

Global Ecovillage Network of Europe - GEN-Europe

Communauté de l'Arche La Flaysisienne, France.

Minutes of the General Assembly

July 12 – 16, 2002

Agenda of the meeting:

- 1) *Official opening*
- 2) *Council & Staff report*
- 3) *Workshops*
- 4) *Discussion on GEN-Europe structure*
- 5) *Election of the new GEN-Europe Council*
- 6) *Approval of budget and accounts*
- 7) *Discussion on transfer of the Secretariat*
- 8) *Evaluation of the Assembly*
- 9) *Report on first meeting of the new Council.*

1. Official opening

Lucilla Borio (Secretariat and Vice president of GEN-Europe) opens the meeting in absence of Agnieszka Komoch (President of GEN-Europe) with a moment of silence. It is the fourth General Assembly of members.

Minutes are taken by Kasimir Reichmuth.

The meeting is facilitated by Ina Meyer-Stoll (ZEGG), Achim Ecker (ZEGG) and Jonathan Dawson (Findhorn).

The proposed agenda is approved.

Present are the following voting members:

7 national networks:

1. Ekilat, Turkey (Demet Irkli Eryildiz);
2. RFEV - Réseau Française Eco Villages (all present members of RFEV collectively);
3. LØS - Danish Network (Insa Freese);
4. RIE - Red Ibérica de Ecoaldeas (Jose Luis Escoriuela);
5. GEN-Senegal - Senegal Network (Ismael Diallo);
6. EVNUK – Ecovillage network UK (Tony Gosling).
7. WAS – Polish Network (Nicole Grosspierre);

7 ecovillages:

8. Damanhur (Lepre Viola);
9. Findhorn Foundation, Scotland (Jonathan Dawson);
10. ZEGG, Germany (Achim Ecker / Ina Meyer Stoll);
11. Torri Superiore (Lucilla Borio / Cristina Evangelisti / Kasimir Reichmuth);
12. Grishino Light Centre, Russia (Luda Berzan);
13. Keuruu Ecovillage, Finland (Seija Mannila);
14. Dambrowka Community (Ewa Kozdraj).

2. Council & Staff report

Lucilla Borio (Secretary of GEN-Europe) starts her reports:

Lucilla's report on her role as GEN-international board member:

The "World Summit for Sustainable Development" (WSSD) at Johannesburg this year is the most important opportunity for GEN-international to present itself. GEN is going to present Ecovillages as models for a viable future, not only by attending meetings, but also by organising its own programmes. Eduard Gonzales has volunteered to work for GEN, and has been in Johannesburg since June, preparing places, transportation and logistics. He is in close contact with Lucilla by email and telephone. At the moment Lucilla is the Chair-person of the GEN-international board, and so it is also her duty to organise the next board meeting, which will take place after the Summit. Then the Chair will go to "the Americas". Lucilla is also "Head of Communications" on the GEN-I board, which means she is co-ordinating e-mail traffic, managing the different existing email-lists and more.

Lucilla's report as Council member:

The most obvious fact is that Agnieszka Komoch and Mete Hacaloglu, both council members, are not present at the meeting, both for different reasons. Lucilla regrets their absence very much, especially Agnieszka's. She has resigned as president and decided not to come to the Assembly. Lucilla explains, that the lack of structure in the council concerning responsibilities and working tasks, had made it very hard for them to work together. On a personal level, it was mainly about the double role of Agnieszka, being the president of GEN-Europe and at the same time staff member under the co-ordination of Lucilla. In addition to this, there was the huge amount of work, that had to be done with the incoming EU-grant, and the big question of the future placement of the office. Nevertheless Lucilla and Agnieszka managed to work together and, with the help of all staff members and many others, to bring all the work to a satisfying end. There has been a lot of discussion in the council about a better structure, but no conclusion was reached at the last meeting in Findhorn. Therefore a whole morning in the General Assembly is dedicated to this subject, leaving it up to the members to decide on a future structure. Lucilla is personally not attached to any structure.

