

# Minutes of the DIAKONIA Region Africa-Europe (DRAE) Delegates' Meeting 29th June and 1st July 2017 in Chicago / USA

## 1. Welcome

Rev. Marianne Uri Øverland, Regional President of DRAE, welcomed the gathered members and opened the session. She showed the Executive Committee, the history and organisation of the region in pictures with a Powerpoint presentation.

## 2. Election of Tellers

Sr. Ulrike Nill (Germany) and James Hamilton (Scotland) were confirmed as tellers for the first DRAE Regional meeting. Sr. Brita Baumgärtel (Germany) and James Hamilton (Scotland) were confirmed as tellers for the second DRAE Regional meeting.

## 3. Confirmation of Agenda

The President explained the agenda and asked if there were any matters of any other business (A.O.B.). The agenda was accepted and no additional items of A.O.B were requested.

## 4. Identification of Voting Delegates

The President explained what a voting delegate is. Every participant of the Assembly were welcomed to take a full part in the business meeting, but only persons selected by members of organizations as voting delegates were able to vote. Every association has selected voting delegates relating to the number of their members as set out in the DIAKONIA Constitution.

36 voting delegates were present in the first meeting, 31 in the second meeting.

## 5. Minutes of the last Delegates Meeting

The minutes of the last DRAE Delegates meeting in Norway 2015 were explained by the President item by item.

The minutes were accepted unanimously.

The minutes of this meeting go to all voting delegates so there is an opportunity for comments.

Afterwards the minutes go to the member organizations.

## 6. Report from the President

The President started her report with the introduction of the Executive Committee and the work of the Standing Committee.

She gave a review of what had happened in DIAKONIA-DRAE since the last meeting in Norway 2015.

### Meeting in Basel / Switzerland 2016

Sr Elisabeth Meier was the host together with her community. The Executive Committee met at the Motherhouse of Bethesda Sisterhood in Basel, Switzerland in January 2016.

During the meeting the board visited the project "Mitenand" (Get together), a project of Diaconal Work of the Basel Reformed Church. In this house different people live together and invite people for

Christian gatherings and mutual meals. The second visit led it to the Spiritual-diaconal Centre of Community House of Deaconesses in Riehen. In a presentation the sisters introduced their work. On Sunday the members of the Executive Committee, were involved in the service and created different parts of the liturgy in the morning worship at the hospital church.

#### Meeting in Neuendettelsau / Germany 2017

The annual board meeting for our Executive Committee took place in Diakonie Neuendettelsau, Bavaria in Germany in February 2017.

The DRAE Executive Committee was invited as guests of Neuendettelsau, with the covered costs for food and lodging. Sister Roswitha Buff and Rector Dr. Mathias Hartmann were the hosts.

In addition to the normal agenda the board also met with the hosts for a dinner and had a tour of Neuendettelsau. The Executive Committee joined for two services at the Neuendettelsau Church. The board also visited the "Rummelsberger Diakonie", another project of diaconal work in Bavaria and was hosted by Dc. Martin Neukamm.

#### Facebook

The Executive Committee decided to establish a DRAE facebook group.

A facebook page would need a person who feels responsible, makes moves and gives access.

Diane Kaufmann and Dc. Ibironke Oworu volunteered themselves to create the facebook page and take care of it .

#### Donations

The Executive Committee decided to inform about donations on the website. There should be a short notice, that a donation was received and DRAE is very thankful. The Treasurer informs both, the Secretary and the Webmaster.

#### Kongshaug

The Executive Committee did a thorough evaluation of the Conference «In the eye of the storm» in Kongshaug / Norway. The board was overall very satisfied with the Assembly and gave a big thank you to the planning committee. In a reflection, the board found out what went well and what there would be to learn, to be able to improve. 16 blankets, for children in Estonia, were the outcome of the knitting.

