

Electoral Commission Report

EMAlumni General Assembly 2021

24 May – 4 June 2021

Report of the Independent Election Committee

18 June 2021

Pursuant to the request of the election chair, we were honoured to be part of the Independent Electoral Commission during the election of the Board Members of EMAlumni Association ASBL (EMAlumni) during the period of 24 May 2021, 11:00 CET – 4 June 2021, 23:59 CET. After completing our mission, the Independent Electoral Commission hereby certifies that the online vote was conducted fairly and honestly and fully corresponded with the provisions of the Statute for the EMAlumni Association ASBL.

Hence, we declare that:

- Referring to Article 14.7 of the Statute, we confirm that the quorum was reached. 39 (thirty-nine) active members out of 67 (sixty-seven) cast their votes. This represents a voting rate of 58%, above the statutory quorum of 50% i.e. 34 (thirty-four) voters.
- Six alumni put forward their candidature for four Board Member positions, all candidacy being valid (according to Article 14.1 of the Statute): – Carolina Canettieri – Cassandra Bockstael – Fionnuala Flynn – Jessica Fiorelli – Michele Romano – Theodora Ralli
- As a result of the vote (see details below), Fionnuala Flynn, Jessica Fiorelli, Michele Romano and Theodora Ralli were elected as Board Members.
- The items opened for comments received comments that are summarised below and which should be considered by the Board under the upcoming mandate.

Background Information

The General Assembly was announced by email on 17 May 2021, i.e. well in advance of the eight days before the start of the voting procedures, as required by the statute. The General Assembly was announced via a mailchimp email to all full members, but also via EMAlumni newsletter and Facebook. Candidates had to present their candidacies before 19 May 2021, 23:59 CET in the campaign's forum. Within this required timeframe, six people put forward candidacies for the Board.

The General Assembly took place online from 24 May 2021, 11:00 CET to 4 June 2021, 23:59 CET.

A forum for online debates around the 2020 EMAlumni General Assembly was opened on 10 May 2021, 13:00 CET but did not lead to any discussion (no post).

The Electoral Commission is in charge of verifying the transparency of voting procedures and confirm the quorum. It is composed of:

- Charlotte Campo, EMA graduate 2011, Former Member of the Board of the EMAlumni Association
- Tanja Fachathaler, EMA graduate 2015, Member of the Board of the EMAlumni Association
- Jean-Marie Rogue, EMA graduate 2009, Member of the Board of the EMAlumni Association

Items for vote or comment

The items submitted to vote (approval or rejection) or comment were:

1. Presentation of the Mid-term Narrative Report 2020/2021 – for comment
2. Presentation of the Mid-term Financial Report 2020/21 – for comment
3. Activity plan 2020/2021 – for comment
4. Election of 4 Board Members (2021-2023) – for vote
5. General Comments – for comment

The following summarises the comments received for the “for comment” items and clarifies the votes and quorum for the “for vote” items.

1. Presentation of the Mid-term Narrative Report 2020/21 – for comment

See annex 1.

The Mid-term Narrative Report 2020-2021 covering the activities for the period August 2020 – January 2021 was accessible via a link.

Nine comments were received:

- In five comments the Association was congratulated on the narrative report and/or its overall work:
 - “Bravo EMAlumni. You are wonderful.”
 - “The narrative report looks amazing. Congrats!”
 - “If I didn't say it before, I am saying it now: The report looks very good, happy to see everything we have worked on presented so nicely.”
 - “Great work”
 - “Congrats on the report and all the hard work! I am looking forward to the big reunion in Brussels!”
- One comment suggested an involvement of the entire community in the campaign regarding the EMAlumni Award. It was further proposed to share more information about the projects led by the association (for example, who does what, results obtained).

Concerning the section 'What we would like to see in terms of the GC/GCA includes', the possibility to collaborate to common articles/blogposts on topics that are not necessarily talked about otherwise was suggested as well as to create an annual ‘newspaper’ (review) in addition to the newsletters to take a stand together on human rights perspectives to create even more recognition for the whole network.

On the mentorship programme: contents (on how to apply for jobs, what to use to prepare for an interview etc) prepared individually by mentors/mentees could be standardised and made available to the participants of the programme.

On ambassadors, hubs and second semester students it was proposed to have 'moving ambassadors' for those working in different countries/different contexts regularly as well to get connected and ensure a proper introduction to the new colleagues joining a mission for instance.

- One member commented that the report reflects that the Association is moving very much in the right direction: being a hub, supporting alumni and EMA students, and being useful for them.

- One member noticed that only very few people are active members and paid their membership contribution. It was pointed out that this weakens the association's legitimacy and encouraged the presentation of ideas to enhance this. It was further suggested that certain benefits like the possibility to participate in the mentoring programme linked to the membership might be an option and has been practiced in the past.
- One member praised the greatly increased visibility of the Association this year and praised the in particular the new online strategy.

2. Presentation of the Mid-term Financial Report 2020/21 and approved year budget – for comment

See annex 2.