Lucilla's report as GEN-Europe Office Executive Director:

Projects realised with EU-money:

- Photo exhibition: 21 panels were produced in English, Spanish, Turkish, French, because these are the languages most widely spoken in Europe, and we have a special focus also on Middle East. 3000-4000 pictures were looked through and chosen from. The exhibition can be borrowed or rented. It's free for full members, others pay a fee of 200 Euro/week (insurance is required, also for members). It was realised by Cesc Martinez, Cristina Evangelisti and Lucilla Borio.
- Film "The dream and the dreamers" on the General Assembly in Poland 2001, available in VHS, formats PAL, NTSC and SECAM. Full members get a free copy.
- Newsletter (see Kasimir Reichmuth's report below)
- Participation at the "Green Week" at Brussels, a Conference organised by the DG Environment of the European Commission. Many different NGOs were represented. Organising this event was mainly Agnieszka's work
- The new GEN-Europe flyer, available in ten European languages, realised by Cesc Martinez, Lucilla Borio and Kasimir Reichmuth.
- CD-ROM of GEN-Europe. Agnieszka did this work with the help of Eduard Gonzales
- New GEN-Europe website, which is database driven. This should make it easy for Ecovillage to enter their own data (address, description, events, courses etc.). It will have pages in ten different languages. Realised by Agnieszka Komoch, ANU and Generations i.e.
- T-Shirts, pencils and other publicity material of GEN-Europe

Jean-Michel Pochat, report as Council member

The main work Jean-Michel concentrated on was the relationship to Africa and the development of the "Twin Village" project. The process started in Denmark, when African NGOs met there.

Jean-Michel co-ordinated a short trip to Africa to make contacts to and lived with the Senegalese GEN-network. On a second trip to Senegal, he travelled with his son Fabrice, and they visited and filmed four different countries: Senegal, Mali, Mauritania and Burkina Faso. Back in France a video was produced from this material to present African Ecovillages.

He also organised the production of a separate newsletter in French, which was in parts a translation of the Ecovillage Living edited by Hildur Jackson and Karen Svensson.

Lepre Viola, report as Council member

Last year Lepre had many problems with her health, and could therefore only do a limited amount of work for GEN-Europe.

In the council she worked for a clarification of the structure in GEN-Europe. At the council meeting at Findhorn there were long discussions on the topic, but without conclusion. One idea was creating programmes shared by many ecovillages, to spread knowledge through Ecovillages. Another idea was to install a database service on trade for all Ecovillages. There have to be future discussions in the next winter meeting of the council.

Cristina Evangelisti, report as staff member

Cristina's job is to take care of general office work and of Lucilla, who is working too much. She replies to info@gen-europe.org and redirects messages to the adequate persons. In general she helps people to get in contact with EVs and programmes. It is in her responsibility to administrate memberships, the sale of material and to welcome people to the office.

Kasimir Reichmuth, report as staff member

Kasimir has been working on the newsletter of GEN-Europe, the "Ecovillage Travels"-programme, the multilingual flyer and more. Regarding the newsletter, GEN-Europe now produces its own English version, which became possible with the EU-grant. Apart from this edition Kasimir is co-ordinating the newsletter in many other European languages, published as parts of magazines like Bugday in Turkey, Rehabitar in France, Passerelle Eco in France and more.

The Eco-tourism programme "Ecovillage Travels" came to an end, because of the financial difficulties of getting a Europe-wide programme to run for one and a half years, as it was not possible to reach self-sufficiency. There will be a workshop during the assembly days on this topic.

The new flyer of GEN-Europe, developed by Lucilla and Cesc Martinez, was redone by Kasimir in 9 other languages. Kasimir is also the person taking care of computer problems in the office.

Back from the Assembly, Kasimir will start taking over the GEN-E-website work, which was formerly done by Agnieszka.

3. Workshops

After a brainstorm on topics for workshops, the workshops decided on are: economics, network activities, future projects, twin villages, conflict resolution, a music workshop and a Forum experience with Ina and Achim from ZEGG.

A daily Yoga-workshop at 7:00 in the morning is agreed on as well.

