

President's Report 2015-2017 to the General Assembly

(Frank Welz)



A. Building a voice of and for sociology

For building a voice **of** sociology, the ESA 2015-2017 Executive Committee (EC) focused more sharply on the topic of the ESA 2017 conference “**(Un)Making Europe: Capitalism, Solidarities, Subjectivities**”, by introducing an additional commonly shared plenary session (opening: Harvey/Illouz; special evening: Della Porta/Varoufakis; closing: Brown/Rosa) as well as 4 new specific semi-plenary and Research Streams sessions that further discussed aspects of the main topic (i. Europe, ii. Capitalism, iii. Solidarities, iv. Subjectivities).

For strengthening ESA's voice **for** sociology, we extended our Social Science Advocacy by intensifying the collaboration with the **European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities** (EASSH) and the **Initiative for Science in Europe** (ISE). The President has been elected a Governing Board member of the former, a task force member of the latter and joined a further initiative related to Austria's 2018 EU Presidency.

B. Strengthening the ESA Headquarters

For enabling a **stronger and proactive ESA**, ESA's conference and office operations have been completely restructured following the very successful model of other big associations. Abstract management, author and participant communication, participant registration, as well as the administrative management of the book exhibition have been “relocated” from the local conference organizers to ESA's Paris headquarters. The move was based on the introduction of the ConfTool conference management software for both, abstract management and participant registration. The move reduces direct conference expenditure by about 170,000 € (2011: 250,000 €; by introducing software, by increasing control of the budget and by reducing charges for Professional Conference Organizers) and enables ESA to have a stable and safe funding of its employees based on a restructured contractual relationship with the local and professional conference organizers. The move has enabled ESA to appoint a **second employee**.

For the first time, ESA has now coordinated conference operations from Paris. French rules apply, e.g., tax exemption in France. Conference payments are done to Paris: for the first time, conference fees and membership fees could be paid by one payment. This innovation has already led to an increase of ESA membership by 1/3, from about 2100 members to about **2800 members**.

The structural change has further been supported by replacing ESA's bookkeeper by a new one who, among others, speaks English and regularly visits the ESA office, by introducing e-banking, by introducing computerised salary management (Sage One Paie) and bookkeeping software (Sage, in progress). Work previously operated manually has been replaced by **automated mechanisms** via the introduction of software (for example, direct invoice printout by members; editing system for newsletter announcements) and well-planned internal **organisational changes** which had been advised by external experts from the fields of accounting, law, bookkeeping, and other scientific associations. I further wrote detailed **manuals** for both, our internal ESA headquarters and conference operations and proposed the same for all other thematic subcommittees. ESA has now been put on a **new organisational, sustainable and proactive basis** – for, in my view, promoting **European sociology as a public good**. The organisational improvements are not an aim in itself, they make it possible for ESA to focus on new tasks during the post-conference year (see below, 3).

