

Minutes of the Committee meeting of the Utopian Studies Society 2nd July 2019

Present: **Chair:** Gregory Claeys, **Secretary:** Justyna Galant, **Treasurer:** Adam Stock, **Committee Members:** Andrew Milner, Antonis Balasopoulos, Artur Blaim, Fátima Vieira, Jorge Bastos da Silva, Laurence Davis, Lisa Garforth, Nathaniel Coleman, Nicole Pohl, Pavla Veselá, Sorin Antohi, Susanna Layh, Zsolt Czigányik.

- After a brief discussion of the structure of the Committee meeting agenda, Justyna Galant expresses her gratitude to David Bell, Lisa Garforth and Adam Stock for their preparation of a substantial document.
- Nicole Pohl and Susanna Layh agree to take the minutes of the Committee meeting. JG expresses her gratitude.
- Apologies from Michael Kelly and Julia Ramírez Blanco.
- It is decided that, considering the time limit of the AGM, a number of less substantial and/or non-controversial questions below are discussed and decided by the Committee without the necessity of submitting them for a vote at the AGM.
- The Secretary informs the Committee that Zsolt Czigányik has agreed to stand for the position of the Treasurer a few days prior to the Conference. All accept the candidate.

I. ISSUES UNANIMOUSLY AGREED ON BY THE COMMITTEE WITHOUT THE NECESSITY OF VOTE DURING THE AGM:

1. **REGISTRATION FORM:** On the Secretary's request, Adam Stock and Lisa Garforth will design a gender-sensitive conference registration form to be used at all future USS conferences.
2. **SESSION MODERATION:** It is agreed that a protocol for moderation will be shared with the Chairs of the sessions by the Secretary.
3. **CONFERENCE DINNER:** The committee recommends two wine receptions instead of a wine reception and an additional (potentially expensive) conference dinner to facilitate the participation of as many USS members as possible. Sorin Antohi confirms this will be done at USS 2020 Conference in Bucharest.
4. **PARTICIPATION VIA SKYPE:** It is agreed that on rare occasions (e.g. concerning difficulties with visa issues) participation via Skype should be allowed/made possible
5. **SUSTAINABILITY:** On the Chair's suggestion it is agreed that single-use plastic is not used by the conference Organisers. They are also encouraged to look for environmentally-friendly foods to serve during coffee breaks and wine receptions.

6. **COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE COMMITTEE:** For the sake of efficiency, the Secretary asks to all Committee members to respond to email correspondence within the deadlines given, if only to notify that the deadlines cannot be met.
7. **SOCIETY'S NAME:** – In response to Michael Kelly's query, it is confirmed that the Society retains its name as Utopian Studies Society (Europe)

II. FURTHER AGREEMENTS APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE WITHOUT THE NECESSITY OF VOTE DURING THE AGM:

1. Website additions:

ii. Choice of conference venues:

A. It is agreed that in future all USS conferences venues will involve:

- a) full reports on potential conference venues presented at the AGM by the potential hosts/organizers
- b) full discussion of such reports by the AGM (with possible tabling for further information gathering or clarification)
- c) a positive decision via a majority vote at the AGM

B. To ascertain that all members of the Society feel welcome to propose a Conference venues, Justyna Galant proposes posting the following information on the USS website: *"If you are a member of USS and willing to organise a conference, please send your proposal to the Secretary at this address: justynagalantusse@utopos.net"*

iii. Archive – On suggestion from Susanna Lays, it is agreed that an archive page about past conference be included as part of the USS website.

iv. Mapping Utopia – The committee agreed to Julia Ramirez Blanco's suggestion and support her in the execution of the map.

v. Funding – It is agreed that the Society's website will need to allow for an option of donations to USS.

vi. CODE OF CONDUCT: On Annette Magid's suggestion communicated via email to the Secretary, it is agreed that the following rules form the USS Code of Conduct be amended as shown below:

I. - 5. Where possible, questions should be taken equally from both women and men. **Chairs should exercise gender balance.**

II. - 6. Chairs should intervene in the event that questioning is personally hostile or otherwise in breach of academic propriety. **Sexism, racism, bullying, sexual harassment or other forms of discrimination must not be tolerated.**

III. - It is agreed that the following rule be removed from the USS Code of Conduct:

8. In exceptional circumstance and on instructions from the Organizers, the chair may introduce short break (max. 3 minutes) before questions.

- It is agreed that a definition of harassment, as quoted in the document drafted by David Bell, Lisa Garforth and Adam Stock is to be placed on the Society's website in the Code of Conduct.

- It is agreed that the chair will present the USS Code of Conduct in the opening session at the beginning of every conference. The Committee will review the Code of Conduct every year, based on feedback from USS members.

2. HINTS FOR ORGANISERS – It is agreed that the following additions marked below in yellow be added to the existing document “Some Hints for the USS Conference Organisers”

BADGES: Please ensure Conference badges/nametags have names printed on both sides in a large font (14-16). Institutional affiliations, where given, can be in a smaller font. **Gender identification is made possible if desired by the participants.**

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME: (If possible) a provisional conference programme will be sent out 1 month in advance of the conference.

III. AFTER A DISCUSSION AND UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT ON ALL THE ISSUES BELOW, IT IS AGREED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE SUBJECT TO VOTE AT THE AGM:

I. Committee and officers:

1. introduction of new officers – EDI and ECR officers. It is agreed that these positions can be held for a maximum of two three-year election cycles (six years in total)

“We propose to elect an Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Officer along with an EDI working group, who will represent a marginalised demographic (e.g. LGBTQIA+, BME, disabled, women, people from the working class, low income earners, ethnic minorities); who will work with Conference Organisers in an advisory function; who will serve as the persons of contact for anyone who might experience any form of harassment (sexual/social harassment; bullying; racism) during our meetings; and who will be in charge of a working group who will devise a clear policy on sexual harassment.”

2. appointing two permanent positions not subject to elections or rota – Website Officer and Editor of Utopian Studies
3. all other officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) and all Committee members are elected for three years and can be re-elected per acclamation at the AGM, unless another person stands against them, in which case they each compete for the position on equal terms.
4. recognising the value of their experience and expertise, those in positions of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and all the Committee members should be allowed to stand up again for a position after a certain time of absence, if they are so willing.
5. it is confirmed that information on the elections and bio-notes of the candidates are sent out to all USS members by the secretary in advance of the conference > in this case no more nominations are taken from the floor at AGM
6. in accordance with the geographical / thematic Committee reform project proposed by the Secretary and discussed by the Committee during the year, it is agreed that Committee members who are already on the board may voluntarily undertake additional positions as group coordinators (concerning subject, language or discipline)

7. Decision making within the Committee

- decision making on the basis of consensus of those present at the meeting
- if no consensus majority rules of consensus of those present at the meeting

- no meeting without a quorum (50% +1)
- on some aspects decision-making via email will be possible

A vote of thanks – The Committee expresses their thanks to organizers of the Prato conference Organisers. The Secretary expresses her thanks to all Committee members for their patience and thorough discussion of the items on the agenda.