#### Election

The President sent out a letter to all members and informed about the election of members for the board. In this letter the rotation system for the outgoing members of the respective group, were also explained. The Secretary sent a letter to all members and informed about the election of the President.

#### Eurodiaconia

The Executive Committee has been in contact with Eurodiaconia for some years. This is a link for the European part of DRAE.

The General Secretary of Eurodiaconia Heather Roy visited the board during our meeting in Basel 2016. Sister Elisabeth and the President have been to the AGM 2016 in Utrecht, in the Netherlands.

The President has been by the meeting this year in Oslo.

The Executive has continued to work on an agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding between Eurodiaconia and DRAE. The agreement was signed at a meeting in Oslo in February this year:

- To recognize each other as partners
- To be part of each other's Conferences and annual general meetings (AGM)
- To exchange resources, people and expertise

The Memorandum of Understanding has designed to develop the relationship between DRAE and Eurodiaconia and facilitate the common working between the two organisations on areas of mutual interest and complementarity. The document, outlines the principles of co-operation on which develop and base common activities is. Such activities will be decided upon in a timely manner where appropriate opportunities arise. DRAE is considered to be a partner organisation of Eurodiaconia and vice-versa.

#### Other Contacts

In addition DRAE has the following partner organisations:

KAIRE, (Ecumenical monastic group )

PORVOO - a communion of 15 mainly northern European Anglican and Lutheran churches

CEC - Conference of European Churches

Other contacts taken care of by DRAE on behalf of DIAKONIA World:

WCC – World Council of Churches

ICD/IDZ – The organisation for Permanent Deacons in the Roman Catholic Church

#### The Statement

The Executive Committee discussed about the benefit for the members, the incentive to be a part of DRAE:

- DRAE networks and links people with similar background and similar tasks, so that nobody is isolated.
- DRAE members learn from each other.
- DRAE members realize that other people have to struggle with the same things.
- DRAE members see that God does good things in the world.

In the second meeting the Delegates had the possibility for questions and comments:

- One African sister asked for more visits of the DRAE President by the member organizations: The President is disposed for visits, especially in Africa. Member organizations that wish to be visited, can invite the President. On this occasion the President thanked Dc. Ibrinke Oworu for her work as Vice President.
- Another African sister asked why Eurodiaconia isn't included with the African continent: The President explained that Eurodiaconia is a European network of 46 churches and Christian NGOs providing social and health care services and advocating social justice. The Africans will look for partner organisations in Africa for example the All Africans Conference of Churches.
- A third participant asked for another way for communication on DRAE matters: The President pointed out that all informations were on the website before the meetings started.
- Another remark was made by an African delegate: She would have wished to see all members of the ExCo sitting at front.

#### **7. Mission Statement from the Executive Committee**

The President introduced in the first meeting the Mission Statement elaborated from the Executive Committee during the last meetings:

DIAKONIA REGION AFRICA EUROPE (DRAE) STANDS FOR

- Spiritual encouragement
- Empowerment for diaconal commitment and work
- Advocating for dignity of people and social justice
- Mutual Exchange

WE ARE ACHIEVING THIS THROUGH

International networking of

- Diaconal Associations

- Religious Communities
- Groups of diaconal workers

#### WE ARE OFFERING

- To be a part of a worldwide community
- To experience mutual understanding of diaconal workers in different contexts
- To provide an avenue for fellowship through regional and world assemblies

In small whisper groups, the participants had the opportunity to talk about this Mission Statement. Is there something to add? Is it understood? The Secretary collected the results.

In the second meeting the President showed the comments of the whisper groups. The Delegate meeting agreed that the Statement needs more indepth thinking and more time as well as broader participation. The work on the Mission Statement will take place on the next DRAE Conference 2019 in Scotland with the involvement of all participants.

### 8. **Presenting the Candidate for President**

The Secretary introduced the candidate for DRAE President. There was only one nomination. Rev Marianne Uri Øverland was the current Regional President. Rev Marianne Uri Øverland is the director of the Church Educational Centre. She is ordained as a pastor in the Church of Norway (Lutheran).