4. Discussion on the structure of GEN-Europe

Two different concepts for the future structure of GEN-E are presented by Lucilla and Lepre.

- A centralised model, with one office and a strong secretariat
- A de-centralised model, with office work being done by council members, empowering member to take action.

Lucilla explains the present model:

What happened over the last twelve months, when for the first time we received a perspicuous amount of funding. This made a change in the work possible. We started with the original structure created by Declan Kennedy in 1996, as a membership association with one funding source, Gaia Trust .

In GEN-E 1999 moved to Italy and now is an Italian membership association registered in Italy. The present council members were elected 2000 in Lakabe. There is also the staff, co-ordinated by one person, Lucilla, who was appointed by the former Council.

What caused problems were a lack of clarity about responsibilities. What does the general assembly do, what is the role of the council, what is the role of the office director, what is the role of the staff.

Lucilla hopes to see what is the best option for the Ecovillages involved and also for the larger movement of planetary sustainability.

Initially the fund from the Danish foundation was reduced annually, now to stop in near future. On the other side we had funding from the European Commission DG Environment. We are presently still waiting for the results of this year's application and other sources of funding.

Under Lucilla's mandate we built up a reserve fund to guarantee a smooth transition to the next office. Also often matching funds are needed, if one is applying for funding.

Lepre: In the discussion at Findhorn on the present situation, we were five the council members, but two have decided to leave, and we didn't reach a final solution. Now it is important to decide together with the members. It should be a network of Ecovillages, as it was originally meant to be. Empowering Ecovillages should be the principle. The network started from the Danish foundation, and was built from the top. But it was clear, that it had to develop step by step to the members. Gaia Trust decided to support the network till it is ready to take this step.

My idea (and of others) is, that the council has programmes to do, maybe also with a written contract, so that things are clear. Maybe we can decide about this in the assembly. There is a specific time to develop and to work out a link to the others. And the programmes evolve from the needs of the members. Plus we have the NGO status and function. Many of the funds pass through the European Union, and this can be a specific job for one person. Agnieszka had done it in the past, and it needs to be done by somebody who has the insight. There are Ecovillages that have these skills and can do these jobs. That's why I think the Council must be formed by people with particular skills, and also because we cannot be sure to have a paid staff in the future. And it also might be a new source of income to the network, to maintain the structure itself. Till now the main fund went to cover office costs. Except the last fund from the EU, where we had specific programmes funded. Gaia Trust reduces funding 40 % each year, and maybe there will be a final cut soon.

Lucilla: Another possibility we have is to maintain a central office.

I think we need to clarify the role of the council. In my vision, that the council is elected by the GA among full members, based on the particular characteristics of the people, that are not necessarily related to their professional background, or the people who they live with. So there can be people from small and big EV's. The Council has to keep a vision, not only of Ecovillages but of the whole world. The Council has to keep the staff on track. I don't see Council members as staff or co-ordinated.

I think Council members shouldn't have direct interest for their single Ecovillage or their own salaries; they should be free of any implication.

The Council should employ one person by contract with work reference, professionally skilled. This person has to accomplish the tasks, and has the right to appoint other staff. And then again this person makes other contracts with the staff, so that it's clearly defined.

This does not mean that an EV does not have a place in this picture. Lots of the work realised with the last EU-funding has been done by EVs, but there was quality control and overview. This is the NGO work. GEN-Europe is in a good position at the moment, if we continue to work well, and if the Council is independent of single EVs.

I think it's important not to fragment funding into many small projects. I see the value of following the other model if all else fails. If no EU funds are gained, we go into the model of voluntary work with decentralised functions, but this is not where we are now. Now we are closer to the last.

I think the General Assembly is really important, with its central structure. There must always be an ongoing discussion.

Questions:

What is an NGO?

A NGO is defined in different forms. Normally it is an international organisation that has received official recognition, and not necessarily has a membership base (member driven).

Has the office's executive director to be member of the Council ?

Till now he/she can be member of the Council, can be a voting or non-voting member, is the Secretary, appointed by the Council. Lucilla strongly recommends that the central office is placed in an ecovillage and not outside.

