



YOUNG
EUROPEAN
FEDERALISTS
NEDERLAND

Capacity Training & GMA 2020

Report

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Abstract

On the weekend of the 15th & 16th February 2020 JEF Netherlands held a Capacity Training and its annual General Member Assembly (GMA). This report summarizes and analyzes the events based on participants evaluation.

The Capacity training brought together members from different sections across the Netherlands as well as representatives of JEF Europe to evaluate the current work and organisation of JEF Netherlands and discuss possible future events, strategy and focus. The training consisted of four sessions, covering communication, project & campaign management as well as federalism and its history in the Netherlands.

The General Member Assembly on the 16th of February began with the meeting of working groups which later enabled the assembly to vote into power a political program, the plan to establish a JEF Holland section and a mandate for the board to work on statute change. The GMA, furthermore, was informed of the board's work during the last term. The board reported the implementation of new financial guidelines and a doubling in membership. Finally the new board for the next term was elected.

The Capacity Training

The Capacity Training was set up with four training sessions and started with welcoming the participants, the guest speakers Leonie Martin & Andreas Hoostgaard and introducing the trainers & the program.

The first session was about getting to know each other, to learn about the objectives of the seminar and to contribute personal priorities. Thus, a name game was played and a Brainstorming was guided. The aim of the Brainstorming was to evaluate the Status Quo with the following questions to the participants:

- What are strengths of JEF Netherlands?
- What are weaknesses of JEF Netherlands?
- What projects/topics would I like to work on?

The answers to these questions (s. Appendix) were meant to serve as guidelines on what to work on and what strengths to make use of, hence what topics to pursue and methods to use in the following sessions.

The second session "Internal Management & Communication" aimed at developing a draft Communication Strategy for the Future Board based on evaluating, reflecting and discussing participants' own social media behavior and ways to increase their private or section's outreach. To arrive at good useful strategies Leonie Martin gave an Input talk about Communication, especially in terms of the usage of Social Media. It was followed by a group discussion and group work focusing on how to improve the internal communication within JEF Netherlands, as well as, the external communication via Social Media.

After a short lunch break, Andreas Hoostgaard continued with the third session “Project & Campaign Management”. He gave an interesting input on online and street campaigning. Based on his informative input, the participants discussed how the political vision of JEF-NL should look like to establish common political priorities in order to map key campaign topics. Thus, the participants gained understanding of good ways to get campaign ideas and good ideas on political slogans.

After the Input from Andreas Hoostgaard, Leonie Martin presented the history and development of federalist activism in the Netherlands and its challenges. Central for this session was to create awareness of what federalism means and to work out ideas how to pitch a federal Europe in the Netherlands. Within this fourth session, the participants got to know how to explain what a federal Europe is, especially in the context of the Netherlands.

The Capacity Training ended with a conclusion-feedback round in order to receive feedback on what to improve (s. Appendix) for the next Capacity Training. Finally the Capacity Training was closed with a Dinner.

The General Members Assembly (GMA)

On the 16th February, the GMA started with breakfast as a good occasion for the participants to greet and gather. After a short round of introduction, the working groups (consisting of a statute committee, a political committee and a future event group) started their work.

The political committee enabled an agreement on JEF-NL's first political program (at least in recent history). The base for this program was a political draft that JEF Maastricht had prepared for the previous GMA but that had not been voted on for time reasons. The program was reassessed and evaluated by a cross-sectional group of members, who prepared a version that reached the necessary majority of votes in the afternoon.

The Future Events group exchanged experiences with events their sections have carried out in the past, and brainstormed possible future events (s. Appendix). The Statute Committee, meanwhile, worked on the latest version of the statutes by discussing and commenting on proposed amendments.

After the working groups had finished their work, the GMA officially opened with welcoming words by Isabelle Büttner. She sent regards to the JEF-NL President, Lucia Ameli, who was not able to attend in person. Further, she appointed a secretary and held a vote on the voting committee. Following this, the agenda and a deadline for handing in motions and amendments were adopted.

The activity report was presented by Sara Stachelhaus (JEF NL Treasurer 2019). She highlighted new internal organizational approaches and successes such as setting up financial guidelines, doing a treasurer call, reforming the membership lists and reorganizing the Google Drive. A main focus of this past year were media literacy trainings, which were supported by JEF Europe and the Council of Europe: First, participants from JEF NL