She has completed degrees in Theology, Literature and Education. She has done congregational work, as a pastor and as a chief administrator and has been teaching at a theological college both in Norway and in Botswana. She did Some of her theological training in USA and Germany. For almost seven years she was the Mother Superior/Forstanderinne at Lovisenberg in Oslo.

She is serving on different boards both political and church related. Marianne is married to Atle Sommerfeldt and they have a daughter. Marianne was born in 1952.

This is her vision for DIAKONIA Region Africa-Europe:

- To continue working on the understanding of diaconia in the biblical context.
- To be a distinct and challenging voice in the diaconal discussions.
- To identify and invite new organizations into our fellowship.

All DRAE Voting Delegates were asked to vote to affirm Marianne as Regional President directly after the meeting.

### 9. **Outcome of the President's Election**

38 out of 38 Voting Delegates were present and casted their vote.

The President was selected by these votes:

35 Voting Delegates voted YES.

2 Voting Delegates voted NO.

1 ballot was blank, and got count as a NO

Rev. Marianne Uri Øverland accepted the nomination and the vote.

The Vice President gave congratulations, thanked for the last four years and gave her best wishes for the next term.

### 10. **Finance report**

Martin Vogler as Treasurer introduced and explained the Finance Agenda.

Financial statement DRAE 2015 and 2016

Both financial statements were explained:

	<b>2015 EURO</b>	<b>2016 EURO</b>
Total Assets	65'810.15	70'339.33
Total Liabilities	65'810.15	70'339.33
-Loss / + Profit	-20'839.47	+ 4'817.18
Total Revenue	97'877.22	13'598.83
Total Expenses	118'716.69	8'781.65
-Loss / + Profit	-20'839.47	+4'817.18

Audit report 2015 and 2016

Both audit reports were presented.

The Voting Delegates accepted all statements unanimously.

The full report is available from the Secretary.

#### **11. Discharge of Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee was discharged unanimously.

#### **12. Membership Fee 2017-2019 Proposal for DRAE: 1 € per person (unchanged)**

Membership fee DRAE

The Voting Delegates approved unanimously the unchanged fee of 1 € per person.

The Treasurer emphasized the thankfulness of the Executive Committee for all membership fees.

With descending members the membership fees are descending too. Therefore the Treasurer emphasized the need, that the Regional Conferences should be financed in future, at least break even including the cost of the Executive Committee related to the immediate preparation and the leading of the Conference.

#### **13. Election auditor**

Proposal: HST-Treuhand, Switzerland

The Treasurer recommended to re-elect the HST-Treuhand accounting AG Thierachern / Switzerland as the Auditor for the next two years.

The result of vote: unanimously accepted.

The President thanked the Treasurer for his excellent work.

#### **14. Executive Committee**

Some of the members in the Executive Committee ended their term of office at the Assembly : Dc Ulrike Kellner, Sr Elli Urio, Deacon Ann Wren and Sr Sabine Ritter (Secretary). They were each given a farewell speech by one of the other members of the ExCo.

The President welcomed the new members: Sr. Gunhild Heidke / Germany, the new Secretary Gordon Pennykid / Scotland (not present), Sr Birgit Banzhaf / Germany (not present) and Dn Gwynne Lawlor / South Africa. (not present)

#### **15. Next Venue for the Delegates Meeting**

The next Delegates Meeting will take place during the DRAE Regional Conference, June 2019, in Scotland

16. **Presenting the DRAE Conference**

On behalf of the Diaconate of the Church of Scotland (DCS), the present members showed the place with a PowerPoint Presentation of the next Conference, the Queen Margaret University in Musselburgh / Scotland. Date: 19th – 24th June 2019

Sr. Sabine Ritter  
DRAE Secretary  
July 2017