

# Continuity: are transitions enough?

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II International Strategy Meeting

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# Let's start with the basics

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Purpose of the workshop:

- Discuss how to make our successors better than we are.

How:

- 1) Approach what we lacked at the beginning of our terms;
- 2) Think of what we can do to ensure that our successors are prepared;
- 3) See what other associations are doing.

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# So!

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What were we missing in August?

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# The answers depend...

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- Very limited idea of what our daily tasks would be;
- Lack of practical knowledge of how our position functions;
- Wrong assessments of the needs of the National Board/National Network;
- Wrong assessment of how feasible our action plans were;

# Then, how to get it?

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- Develop the way transitions are made
  - Problem: transitions tend to be theoretical and more of knowledge transition. A practical approach is not often taken, meaning that during the first months of the term, our successors will still be in a learning process.
- Creating requirements for Officers to run to National Board positions:
  - Ex: nr. of NCMs attended, Flagships organised, positions in the National Team.
- Any other ideas?

# Now then!

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What do we want from our successors?

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# We want the obvious:

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- Someone knowledgeable about ELSA X;
- Someone with experience with the tasks of our positions;
- Someone willing to put in the time;
- Someone willing to listen and to learn.



# But we also want a bit more:

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- Someone willing to continue the work of previous terms (not just ours!);
- Someone looking out for the best for ELSA (even if with a different idea from ours);





# And we also have a list of what we do not want:

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- Lack of preparation or dedication;
- Someone with the wrong idea of what the NB is when running;
- An approach that puts past achievements in jeopardy;
- Elections based on popularity and not skill.

# But...

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Are we entitled to want something from our successors?

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# Let's start with a round of questions:

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- 1) Who is the person that knows better your position and what your daily tasks are?
  - a) We really hope you answer yourselves...
  - b) Other fair answer: predecessors (but not completely)
- 2) Does your national network know what you actually do?
  - a) More importantly: do they know how to do it?
  - b) Even more importantly: do they know why you do it?
- 3) Do your Local Groups understand the needs of the entire national Network?
  - a) They are Locals - they tend to focus on their own needs (and rightfully so);
  - b) Even if they know, do they know what it takes to tackle those needs?
  - c) No? Then who does?
- 4) Did you know, when running, what you were getting yourself into?
  - a) Do you think part of action plan is not as feasible as you thought? At least in the same timeframe?
  - b) Look at your hypothetical successors - do you think they know what they will have to do?

# That being said:

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Who knows your position the best and the needs of the Network?

- You

Who will be your successor?

- Not you (most likely)
- Meaning: someone creating an action plan for a position they don't fully understand

Who will decide on your successor?

- Not you - your National Council
- Meaning: someone voting for a position they don't fully understand

Do you have any say in this process?

- No

# Then what you are saying is...

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- 1) The person that runs for a position doesn't fully understand what they are running for;
- 2) Your National Councils also don't fully understand what they are voting on;
- 3) The people that actually know what is happening have no say in the matter.

# But you were saying you are entitled...

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We disagree. Our election systems (generally) do not include that. This means:

- You are not entitled to expect your successor to continue your and your predecessors' work;
- You are not entitled to expect your successor to focus on what you think is good for your Network;
- You are not entitled to speak;
- You are not entitled to prepare and guide them;
- You are only entitled to silently watch.



**Do you think this is the best outcome  
for your Networks?**

# We tried to predict your answers:

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No, because:

- In the past, people ran for the wrong reasons/priorities;
- In the past, people that ran were not qualified;
- In the past we lost information and we had to start from the beginning;
- When the term started, I felt lost even after transition/I had no idea what working in a National Board meant;
- In the past projects were lost due to the lack of care;
- Etc...

No, but:

- Democracy is important: the National Councils must decide and people must be free to run;
- Transition is important: the lack of knowledge is fixed by the transition period;
- Impartiality is important: the National Board should be impartial on their successors to avoid problems in continuity;
- We probably missed some...



# And we fully disagree.

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Just kidding. We agree with you.

But that does not mean that nothing should be done, since if succession is done poorly, we lose a year (if not years) of work:

1. Democracy - The last decision should always be made by the National Councils. But does that mean National Boards cannot prepare successors?
2. Transition - Transitions do not fix everything, as most of the time they are short and not practical. After yours, did you feel fully prepared for the term?
3. Neutrality - Impartiality does not mean passivity.

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**What can be done without going too far?**

# Let's take a practical example

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Other Brussels-based Associations have some structures in place to prepare candidates.

Procedure:

- “Candidates’ Academy”;
- Recommendation by Board, Alumni, etc;
- The results are submitted to the Council as a recommendation;
- The Council interviews and votes on the candidates.

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# What if...

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We suggested this for the international elections?

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# Proposal

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- IB opens a call for applications so that those interested get:
  - Theoretical knowledge - what is the situation of that IB position;
  - Practical knowledge - what does that IB member do daily;
  - Strategic knowledge - what does that Area need in the future to develop;
- Candidates work with their IB member, through a period of time.
  - All candidates get the **same** assistance and practical tasks
- After going through the “Academy”, applicants may run for the International Board.
  - They have to prepare candidacy materials, interviews and be elected as usual

# How do you think we can make successions better?

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Time for Q/A

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