participated in a Training for Trainers in Novi Sad and became a member of the JEF Pool of Trainers, a resource pool for JEF Europe to draw trainers from for their workshops. Secondly, two of the returning trainers organized a media literacy workshop in Enschede which was attended by the European Student Network Twente and JEF members. In an attempt to take these trainings to school, one training was organized in a local high school in Enschede. Sara Stachelhaus pointed to the fact that the training could be easily reproduced and that the new board might want to continue with organizing media literacy workshops. Finally, JEF-NL and JEF Maastricht applied for hosting one of the five regional schools by JEF Europe in Maastricht, which took place in November. The regional school was attended by international participants with and without JEF background that worked on the topic of media literacy together and developed their own media pieces to raise attention. JEF-NL also applied to participate in the JEF Europe program Pimp My JEF, a tutoring initiative for small but ambitious JEF sections; there, board members and interested members attended webinars (e.g. on membership recruitment, knowledge management) together with JEF Sweden and JEF Bulgaria. Additionally, a fund was made available for participating sections. JEF-NL used this available money to organize the capacity training. Thereby, food as well as partial travel reimbursement could be offered to participants. In terms of section development, JEF-NL has doubled its total members in a year due to a sharp increase in members in Maastricht, despite the unfortunate news that the JEF Den Haag section has fallen inactive.

In her position as a treasurer, Sara Stachelhaus then continued with the financial report. The financial guidelines that were put in practice by the JEF-NL since May have led to a doubling in membership fee payments. Introduced in last year's GMA, the financial guidelines are advisory rules to improve the financial sustainability of JEF-NL while introducing more freedom when it comes to financing activities on the local level. The main innovations are a "section's budget" which is a reserved part of the general budget that remains on the JEF-NL account but is reserved for a certain section and increases with every paying member said section has. This budget can be used for JEF purposes and according to a limited number of rules, For that, membership lists were reformed and made more easily accessible for local treasurers. Also, the decision procedure and criteria for project-based funding from the general JEF-NL budget was made more transparent. Criteria include: Medium- or long-term impact, Sustainable resources, Cost-reduction, Equal chances and Timely Request. This financial report was confirmed by the present auditor Hannes Hühmer (JEF Enschede Treasurer 2019).

In an open Q&A round, board members highlighted their work in the past term. While some mentioned constraints due to personal time capacities and limited membership feedback, others highlighted the strong and reliable team work and improved internal communication between sections. Answering a question regarding JEF NL's relationship with JEF Europe, a special acknowledgement went to contact person Andreas Hostgaard and his predecessor Sebastiano as well as JEF Europe President Leonie Martin who were open and accessible throughout the year. The participation in Pimp My JEF and the possibility to host one of JEF Europe's regional schools in Maastricht supported this positive picture. Regarding future relations, Andreas Hostgaard expressed hope to facilitate contact to other JEF sections in similar situations as JEF-NL to share their experience and to be available for questions. In regard to money, the treasurer highlighted that money is available for sections to apply for

and that promotional material can be covered this year. A food for thought was given by the suggestion to sync the sections and national board years in the future.

Before the lunch break, Leonie Martin and Andreas Hostgaard presented the activities of JEF Europe, including the democracy under pressure campaign, their ambitions for the conference on the future of Europe, media literacy, and others.

After lunch, the working groups presented their results. The political program was presented by Dylan and Jannis and consecutively discussed. While most proposals for changes were accepted by Thilo, representing JEF Maastricht (the initiator of the political program), votes were held on some critical changes. Eventually, the full program was adopted with 31 votes in favour. It was highlighted that this was a living document, and that a potential political committee would work on the document and present new changes next year.

Following this, the working group Future Events presented their findings. Then, the statute committee summarized their work, and navigated through the amendments, providing their comments and guidance.

Next, amendments and motions were discussed and voted on. Two major motions were adopted that tasked the new board to present a gender neutral version of the statutes at the next GMA and to work on establishing a regional section in Holland (Amsterdam, Den Haag, Utrecht, Leiden). Among the major discussions were the topics of amending the formal rules of dissolving an inactive section, and the set up of a formal requirement for board members to reside in the Netherlands and peripheral regions, which was turned down (For a full list of amendments and votes, please contact the board).

Afterwards, the board candidates introduced themselves and were immediately voted on. No other candidates came forward. The new board is composed of Isabelle Büttner as President, Vivien Szameitat as Vice-President, Evelin Emmerich as Secretary-General, Hannah Peters as Treasurer, Jannis Schneider as Communication Officer and Martin Wasser as International Officers. The three auditors are Thilo Buchholz, Hannes Hühmer and Magdalena Weber. At the end of the assembly, JEF Maastricht gave an update from their section, JEF Europe sent their regards and the meeting closed at 18:25.