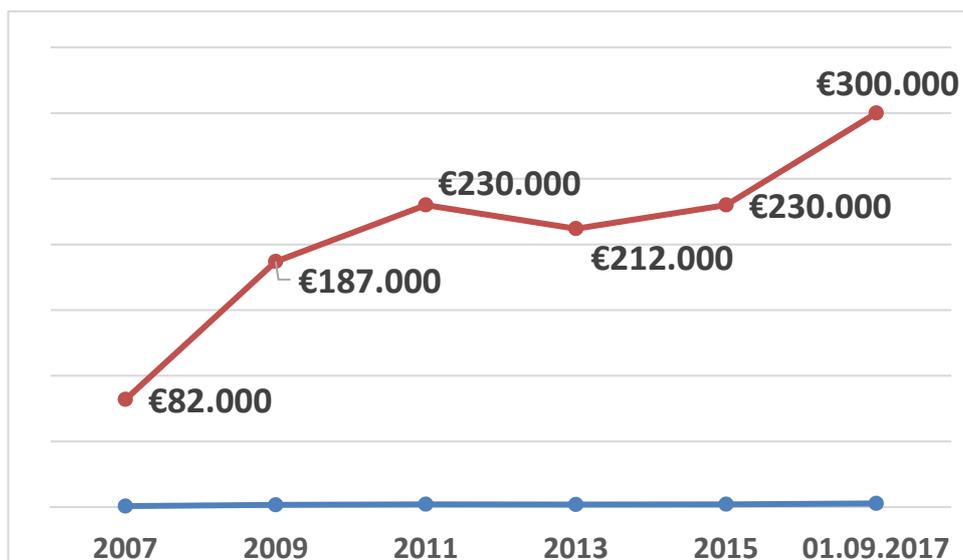
C. ESA 2015-2017 in short facts

- (1) Restructuration of conference and headquarters operations (new contracts, laws, bookkeeping, distribution of tasks, manuals)

- (2) Move of the ESA office to FMSH, Bureau A2-27, 54, Boulevard Raspail, 75270 Paris Cedex 06, in April 2017 (kindly supported by the President of the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme, Michel Wieviorka, as well as Olivier Bouin, board of directors).
- (3) Appointment of a second employee, Dr Dagmar Danko since 3/10/2016. Contractual tasks: i. conference coordination; ii. editor European Sociologist; iii. editorial assistance 3rd ESA journal, planned: European Sociological Debate, in cooperation with RNs and NAs (inclusion strategy); iv. development of an expert database for media contacts.
- (4) **Open Access** debate launched ([European Sociologist, No. 40](#)). Plan: publishing the "European Sociologist" and a 3rd ESA journal based on "Open Journal Systems 3" software with a non-profit university press for agenda setting in a rapidly changing publishing field.
- (5) Interim ESA website & **new ESA website** launched (www.europeansociology.org)
- (6) New ESA logo launched (www.europeansociology.org)
- (7) New ESA membership database launched (www.europeansociology.org)
- (8) New (CMS based) "ESA Newsletter" replacing the previous "Monthly Bulletin".
- (9) New group email, web content access & new "legalized" RN conference funding "agreement form" for RN coordinators
- (10) New proactive search for the next conference venue: **Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne**
- (11) New salary management and bookkeeping software (in progress) introduced
- (12) New salary structure (reference to CNRS classification schemes)
- (13) New interim employee Andreia Batista Dias (sec.) from Apr.-Sept. 2017. Interns Christine Frank (Feb.-May), Veronika Riedl (Apr.-Aug.), Thomas Caubet (June-Aug. 2017).
- (14) **Obstacle overcome**: loss of the previously agreed conference site in Athens (need to identify a new conference venue in summer 2016, change of conference planning)
- (15) Obstacle overcome: employee's sick leave for four months in late 2016
- (16) Obstacle overcome: loss of the previous ESA office
- (17) Obstacle overcome: loss of the previous ESA website (hacking attack)
- (18) Major challenge overcome: operating the "old" system of manual activities in the ESA office while in parallel planning and introducing new **automated** processes as well as all new processes around conference abstract submission and participant registration.
- (19) Result of the technical changes: New peak in **ESA membership** (increased by about 1/3):

year	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	1 Sept. 2017
members	758	1731	2126	1965	2118	2741 +100 pending
fees in € (estimated)	82,000	187,000	230,000	212,000	230,000	300,000

(20) ESA membership fees (estimated, 108 €/member)



(21) ESA 2017 Conference in Athens

- **3581 participants** (new peak) from 77 countries (big ten: Greece, UK, Germany, Italy, Poland, Turkey, Finland, France, Sweden, Russia)
- 1332 new ESA members via conference registration
- 5160 abstract submissions; 5288 users of ConfTool (registration system)
- acceptance rate: 47% to 99% (anonymous peer review of abstracts by 37 RNs/13 RS)
- (semi)plenaries: new bottom-up abstract submission resulted in: the rate of a) **non-native English** and b) **female speakers** roughly doubled to about 60% each.
- 11 time slots only for RN/RS sessions (no competition, no other sessions types parallel)
- RN sessions: new optional session types, RN keynote & RoundTable sessions, for extending options for RN coordinators (and the audience)
- new fee categories: unemployed (35), student group ticket (1).
- lowest conference fee since 2009 (in average): 195 €

