

District 109 - 8th Executive Council Meeting

Monday 8th of May 2020 - Online via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

At 19:05 CEST Metaxia Kritsidima, District Director, called the meeting to order and welcomed the members. She then provided some guidelines on how the meeting will be conducted.

Guidelines:

- We will be following Robert rules of Parliamentary procedures.
- When someone wishes to speak, either he unmutes himself and requests to speak or he sends a message to the District Director who will then address the speaking. The person is requested to name his/her position and name.
- The chat will be put in the setting to “everyone only”.
- Frank will be the timer. Speakers are requested to follow the time requirements.
- All discussions will be in 1 minute intervals in a total of 6 minutes. Positions opposing will be speaking first then those in favor. Opposing and in favor positions will be alternating.
- In the case that we have no opposition we will be moving to approval with a single vote.
- Minutes will be kept by Helen Polymerou and uploaded in our shared files. The meeting will be recorded to assist in the drafting of minutes. After approval of the minutes at our next DECM the recording will be deleted.

2. District Mission

Helen Polymerou, Administration Manager, read the District’s Mission: “We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.”

3. Certification of Quorum

Helen Polymerou, Administration Manager, confirmed that 22 out of 36 executive members are present, and that quorum has been met.

4. Approval of Agenda

The agenda for today’s meeting has been sent to the district’s executive members via e-mail and uploaded in our shared folder. This agenda presented today has been amended. The amendments are:

- The time in the agenda is indicated as Central European Time. It has been amended to Central European Summer Time.
- In the Core Team reports we are missing the Administration report. It is added after the Finance report. Part of the Administration report is also a training for the virtual elections that we're going to be using at our DCM and a test election that our parliamentarian and Helen are going to be conducting.

Aires Marques CGD: Move to approve the amended agenda as presented

Günter Herold AD F1: Seconding

Opposition: no

AM: single vote has been placed

Motion has been carried. The amended agenda as presented has been approved.

5. Approval of Minutes of Turin DECM, January 26th 2020

The minutes have been sent to the district's executive members.

Aires Marques CGD: Move to approve the Minutes of Turin DECM as sent

Günter Herold AD F1: Seconding

Opposition: no

AM: single vote has been placed

Motion has been carried. The Minutes of Turin DECM, January 26th 2020, have been approved.

6. Approval of Minutes of Online DECM, March 9th 2020

The minutes have been sent to the district's executive members.

Lorenzo Gios PQD: Move to approve the Minutes of Online DECM as sent

Aires Marques CGD: Seconding

Opposition: no

AM: single vote has been placed

Motion has been carried. The Minutes of Online DECM, March 9th 2020, have been approved.

7. Approval of Minutes of Online DECM, March 23rd 2020

The minutes have been sent to the district's executive members.

Lorenzo Gios PQD: Move to approve the Minutes of Online DECM as sent

Aires Marques CGD: Seconding

Opposition: no

AM: single vote has been placed

Motion has been carried. The Minutes of Online DECM, March 23rd 2020, have been approved.

8. Presentation of Additional Article on District Procedures

Presented by Lorenzo Gios, PQD

Our objective is to retain the D109 procedures as updated as possible, in line with all other official documents of TI. Moreover, all members of the District Council are eligible to suggest improvements which, if agreed upon by the DECM, will be validated by the DCM and formally included in the procedures.

In total, two amendments are being proposed this time, both at the request of D109 PQD, Lorenzo Gios. The purpose of these amendments is to make the District Procedures more easily readable and to merge articles that belong to the same topic.

Amendment 1 on p.13-p.16, Articles 6 & 7:

Merger of two Articles into one Article:

The information included under Article 7 (Educational awards) is merged into Article 6 (District Awards).

Reason for Amendment:

To simplify the structure and make it easier to read as both articles covered a similar topic.

Amendment 2 on p.13, Article 6:

Addition of a clause describing how the list of District Awards is selected every year:

“The proposed list of Awards needs to be presented by the Core Team together with the District Success Plan and voted on during the District Executive Council Meeting (DECM).

Every change to the list of Awards needs to be presented and discussed in the DECM”.

Deletion of the Characteristics of each Award:

The selection process and criteria for each of the possible District awards has been deleted.