Concluding remarks

Summing up the weekend, the Capacity training contributed in a number of different ways to the knowledge of the participants as well as to the improvement of JEF-NL and its sections. The Brainstorming in the beginning of the training about the strengths and weaknesses of JEF-NL and desired future projects is a good guide for the future work of JEF-NL. Evaluating the strengths of JEF-NL reflected the high potential of the organization, due to its active sections, its strong growing membership base and its non-partisan outlook. Moreover, the fact that inexperienced members can get involved quickly and strongly by facilitating a learning by doing approach within JEF which leads to “talking with Europeans about Europe instead of talking only about other Europeans” was highlighted (s. Appendix). The evaluation of the weaknesses of JEF-NL showed where improvement is needed. It was often pointed

out that JEF-NL only has few Dutch members, which can potentially be explained by the widespread euroscepticism among young Dutch people. The lack of Dutch members also makes JEF-NL less able to be active in Dutch politics. Hopefully this challenge can be worked on by overcoming the emphasized weakness in membership recruitment in the future. Fortunately, the session by Andreas Hostgaard about street campaigning and Leonie Martin's session about Federalism helped the participants to actively present JEF-NL to interested future JEF members. Other identified weaknesses of JEF-NL that need to be tackled are a missing membership fee inquiry, little interaction and exchange between the local sections and a limited outreach beyond the university bubble. The latter weakness could be tackled by organizing more europe@school projects to get in contact with young people and introducing JEF to them.

At the GMA the Future Events group exchanged the type of events their sections have done in the past, and brainstormed events they are interested in conducting.g. The group worked out a great variety of possible future events ranging from social, educational to cross-sectional and cross-border events (s. Appendix). In general it was established that traveling for JEF events just for a social event is not as attractive as traveling for a political activity or workshop. Further, the participants of the working group seemed interested in setting up a permanent working group to deal with cross-sectional events based on the brainstormed ideas, including an outreach to JEF sections of the bordering countries.

With regard to the activity report, a takeaway is that media literacy workshops have been successful and hence should be continued, as they are also easy to reproduce in the future. In the evaluation round of the GMA the majority of members emphasized that it would make sense and that they wish to have a Capacity Training every year before the GMA. Even though it will have to be evaluated how the costs can be covered without the Pimp My JEF funds for the next year it is hoped to have such a successful joint Capacity Training and GMA weekend next year as well.

Appendix

-The following compilation is based on evaluation sheets filled in by members from JEF Den Haag, JEF Enschede, JEF Nijmegen and JEF Maastricht-

Future Events

1. Social
 - a. European Dinner
 - b. Movie night
 - c. Eurovision
 - d. Silvester Party
 - e. Picknick

2. Educational
 - a. Stereotypes
 - b. East Europe
 - c. Trip to Brussels (cross-section)
 - d. Green New Deal

3. Cross-section/Cross-border events
 - a. Tournament like Pub Quiz
 - b. Career Fair with Alumni
 - c. Border Party
 - d. Beach Party
 - e. Workshop/Conference
 - f. Trip to Straßbourg/Berlin/The Hague
 - g. European Youth Event
 - h. Twin-section exchange
 - i. Argumentation workshop: Euroscepticism
 - j. Future of Europe
 - k. Panel discussion with politicians

Strength of JEF-NL:

1. We have pol. Intern. Cities such as The Hague and Maastricht
2. International variety of members
3. Interesting discussions
4. Social aspect
5. Strong growing membership base
6. Motivated young people
7. Not caught up in old structures -> flexible
8. So much potential

9. Sense of community
10. Unequivocal advocates for strengthening democracy and role in europe
11. Strong in university cities - active, enthusiastic students
12. Facilitate learning by doing -> also new (inexperienced members can get involved quickly and strong)
13. We are talking with europeans about europe instead of talking only about other europeans
14. Small distance to JEF Europe
15. Active in more places than one
16. Young people from many studies, all contributing their specific knowledge
17. Diverse & motivated talent people

Weaknesses of JEF NL:

1. When people ask what the aim of JEF-NL is, the answer is often very abstract
2. Barely any dutch/-speaking members
3. Widespread euroskepticism among young dutch
4. Less active in NL politics
5. Missing membership fee inquiry
6. Little interaction /exchange between different local sections
7. Limited outreach beyond uni bubbles
8. Visibility
9. Lack of resources
10. Low interest in the org. From the dutch students
11. Very student focused -> a lot of discontinuity in members
12. Where is our connection to youth -> +18?
13. Contact & Network to other dutch youth organisations
14. Publ. Image among students
15. Member recruitment

Projects you like to work on:

1. Collaboration with National pol. Parties
2. Cooperating with org. Like student4climate since the issue has an european dimension
3. National&European election campaigns
4. Conference on the future of europe
5. Street campaign
6. europe@school
7. Keep JEF section active in Holland or start up one
8. National Working groups -> Events
9. More Media Literacy Trainings
10. Knowledge in managing NGOs
11. Video content
12. Workshops