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MINUTES
Executive Committee Meeting (ECM) of IFSDA 2020
Thursday 5 November 2020 at 14:00 - 15:15 (CAT)
via zoom

Present: Rob Smit, Ingomar Walter, Lars Boes, Paul Sussman, Lars-Olow Carlsson, Richard Johnson, Mario Mirman, Madhukar Jhingan and Francois Friend.

1. Opening and welcome

The president of IFSDA, Rob Smit, opened the 72nd IFSDA executive committee meeting and welcomed all present. Rob then requested a moment of silence for Hans van den Eijnde and Svein Arne Hansen, both of whom passed away during the year.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Torsten Weller.

3. Approval of minutes of last ECM (Stockholm 30 May 2019)

The president asked for the acceptance of the 2019 minutes and Ingomar requested one word change in Section 4, "chosen" to be replaced by "elected". The minutes were subsequently approved by all present, proposed by Ingomar and seconded by Lars-Olow. The secretary was complimented on the minutes by members of the board.

4. President's report

Rob then presented his president's report of 2019 - 2020. After a successful event and meeting in Stockholm all members were looking forward to the next meeting in London. However, everyone now knows that the dramatic change in the world due to Covid-19 made the London meeting impossible.

In Stockholm Rob informed members that they were working on a new website and the reason why this was required. The new website has now been available for some time and he will discuss more about the development, features and further options under Section 9.

Never before was there anything that had such an impact on almost everyone in the world as Covid-19. Unfortunately many people, sometimes relatives, became ill or even died. For most people this meant a different way of living and spending of their free time that actually resulted in a partly positive development for philately. Not for all members though, as those dealers who trade mostly at either fairs or shops were severely impacted upon by the pandemic and associated lockdowns. On the other hand, internet dealers and auction houses have been doing better than in many previous years. One should foresee that this could be a permanent situation within the philatelic market, even when the world comes out of this crisis. Many collectors who used to buy at either fairs or shops now came in contact with the internet possibilities and will keep buying there.

Unfortunately during this year the Philatelic Traders Society (PTS) has decided to withdraw their IFSDA membership at the end of the current term.

Rob then thanked all board members for their support during the year and those present at the meeting, hoping that all would be able to meet personally again in the near future.

After Rob's presentation of the president's report there was an opportunity for questions and Ingomar enquired whether Rob has had contact with Bernard Beston with regard collaboration between FIP (Fédération Internationale de Philatélie) and IFSDA. Rob indicated that he will discuss this under Section 12.

Lars-Olow said that it was sad that the PTS decided to leave IFSDA as during the Stockholm meeting relationships between the two institutions seemed very good and enquired if any reasons were given for their decision. Rob said that he believed the overlying reason would be financial, especially in light of the cancellation of Stampex (normally the biggest income generator for PTS) due to the corona pandemic. Ingomar said he attended the meeting and provided feedback on questions raised during the PTS annual general meeting during which time the decision was taken to leave IFSDA. Ingomar said he would forward the minutes from the PTS meeting to Lars-Olow that described in detail the events that took place during this meeting. Richard said that the decision by PTS to leave IFSDA was a done deal before the meeting and was very disappointing.

5. Treasurer's report

Ingomar Walter, treasurer, presented his report for 2019. IFSDA incurred a small loss for the year of CHF 1 760,73 with overheads kept in line with the budget. Some costs of the handbook were transferred across to the 2020 budget as the handbook was sent out later. Ingomar then discussed the non-payment of fees by the Indian association and proposed that they should be expelled from IFSDA as no payment of their relevant fees were reflecting in IFSDA's bank account at date of meeting. Madhukar then explained that they had issues relating to the quantification of members to their association and that these have now been addressed, the amount due to IFSDA was correct, and that they would make payment but still had some issues with the website. Rob said that they can discuss the website matter outside of the meeting and it was accepted by all that India would be given time until the end of calendar year 2020 to make their payment. Failure of which will result in their expulsion from IFSDA.

Ingomar also indicated that due to the corona pandemic the fees for 2020 should be waived. It was further proposed that in order to maintain the IFSDA finances for this year an amount of CHF 17 320 would be paid to IFSDA from the European Stamp Dealers Association (ESDA) 1995 unutilised funds. This proposal was accepted by all European board members present. It was proposed that the fees for 2021 for all member associations and their members would revert back to the normal CHF 20 per member. This proposal was accepted by all. The treasury report of 2019 and budgets for 2020 and 2021 included as attachment A.

6. Election/re-election of executive committee

With the departure of the PTS Rick Warren resigned from the executive board of IFSDA. The below members of the board were due to retire, were available for re-election and were subsequently re-elected to their respective positions:

President Rob Smit,

Vice presidents Sam Malamud, Paul Sussman, Lars-Olow Carlsson,

Treasurer Ingomar Walter,

Secretary general Francois Friend,

Board members Torsten Weller, Mario Mirman Castillo and Madhukar Jhingan*.

(* Madhukar's board membership post 2020 dependent on India's payment, as discussed in Section 5.)