These details are thus left to be presented, every year, by the Core Team along with the list of proposed awards and voted on during the District Executive Council Meeting (DECM).

Reason for Amendment:

- To underline the fact that the awards are an integral part of the District Success Plan. They are necessary to reward the achievement of the goals defined in the strategic plan.
- To establish clear responsibility: the list of Awards and their criteria need to be approved by the DECM as the District Success Plan does.

This means that the DECM will create each year a Success Plan that will also contain awards that are supporting the goals of the Success Plan. The DECM will be able to decide on the awards that best fit their goals for the year.

In the same article we have listed suggested types of award like Triple Crown or Outstanding Toastmasters, which can be used. The main change is that we link our awards strategy with our District Success Plan.

Aires Marques CGD: motion for recommendation to the DCM to approve the article as presented

Günter Herold AD F1: Seconding

Opposition: no

AM: single vote has been placed

Motion has been carried. The recommendation to the DCM to approve the article as presented will be moved to the next meeting.

Core Team Reports:

9. Update on District's Progress

Presented by Metaxia Kritsidima, District Director

District Numbers

The latest updates of dashboards show 103 clubs. We started the year with 101. We have 5725 payments and we have more than half of our clubs distinguished. These are our key performance indexes.

If someone looks at the numbers only, they may say that our original goals were not met, but as Toastmasters we look at the human factor mainly. It has to be said that in the middle of the COVID-19 crises, we have worked and have more than 50% of our clubs distinguished. We have not lost clubs.

Aires will report later on the new numbers and the fact that clubs are not renewing, especially because some of them are University clubs or they're corporate clubs, where businesses are

closed. So in reality, we don't have a hundred and three clubs. Also Aires will address the payments and why we have been challenged in relation to them.

From a global point of view our district is 1st in Europe in terms of distinguished clubs, 2nd in terms of Clubs and 3rd in terms of membership payments. We are 4th in the world in distinguished clubs, 9th in paid clubs and 15th in membership payments.

Numbers this year have been challenging all districts. Nevertheless our success plan has been met and we have been achieving excellence given the situations that we are in.

News that relate to our District

Things are changing in Toastmasters in general.

- Because there is a challenge and clubs are not renewing, there is an extension of access to Pathways Base Camp. Up to the end of June, members that are challenged because of the situation, will still have access to Base Camp. This will impact our membership growth because people might not be motivated to pay their dues, but this is the situation we are all in and we need to support our members that are challenged.
- There's a new improved PowerPoint template available for district officers to do their presentations.
- Online meeting videos are available. As district officers, please share these links with all our club officers. A lot of information and material is there for them to use.
- Club Flyers are available. Please share them and show to our club officers where to get all this information.
- Board of Directors have decided that they will temporarily discontinue printing and delivering the Toastmaster Magazine. They will reassess the situation, but for now, we don't have the magazine and will not be receiving it. We do have accessibility online as we did before and there are actions for the rotary courses on Pathways and rotary allowances and templates.

Our path 2019-2020

- We began focusing on early
- Then we focused on what is important (contests, training our officers)
- Later on we had to focus on health. To keep every member healthy and then return and focus on important.

Metaxia closed her presentation by congratulating every one for acting briefly, quickly and effectively.

10. Program Quality Report

Presented by Lorenzo Gios, PQD

Despite the situation we faced this year, we had a lot of achievements:

- We have done a lot of club visits to support our clubs; 91 in the first run and 23 in the second run. The data was updated the first of May so the visits are surely more than 23.
- A lot of officers were trained. Approximately 800 officers.
- We have 54 distinguished clubs.

One of our biggest success was our quick transition to online meetings, which helped our members and clubs to learn something new and to continue with their Toastmaster experience. We got also the opportunity to create more connections and ways of working together.

We have already three Divisions, A, D and E who are president distinguished and two, C and F. that are select distinguished. In case they get a new club, they will be president distinguished as well. Division B will be distinguished with two more clubs.

Some of our Projects

On Pathways, we have a 70% adoption rate by our members, which is more or less in line with the other districts. We have a mentoring program where we conducted some webinars and we had a youth leadership program very promising. Due to the coronavirus, we had to stop some projects temporarily as well as postpone the district conference in Crete for next year.

