



*European Same-Sex Dance Association*

## **Annual Report June 2014 – June 2015 by the Secretary**

### **Contents**

1. Follow-up on goals and plans for 2014 – 2015 and beyond .....	2
2. Competition Rules .....	2
3. Financial matters .....	3
4. EuroGames Stockholm 2015 and Helsinki 2016 .....	3
5. Involvement in other international same-sex dance competitions .....	4
6. IFSSDA .....	4
7. Communication (website, Facebook) and finding a new webmaster .....	4
8. The Board and (re-)elections .....	5

## **1. Follow-up on goals and plans for 2014 – 2015 and beyond**

In 2013 -2014 the board did a survey by email among the national bodies to ask them what they saw as the main focal points for ESSDA for the years to come. Based on the response from six national bodies, six focal points emerged, which were discussed at the AGM in 2014:

- enhance / strengthen / promote the quality, identity and perception of same-sex dancing
- enhance / secure the quality of adjudicators for same-sex dance competitions
- provide a platform for adequate, clear and up to date information on same-sex dancing, competitions, competition results, ESSDA finances and ESSDA achievements
- coordinate and support European as well as local competitions
- intensify collaboration between ESSDA and national bodies for mutual benefit
- set limits for competition and spectator fees / find funding for individual dancers

The goal of discussing these focal points was to extract concrete actions from them and to look for ways how to accomplish (and possibly fund) them.

In 2014 – 2015 the board has discussed and addressed several concrete actions that were suggested at the AGM in 2014:

A first suggestion was to make clear to members what ESSDA does, for example by asking organisers of dance competitions to give a discount on the registration fee. This has been achieved for the EuroGames (also see Topic 3 on Financial Matters below) but not yet for other competitions. Another suggestion in this respect was to make it easier for organisers to show that they comply with the requirements for the ESSDA label. Organisers are having a hard time getting their competitions financed and are not able to pay for the additional costs involved with the presence of an ESSDA board member. Either an ESSDA board member living nearby or someone the organiser proposes can observe whether a competition meets with the ESSDA Competition Rules and report on this to the board. The intention was to get in touch with organisers about this but this has not been achieved this year. The board will take this up next year.

The board discussed the idea of setting up a database with qualified judges (mix of experienced and new). This seemed to be more a global than a continental issue so this is a case for IFSSDA. The most difficult part is how to qualify judges. In principle this is the responsibility of the competition organisers. If it is a European championship this responsibility is shared with ESSDA. It is also very hard to find judges. What ESSDA can do is ask organisers to involve the best judges they know of and to create a budget for travelling and accommodation expenses, and for fees for judges (also see Topic 5 below). The conclusion of this discussion was that setting up such a database is a fruitful idea but it is not relevant at the moment.

Another suggestion made at the AGM was to improve the communication with ESSDA members (website, Facebook). This is addressed in Topic 7 on Communication below.

## **2. Competition Rules**

For the previous AGM a proposal had been put forward to have one senior age category (there are too few competitors for two different senior competitions) and to raise the minimum age of both dance partners to 45 years. Reasons for this proposed change were demographics (aging dancers' population) and lesser body strength that comes with aging. At the AGM in Blackpool it became clear that a majority of the people participating in this meeting felt the jump from 35 to 45 years would be

too big. and for The idea of setting a minimum age of 40 for both dance partners together with a minimum combined age of 90 was received favourably.

At their next meeting the board discussed both proposals. Given this discussion, the second option, a minimum age of 40 together with a combined age of 90, was put to the vote and was accepted unanimously.

The revised version of the Competition Rules (review and textual improvement of Rules 1 to 7), together with the change in the senior age category have been published on the ESSDA website.

### **3. Financial matters**

Some time after the registration for the EuroGames in Stockholm had opened, the ESSDA board was informed by the Stockholm organisation that ESSDA members were not entitled to get the EGLSF member discount on the registration fee. The reason for this was that ESSDA had an associate EGLSF membership, which, up till then, gave the right to such a discount. Due to the collaborative and constructive approach of the president of the EGLSF, the board was able to come to an agreement about this. The associate membership (€80,- per year) was changed into a regular membership (€250,- per year), which gives paid-up ESSDA members the right to a discount on the registration for the EuroGames.

Another financial agreement the board has made is related to the expenses of an ESSDA board member who does not compete in dance competitions but goes to a European championship or other same-sex dance competition to do work for ESSDA. The expenses involved are entrance fee, travelling, accommodation and food. It seems reasonable to contribute to expenses like these. Two options were discussed: either decide on a fixed amount or decide on a case-by-case basis and use an application form for this. The case-by-case approach got the most support. The board will take a decision on the financial contribution a board member asks for. This decision will also depend on how much money there is in the ESSDA bank account. Depending on the outcome, the board member involved can decide whether or not to go to the championships or competition.

### **4. EuroGames Stockholm 2015 and Helsinki 2016**

Hadass held negotiations with the organisers of the EuroGames 2015 in Stockholm. ESSDA and the organisers had come to an agreement that the European Championship will run under the auspices of ESSDA, with ESSDA guiding it all the way through. The challenge in Stockholm was that there is not a local Same-Sex body to work with.