The Mid-term Financial Report covering the period August 2020 – January 2021 and approved year budget and approved year budget for August 2020-July 2021 was accessible via a link.

Only four comments were received:

- One comment said that they did not have comments.
- One comment noted that the budget does not reflect income sources, and suggested that it would be good to have information about them.
- One comment expressed joy that the organisation is financially sound and responsible.
- One comment noted that in Programming and in Evaluation, we learn to use budget as a relevant indicator. They highlighted that at a glance, the budget looks as if it was only for the position of the Secretary General and pointed out that for an external assessor, this could be a warning and reason for looking at it more thoroughly.

3. Activity plan 2020/2021 and inputs – for comment

A link to the activity plan drafted by the board for the period August 2020-July 2021 was provided. It was explained that the activities are in line with the 3 objectives of the EMAlumni Association (Strengthen the community by bringing alumni together/Increase the visibility of the work and impact of alumni on human rights/Support the professional development of alumni). Also, members were informed that on July 3/4, the board members will get together for an in-person board meeting in Brussels to discuss the Association's priorities for the upcoming year. For this purpose, members were encouraged to provide suggestions.

Six comments were received:

- One comment stated that they did not have comments and another one wished the Association good luck for the new activities.
- One comment provided the following concrete suggestions:
 - Increase active participation of Alumni in activities from the Alumni Association:
 - Organise and promote the Alumni Award by giving both current students and alumni the possibility to present and submit some projects that could be presented in the newsletter or that others could promote on behalf of others to ensure a better understanding of achievements made and in which sector;

- Organise the General Assembly and involve active members in its participation to provide inputs through ad hoc calls;
 - Create a webzine/blogposts similar to the 'Rights Blog' to promote further cooperation with all networks across the globe through calls for publications to value the network;
 - Create tools to be used for all alumni on job search (ie mentors providing materials prepared for their sessions to guide mentors and provide proper feedbacks on job search in the sector/ tools to write an academic article and how to be published/ tools to start a project of advocacy and others: common knowledge for starters...)
 - Facilitate professional experiences in cooperation with the EMA programme for the current students;
 - Facilitate seminars on transition between human rights and humanitarian sectors (good practices and exchanges);
 - Enhance 'calls for volunteers' on specific projects for instance: creation of a coaching for alumni in job search to enhance their experience and value them despite the difficulties of job search to have a psychosocial support of Alumni;
 - Provide capacity building opportunities for EMAlumni;
 - Establish partnership with Rights Blog and creating partnerships with a few recognised universities and NGOs/IOs for enhancing publications;
 - Improve outreach, branding and communication;
 - Organise access for alumni to online libraries on human rights when paying a higher contribution and training opportunities from recognised institutions in human rights and ensure a restitution or a 'knowledge management' platform on some contents creating by some members of the network to get access to our own resources
 - Ensure all events created in person in Brussels can also be available online
- One comment suggested that once the pandemic has been overcome, Ambassadors should be invited to organize human rights-related initiatives and social gatherings in their local hubs and receive support from the Association in doing so (funding and promotion of the event on social media); maybe by using Paypal; to sell merchandise such as a GCA/EMA coffee mug or t-shirt.
 - One comment proposed to invest in making alumni's work/expertise/stories more visible.
 - One comment criticised that there was no list of acronyms and wondered if this was an indicator for the Association being at risk of being limited to a small group of people with limited outreach in terms of communications.

4. Election of 4 Board Members (2020-2022) – for vote

Six alumni put forward their candidature for the Board Member position, all candidacy being valid (according to Article 14.1 of the Statute).

Total number of voters: 39 – The quorum was reached.

The candidates received the following votes:

- Carolina Canettieri: 8
- Cassandra Bockstael: 18
- Fionnuala Flynn: 27
- Jessica Fiorelli: 24

- Michele Romano: 25
- Theodora Ralli: 33

As a result of this vote, Fionnuala Flynn, Jessica Fiorelli, Michele Romano (re-election) and Theodora Ralli (re-election) were elected as Board Members.

5. General Comments and Suggestions

Voters had the possibility to propose any additional comments and/or suggestions for the Association.

Ten comments were received:

- Six persons thanked the Board for its work.
- One comment expressed anticipation regarding future meetings in Brussels.
- One comment suggested to organise in-person events (career, forums, etc.).
- One comment suggested using another communications provider, as “WhatsApp” does not seem to be ideal in terms of data protection and suggested the use of “Signal”. The same comment suggested the requirement for members to formally approve the financial report.
- One comment expressed concern about the fact that only 67 people out of more than 1000 alumni were supporting members of the Association and that only very few actually participated in the General Assembly. The comment further suggested for the new Board to look into increasing the number of supporting members.

END

18 June 2021, signed:

The Electoral Commission

- Charlotte Campo
(pending)
- Tanja Fachathaler

- Jean-Marie Rogue

Annexes:

- Annex 1 : Mid-term Narrative Report 2020/21
- Annex 2: Mid-term Financial Report 2020/21