Our Top Priorities

- Complete club visits
- Help clubs in election and transition
- Support weak and understrength clubs
- Handover to the next DivD/AD. Have a smooth transition.

Lorenzo closed his presentation by thanking all officers for serving our clubs and members.

11. Club Growth Report

Presented by Aires Marques, CGD

Since the last DECM we have two new clubs in Italy; Toastmasters Pisa and Toastmasters Academy Rome.

Current Situation in our District

Despite the difficulties we are facing, we have achieved to have 103 paid clubs and we still have 15 prospects at the moment. We have five unpaid clubs, mostly in division B. There is a possibility that Division B will lose an area.

The number of understrength clubs and weak clubs has been rising since the last report. So we have to put some effort there to support these clubs.

As far as the goals that were set, we are 9th in the world in new clubs and 15th in payments, which is good considering the current situation.

There is a possibility for new clubs chartered thanks to The Corporate Summit Program, which is one of the programs that were successful this year.

Toastmasters International just made some announcements. The Club Coach Program has been extended until June 2021. Members from our district can become coaches and can still go for the DTM and submit it until June 2021, as long as they have the Advanced Communicator Gold and Advanced Leader Bronze already completed. In order to become a coach you have to find a club and fill the form. There will be of course other opportunities in this year and the next one.

Aires closed his presentation by thanking the officers for their great work throughout the year.

12. PR Report

Presented by Frank Kaiser, PRM

Achievements

- Conference PR support during challenging times: We made it, despite having less time for advertisement compared to the previous conference and facing difficulties due to the COVID-19.
- Visitor Trophy Challenge participation increase
- Interviews on mentoring: 2 publications
- Phoenix Project PR support: A dedicated group on Facebook has been created. Since the placement on Facebook, the number of people has been increasing quite fast.

Visitor Trophy Challenge Results

- 1) The Erzelli Toasters, Genoa (29 points)
- 2) International Geneva Toastmasters Club (24 points)
- 3) Rhetorik Club Zurich, Zurich (17,5 points)

4) TOASTMASTERS Baden (16 points)

4) Toastmasters GE Baden (16 points)

We had in total 28 clubs participating.

Project Status Update

- Website update is in progress
- Reinforcement of branding to be considered
- Social media presence has been extended
- #BePreparedForParis2020 has been cancelled (due to general budget cut)

Priorities

- Newsletter (website update)
- District 109 Conference PR support
- PQD and CGD support: webinars (ex. for Malta) and other Districts' events' PR support
- PR support for other District 109 activities

Frank closed by thanking everyone for the support and for all their feedback.

13. Finance Report

Presented by Dimitrios Diamantopoulos, FM

During the last two months we closed the previews three quarters. District officers can find the relevant statements for the closing of March in the shared folder of this DECM meeting. Officers can study them and come forward with questions in the next days for the Core Team to reply. Please let your club members and club officers know, if they're interested in finance and the finances of our district, that they can prepare questions and many of them could be replied during the DCM.

Also, we reimbursed all the participants of the district conference. So all participants who had already paid got their money back. It was a very smooth procedure thanks to the help of Metaxia, and Jaap and the support of all the participants.

In the statement of the available funds there are funds available. So if there are any actions, projects that you would like to be paid by the district, please come forward to Lorenzo and Aires to study them and approve them.

Finally, district officers are asked to submit their expenses. If there are any expenses from the previous months please submit them during the next days and weeks and don't let them after the mid of June. If they're submitted afterwards they will be reimbursed after two or three months. June expenses can be submitted in July.

14. Administration Report

Presented by Helen Polymerou, AM

Main responsibilities:

- Keeping the meeting minutes
- District correspondence
- Assist district officers when needed

Helen thanked everyone for all the help and support and for the opportunity to serve as Administration Manager.

15. Training for Virtual Elections

Presented by Emilia Fossati, Parliamentarian and Helen Polymerou, AM

A test election will be launched, with voters the participants of today's meeting, in order to demonstrate the use of the tool for virtual elections and to test how it's going to run in a smaller group before running it in DCM.

