

ACIDE extraordinary General Assembly

22nd February 2023, Location: INM202

Minutes

Andreas Möri (PhD student), Dr. Joern Pezoldt (PostDoc), Solal Pirelli (PhD student)

The following acronyms will be used in the minutes:

- EGA for Extraordinary General Assembly
- GA for General Assembly
- EPFL for Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne
- ACIDE for Association of Research Scientists and Lecturers
- EPDA for EPFL PostDoc Association
- PolyDoc for EPFL's doctoral students association
- AE for Assemblée d'Ecole / EPFL Assembly
- APEL for Association of EPFL Professors
- APC for Association du Personnel de la Confédération, section EPFL
- AGEPoly for Association of EPFL's bachelor and master students.

Opening

Time: 12:00

Presence

Chair of the meeting: Rita Sarkis | President ACIDE

Committee members: Jade Mai Cock (JC) | Treasurer, Pauline Franz (PF) | Elected Member, Dr. Anita Nasrallah (AN) | Elected Member, Zerrin Celebi Ghavami (ZCG) | General Secretary, Permanent Non-Elected Member.

The complete attendance list is attached.

Agenda

1. Welcome
 - a. Approval of the Agenda
 - b. Meeting language (english or french)
 - c. Introducing committee members
2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous GA (26th October 2022)
3. Organizational
 - a. Membership

- b. Explanations of the changes in the Statutes
- c. Vote on the change of the Statutes
- 4. Elections (if the Statutes changes are approved)
 - a. 5th committee member
- 5. Update on ACIDE finances
- 6. Miscellaneous

1. Welcome

RS welcomes everyone, in both English and French, and introduces the e-voting system. There is a first successful “test” vote to establish the presence list. Additional time is given to the registration as AN asks whether they need more time to connect and add their name to the attendance list.

1.a. Approval of the Agenda

RS introduces the agenda, which was communicated by email already, and asks if anyone wants to add points. Nobody does. ZCG asks to move the finance point “update on ACIDE finances” up, because there are important issues that need to be known. AN and RS say that it is possible for members to add or remove points from the agenda but not to change the order. No one else speaks up and demands changes to the agenda.

The agenda is accepted unanimously (121 votes).

RS states that AN has been chosen to be the moderator. She then assigns four volunteers to take the minutes: ZCG, Solal Pirelli (SP), Dr. Joern Pezholdt (JP) and Andreas Möri (AM). All four will take the minutes separately and then send them to the committee. They will then be grouped and sent for approval before they are distributed to the entire ACIDE community.

1.b. Meeting language (English or French)

AN, in both English and French, explains that a single language would make the assembly faster and avoid going over the time limit. There is a vote between English and French.

By 118 votes to 4, the meeting will from then on be in English.

1.c. Introducing the committee members

AN introduces the committee: RS, AN, JMC, PF, and ZCG. Each of them introduces themselves.

- RS has been voted in as the President on the first committee meeting. She is a Doctoral student, Doctoral Student Representative and former committee member of PolyDoc. She is further a Peer2Peer counsellor and member of the SV Faculty council.
 - RS: says that she felt that the political weight in decision making of PolyDoc and as a representative is very limited. The proper body of EPFL to do so is ACIDE. This is why she wants to push ACIDE to fulfil its functions as one of the main associations of EPFL.
- AN presents herself:
 - AN is a current member of the committee of EPDA (past Vice-President) and a PostDoc at EPFL. She is the Peer2Peer counselling coordinator. Her main motivation is to unify the voices of mid-level academics and to give them the power to contribute to the development of EPFL as a whole.