Comments:

Jean-Michel: The work over two different Council meetings made it clear, that it would take a long time to change the structure of GEN-Europe. The reason for changing is the funding we have at the moment. Hopefully we can see during the assembly, how we can change, and what is possible. We have to find a balance between two possibilities.

My experience over the last years in the Council is, that during my first year in the Council, it was difficult to understand how things work, as it is very complex. I had to situate myself and give myself more time to get involved. To involve myself, I proposed several actions with Franco-phone Africa, i.e. the French publication and other. And then I saw my role in the Council. Lucilla's vision of separating the Council from the work is very nice, but it's a theoretical vision, and in reality it's very difficult for a Council that meets just twice a year to do so. It's important that GEN keeps its role as an NGO, but it's also very important that EVs get into the organisation. It's important to find a balanced situation, maybe two members of the Council as vision keepers, and the others being responsible for their own programmes.

Lucilla: It's important to know the budget, because without funding the decision is hard to take: we just know about the Gaia Trust funding till July 2003. EU money has not yet come in. We always work in semesters because of the different fiscal years. The rough proposal of budget is to arrive at June 2003 - without EU money - having still a reserve of 40.000 Euro.

Lepre: there is a possible mediation between the two possibilities. It is important to decide on the future and our priorities, plus we have to consider, that there is not necessarily a problem between small and big EVs, because we have the assembly, where everyone can attend. Plus we have to cope with reality. If we have good professionals, we have good people, this is not a contradiction. A Council involved into matter with reality.

Jonathan: I facilitated the last meeting of the Council at Findhorn, so I had a little insight into the process. And it seems there were very extreme positions which I have no heard today. Now we are much closer, and I think we can have both solutions. I think we have to clarify the different points from the different poles.

The first: Is the nature of the programmes framed by the office, or is the EVs that say "we would like to do this," and then it is to be decided.

The national networks are organised in a democratic way, and my feeling is that GEN-Europe is still in the process of finding its role. Until this is achieved, each EV contributes to their national network. This needs a very strong office. But if we are to get funding, there must be a strong quality control, where the secretariat must identify people in the network, supervise and filter the work before it is delivered to the donor. A key contrast at the meeting in Findhorn was whether Council members should supervise their own programmes or if the Council should be impartial, having the secretariat that says what needs to be done.

The final point to me: it's not about participation, but the central office has to guarantee for quality control.

Lepre: it's not true that we have said that an EV should come up with their programme. 4 months have passed, and there has been an evolution of the idea.

Plenary discussion:

Achim Ecker facilitates the meeting and proposes not to lose time and energy with an open discussion, but only to have some strong opinions expressed.

Semih Eryildiz explains his point of view: The assembly of members discusses general guidelines and gives programmes to the Council, and elects the Council members. Alternating in one year there are elections of 3 members and in the next 2 members.

The Council of GEN-Europe elects the president, who is representing GEN at authorities, and is GEN's first speaker. The president presides all meetings.

The Council elects a treasurer.

The Council appoints a professional secretary/director, who then appoints a fundraiser and a deputy secretary (which could be redundant in emergencies). The secretary is doing professional work, strictly separated from the Council.

The Council must not work professionally, only travel expenses and the meeting's expenses are to be covered. Council members do not have working contracts with GEN.

Others, who are proposed by the secretary to do the work, are to be approved by the Council. There need to be inner regulations for professionals.

The Council is the programme maker.

The representation of members should be balanced. There should be members from places like Findhorn, Sieben-Linden, ZEGG... Others should be from small Ecovillages and future representatives like Africa and Middle East.

Clarification process of the GEN-Europe structure with the “Fishbowl method”

Achim (and Ina) facilitate.

Fishbowl means that all full members sit in an inner circle, the EV supporters in an outer circle. There are spaces in the inner circle, that can be taken temporarily by the ones from the outer circle in order to express strong opinions.

This method raises effectiveness and concentrates the discussion to those, who then also have voting rights (only full members).

Achim invites people to take strong positions.