Participants will receive an email with their credentials to register in the voting platform. After registering they can submit their vote. It's important that the email address the officers are using is an address that they can have access to on a Saturday. In case they are in a corporate club and they don't have access to their email on Saturday, they should register with a different email. Also, the voters must be in the room, at the latest by 10:10. Whoever arrives late won't be able to vote.

In the moment of the election eligible voters will receive an email with their credentials and a link to a virtual ballot. Through Election Runner, the voting platform we are going to use, voters will be redirected to a page with the virtual ballot, where they can fill it as they would a paper ballot. After the voting is completed, the results will be shared.

Frank Kaiser PRM: Request for Information

Only the registered people will receive an email to vote?

Emilia: For today's election only the DEC members will receive the invitation to vote.

We have several people that haven't received it yet.

Frank Kaiser PRM: Request for Information

The sender of the email is you or the voting system?

Helen: The emails are sent through Election Runner.

Frank: I will check the spam folder in case it went there.

Metaxia: Has anyone received? I propose we continue with the meeting and someone will be monitoring. We will see the time that it takes for us to receive and reassess the tool. We will address the issue further down in the meeting.

16. Division Directors Reports

Division A Report presented by Katia Burdet, DivD A

We had some issue during this year, but we had a lot of successes.

We achieved a few goals. Unfortunately, we had no chance to work a lot on mentoring and also on youth leadership program, but we achieved our goal on Growth and Excellence. We had two new clubs and we are close to another two new ones as well. We also lost a corporate club. The Division Conference had great success thanks to our zoom masters and the experience we already had in zoom.

Katia closed by thanking all her ADs for their commitment to supporting their clubs.

Division B Report presented by Dimitrios Diamantopoulos, DivD B

We started this year with five areas in Division B, not four as last year, because we were fulfilling the requirements to form two areas in Bulgaria. That was done in order to give the chance to one more officer to become a district officer and enjoy and learn throughout this experience. It was a good decision because Theodora, our 5th Area Director, learned a lot through this procedure and did her best for her area. During these months all ADs organized club officer trainings, club visits and they were in close contact with the club officers to support them. We had a lot of new club leads and we were preparing for a demo meetings, but due to the coronavirus everything stopped. Bulgaria was, this year, the most dynamic country and a lot of effort was put for new corporate clubs, but all this stopped and some of Bulgaria's clubs turned to weak clubs, especially the corporate ones. We had all around Division B an issue with the corporate clubs. That's why we took the decision to merge the two areas in Bulgaria. Closing Dimitrios thanked all the ADs of Division B for all their efforts.

Division C Report presented by Roland Karius, DivD C

Division C has 12 clubs, 320 members. All division clubs moved to online meetings. The division contest was online. One of its clubs is partially online since 2017. The division's current challenges are the vacancy of C2 Area Director and the fact that we have two weak clubs and one understrength. Division C didn't lose clubs. Three clubs are Presidents Distinguished, three clubs are Distinguished and probably another three will reach Distinguished status.

Division D Report presented by Beatrice Anton, DivD D

Division D has adapted to the new circumstances and most of its clubs meet online. Division officers are enjoying what they are doing and have the energy and enthusiasm to continue. All areas are in a better state than they were at the beginning of the year. The division had three out of four ADs successfully completing their HPLs and did the biggest division conference ever in Division D, with more than 100 people registered and attending. All the clubs have paid on time, which wasn't the case initially. All clubs have at least one new member. Division D is already Presidents Distinguished and we're aiming for all areas to become at least Distinguished.

Beatrice closed her report by thanking everyone for the support and for the opportunity of leading the Division.

Division E Report presented by Giada Sartori, DivD E

Giada opened her presentation by thanking the Division E core and extended team.

Accomplishments of this Toastmaster year:

- Division E is Presidents Distinguished, with 4 Distinguished clubs, 4 Select Distinguished clubs and 4 Presidents Distinguished clubs.
- Improved the transparency and collaboration within the Division E team through monthly division Councils and the use of a division Google Drive.
- Successful Division E Contest

Division E maintained its stability with a good mixture of strong "flagship clubs", weak and understrength clubs, which are all representative of the German and English language. The division still has 21 clubs, one chartered club (Google Toastmaster Club) and two prospect clubs, but unfortunately, didn't make it to have two new chartered clubs and had a membership growth of -13%. The division also didn't manage to spin-off clubs with more than 30 members. Successful activities were carried out from the mentoring program, increasing the pathways adoption and giving workshops for chartered and younger clubs.