- AN introduces JMC, who is a doctoral student representative, faculty council member and engages in her faculties social association. She asks her why she has joined the committee of ACIDE:
 - JMC: re-emphasizes that as a doctoral student representative the power and actual leverage to induce change or promote new ideas is rather limited. ACIDE is the perfect body to connect the mid-level academics better, making it easier to promote improvements. Due to the important position of ACIDE in the structure of EPFL.
- AN presents PF: She is a previous member of the AE and currently member of the EDCH PhD committee. AN asks her to state why she joined the committee of ACIDE.
 - PF: Coming from the AE, she felt not enough “backed-up” by the community she represents. Furthermore, the AE is more of a parliament where you are one amongst many and it is very much about the consensus between all stakeholders. Within ACIDE, she hopes to have more opportunity to further improvements and thus being able to more strongly represent and put forward the interests of mid-level academics.
- AN presents ZCG: She is a permanent, non-elected member of the committee by her function as general secretary of the association.
 - ZCG: She says that the picture on the slide is an old one and that they should have used a different one. She then states that she did all her studies at EPFL as electrical engineer. After going to the industry, she has been asked to come back to EPFL and work as a scientific assistant for a former professor. The lab of said professor then closed and that’s when she changed into her role of general secretary of ACIDE. She has been doing this job ever since.

PF explains how ACIDE fits in EPFL. When EPFL wishes to change a regulation, they must consult the School Assembly, which includes representatives from four bodies: the professors (represented by APEL), the technical and admin staff (represented by APC), the students (represented by AgePoly) and the Intermediate Body (represented by ACIDE). As part of this, ACIDE can also nominate representatives to commissions such as the one on restauration (haven’t all of us wondered what goes on with Food Trucks?), Sports (What about the fees which are different from UNIL even though the sports centre is joint?), Social and Scholarship, and the Disciplinary commission.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the previous GA (26th October 2022)

RS starts the vote to approve the minutes of the previous General Assembly. There was some confusion over missing points in the minutes sent out by the ZCG, and the other committee members amended them after feedback from the attendees of that GA.

The minutes of the previous General Assembly, as amended by the elected committee members, are accepted by 118 to 2 votes.

3. Organisational

3.a. Membership

PF introduces the proposal by the committee to make the first year of membership free. She states that ACIDE used to be very active and organised many social activities for the CI. The rate of activities went down in the last few years, even before COVID, before stopping

completely during COVID. With the slow decay, number of members dropped continuously. Making the membership free will help recruit members and regain the trust.

ZCG argues this will decrease the association revenues as 24% of the budget comes from the membership fees, but AN counters that existing members will continue to pay thus revenues cannot decrease. ZCG demands guarantees on her salary by the committee, as she thinks making it free is not viable for the association.

Questions are raised by the audience:

- With the waive for new members, the committee wants to give as many people as possible the opportunity to join. This will allow them to check what ACIDE can do for them and if it is worth it. Then, after the first year, you either pay the membership because the new members are satisfied or quite the association
- Someone asks where the contributions of the current membership fees are going? Because it is not usual to have membership fees for EPFL associations. AN responds: She says that it is not that unusual to have membership fees (AgePoly for example gets it directly from the studying fees of students, you just don't realise that you pay membership fees). She states that there must not necessarily be a fee for such an association but, in the current statutes there is written that there must be a which is not specified to a numerical value.
- Question from the audience: Is it right that the waive only counts for new members and not for current members which pay as they did before? AN clarifies that the waive is only temporary (this year) and, as stated by the attendant asking the question, only for newly joining members. She further clarifies that this means that there is no change to the budget approved at the ordinary GA which was based on the current members at that time.
- ZCG states that she doubts that all attendants are really allowed to vote. She says that according to her list there are not as many people allowed to vote as there are present.

The waiving of 2023 membership fees for new members is accepted by 131 votes to 1.

3.b. Explanations of the changes of the statutes

JMC introduces the proposed new statutes. She first states why a change of the Statutes is proposed. There are four points that are not in the interest of the community according to the committee. For now, the Statutes allow for members which do not actually belong to the intermediate body. There is a permanent, non-elected member (the general secretary) from outside the intermediate body always present in the committee and has voting rights. The power separation is insufficient as there is no vice-president and no treasurer. In this regard, there is also established a single double signature right between the permanent member and the president (no other committee member has signing right). Finally, the financial management is handled solely by the general secretary and the details are not accessible even to the elected committee members. JMC already mentions that senior scientists are currently not represented in the committee. This is an issue which they would love to remove by having the fifth elected member to be part of this body at EPFL.