7. IFSDA handbook

The 2019 handbook was published and forwarded during the year. On a question from Rob as to the whereabouts of the remainder handbooks to provide to possible new members, Ingomar indicated that he will find out and forward some to Rob. Ingomar said that invoices for advertisements in the handbook will be forwarded in due course. He also enquired from Mario whether the possibility of posting of the 2022 handbook will be possible from the Spanish Post as postage represents one of the biggest expenditures in the issue of the handbook (typically setting up the handbook CHF 5 000, printing CHF 8 000 - 10 000 and postage CHF 8 000). Mario responded that he will find out about that but that Spanish Post was also impacted from the corona pandemic. Rob reminded everybody that there is an advantage to the posting in that all dealer addresses would become available to the relevant entity doing the posting.

8. IFSDA new membership cards

Ingomar said that Auktionshaus Christoph Gärtner would possibly be the sponsor of these cards and they can start immediately should all member information and address lists be 100 % correct. He thus requested that all members should ensure that their information on the website is correct.

9. IFSDA website

Rob then gave feedback on the website and said that in developing the new IFSDA website they faced some serious problems. The chosen WordPress platform has many possibilities but it was not easy to find the right solutions for the divided rights in three levels, namely:

- all rights for the webmaster,
- rights for associations, such as placing events, board members, association members and the possibility to change member data, and
- rights for dealers to change their own address, to add their personal profile and pictures and to get access to the members section.

They finally succeeded in creating this structure and gave everyone, as long as their email address was available, information on how to get access and update their information; first the associations with a special request to update the email addresses of their members and thereafter they emailed all dealers. Unfortunately not all organisations did what was hoped for although some dealers either updated their profile or added pictures, but still too few members did so. However, Rob still believes that the IFSDA website can grow to a very useful tool for dealers worldwide and that there are even more options available, for example:

- the possibility of a blog in the members section where one can develop a want list section for dealers to place lists of items they are willing to buy for their customers, and
- adding more information about experts and how to get approvals on stamps, as well as on philatelic publications and where to obtain them for dealers (Rob indicated that these options will take time that he unfortunately does not have freely available at present and if IFSDA wishes to have these extensions a solution must be found).

The main objective remains getting the information on the website updated with associations playing the main role to ensure their member data is up to date, especially the email addresses of all individual dealers are important for communicating with them directly with regard mailings and manuals on how to benefit most from the IFSDA website.

Rob concluded that emails he receives at president@ifsda.org and info@ifsda.org are mostly from people who either want to become an IFSDA member, want to sell collections, or are looking for special items and ask for advice on where to find it. These are all responded to and in all cases they are either referred to national associations for memberships or to the website to find the nearest dealer.

Paul complimented Rob and said that the latest version of the new website was a big improvement on the first draft version. Paul further stated that patience would be required to get all associations to understand how to update the database. He believes that tutoring would be required with the one person in charge of the national database of each national association via phone calls and follow-ups. Rob should be informed of the relevant person in charge of the national associations' database (inclusive of contact detail). Ingomar mentioned that there would be some assistance required in the updating of the database and learning of how the website functions. Rob said that a manual on how to use the website has been forwarded to all but that he could do so again to people wishing to receive it. Paul said that the best assistance would be to start with a telephone call checking if they are having any kind of difficulties in updating the IFSDA database and Rob indicated that they are available for such assistance dependent on the relevant time required for such assistance. Rob also implored all board members to request from their respective associations to update their respective databases.

10. World Association for the Development of Philately (WADP)

Paul reported that he spoke to Ms Olfa Mokaddem, Philately and IRC (International Reply Coupons) Programme Manager at WADP, the morning of the meeting and that the relationship between IFSDA and the WADP remains good. Paul further supplied the below prospective WADP agenda:

- the UPU Congress 2020 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire was postponed to 2021, also to be held in Abidjan,
- the WADP's General Assembly will take place on 23 - 26 November 2020 via Webex, paperwork to be published by 13 November 2020, and
- a WADP webinar on Stamps related to Art and promotion of Philately will take place on either 9 or 10 December 2020.

11. Possible role for IFSDA with regard experts in various countries

The overall consensus of the meeting was that there were already more than enough information in the handbook and on the website and that some experts may in any case not like to divulge their rates for other experts to see.

12. General

Rob reported that he has not yet contacted Bernard Beston but that he will shortly follow up with him. In addition, challenges with international customs remain a concern in industry and Paul said that there was a vast amount of experience within the association to the benefit of all. Ingomar warned all that he received a fake email from Rob and Rob then emphasised, with a giggle, that he would never email members for money.

13. Next annual general meeting (AGM) proposal

It was decided by all that there would not be an AGM for 2020 due to the corona pandemic and that suitable dates for the next ECM and AGM for 2021 will be decided in due course once a clearer picture of the current world norms can be ascertained.

14. European Stamp Dealers Association (ESDA) report

Rob said that Henk van Lokven have replaced Hans van den Eijnde as a second person with the ability to access the ESDA bank account. He also mentioned that Hans Stins of ESDA did not believe that the funds of ESDA could be utilised to the benefit of European IFSDA members (as discussed in Section 5), but that he and Ingomar have corrected him in accordance to the relevant articles of the association.

The president expressed thanks to all the executive committee members for their attendance and participation. The meeting closed at 15:15 with boisterous laughter and waving on zoom.