Tony Gosling: Seems that GEN-Europe is going to a strong change from a top-down to a bottom-up organisation. So the growing pain is quite normal. We need a clarification on the structure. If it is bottom-up, the members elect the Council to control the office. The Council should interview the employees and oversee the budget. All members come together at the GA, but the election is only every second year. I propose a yearly change of the Council, to make it more interesting to come to the GA.

The lack of clarity is sorted out with the membership.

Nicole GrosPierre: I see, that we are seeking money, but where do we want to have it from? It's an energy flow. Do we want to have it as a circular flow from the members, or from outside. If we would have our own source of income, it could give a stable base to establish, and it would not be completely dependant on outer sources. There can be both strong and small sources. It is about the energy flow of the organisation. In Poland we get it from all sources right down to the bottom. We could generate our own economy, this could be also a goal.

Insa: The Danish network intentionally has the structure, Tony explained. But our secretariat initiates a lot of projects and works very autonomous, and sometimes it is hard to keep track of everything as a Council member. So in reality it's more like: they do the work, and the Council supports and helps the best they can, depending on their time and resources – voluntarily off course. From this I personally think that a strong office is necessary.

In the Council, half of the members stand for election every year. This gives an important stability and continuity. We have a big Council with 9 members including the president, and we also have minimum 2 deputy members. They can join any meeting and get the same information as the others. So we have a big, embracing Council, that works very informally.

I suggest to have two deputy members, that can fill in spaces, when other Council members cannot attend meetings.

The secretaries are not Council members, as they are hired, but we have chosen to give them voting right, as they have the most insight.

Alison: I am on the board of the permaculture association UK, we have had the same experience. We came to the solution, to have a strong co-ordinator, who is a paid member, and I think 5 Council members is not enough (we have 10!) As a Council we meet four times a year, some of the Council are taking over particular tasks, which is really valuable, I think. In some senses it's like a board of a commercial company, but with a controlling board.

The plenary is followed by more discussions in workgroups.

Discussion in Workgroups:

Achim sends the assembly members into smaller groups to discuss and overall clarify open questions.

Jean Michel reports from his group: The Council sets up the objectives of GEN and promotes it as an NGO and network. From his own experience in the Council, it is good if members of the Council have a real role with responsibility and a mission. A part of the Council members could be vision keepers

without work commitment. The possibility to have two separate Councils was also discussed. A large one expressing all the needs to a smaller Council.

Tony Gosling group report: The members are the owners of GEN-Europe. This is expressed through the general Assembly. The elected Council presents GEN-Europe throughout the year. Members of the Assembly have to prioritise the work and to elect the Council.

The Council supervises the work process and only expenses are paid. The Council should move to the situation, where members of the Council do not do projects but supervise them. Annual elections are possible. The secretariat is paid, running the office/projects also with staff from outside. The office should focus on fundraising and co-ordinate other staff contracted by GEN.

Nicole GrosPierre: points out, that there should be replacements for Council members, and proposes consensus as decision making principle in the Council.

Further discussion on the structure of GEN-Europe

A model of GEN-Europe is presented by Semih, looking very much like the existing, apart from Council members being raised to seven. Council members have special supervision functions on GEN-Europe activities.

Achim (facilitator) recommends to have only two additional speakers, one in favour of the model, and one opposing to it (a model introduced at an ATTAC meeting) in order to avoid endless discussions. Lepre is asked to defend a contrary model.

Lepre: The main difference would be having a strong president, who has been missing till now, which caused a problem with the secretary position. The secretary is not necessary, but it is important to have a strong head of the association, not only representative. Members of the Council should do necessary work and be paid for it.

Jonathan takes a contra position to the Lepre model.

He emphasises the need for quality control, if you do professional NGO work and communicate with UN, EU and other official levels. This calls for a central co-ordination of programmes, with one main office. Of course there is also space to give work out to Ecovillages/other offices, but with under the supervision of the central office.

The facilitating process only lets people ask questions of understanding and not discussion, as time was short.

It was decided, as voices for open discussion came up, to leave the discussion to the new Council and eventually others that are interested.

5. Election of the new GEN-Europe Council

Discussion on the election process:

It is left to the Council to decide a good structure, but with interested people be able to participate in the discussion.

