

Accountability Report

Steffen Lehmann, Main Chair (Audit Board)

After my predecessor resigned a few weeks after the AB mandate 2019/20 started in September 2019, I took over on 01 January 2020 and filled out the position of the Main Chair until 31 August 2020. During my mandate, I carried out the following tasks that also were described in the Open Call when I applied for the position:

- Representation of the Audit Board
- Contact person for the sections, the Alumni, and the National Board
- Coordination and task delegation of and inside of the Audit Board
- Composition of reports for and of National Platforms (in cooperation with all parties involved)
- Monitoring of the work of the National Board
- Procedural Audit
- Suggestion of topics for the weekly National Board Hangout Calls if required by the Audit Board
- Participating in defining the strategy of ESN Germany
- Preparing and conducting the elections at the National Platforms

Since the NA Munich was taking place already at the end of January, the beginning of my mandate was a bit like jumping into cold water. Instead of being able to focus on a proper induction, I had to do my part to ensure a smooth procedure of the assembly. I'm pleased to say that I managed to handle all major aspects successfully. Above all, both the preparation and the execution of the voting, including the elections of the next NB mandate, ran smoothly during the NA. Moreover, together with the former President Olivia, I made sure that the CoC-complaints against one participant which were brought forward to the Ombudspersons were handled in a fair but consequent manner. Although it's not necessarily the task of the AB Main Chair to attend a lot of events, it's a pity that I couldn't join more physical events than only the NA Munich during my mandate.

After the NA, I finally had the opportunity to finish an induction into the position. At this point, I want to thank my AB colleagues a lot who supported me at any time. Since then, I continuously

kept an overview of the current topics that are relevant for the AB and coordinated the specific task fulfillments. Furthermore, I realized that the AB's drive folder was missing some relevant documents and was generally rather unstructured. Hence, I collected all documents that I could find in the AB's history and sorted them at a sensible location to ensure knowledge transfer, especially once the initial members of the AB will no longer be part of it.

Since I joined the AB, we got back to a fortnightly call to discuss current issues. For this, I prepared an agenda, chaired the calls, took notes, and shared the final minutes on Slack. As part of the re-organisation of our drive folder, I also collected and sorted all minutes of all AB Calls ever [in one folder](#). During the first month of my mandate, together with Olivia, I also re-established regular visits to the association's bodies' calls by the Main Chair and the President. Together with other AB members and AB-external ESNers, I worked to implement proposals like the budget, regional coordinators or section consultation in our legal documents.

In the weeks that followed after the NA Munich, there also arose a dispute between the NA OC and the NB/Treasurer that the AB was asked to mediate. Together with one of the Legal Auditors, I first talked with both involved parties individually, audited all relevant documents and then wrote a proposal of our own on how to solve the situation. Thus, we were able to solve the problem in a final call between the parties.

Shortly after, unfortunately, the Corona situation started to affect the rest of my mandate significantly. Thus, for the most part of the mandate the requests that the AB got from sections and the NB were more or less related to the new challenge. Together with the other AB members, I tried to answer everything as quickly and thoroughly as possible.

Since the NB Transition Meeting, I was asking the new President Pedro on a regular basis about the new NB's plans for how to approach the next 3-Year-Strategy, as the Main Chair is supposed to work on it, too. Understandably, the NB prioritized other issues over this one, so that I unfortunately couldn't contribute to it during my mandate.

The limited opportunities at times of Corona-related restrictions probably also resulted in a first rather low interest in the new AB elections. (I never planned to run for re-election as I want to finish my studies before the next mandate ends.) However, together with my

colleagues, I was persistent in trying to motivate volunteers within the network to make sure that ESN Germany fulfills the requirement of having an Audit Board. Thanks to our newly elected AB, our efforts were successful.

In the days approaching the Online NA, it became apparent that it was nearly impossible for all elected members of ESN Germany to keep an overview over all deadlines. Hence, I went through our legal documents and developed such an [overview](#) and some [instructions](#) on how to work with it properly as it might be a bit confusing at the beginning. Thus, it should now be harder to miss anything. For the Online NA itself, I ensured that all necessary procedures for the voting were adhered to in the online format and conducted the elections at the NA with great support by the IT Team.

Apart from the pandemic, the issue that mostly overshadowed my mandate was certainly the conflict with the NB which started with the email which was sent by it the night before the NA. Given that I always had a good as well as professional relationship with both presidents during my mandate, I was shocked by the email's message. However, as it turned out, the email was rushed and several NB members were not happy with that as well. Nevertheless, the conflict made clear that there were different perceptions in both bodies of what the Audit Board could do and what it couldn't. As pointed out in the [joint statement](#) of both bodies in the end, it was never the AB's intention to actively overrule decisions taken by the NB, although it may have been understood by the NB like that.

In the month between the Online NA and the transition period in August, there were no official AB Calls, since only Monika and I were left in the AB as a consequence to the email that was sent by the NB. During this time, the overwhelming topic was to normalize the relationship between both bodies again. With the help of the Alumni, we were fortunately able to take decisive steps towards that goal. As the Alumni pointed out, the relation and distribution of power should be further defined in our documents, so the issue won't arise again after some mandates in the future. While it may be too soon to claim to have achieved this for sure, I am confident that the groundwork has been done and the new AB can work together efficiently with the NB again. In the final month, together with the help of Kathi and Caro who resigned around the Online NA due to NB's email, Moni and I introduced the newly elected AB members to the job, so they can properly continue the work.

My goal for the Audit Board always was to have a body within the organisation that keeps an eye on the National Board's work - not to patronize or take its decisions for it but to increase its legitimacy and enable its ideas within the given legal framework. While doing so, it was likewise important for me to be available to both sections and the NB for advice whenever requested. It is my belief that the Audit Board, thus, can help ESN Germany the best. I wish my successor all the best of luck to further achieve that goal!

Göttingen, 31 August 2020

Steffen Lehmann

