

Dear all,

I would like to start with a big **Thank you!** to all those who have put in so much time, passion and energy into the European Juggling Association over the last year. There have been many, and I will certainly fail to remember them all here, but at the very least, I want to name a few.

The EJC Hanko team around Leo and Jacob, who remained positive until the last day!

The Executive Committee (XC), namely - in alphabetical order - Bubba (Treasurer), Kamil (IT & Infrastructure), Linde (Pre-Reg), Mittens (Secretary), and Simi (Advisor). Thank you for all your energy, commitment and work!

Those on the European Juggling Association's Board, who have been at so many more Board meetings this year than previously, and who have contributed a lot in the past year! You know who you are!

The fantastic bid teams from Ireland and France, who bore with us while we were trying to make the best of this XC's first pre-screening process and who produced great bids!

Last, but certainly not least, the VEJC team, many of which are also Board members, and who organised this event with passion and skill. By the time of writing this, the event has not happened yet, but I am certainly looking forward to it!

There are many more who deserve thanks for their efforts and support; if you are one of them, please know that you are appreciated!

Thinking back on the year, we've been incredibly busy: For one, of course, there has been COVID. Trying to organise one of the largest international and volunteer-run juggling events in a pandemic world may be one of the hardest tasks there is, and we've done our best to support the EJC teams in Hanko and Tres Cantos. They have done incredibly well, even if for Hanko there couldn't be a happy end. You all are amazing!

But it's not just because of the pandemic that we've been busy. We've increased the number of Board meetings from one or two per year to eight; we organised a VEJC; and we've begun important conversations about the future of the European Juggling Association.

This XC is ambitious: We want us and the European Juggling Association to be the best versions of ourselves. This is a difficult task, not the least because it requires all of us to have a shared vision of what this future best version in a changed world is supposed to look like. We have only begun these conversations, and we invite everyone to contribute. We're planning an event on this during the VEJC - please join - and we're thinking about other options to include many voices. Please sign up to our newsletter to stay tuned, and if you want to get in touch with us directly, drop us a line at [directors@eja.net](mailto:directors@eja.net). We'd love to hear from you!

Jonas Fathy

# The Year in Review

## August 2020 - Annual Board meeting

Simi's term as **Treasurer** ended, and Bubba stepped forward and was elected for a term of three years.

Ron stepped down from his role as **President** due to personal reasons, having to focus on his family and professional work during the pandemic. Jonas was elected for the rest of the term (2 years).

A big thank you to both for their hard work over the past years!

## September & October 2020

**EJC Hanko:** The XC began to meet with the EJC Hanko team almost bi-weekly to support the EJC with thinking and planning in times of uncertainty. We also explored what financial support the European Juggling Association could offer in light of the significant risks to the event.

**EJC Tres Cantos:** The XC met with the EJC Tres Cantos team to see how they are doing and support with thinking and planning around risk management, the budget and other things.

**Pre-registration System:** To improve our pre-registration system, the XC met with Piet van Steen from the Stichting NJF. The NJF had been using a specific system successfully for a few years in support of national conventions in the Netherlands. This option seemed to work well, is affordable and seemed to provide all the functionality needed for a good prereg system for an EJC!

**Strategy:** The Board met and we kicked off the strategic planning process with conversations about the European Juggling Association's identity, its current state and environment, and what long-term goals could be.

## November & December 2020

**EJC Hanko:** Biweekly meetings with the EJC Hanko team continued. The EJC team worked diligently on budgets and contingency plans for various scenarios. We agreed to push prereg back to the latest possible date to avoid unnecessary fees for jugglers and the EJC. Instead, we agreed to launch a fundraising campaign for a specific part of the EJC (the gala), to garner support and get the excitement up.

**Strategy:** At Board, we finalised the first version of the strategy and had various conversations about what the European Juggling Association could or should look like.

**Additional support:** We had already recognised that the XC needed more help and people-power. To fill a gap, we drafted a job description for an IT & Infrastructure Manager, and recruited Kamil. From then on, the XC met in a constellation of 5 people instead of 4!

## January & February 2021

**EJC Hanko:** Biweekly meetings with the EJC Hanko team continued. The situation became increasingly difficult in Finland, but the team held up morale as well as they could! To support them in the uncertain environment, the Board signed off a risk-loan for the EJC Hanko team.

**Pre-registration System:** After exploring options for pre-registration systems that would fit the complex needs of the EJC since autumn, we agreed that the system that the NJF showed us would likely be a good and appropriate system, and started to develop it for the EJC Hanko.