Jonathan says that expenditure of travel costs twice a year, is something donors normally don't like to pay, so we would have to limit the number of Council members.

Cristina wants to point out that it should be good to clarify the requirements for Council members: these are standard requirements - like living in an ecovillage or representing a national network, and checking emails at least once a week.

Jean Michel: we have experienced that sometimes one or two members couldn't attend the meetings for serious reason. That's why I recommend 7 people, to be members of the Council. Another reason is that there is a lot of responsibility and work, so seven would be better.

Ismael: Is there already a member of the African covered? Travel expenses?

Tony: on the question of having 5 or 7 members in the Council, I agree with Jonathan that 5 is better, but it is crucial that they can come. It should be a very important fact for them in their life.

Abou Sow: In our network, we have already implemented a similar structure. I can't see a participation of Africans in Europe, as there should be an African network. I am against having Africans in the European network. About the number of Council members I say, it should be seven, because it easily happens that the meeting is just among three.

Ismael: This is about Africa being part of the GEN-Europe network. So at this point, we are not speaking about continents, we are talking about a bunch of people who have the same vision of establishing EVs as spiritual, environmental protection. These don't have borders, so if we are accepted as GEN members, there should be a possibility for Africans also to be GEN-E Council members. Secondly, it is very important that there are Africans who can represent GEN in Africa, if GEN-Europe wants to expand in Africa. The new design should require an African representative.

Jean-Michel: I just wanted to say that the relations are not clear and need clarification. But the problems of African EVs and European EVs are totally different.

It was decided to enlarge the Council with 2 deputy members, who attend meetings if other Council members cannot.

Presentation of Council candidates:

All full members can present themselves as Council candidates, explaining why they stand for candidate, and what their contribution to GEN would be. A moment of silence.

Lucilla Borio: I am available to sit in the Council again, and this will be the last time for me, because I believe that a turnover is good. At the same time, we need a smooth transition to a new office and structure. I will be available as a resource person of GEN-Europe later on, and I am available as office director for a limited amount of months, as my EV needs me. I will not drop out of GEN-Europe, I am available to make sure there is a good transition to the new office.

Jean Michel Pochat: I am a candidate to be re-elected on the Council for the following reason: it took me a year to understand the structure and the work. The second year was dedicated to different activities that I initiated or took over. The first was the brochure in French that had to be made really fast and is to be used for Franco-phone networks and countries. The second was the contact with the Africans, beginning to establish a twin village network between Africa and Europe. I would like to develop this work further and not only in Senegal but also with the initiatives in Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Guinea. It has been a great year and full of changes.

Lepre Viola: I really ask myself the answers to your question. I am available to be re-elected, I think something very similar to what both Lucilla and J.M. said. Getting involved in this Council takes time, and in the beginning I had health problems, so I needed even longer. New energy is good, and so I think, it is good to enlarge the Council. I know there are also other members of Damanhur who have time, and our Internet company can offer free work.

Nicole Grosspierre: I want to say that I am a candidate for the Council. I am French but have been living in Poland for many years in a community which is trying to be an ecovillage. I am involved in the Polish network. I want to be in the Council because I have the feeling that I can give a lot as I have the experience of these two cultures, French and Polish, with specific depth. And the other is that I have a lot of love to give, too. It will be very good for my work, if I am in the Council because it is a very honourable position. In Poland it would give a good push to my work.

Jonathan Dawson: I want to serve, and I can bring energy, experience, wisdom and love into the cooking pot. I represent Findhorn and myself personally. I am humble that I can be the channel for the experience and desire of Findhorn to express through me. Particularly in Africa and Asia I have been working professionally with several organisations, where I helped to make clear the different aspects and I think this kind of experience serves the Council member job. I have lived in a small and a big community, have been involved into local economies and Anglophone and Franco-phone work.

My understanding is that as GEN was founded at Findhorn, their feeling was “Great, we can reconnect with the roots.”

