

Minutes of the Board Meeting of 27 April 2023

Location: Kollegienhaus (main building), meeting room 206

Time: 12:15 - 13:40

Present: Stephen Germany, David Ballmer, Galya Iseli, Séveric Yersin, Johanna Fröhlich, Ali Darudi, Elena Pauli, Sven Kraus, Antonia Vogler, Amancaya Formica, Patricia Eiche

Absent: Esther Maria Meyer, Anna Viola Bleichenbacher, Tolga Daniel Dittrich, Boris Ševarika, Laura Rindlisbacher, Ulrike Unterhofer, Fabio Carbone

Total: 11 present, thereof entitled to vote: 8

Minutes: Patricia Eiche

Agenda:

1. **Approval of the agenda of the board meeting of 27 April 2023**
2. **Elections of minutes taker and vote counter**
3. **Approval of the minutes of 30 January 2023**
4. **General Managers**
 - a) **Overtime (reduction) of Amancaya Formica and Patricia Eiche**
 - b) **Alimony payments**
5. **Finances**
 - a) **Tax status**
 - b) **avuba annual report 2022**
 - c) **avuba revenues 2023**
 - d) **avuba expenditures 2023 incl. events 2023**
6. **avuba projects**
 - a) **List of completed projects**
 - b) **Current status of projects in progress**
 - c) **List of pending projects**
7. **Varia**
8. **Next avuba board meeting**

Agenda item 1: Approval of the agenda of the board meeting of 27 April 2023

The board meeting's agenda has been approved unanimously.

Agenda item 2: Elections of minutes taker and vote counter

Patricia Eiche was unanimously elected as minutes taker. Amancaya Formica was unanimously elected as vote counter.

Agenda item 3: Approval of the minutes of 30 January 2023

The minutes of the board meeting on 30 January 2023 were approved unanimously.

Agenda item 4: General Managers, a) Overtime (reduction) of Amancaya Formica and Patricia Eiche, b) Alimony payments

a) Overtime (reduction) of Amancaya Formica and Patricia Eiche

Since the end of January, both directors have been able to take weeks off and thus reduce their overtime by 30% (Amancaya Formica) and 20% (Patricia Eiche). The directors will continue to take Fridays and weekends off, except for if pressing matters arise. In summer, avuba will be "closed" for a minimum of 2 weeks.

b) Alimony payments

The General Managers have signed the waiver of entitlement to alimony payments. They have thus confirmed in writing that they waive any child support allowances and corresponding payments of interest to be claimed retroactively in relation to their previous employment. The executive board would like to state that this is by no means a matter of course and would like to thank Amancaya Formica and Patricia Eiche.

Agenda item 5: Finances: a) Tax status, b) avuba annual report 2022, c) avuba revenues 2023, d) avuba expenditures 2023

a) Tax status

avuba received the following notification from the tax administration of canton Basel-Stadt on 24.1.2023: "The avuba association is noted in our tax register as a tax-exempt institution. The association remains to be tax-exempt".

On 1 February 2023, avuba received a letter from the tax administration accompanying the 2021/2022 questionnaire for tax-exempt legal entities and the 2021/2022 questionnaire. avuba contacted the tax administration and was told that the contact person at the tax administration has retired in the meantime, and that this person had mixed up the years. I.e. in order to check whether avuba is truly tax-exempt, avuba must submit the questionnaire with all the relevant documents to the Canton Basel-Stadt tax administration office by end of June 2023. According to the current state of knowledge, it can be assumed that avuba will be tax-exempt in 2022.

Addendum: Email from the Tax Administration of Canton of Basel-Stadt, dated 2 May 2023, states regarding questions about avuba's tax exemption:

- *Excerpt from the cantonal tax law: "The following are exempt from profit and capital tax liability: f) legal entities pursuing public and charitable purposes, for profit and capital exclusively and irrevocably dedicated to these purposes; entrepreneurial purposes are in principle not charitable..."*
- *If a legal entity is tax-exempt, the amount of the membership fees or the amount of the assets may play a role as an indication for the assessment of the tax exemption.*
- *In the case of tax-exempt institutions, capital and profits are not taxed.*
- *The holding of events and a profit from such events may constitute an economic activity and result in the loss of tax exemption.*

- *An assessment in this respect takes into account quantitative and qualitative aspects - the charitable purpose or the activity associated with it must always be dominant.*
- *Events for members are usually self-serving or an end in themselves.*
- *Events organised by non-profit institutions should serve the non-profit purpose, be open to the general public and free of charge.*

b) avuba annual report 2022

Mike Rümmele, Head of Controlling & Reporting, confirmed on 21 March 2022 that the figures in the annual report correspond to the values in SAP.