The division had two Innovation Lab series and released two semester newsletters.

Also when it comes to the executed strategy activities, the division had an Evaluation Workshop led by Lesley (AD E3), a Speech Boot Camp led by Tim (AD E4) and increased the quality standards of contests with the help of Karina (AD E2). Finally Division E has four new DTMs and four More Advanced Leader awards.

Giada closed her presentation by thanking her team for their support and commitment.

Division F Report presented by Harald Mattenberger, DivD F

Division F had significant changes and challenges during this Toastmaster year.

The division lost the support of two Area Directors, F3 in winter and F2 in spring and had great support from AD F1 (Günter Herold) and the substitute AD for F3, Ingeborg Schaffer.

The transition to online meetings, contests and workshops went very well and the division conference, organized by Martina and her team, was very successful.

The division maintained the same number of clubs and has some new potential corporate clubs. All areas had a combined conference at the end of April, which was held online.

There were several club officer trainings; one is foreseen to be in June, before the next group of officers takes over. Club visits went very well in all areas, with F1 and F3 supporting F2.

Division F had ten Triple Crowns at the Division Conference.

Thanks to the online meetings, there was more exchange between division clubs and much less distance.

17. Alignment Committee Report

Presented by Andreas Geiger, Alignment Chair

The purpose of alignment is to make sure that all areas of the district consist of four to six clubs, to ensure geographic proximity and to enable growth.

The latest figures show that 95% of our clubs paid their dues on time (103 of 108 clubs). There is one new club, Toastmasters Academy Rome, which chartered in the last few days. Division B has some difficulties, with one club low and one ineligible.

The district had 91 clubs on July 2018 and now has 108 clubs and 15 prospective ones.

Two changes are proposed to take place as of July 1st 2020. The reduction of Division B areas from five to four and the creation of a new area for Division E (E6).

Lorenzo Gios PQD: Move a motion to approve the proposal of realignment as presented.

Frank Kaiser PRM: Seconding

Opposition: no

AM: single vote has been placed

Motion has been carried. The Alignment Report as presented will be recommended to the DCM for approval.

18. Leadership Committee Report

Presented by Francesco Fedele, Immediate Past District Director

Nominated for the position of:

- District Director, are Gios Lorenzo and Kuentz Nina Maria
- Program Quality Director, is Shaftacola Lilian
- Club Growth Director, are Diamantopoulos Dimitrios and Fossati Emilia
- Public Relations Manager, are Anton Beatrice and Shaftacola Lilian
- Division Director for Division A, are Gage Alessandra and Tanin Turan
- Division Director for Division B, are Liaropoulou Natalia and Shaftacola Lilian
- Division Director for Division C, is Dümpelmann Ralf
- Division Director for Division D, is Collier Jespersen Jacqueline
- Division Director for Division E, is Kaiser Frank
- Division Director for Division F, is Bruckmüller Andreas

Francesco reminded everyone that a showcase with all candidates will take place on Thursday the 14th of May, at 7:00 CEST. It will be an opportunity for everyone interested to learn more about the roles and ask questions to the candidates.

Francesco also pointed out that today is the last day for the submission of any candidate running from the floor. So far there is one nomination, for the position of Public Relations Manager, from Tarek Desir from Division B. Everyone can view the candidate corner on EasySpeak.

Metaxia: Submissions will be accepted up to tonight. Tomorrow all candidates as presented plus the floor candidates will be announced to everyone with an email. As District executive leaders, we are not allowed to support any candidate. We're supposed to have a neutral position. The candidate showcase is a great opportunity for everyone to observe the leaders, to learn and see who is running as a candidate.

19. Fall/Winter Event 2020

Presented by Lorenzo Gios, PQD and Dagmara Dąbrowska

20. Spring Conference 2021

21. Online Clubs

Open discussion for 6 minutes related to the online clubs, proposed by Günter Herold AD F1, on the previous DECM.

