there a particular reason for the difference between the estimate and the actual value?

efsli Board: It was explained that not all of the events that had budgeted for had taken place, and it was possible that they may not take place during the remainder of the year. With this in mind, the annual estimate for income and expenditure was expected to be less than the values that were in the original budget. The board also explained that efsli income tends to fluctuate throughout the year, with a raise of income at specific times, due to specific events. Income increases around the times of the efsli schools and the conference and AGM making these periods significantly different from other times in the year. Income from merchandise and membership can come in throughout the year, but is much lower outside the times that the schools and conference take place. The treasurer noted that the €27,000 in the budget will not be spent, however the income figure of €28,000 will not be achieved either. Further information will be available in the full 2009 accounts.

BGSD: A query was raised in relation to the mention of a minute taker in the financial accounts, however there was no mention of the minute taker expenses in the previous accounts.

efsli Board: It was clarified that the expenses for the minute taker were always in the accounts, however they were previously to be found under the expenses of the efsli board, rather than as a separate category. It was decided to give them as a section this year, as they are not truly board expenses, but expenses of the organisation.

efsli Board: The deadline for the submission of topical and country reports is the 1st of October 2009 and may be submitted to secretariat@efsli.org

15.3. The budget for the upcoming year

15.3.1. The treasurer introduced the budget for the upcoming year and highlighted the income and expenditure for the period. A proposal for the use of an external auditor for efsli accounts was outlined to the meeting. Income was estimated at €28,000, as was expenditure.

efsli Board: At a previous AGM, the members had requested that the accounts be externally verified. The proposal for the use of an external auditor is a response to this. The board made a proposal that an external auditor could examine the accounts, as a trial making the overall costs involved somewhat clearer. If the costs were deemed to be excessive, then efsli would be able to consider whether it is necessary to continue this process into the future. Another reason for moving towards audited accounts was given as the

possibility of this being a legal requirement for accounts that are filed in Belgium.
ASLI: The actual need for an external auditor was queried. It was accepted that if there were a legal requirement, then would it necessary, however if it were not a legal requirement then it would be an unnecessary expense.
BVTG: A legal requirement in Belgium that requires an external audit every 4 years was explained to the meeting.
efsli Board: The board committed to examining the situation and establishing if there were a legal requirement for an external audit or not. Should there be a need for an audit, then an audit shall be arranged. If there is no requirement for an audit, then this will require a slight alteration of the budget. It will be necessary to wait and obtain further information before a decision can be made in relation to this matter.
NBTG: A difference between the estimated income for 2009 for the sale of merchandise (€1,600) and the figure to-date (€500) was highlighted. The board were asked where the additional income was expected to come from.
efsli Board: The difference in the income figures was attributed to the seasonal nature of efsli income. While the figure to-date was somewhat different than the estimate, the conference and AGM represent another period of major increase and allow for the opportunity for actual sales to equal the estimated value.
BGSD: The current situation in relation to the need for an audit was raised. The members were asked if it would be necessary we vote on the external audit proposal at this meeting, or to allow the board the opportunity to carry-out further research first? Would it be possible to vote on having an audit carried out every four years if that is what will be required?
BGSD: The costs for the minute taker were raised as they appear rather expensive (€850). An additional question was asked with regard to the possibility of reducing bank charges.
efsli Board: The board informed the members that the financial situation is always monitored in order to find the best value for efsli. In addition to this however, efsli tries to make the finances as convenient as possible for members. efsli uses a high interest account for savings, where surplus funds can be placed in order to get a better rate of interest. In terms of offering convenience to members, efsli uses PayPal to process membership payments. There are charges associated with this service and efsli covers these charges rather than members. As a result in efsli receiving less money are these transaction fees are deducted by PayPal. In relation to the €850 for the minute taker, the role should be seen as more than just minute taking for the AGM. The Board have asked that the minute taker look after the merchandise table for the duration of the conference. It has been efsli practice to pay for the costs of getting the minute taker to the conference in the past.
BGD: It was clarified that the costs associated with the minute taker were always in the accounts before, but normally listed under the board expenses category.

efsli Board: in the past the minute taker was under the 'Board Expenses' category, however in the interests of clarity, it was decided to use a separate category this time as the Board have their own expenses, but it is believed that the minute taker does not fall into that category. We hope that the situation is clearer now that the minute taker has a listing of its own.

The budget was voted on by the members: The results were 33 votes for; 0 against. The accounts were carried unanimously (33 votes).

16. Proposal: That efsli shall create a list of people who call themselves International Sign interpreters.

efsli Board: The board explained that a number of requests from individuals who are seeking to make contact with International Sign interpreters have been received by the board. At present efsli is not in a position to offer must assistance other than contacting interpreters that are known to members of the board. This proposed list would offer an alternative system.

ASLI: It was highlighted that on a many occasions when an International Sign interpreter has been requested, an interpreter working with a national sign language may be better suited to the assignment. It may be beneficial for efsli to direct people towards interpreters working with national sign languages.

BGSD: An amendment to the proposal was put forward suggesting that it may be beneficial to review the list in two year's time. The review could include asking the individual if they have worked as an International Sign interpreter with a certain period of time, or by requesting that clients give feedback regarding the level of service that they received.

efsli Board: The board explained that while it would be possible to review the list, it is not planned that efsli would be involved in the assessment of those individuals on the list, or would give any guaranteed in relation to the skills that those on the list exhibit.