The avuba auditors, who were elected throughout the last General Meeting, audited the accounts on 4 April 2023 and recommend the General Meeting to approve the invoice from 1.1.2022 - 31.12.2022 as presented and to discharge the Executive Directors, Co-Presidency and Executive Board.

The avuba executive board would like to add a table to this annual report to display the financial commitment to mid-level academics in a more transparent way. Patricia Eiche will prepare this and insert it on the first page. (Note: As the University of Basel credits avuba's invoices in the university's system, the cost types used for each business case are those that correspond to the university's ways. This is why, for example, avuba's costs for co-financing academic and non-academic projects are credited to "train, tram, bus" or to "catering, admissions, representation").

Addendum: The annual report has been submitted to the President's Office in due time, i.e. by 30 April 2023, as stipulated in the performance agreement.

c) avuba returns 2023

The accounting department of the University of Basel has confirmed that avuba can count on the planned income of 190,000 francs for 2023: This amount is made up of three parts: 100,000 Swiss francs from membership fees, 75,000 Swiss francs from the University's financial contribution and 15,000 Swiss francs profit carried forward from 2022.

d) avuba expenditures 2023 incl. events 2023

The testing of Deepl.pro in February has been successful, i.e. the layout of the translated version practically corresponds to the layout of the original version. In terms of content, the revision effort was substantial. Patricia Eiche has created an avuba glossary in collaboration with Antonia Vogler, which has been uploaded to Deepl.pro. The translation of the next documents should therefore take less time in the future. avuba expects savings of CHF 8,000 (due to the elimination of outsourced translation costs).

avuba's financial regulations stipulate that expenditures must be based on the budget. For 2023, the General Meeting approved CHF 15,000 for "Catering, Advertising, Representation, Events" as part of the approval of the budget. Amancaya Formica has drawn up a list of events and meetings and the corresponding expected costs, i.e. the expenditures for catering at these events. The avuba executive board agrees with the list. For the assistants, in 2023 there will probably be ten in-person lunches, six happy hours, three faculty events, one BBQ and one Christmas event.

The next quarterly financial review will be conducted before the end of June 2023.

Agenda item 6: avuba projects: a) List of completed projects, b) Current status of projects in progress, c) List of pending projects

a) List of completed projects

The following tasks have already been completed:

- PhD survey Phil-Hist in 2023: Draw up questionnaire and send to the support groups in the various faculties and departments.
- Granted access to the R:\ drive for the avuba board members. The set up on the individual computer must be carried out by each board member individually. IT Services offers support on this matter.
- avuba members can now register digitally for lunch talks via Google Forms.
- The avuba annual report 2022 has been prepared and the audit has been carried out.
- The interface issues between accounting and avuba have been clarified.

b) Current status of projects in progress

- Statement regarding abolition of Doc.CH: The avuba executive board would like avuba to complain in a letter to the editor that both Doc.CH (for humanities and social sciences) and individual funding vehicles for other research areas (MD-PhD, Doc.MINT, Practice-to-Science and R'Equip) have been abolished without providing any alternatives or prior consultation with stakeholders. The aim of this letter is to keep the discourse on this matter alive, as the importance of funding opportunities for independent research is very valuable to society. Possibly, the universities themselves could generate funding pots again if the Swiss people vote for the taxation of large corporate groups on 18 June 2023. In this case, the cantons will receive higher tax revenues, as 75% of the income is to go to the cantons and 25% to the federal government. If necessary, the university could then obtain a higher financial contribution from the cantons for the performance period of 2025-2029. In the course of the comments on the abolition of Doc.CH, which were sent to the education departments of the sponsoring cantons, among others, avuba was advised to lobby more strongly at national level, as the SNSF is the responsibility of the federal government. The sponsoring cantons could only influence the global budget of the University of Basel, which, however, also includes potential local measures to compensate for the loss of Doc.CH.
- Guidelines/position paper: The avuba Executive Board will provide feedback on the first draft by mid-May. The consolidated document will then be circulated again amongst the executive board before its release. This document should provide information on avuba's achievable goals and be reviewed regularly – for instance, once a year.
- Application to the President's Office for the creation of additional positions below the professorship or within the respective departments or faculties: The avuba executive board has already commented on the first draft. Sven Kraus will receive further feedback by mid-May. In order to grant researchers from third countries access to these positions, the creation of job categories that allow for a work permit is needed.
- Switzerland-wide survey of mid-level academic's organisations regarding salary levels and semester fees: avuba has created a questionnaire. However, the first round of feedback amongst mid-level academic's associations showed that salary structures vary widely. Therefore, a quantitative survey does no longer seem possible at this stage. A project team led by actionuni (the Swiss umbrella organisation of mid-level academic's associations) will discuss whether/how such a survey could be implemented.