Aires Marques CGD: Seconding

Metaxia: We will start with Günter presenting his proposal.

Günter Herold AD F1: I would like to bring forward the topic to form a committee to write to the Board of Directors for virtual clubs to become part of the districts. There are three reasons for that.

First, due to the circumstances, we need to treat virtual clubs as physical clubs. The COVID-19 crisis has shown that it's important to continue with this format. There are ways in which we can combine online meetings with physical ones and make them be perceived as a full Toastmasters Club.

The second point is, that clubs should be open to everyone from whichever country, to visit and to give feedback, as several visitors we had from around the world who visited clubs from different districts. This would give to everyone the possibility to visit around one hundred and twenty districts, learn from each other and exchange feedback.

Third and last point is that virtual clubs are treated at the moment as something totally separate from the districts. They have their own contests and they don't have access to the mentoring system nor the area and division directors. If they were part of a district, they would offer a great possibility not only on a global scale but also in a regional scale. There are people who are members or are interested to become one, who live on the countryside and do not have a Toastmasters Club nearby. For them, it would be very beneficial to join virtual meetings and at the same time to be able to visit a Toastmasters Club as guest and a fully recognized Toastmaster, when they are in a bigger town, closer to a physical Toastmasters Club.

Metaxia: The motion is to refer to a committee, to draft a report to the Board of Directors, that virtual clubs become part of the respective District.

Sabine Schmelzer AD C1: Request for Information

A report might not be enough to make a change, because it must be put into the rules and regulations that we have. There it's mentioned that virtual clubs are not part of a district. So it needs more looking into the guidelines and bylaws that we have.

Metaxia: It is not within our jurisdiction, as a District Executive Council, to make such changes so we don't have the opportunity to even discuss this topic under that prospective, but we do

have the ability to discuss upon it, if we're going to come forward as a District, as a team of leaders, requesting to the Board of the Directors.

Metaxia: Anyone in favor?

Aires Marques CGD: The trio already tried this in the past and when we were interviewing the candidates for international directors we pushed for this. We should keep insisting.

There is a case in our district of a club that was created by Andreas Geiger, which is fully in our district but we are not able to support it in a proper way, because it's not within our district. It would be beneficial if Toastmasters International allowed districts to have online clubs that can be properly taken care of by the district.

Metaxia: Anyone else that would like to take position?

Beatrice Anton DivD D: The world is moving into a more digitalized direction. We will start working from home as well as our members and our potential ones. The best way to empower and to serve them is by allowing them to develop the necessary skills, in a safe environment, by practicing Toastmasters, not only physically but also online.

Alessandra Gage AD A3: request for information

If we were to proceed with this, would it impact the size of the areas in terms of maximum number of clubs per area?

Metaxia: We don't know the answer to that. It will go under discussion to the Board of Directors. Is there any opposition to this motion? Anyone in favor?

Sabine Schmelzer AD C1: In favor

Metaxia: Closing the floor from discussion.

Opposition: no

AM: single vote has been placed

Motion has been carried. Motion to reference to a committee to draft a report towards the Board of Directors, that virtual clubs become part of the respective district, has been approved.

22. New business

Our new District Executive Council officers are:

- Dimitrios Diamantopoulos, who has been appointed as Finance Manager
- Karina Castella, who has been appointed as E2 Area Director
- Ingeborg Schaffer, who has been appointed as F3 Area Director.

These area directors and the core team member need to be approved by the DECM to be in position.

Francesco Fedele IPDD: move to approve the appointment of the District officers as mentioned

Lorenzo Gios PQD: Seconding

Opposition: no

AM: single vote has been placed

Motion has been carried. We do have acknowledged the area directors and finance manager officially as our district executive council members.

Metaxia: Any other business?

Emilia: Tim (AD E4) raised an important point we should mention. He has asked about the proxy and the governing procedure. We are not allowed to assign proxy for online elections. So it's very important that District Officers inform all club presidents and VPEs, that they must join the meeting in order to vote. The same applies for the Area and Division Directors. As for the weighted votes, we have chosen Election Runner because it allows to weight the votes of the people who have have multiple roles.

23. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned for September.