The committee proposes to the members of the association the following changes to the statutes:

1. Members: Only current members of the intermediate body should be in the association (no honorary or supportive members). The wording is adapted as to comply with federal law (the French version is legally binding). This has been

rephrased in contact with EPFL. So far there has been an overlap with APEL, which must be lifted to ensure the right structure of the bodies.

2. Power separation: A double signature is established within the five members of the committee. One person out of the presidency (President, Vice-President, and Treasurer) has to sign at least.
3. Commissions: Specification about types and differences of commissions deleted. Every commission will be started by the committee and get a budget to be more independent.
4. Finances: Generalise the income sources. Pose a potential gratuity. Introduce a treasurer to have the finance handled internally. Implemented the system of double signature to have two committee members to sign. The finances must be accessible upon request to all members.
5. Committee: Guidelines for the representation in the committee of the different parts of the intermediate body. All five members should be elected and part of the intermediate body (no more permanent member). Always have a President, Vice-President and treasurer and clarify the roles of each committee member. The allocated tasks of the permanent member are redistributed among the committee members.

There is some discussion with clarifications regarding:

- What the double signature exactly means. the answer is that one out of the president or vice president and another elected member of the committee will be required
- Are there gonna be salaried position? Voted members are volunteering (no income). Secretary may be payed, if, for example, money is given by EPFL
- Is the position of the secretary removed? No, not removed, but requires funding. Only the voting rights are removed.
- Can the committee decline membership? Yes, they can. Only the CI can be a member.
- Can MER be members? MER are a part of APEL and not ACIDE. The french working title is legally binding.
- When would the changes start to act? AN: If the changes are accepted it starts at closure of today's EGA and the EGA can after acceptance vote for the fifth member which would replace the permanent member.
- How are finances handled with the treasurer? Swiss law requires a president and a treasurer. Treasurer will not have a single-handed decision power. Treasurer and second person need to sign off on any contract. This is also why they enforce the double signature rule. At the end of the accounting year is an audit which is to be heard and accepted at the ordinary GA. This audit should be performed by an external party without connection to the finances of the association.
- Follow up: Is the accounting from now on to be done on a voluntary basis by some committee member? AN: Yes, in principle this is not unusual and normally how it is done in other associations. However, the committee has the liberty to hire an accountant, which is what is done at the moment.
- Will the French course continue? Yes, but the spouses' commission will no longer be written down in the statutes.
- Will there be no possibility of international spouses group? Yes, it can be done via a commission. But the commission will not be in the statutes.
- Where is the general secretary's salary coming from? From the cotisation that is coming from the paying members.

- Will there be no cotisation? Yes there will. The membership fee is waived for one year to new members only. Old members pay.
- 3 lawyers have been contacted by ZCG about the general secretary's contract about how her fixed term contract (CDD) mentions that she is a "permanent member of the committee" which would contradict the new statutes.
 - General secretary in the statutes is not bound to a single person.
 - It is a one year contract.
 - The contract was signed by the former president and a former committee member.
 - The contract does not need to be extended.
 - Until end of December 2023, the contract is extended, but without voting rights.
 - Interruption: a member states that they cannot violate the legally signed contract of the previous committee, agreed upon the ordinary GA.
 - Clarifying question from the audience: Can the general secretary from now on still be an external person or does it have to be a member of the intermediate body? AN: It is a non-elected position and can be whoever the committee chooses (not necessarily a member of the intermediate body). It can be given to someone who is paid for the work but does not necessarily have to. This is coming back to the portion of the budget that the committee can allocate for this.
 - Question to the current general secretary from the audience: What do you contribute to the association, how do you advance our cause? ZCG replies that she does not have her list of duties with her and cannot really reply. She states that she does all the administrative work and the finances which is all together a lot of work.
- What is the general secretary?
 - Not voted by the GA
 - Appointed by the committee
 - If a member of the committee is becoming general secretary it is on a voluntary basis with no income rights.

3.c. Vote on the changes of the statutes

The new statutes are accepted by 136 to 3 votes.

4. Elections

4.b. 5th committee member

It is time for an election of the 5th and vacant spot on the committee. There is only one candidate: Dr. Kelvin Lau. He introduces himself. He's a permanent senior scientist at the protein facility.

Dr. Kelvin Lau is elected committee member unanimously (127 votes).