**Future EJCs:** We started the call for future EJC bids to get in touch with the XC. Three bid-teams came forward: Ireland, who had already been pre-screened in 2019; France; and Portugal. We met in February to get to know each other and agree on next steps.

**Diversity & Inclusion:** The XC, led by Bubba on this topic, started conversations about how to increase and improve the diversity and inclusion practice at the European Juggling Association.

**Organisational Structure:** We began discussions around what a future European Juggling Association could look like, including the proposition to become a full membership organisation (with free membership, and membership as a method to increase transparency and inclusion). However, the Board remained split on whether this would be a positive development or not.

## March & April 2021

**EJC Hanko:** Eventually, the uncertainty became too big and the EJC Hanko team had to call off the event, even though they had done everything in their power to prevent that from happening. After over 12 months of trying to organise an EJC in a pandemic environment, and 24 months overall, the team was worn out. There would, unfortunately, be no EJC in Hanko in the near future.

**VEJC:** However, nobody wanted another year without any sort of EJC, and so the European Juggling Association and EJC Hanko team joined forces to organise the first Virtual EJC - the VEJC, with a gala show organised and streamed from Finland. This was a new field for all involved, but we were determined. This would also allow us to test the new prereg system and gain experience with it for future events, and it would allow us to hold EJC elections for 2023.

**EJC Handbook:** We began some work with Garry Rossiter, one of our Board members and an experienced organiser, to progress the unfinished EJC handbook.

**Financial Future:** Alongside this, Bubba started on a forward looking analysis of our finances. His Treasurer's report will provide more information on this. Over the next few months, we would speak about ways to make the European Juggling Association more financially sustainable, so that we would continue to be able to support future EJs.

## May & June 2021

The work on the European Juggling Association's financial future, on the VEJC, and on the election of an EJC team for 2023 continued. This took almost all our resources, and we had to stop work on most other projects (such as recruiting more volunteers for, for example, the brand work), except:

**EJC Tres Cantos:** The XC and the EJC Tres Cantos team met to work through the budget and support the Tres Cantos team with planning. We also had first conversations about pre-registration, and will take next steps as soon as the lessons from the VEJC are in!

**Legal changes in the Netherlands & Organisational Structure:** However, one other thing we had to pay attention to: In July 2021, Dutch law will introduce WBTR, a law that is meant to improve governance and accountability of not-for-profit organisations. In order to comply with the law, we will have to change aspects of our organisational structure as it does have implications for the liability of Board members and other aspects. This echoes our strategic goal around organisational structure, but adds further importance to it.

## July 2021

The **VEJC** happens! All our focus is on this event - Discord, Prereg, Workshops, Volunteers, Gala, and more - as well as our very first virtual General Assembly and elections!

# Looking Ahead - A Strategy on Two Pages

## Who we are

We believe in the power of juggling and performing arts to connect people across borders and differences, creating beautiful and joyful moments together. We enable others to organise joyful events, first and foremost the European Juggling Convention.

In our work, these things are important to us:

**Connection:** We bring people together for meaningful exchanges.

**Diversity:** We value differences and the challenges they bring because they make us better.

**Participation:** We actively enable others to participate in our work and create their own work.

**Joy:** We create joyful moments.

## Our ambitions...

...for the difference we make.

Events we support continue to bring joy, and to a wider variety of people: Not only do EJC's survive the pandemic, but we also support other events, especially in less affluent places. More people from a wider variety of countries know about the European Juggling Association and experience the joy of juggling events it supports.

...for our organisation.

We are an organisation that delivers on its promises: When we decide to start a project, we either complete it or consciously choose not to for a good reason. Our knowledge and resources are accessible in a way that is useful for those accessing them. We are financially healthy and have enough resources to support our impact ambition sustainably.

## Our strategic goals

### 0) Recruit and support EJC teams

We will continue to recruit and support current and future EJC teams.

### 1) Create an organisational structure that is structurally independent (of the EJC, for the benefit of the continuity of the EJC)

We will build a structure that remains functional and stable even if the EJC is under threat, in order to provide stability and support to the EJC in the long-run.

## 2) Create independent income streams

We will build income streams other than surplus from EJsCs. This will further increase its stability and ability to support EJsCs.

## 3) Improve the visibility and attractiveness of the EJA

We will become more visible and attractive for jugglers in order to generate more resources for EJsCs.

## 4) Improve internal systems and processes

We will improve its internal practices and processes, being more efficient and reducing frustration for its people.

## 5) Make the EJA's knowledge & information more accessible to the public and potential future EJC teams

We will create and collate resources that make the organisation of juggling events (and specifically the EJC) easier and more attractive.