(22) Voters for the ESA elections

2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
440	457	329	779	1087

D. International relations

The President has been invited to participate in conferences of the following National Associations and Centers of Sociology:

- China: Lanzhou (17.07.16)
- China: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing (21.07.16)
- India: Bhubaneswar (27.12.15)
- Israel: Tel Aviv (25.01.16)
- Macedonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of: Skopje (25.11.16)
- Portugal: Faro (08.07.16)
- Russia: St. Petersburg (10.11.16)
- Slovenia: Ljubljana (6.11.2015)
- Turkey: Ankara (01.12.16)

I delivered **keynote speeches** on topics such as “The Task of Sociology”, “Protest - how to understand people’s movements in Europe”, “Contemporary European Sociology: Conditions of Knowledge Production”, “Cultivating Differences - Rethinking Sociology with C. Wright Mills”. Chinese and Indian sociologists are eager to establish contacts and exchanges with European sociology. In addition, seeing sociologists from a variety of other national associations and discussing with them has been an eye-opener and has provided me with further arguments for strengthening the inclusion strategy of the ESA.

From 2015 to 2017, I actively participated in 11 meetings in Brussels for intensifying **ESA’s role in advocating**, in joint efforts with other organisations, **the social sciences in Europe**.

E. ESA Executive Committee 2015-2017

01 Communication and Publications Committee

Marta Soler (chair), Lena Näre (co-chair), Elena Danilova, Monica Massari, Eleni Nina-Pazarzi, Csaba Szalo, Frank Welz (*European Sociologist & website; journals ES & EJPCS, editorial boards, book-series, relations with publisher*)

02 Conference Committee

Christian Fuchs (chair), Nilay Cabuk Kaya, Tomas Kostelecky, Eleni Nina-Pazarzi, Frank Welz (*conference programme, ExeC-LOC-relations*)

03 External Relations Committee

Frank Welz (chair), Sue Scott (chair, NA Council), Airi-Alina Allaste, Kathrin Komp, Marta Soler-Gallart, Csaba Szalo (*relations with EASSH, ERC, ISE, National Associations / ISA and other bodies*)

Council of National Associations: Sue Scott (chair, elected by NAs)

04 Finance Committee

Kathrin Komp (chair, treasurer), Tomas Kostelecky, Ruth McDonald (*budget & financial report, financial decisions*)

05 Nomination Committee

Helena Serra (chair), Ruth McDonald, Csaba Szalo; Krzysztof T. Konecki, Lukasz Posluszny (both, external members)

06 Policy Committee

Kathrin Komp (chair), Laura Horn (*statutes, by-laws, fee structure, etc.*)

07 Post-graduate Research Committee

Airi-Alina Allaste (chair 2016-2017), Monica Massari, Ruth McDonald, Lena Näre, Helena Serra (chair 2015-2016) (*PhD Workshop 2016 & ESA summer school 2017*)

08 Research Network Committee

Laura Horn (chair, elected by RNs), Nilay Çabuk Kaya, Elena Danilova, Ruth McDonald, Helena Serra

In 2015-17, EC member Hans-Peter Müller could unfortunately not participate in meetings.

Despite a few extreme and unplanned additional challenges (or possibly even because of them), I very much enjoyed four plus two years of serving the ESA. In addition to introducing a few basic formats of the ESA conferences since 2013, including ConfTool, I felt it as a great honour to initially propose the title of the conference twice. Particularly, I am really glad about the success of the long planned restructuration of the ESA headquarters and conference operations. For having made this possible, I am finally most thankful to all Executive Committee members 2015-2017, in particular to the Chair of the Conference Committee, Christian Fuchs, the ESA Headquarters Coordinator, Dagmar Danko and, wholeheartedly, to Apostolos G. Papadopoulos, Chair of the Local Organising Team, Athens.

Frank Welz, Aug. 2017 (rev. 1 Sept. 2017)