5. Updates on ACIDE finances

ZCG presents the accounts. The slides are only in French. The income is 23% (13'080.- CHF) the member fees and Social Activities (of IS) is 72% of the budget (40'676.- CHF). She states that the social activities income is very important for the entire year as we need to pay the French teachers of the courses. Further, the expenses on the salary (53'698.29 CHF which is over 96% of the expenses) include (aside of French teachers) website designers.

She states that she does not know how to get the money by the end of the year if membership is waived and French courses dropped. The web design was necessary because the website was down for three months because of a cyber-attack. She has put in a lot of work herself and EPFL IT did not help. EPFL IT asked for 12'000.- CHF to re-establish the website. She mentions that she had to pay it herself and that from last year she is still eligible to get 15'500.- CHF which is the debt of ACIDE towards her. She asks the committee how her salary will be paid if the membership fee and the French courses (IS) fall apart?

Several questions are raised:

- What are the details on the ~54k personal fees? AN explains that some part of it is to pay for the French teachers for French courses (1.5k per teacher), but the rest is for the assistant(?), accountant(1k), and website (2 to 3k). The general secretary's salary is unknown.
- Why did not EPFL IT rework the ACIDE website? ZCG says they didn't want to. AN precises that according to ZCG, EPFL IT asked for 12'000.- CHF to do it which is why they decided to resolve it externally.
- Will the french course continue?
 - Until april 2023
 - Continuation if the finances are available
- Where will ACIDE get money from?
 - Aiming to get a lump sum from EPFL
 - Any help on getting sponsors will be much appreciated
- How much is owed to the general secretary?
 - Unsure, pending the book check april 2023.
- Someone asks if ZCG handled the accounting and finances and why the association is in depth with her by 15'500.- CHF. Where did the money go? ZCG answers that it is in the salaries paid and that the problem is that EPFL does not give any subsidies to the association.
 - AN takes the precision that they will get the proof of all charges and expenses. Once the accounting will close by the end of April, they will have the information. The details of the salary in the fixed-term contract are under a confidentiality clause and cannot be disclosed. At the end of April, there will be a finalisation of the accounting and then it will be legally clear how much is owed by ACIDE to ZCG and this money will be paid. The committee emphasizes that they do not intend to take away money from the general secretary that she has earned through her work.

6. Miscellaneous

ZCG argues that her contract, signed last year and valid this year, states she is a permanent committee member, thus she must remain one for this year. The committee puts up to a vote for a temporary measure to keep ZCG as a permanent committee member without voting rights. Someones wants to clarify what yes and no to the last vote mean. The committee and the person who asked the question clarify that saying yes at the last vote means that ZCG can stay as general secretary until her contract in December 2023 ends (as per the legally binding contract already signed). This means also that the current committee needs to ensure that the financing is alright and that she obtains the money she has earned with her work and that is already promised within the contract. If the attendants say no to the last vote, then the contract of ZCG would be in violence of the new statues, meaning that it becomes a legal issue which would probably need to be resolved in court or a buy-out. AN adds the precision that this summary of the person is true! With a yes ZCG will no longer be

a member of the committee but remain general secretary for as long as her already signed contract is valid. With a no, the contract would violate the new statutes and it would become very difficult to handle it.

ZCG remains as a temporary committee member without voting rights until the end of 2023 by 98 to 12 votes.

The GA ends.

Attendance list:

n°	Last Name	First Name
1	Abdelhadi	Dina
2	Alieh	Leila
3	Anwar	Muhammad
4	Asaro	Antonino
5	Bachmann	Roman
6	Banaei	Mohammadreza
7	Barooti	Khashayar
8	Bayazit	Deniz
9	Bechvilaseca	Pol
10	Beckendorff	Dorothee
11	Bonati	Lucia
12	Boroviks	Sergejs
13	Bowman	Alan
14	Braun	Jonas
15	Briling	Ksenia
16	Caforio	Andrea
17	Castes	Charly
18	Cebeci	Can
19	Celebi	Zerrin