ÖGSDV: A comment was made that regardless of whether efsli were to be involved in assessing the interpreters on the list or not, simply having people on the list may be seen as some form of endorsement of the individuals.

ASLI: In response to this, trust was expressed in the interpreters who would put their names forward for inclusion on such a list. With the list in place, the client wishing to book an interpreter could contact the IS interpreter. It would then be possible to discuss the needs of the assignment with all parties, including the deaf and hearing people involved, to ensure that an adequate service is provided. If an interpreter who identifies themselves as an IS interpreter is contacted regarding an assignment, it will their decision as to whether they should accept the assignment or not.

SVT: The possibility of including information relating to the languages that an individual uses was raised. Additionally, it was asked if it would be possible to include references.

efsli Board: The board explained that the current plan was to provide a list that comprised only names and contact information so that further discussions could take place after client contacts the interpreter in question.

SVT: The issue of the client knowledge of International Sign was raised. In general, when clients contact efsli looking for International Sign interpreting, are they are aware of what International Sign is, and are they well informed?
efsli Board: The board stated that it may be possible to ask those individuals seeking International Sign interpretation some questions in the hope of assisting them to decide which path to take.
ASLI: Trust was expressed for the ability of professional interpreters to decide on whether to accept the assignment or not on the basis of the needs of the particular assignment.
ÖGSDV: A further possible change to the structure of the list was given to the meeting. A change to include the languages that people work with – for example, working to/from International Sign from/to English, or Spanish, or any other spoken language that the interpreter uses may be beneficial for those who will avail of the list.
efsli Board: It was proposed that the members endorse the current proposal without amending the wording at present. The board asked that they be allowed to adjust the list accordingly, on the basis of the comments that were made in the course of this discussion.
This proposal was voted on by the members: The results were 33 votes for; 0 against. Proposal carried unanimously (33 votes).

17. Elections

17.1. The members were informed that Maya de Wit's term in office comes to an end in 2009. The other board members do not complete their terms this year, and so are not up for re-election. Members were advised that there are currently a number of vacancies on the board, with the current board members sharing the workload. In advance of the meeting, nominations were opened to members, and the following nominations were received:

- Elvira Vega Lechermann (BGSD, Germany) - nominated as board member.
- Stéphane Gobert (AFILS, France) - nominated as board member.
- Maya de Wit (Netherlands) – nominated as president of efsli.

17.2. The three nominees introduced themselves and then left the room while voting took place.
Vice President: The voting system was clarified, with the members reminded that there are two new nominees to the board. Maya de Wit is running for re-election to the position of efsli president. As sufficient vacancies exist for all three nominees, the members were advised that a vote on would not be necessary if there were no wish for a vote.
ASLI: It was clarified that three people could be voted onto the board, as a sufficient number of places existed.
ANIOS: The voting system was clarified in relation to the choices: "yes", "no" or "abstain"?
Vice President: It was explained that those members who wished to abstain, could do so by not raising any card while the votes were being cast.

The results of the election were as follows:

- Elvira: 30 in favour, 0 against, 3 abstentions
- Stéphane: 32 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention
- Maya: 33 in favour, 0 against 0 abstentions

Elvira, Stéphane were elected to the board of efsli and Maya was re-elected as president of efsli. The candidates were welcomed back to the meeting and congratulated on their success.

18. Report on the efsli schools:

18.1. The Training and Development department outlined a brief history of the efsli schools that were held in the past and then outlined some of the efsli schools that were yet to take place.

18.2. The first efsli school was held in Prague, in the Czech Republic in 2006. In 2007, more efsli schools were held in Prague, Malta and Zagreb. Marinella extended thanks to the trainers who had worked on the schools to date: Christopher Stone, Marco Nardi and Kyra Pollitt; Julie Brown and Sanja Tarczay.

18.3. In 2010, the Czech Republic will once again host an efsli school. The theme is "Deaf interpreters in a Team" and will be held from April 9th to April 11th 2010. An efsli summer school will be held in Siena, Italy from the 5th until the 11th of July 2010. The theme of this school will be 'Working in International Settings'. In 2011, an efsli winter school will be held in Slovakia focussing on 'Performing Arts Interpreting'.

18.4. For future schools the Survey Monkey website will allow people to register for efsli schools.

19. Any Other Business

19.1. *NBTG*: NGTG announced that a DVD had been produced that provides information for Deaf children about how to co-operate with a sign language interpreter. The DVD has been produced with the co-operation of children of approximately 12 years of age and targeted at children in the same age group. It provides information in spoken Dutch, Dutch subtitles, and Dutch Sign Language.

19.2. efsli Board: The members were reminded that the next AGM and conference was due to take place in Glasgow, Scotland from the 10th until the 12th of September 2010. Further information would be made available at the closing session of the efsli conference this Sunday.

19.3. Future dates for some efsli events were given:
- 2010 efsli Trainers (efsliT) seminar will take place in Finland in October 2010 – exact dates to follow
- 2011 efsli AGM and conference will be held in Salerno, Italy
- 2012 efsli AGM and conference will be held in Vienna, Austria. efsliT will take place in Austria also.
- 2013 efsli AGM and conference in Slovenia
- 2014 efsli AGM and conference will be hosted by the Flemish association

20. SAF raffle

A total of €405.28 was raised through the SAF raffle this year. All those who supported the SAF raffle were thanked for their continued kind support of the SAF.

21. Closing

The president thanked all present for their attention and attendance and officially closed the AGM at 18:15.