- Switzerland-wide mental health survey: avuba itself does not have the resources to develop a questionnaire or conduct and evaluate a Switzerland-wide survey. actionuni has therefore put together a project team, in which avuba will participate. The kick-off meeting will take place in the first half of May.
- Communication:
 - avuba website: The revision by Antonia Vogler and Amancaya Formica is planned for summer 2023.
 - avuba newsletter: In order to make the newsletter leaner and more appealing, it is currently being examined whether it is possible to switch to a HTML format.
 - avuba social media channels (Twitter and LinkedIn): On the one hand, something should be posted or "re-tweeted" at least once a week. In addition, avuba will proactively friend assistants on the two social media channels in order to increase its reach on social media.
 - avuba communication concept: This is currently being revised and will be discussed at the next board meeting in September.
- Doctorate Forum (organised by GRACE):
 - The first meeting took place on 1.2.2023. It lasted for 1.5 hours and was attended by assistants as well as representatives of avuba and the university administration. The meeting concluded that the "Doctorate Forum" should discuss subjects related to terms of employment (of (post-)doctoral researchers). One smaller and one larger subject is to be presented and discussed at each meeting.
 - The meeting of 7.6.2023 will address:
 - Creation of "third space positions" in the postdoctoral field
 - Co-authorship in the light of academic integrity
 - Further topics for future "Doctorate Forum" meetings were noted:
 - Separation of supervision/employment for doctoral researchers
 - Mandatory Job description
 - Transparency regarding financial pots and salary levels of assistants
 - Personal integrity and mental health

c) List of pending projects

The following is a list of projects that have not yet be tackled due to resource constraints:

- Preparation of a dossier that provides information on how avuba could act as an employer, what the financial consequences of the scenarios would be and whether the employment contracts, the bylaws and/or financial regulations would need to be adapted;
- Preparation of a dossier that provides information on financial implications of parenthood for assistants (per type of funding);
- Discussion on how to ensure that measures are being taken at a faculty level, to examine the current state in each faculty and make proposals on how to improve working and research conditions;
- avuba postdoc survey 2020: List of measures that the university has implemented for postdocs since then;
- Clarification and documentation of the interfaces between avuba and HR;
- Longer-term financial planning of avuba (taking into account consequences if the tax exemption were to lapse);
- Clarification of avuba's legal independence from the university;

- Intensification of the exchange with the representatives of Gr. III in cross-faculty commissions;
- Participation of the assistants in the university self-administration: drafting of avuba election regulations. This includes the election procedure;
- Preparation of a 2-page information paper per faculty, containing the most important information for assistants (presented on the avuba website);
- Contacting new avuba members (twice per year);
- Writing job descriptions for the Co-Presidency and Executive Board;
- Evaluation of the results of the doctoral surveys for each faculty in collaboration with GRACE (2024).

Agenda item 7: Varia

Stephen Germany will be stepping down from his position as representative of Group III on the Senate Committee as of 1 September 2023. Senate representatives on the avuba Executive Board who are interested in this position can contact Patricia Eiche by mid-May.

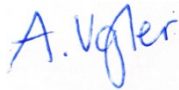
Agenda item 8: Next avuba Board meeting

The next meeting should - if possible - take place at least one week in advance to the next bilateral meeting with the President's Office (18 September 2023).

Basel, 15 May 2023



Sven Kraus
avuba Co-President



Antonia Vogler
avuba Co-President