n°	Last Name	First Name
20	Chassot	Samuel
21	Chatel	Sylvain
22	Chen	Tianyue
23	Chiplunkar	Shardul
24	Chrisnandy	Antonius
25	Clarte	Lucas
26	Cock	Jade
27	Collins	Daniel
28	Contre	Cassandre
29	Coulon	Louis
30	Crespo	Miguel
31	Cristofori	Micaela
32	Crottaasis	Agostina
33	Crouzet	Simon
34	Dadi	Leello
35	Dalle	Guillaume
36	Denis	Gaetan
37	Devos	Arnout
38	Dolev	Amit
39	Du	Wenxiu
40	Duerr	Simon
41	Durrieu	Matthias
42	Edalat	Kasra
43	Elci	Bilge
44	Enbar	Tom
45	Firth	Connor
46	Foroutan	Negar

n°	Last Name	First Name
47	Forouzesh	Mahsa
48	Franz	Pauline
49	Gadiri	Mehdi
50	Gehin	Charlotte
51	Gheysen	Julie
52	Grasemann	Laura
53	Guan	Yawen
54	Hernandezescobar	David
55	Hirsch	Matteo
56	Hofer	Moritz
57	Hoffmann	Antoine
58	Hsiung	Hao-an
59	Huguenin-dumittan	Lois
60	Jakus	Natalia
61	Javed	Saqib
62	Johnson	Sophia
63	Kalani	Neelu
64	Kletnieks	Eriks
65	Konobeev	Mikhail
66	Kothari	Yugesh
67	Kramer	Stella
68	Krawczuk	Igor
69	Kroninger	Fabian
70	Kuppandajafri	Sourabh
71	Kusupati	Uday
72	Landoni	Juan
73	Langer	Jakob

n°	Last Name	First Name
74	Lau	Kelvin
75	Lebas	William
76	Lee	Siang-yun
77	Lee	Yebin
78	Lee	Joonhyung
79	Liardon	Tristan
80	Lis	Krzysztof
81	Liu	Zhenyuan
82	Lorenzomartin	Luis
83	Lucherini	Lorenzo
84	Magrez	Arnaud
85	Makarov	Mikhail
86	Marco	Laurane
87	Mejia	Paola
88	Mercadier	Deniz
89	Mery	Adrien
90	Mikhaleva	Sofya
91	Mirandaherrera	Pierre
92	Moalla	Skander
93	Modder	Dieuwertje
94	Molina	Pedro
95	Montariol	Syrielle
96	Morea	Martina
97	Mori	Andreas
98	Mouchet	Christian
99	Musat	Andreea
100	Nasrallah	Anita

n°	Last Name	First Name
101	Nicholson	Hamish
102	Nicolet	Baptiste
103	Noseda	Lorenzo
104	Ollivier	Adelie
105	Oveisi	Emad
106	Pezoldt	Jorn
107	Pirelli	Solal
108	Placzek	Silja
109	Porro	Gloria
110	Prasopoulos	Konstantinos
111	Pu	Ye
112	Ramirez	Lucas
113	Raynal	Mathilde
114	Rebjock	Quentin
115	Remizova	Anastasia
116	Ribeirovidigueira	Manuel
117	Ricchi	Ilaria
118	Romanou	Angelika
119	Rommelaere	Samuel
120	Roux	Helena
121	Ryser	Till
122	Sarkis	Rita
123	Savva	Giannis
124	Scheidegger	Alan
125	Schneider	Fabian
126	Scialom	Elsa
127	Senouf	Ortal

n°	Last Name	First Name
128	Serracoch	Gloria
129	Singhvi	Ankita
130	Srinivasadesikan	Bhargav
131	Suresh	Aswin
132	Swamy	Vinitra
133	Thiriet	Pierre-emmanuel
134	Tinguely	Yann
135	Troiani	Emanuele
136	Tyszkiewicz	Michal
137	Vasquezportoviso	Jose
138	Veiga	Rodrigo
139	Vogl	Lukas
140	Wang	Guillaume
141	Wang	Boya
142	Weaver	Bruce
143	Wells	Rebekah
144	Will	Edward
145	Winkler	Pamina
146	Winter	Julius
147	Xia	Mengqi
148	Yang	Rui
149	Zhang	Haoqian
150	Zhang	Zhan
151	Zhang	Chibin
152	Zuliani	Fabio