Insa Freese reads the essence of a poem from the Danish network’s Newsletter:

“To love one another
You must try to understand one another,
and to understand you have to be able to communicate.
Whether this is done in words
or in silent action
matters not.
As long as it is done in love
and your heart is open.

You must try to share those deep feelings inside you.
It may not be easy to do this,
but you have to make the effort.
Because when you really love
you want to share all with those you love.

Love is the answer to all relationship,
and when there is love
no words need to be spoken.”

To me this movement is the search for the path of the open heart. So what we do is really important. I am sent by the Danish network to make the link between the Danish network and GEN. I have been a member of the Danish network Council for 1,5 years, and been living in a spiritual community for 8 years. I have a broad spectrum of practical, social, and spiritual background. I would like to bring lightness and joy to the Council.

Tony Gosling: I make myself available, as I think GEN is in a period of great change from a top-down to a bottom up organisation. I am not living in an eco-village, but I spend much time at Tinkers Bubble. I am not sure how many people we are electing, but I would be happy to be one of the supplements available, if other members cannot attend.

Semih Eryildiz: I am from the Turkish network, and believe that there is a need to build many more eco-villages. Personally I am an architect living in a village, where we do a big job of restoring. Turkey is a part of Europe and Middle East. I stand for developing the Council model with a central office.

Election of the Council by secret vote:

Each of the 14 full members has five votes to give

Lucilla: 14; Jonathan: 13; Lepre: 5; Jean Michel: 7; Semih: 5; Tony: 3; Insa: 13; Nicole: 14

New Councilmembers are: Lucilla, Nicole, Jonathan, Insa and Jean Michel.

Deputy members are Lepre and Semih.

As Lepre and Leone from Damanhur are leaving we sing “Blessed Journey“:
“On my way I am blessed with love , On my way I am blessed with life, On my way I am blessed with joy, I am blessed on my way.”

6. Budget of GEN-Europe

Members of GEN-Europe were invited to approve/discuss the budget, the others met outside to use the time for discussion etc.

Our budget consists of GEN-international money, GEN-Europe EU money, and other GEN-Europe moneys. A difficulty is that there are different fiscal years between the Italian law, the donors fiscal year and European Union grant fiscal year, and the system can work only organising budgets and accounts in semesters which are assembled as needed. Lucilla explains the budget summary: according to Italian law, members have to approve the budget, as GEN-Europe at the moment is an Italian registered association.

Heikki asks about the fundraising point. Lucilla explains about the Green Week event, as a result of this fundraising.

Approval: account 2001
8 members vote yes, 0 no, we have consensus

Explanation of GEN-Europe EU-grant budget:

In this we have EU money and Gaia Trust money (matching funds etc). A-G is EU, H is non EU activities (eg: GEN-international). Normally there is 4 months to close the budget. At the end of September the financial has to be sent to the EU-Commission, DG Environment, together with the technical report.

Comment from Tony: I see large amounts of travels costs for trips to Africa. EVNUK decided to use all their money to bring Africans to Europe. I would propose, that a Council member resigns before using Council money for doing personal projects in Africa.

Comment Ina: The figure for national networks looks high. Lucilla says it had to be spent like this, as it was in the EU grant design.

Approval: Account 2001-2002
9 members vote yes, 0 no, we have consensus

The audience appreciates and applauds to the great work done!

Budget discussion

Reserve funds include:

BALANCE July 1st	40.000 Euro
BALANCE EU	28.000 Euro
BALANCE GW	120 Euro

Reserve	74.980 Euro
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Financial Year 2002/2003

A) with EU grant	
reserve allocated	14.000 Euro
reserve remaining	60.920 Euro

B) without EU grant	
reserve allocated	30.700 Euro
reserve remaining	44.280 Euro

To B) „without grant“: a lot of this money is already „earmarked“ and is not flexible for other needs. There is little to decide. Website and newsletters should be continued, as they are valuable tools.

Lucilla reports: A phone call to Torri revealed that the EU decision on the next grant is not clear before August 15th. This makes it difficult to set the budget for the next year and future programmes.