Advertising and promoting the European Championships has been cause for concern for the board. The first information on the website, for example, spoke of 'open' categories, which seemed to suggest a mixed competition, which ESSDA cannot support. Another cause for concern was the low number of registered participants. Advertising and promoting the competition is not Essda's responsibility but our commitment has been as strong as possible. It proved to be difficult to promote the EuroGames because there were not any 'special events' we could advertise. In the end the board decided on some additional actions, such as asking the organisers to provide a flyer that could be distributed at other dance competitions, asking competition organisers to do this and to make an announcement on the EuroGames, and posting a message on our own Facebook page.

At the European Championships in Stockholm Hadass will be General Chairperson, Davy will be the official ESSDA Board representative and Diana will be involved in volunteer work and ESSDA board work.

As for the EuroGames of 2016 in Helsinki, Davy has been involved in the preparation. The contract has been sent out to the organisers and they are looking into the budget.

## **5. Involvement in other international same-sex dance competitions**

Miami (2017) and Paris (2018) will be World Championships under the auspices of IFFSDA, with NASSPDA as the sanctioning body for Miami, and ESSDA for Paris. This has been decided on together with NASSPDA.

The board evaluated the World Championships that took place in Cleveland in 2014. The competition was lovely, friendly and well run and it showed that the organisers had worked very hard. The competition was quite small and there weren't many European couples (the registration fee was very high). In addition, the panel exclusively consisted of American judges. There appeared not to be a budget for judges so it would have been quite expensive for overseas judges to participate.

Essda's concerns about the Gay games in Cleveland (composition of panel of judges, lack of coverage of judges' expenses, judges' fee; very high registration fees) were shared with NASSPDA and this point was taken by NASSPDA. The goal for sharing this was to have the same high standards for Outgames and Gay Games as we use for European and World Championships, and insist on NASSPDA applying them. It is essential that a budget be reserved for officials, but also for Outreach and hosted housing.

The ESSDA board was asked to check the FGG Red Book for Dancing and suggested to add some requirements, related to covering expenses for officials and to paying a fee for the work officials do. Another suggested adjustment related to the change of the senior age category. Davy and Diana will have a meeting in Stockholm about the required budget with the Vice President Host Relations and the male co-president of FGG, together with some people involved with the organisation of the World Championships of 2018 in Paris.

## **6. IFSSDA**

At the board meetings the board has discussed how ESSDA can we move on with IFSSDA. At the moment IFSSDA is a 'non-registered' organisation. Hadass was asked to be a judge. If her accommodation and traveling expenses were covered and she got a fee for the days she is judging, she would be willing to go. She offered to have a meeting with NASSPDA representatives about the next step to be taken with IFSSDA.

## **7. Communication (website, Facebook) and finding a new webmaster**

Frank Morche used to be webmaster for the ESSDA website. He still maintains the competition calendar. The board has not been able to find a replacement.

The board also discussed the current design of the website and agreed there was room for improvement. Michal offered to look for a web designer to redesign the ESSDA website, maintain it and keep it up to date. A small budget was reserved for this. He would also like to add a ranking system, the idea for which he presented at a board meeting. This would require collaboration with

and some additional work from competition organisers (they will have to provide competition results in a fixed format by hand); and a way to decide which dance competitions will be included (such as the ESSDA label). The plan was to present a first draft of the redesign to the board before the summer. But due to personal circumstances of the web designer involved, this was not feasible. The board will work on this after the summer.

It might still be worthwhile to discuss with our membership how, where and by whom news items could or should be shared, and for what kind of information or news the website or Facebook page should be used.

## 8. The Board and (re-)elections

Last year one board member did not stand for re-election and no one offered to take his place. This means that the board was composed of six members in 2014 – 2015:

Hadass Armon (UK)	Female Co-President
Davy Brocatus (Belgium)	Male Co-President
Diana Vinke (Netherlands)	General Secretary, Treasurer & Membership Officer
Michal Vaníček (Czech Republic)	General Board Member
Sören Stauffer-Kruse (UK)	General Board Member
Thorsten Reulen (Germany)	General Board Member

The following Board members' term comes to an end in August 2015:

Hadass Armon

Davy Brocatus (stands for re-election)

Sören Stauffer-Kruse (stands for re-election)

Michal Vaníček (stands for re-election)

Thorsten Reulen

The three members who will stand for re-election, together with the one remaining member gives room for three new board members (the ESSDA Bylaws specify that the Board shall consist of 7 members).

The Board has informed ESSDA members about this vacancy and also tried approaching potential candidates in person but has not received any applications yet (one person, though, has expressed his interest and intention to apply).

Hadass, who was one of Essda's founders and has been a board member since then, has decided not to stand for re-election. This means that only one female board member will remain. So the board would love to welcome at least one woman as a new board member.

9 July 2015

Diana Vinke

General Secretary and Treasurer to ESSDA Board