To A) „with EU grant“: this includes EU - and non-EU programmes. We need to have matching funds for a EU grant of this kind. (See budget for more details). There is money for fundraising and educational support (people sent to Findhorn etc.). This also means more money for the Newsletter,

Twin Villages programmes, the Earth Summit at Johannesburg, the annual Assembly and Council meetings.

Questions:

Ulysses: How do we have matching funds in the future, when buffer is declining?

Lucilla: That is why we have to invest into fundraising now when we still have the reserve. Also receiving EU money gives you credibility for other donors, also to cover matching funds.

Nicole: What is the "Living and Learning" centres programme in Europe?

Lucilla: The project was proposed by me, and was discussed by Agnieszka and Jean-Michel. We have worked together with Philip Snyder, who co-ordinates the Living and Learning Centres programme world-wide. The idea is to pay the teachers' fee, and to allow a team of 8 people to travel around Europe to have a direct experience of different EVs that are specialised in particular fields (permaculture, economics, health etc).

Ina: In January 2003 there is the very important meeting, the „Porto Alegre - World social forum“ in Brazil, where GEN could present its activities. There is also a European Social Forum happening Nov. 2002 in Florence.

Cristina answers: The Italian network will go to Florence and also present GEN and GEN-Europe.

Jonathan says: May East from Findhorn goes to the Porto Alegre and most probably presents GEN.

Jean-Michel: I think that the work of the Living and Learning Centres is very interesting, and Philip Snyder is doing consultancy on this for GEN-International. It could perhaps be combined with the GEN-Europe Council.

Lucilla: points out that when people from ZEGG are going to Florence we should definitely work together! Regarding Porto Alegre, GEN-Europe members in the GEN-International Board could recommend doing actions in that direction, but otherwise Brazil is covered by ENA (Ecovillage Network of the Americas).

Approval: July 2002 / June 2003 budget

ten members in favour, 0 contraries, consensus is reached.

7. Evaluation of GEN-Europe Assembly 2002:

went well	could be improved	next year
Translation was super	more workshops	improve the good translation to simultaneous, which we already had in Wolimierz.
general organisation	find more time to answers, as many times people want to say something, but there is not the time to answer	First do members meeting and then a non-member meeting, brings more efficiency
Jean-Michel's work to organise the event	people who are strong speakers should be more aware of language problems and shy speakers	Meeting should be not in July as it is the most busy time for many people, suggestion in September and one more day
atmosphere at La Flayssiere	we need to rest and celebrate more together	Facilitators have to meet before as a group to prepare
Food	Timetable from buses/trains/tel. numbers of pick-up people	more time for members to report on their EVs and news from the network, not only general information
entertainment was good with drums and yoga	evaluation every day	speak more of small EVs, their problems and solutions
forum was great energy, and maybe it could be done earlier	programme is to stuffed (especially with the translation), less topics would be better, maybe more group work	hear more on other national networks
Lucilla & Jean Michel could continue do work even in this	It's a pity many members will have left when there is still the festival to	more reports from the workshops

destructive mess	come	
visit to La Borie Noble	more members should come and members have to tell the others how important it is to come	festival could be in the middle, because something happens when people dance
	identify the secretary first	programme could be more precise

People from L'Arche come and thank us for being here, for the wonderful behaviour and the respect we paid to the community rules. We thank you for having us and for the marvellous and supportive energy radiating from your commune!

8. Secretariat transfer

The discussion on the transfer of the secretariat is sent into the Council, but any member with a strong opinion is invited to participate, e.g.: by email.

9 . Report on first meeting of the new Council

Jean-Michel reports on the Council meeting held the previous night.

Agenda of the first meeting of the first Council :

- election of President, Treasurer, Secretary
- organise how to work together
- discussion on future structure
- transfer of secretariat
- honouring former Council members
- second representative for GEN-international
- how many times does the Council meet
- next meeting
- GEN-International board seat
- how to close the assembly.

For a full report request the "Council report 07/02 at the GEN-Europe office (also at www.gen-europe.org).

Minutes taken by Kasimir Reichmuth, edited by Kasimir Reichmuth, Insa Freese, Lucilla Borio. Released in November 2002.