**General Assembly of the Club of Rome – EU Chapter (‘CoR-EU’), 25 June 2020**
**Summary of the reactions and discussions**

*The present document is an (important) appendix to the ‘Minutes of the Board Meeting’ of 25/6/2020. It does not cover the ‘administrative’ topics (financials, Members and Board composition) to be found in the Minutes neither the information covering the period up to 25/6/2020 contained in the ‘Highlights of 2019/2020’ but it answers questions of clarifications or comments/criticism risen during the discussion. It concentrates on the vision and the action for the coming months (regrouped under a few themes suggested in Roland’s slides).*

Like many ‘organisations’, the CoR-EU[[1]](#footnote-1) faces a main challenge.
When recognizing some mega-trends (networks replacing structures, decentralisation and co-construction, new tools available, the Youth taking charge? ….), it becomes obvious that we **need/want to adapt.** But the key question remains: HOW? A process involving ALL members has started under the name ‘Agora’ (the report of the meeting of 2 April 2020 is available).
Interrupted by the Covid-19, it will resume after the holydays and a Members’ event will enable us to discuss openly the best manner to implement the vision and values of the CoR-EU (as defined in the statutes) which remain unchanged!

**A. Positioning of the CoR-EU in the Club of Rome (‘CoR’) network**
**A.1. Info exchange in the Network**The president of a ‘national’ Chapter has access to the ‘google group’ of the Club of Rome. The Board Members did not want to be in copy of all the ‘chats’ but they appreciate receiving the most interesting information and documents. This principle can be extended to our Members via the newsletters, the publication on our website of key articles or by simple links to the website of the CoR : <https://clubofrome.org/>

**A.2. How do we contribute to the CoR objectives?**By fulfilling all our different roles. As our name clearly indicates, and thanks to our location, the priority is to interact with the European institutions (see point B here-under).
This happens in close cooperation with the Club of Rome, more than ever since Sandrine Dixson-Declève became Co-Chair of the CoR which established a ‘Brussels office’ in February 2020.
But this does not prevent us, to the contrary, from playing other roles, in full synergy with the first one : 1. act on Belgian authorities and stakeholders to push the European agenda and 2. offer our services (including the competences and introductions of our Members) to the CoR and to the other Chapters of the CoR active in the EU.
The possibility for the CoR-EU to solicit for grants from the EU was also mentioned. It is not an easy task and requires a professional approach. It will be looked at in cooperation with the CoR, the other Chapters as well as experienced partners.

**A.3. Role towards other EU Chapters?**The EU Chapter is also ideally placed to encourage the CoR national Chapters to gain national government’s support for ambitious EU policies, such as the EU Green Deal. The idea is to establish regular contacts with the Chapters interested in EU Policies, in line with the CoR, in order to guarantee the flow of information and agree on the strategy and the tactics to be implemented.
As a logical consequence of the creation of an Office of the Club of Rome in Brussels (at Triodos Headquarters), the CoR-EU will move its purely administrative address to the same address (Rue Haute, 139). This will be done when we modify our statutes to comply with the new regulation. The CoR-EU thanks the IUCN for having hosted it ‘administratively’ since its creation.

**B. Do we agree that CoR-EU has a ‘dual’ function (90%EU and 10% BE)?**If so, how do we best implement both functions?
Thanks to Mark Dubrulle’s mail and the worried reactions of a few Members, Roland had the opportunity to confirm that the CoR-EU carries its name proudly and according to the statutes.
Working with the EU covers 3 aspects : the Commission is 100% EU ; the Parliament is also nearly 100% but lobbying the Belgian MP’s is also a BE issue ; working at the level of the Council is undoubtedly a ‘national’ job as well. Whatever the percentages, the CoR-EU is primarily active at EU level but does not neglect the BE level.
According to the ‘chat’, the Members were satisfied with the clarification and the idea that we would do a much better job by increasing the cooperation with the CoR and the European Chapters.
Peter Schellinck: « *with what is happening as a consequence of the corona-crisis, we will need to address two key issues: a new economic model based on the Green Deal and the SDG’s and a societal remodelling in regional areas whilst securing the EU project to avoid disintegration* ».

**C. Decentralise our working ; promote the work of the Members**.
As an introduction, a comment from Board Member Jorn Verbeeck: « *the decentralised approach is an answer to the complex challenge, so coordination and cooperation are key - but often connecting a long term vision and tangible efforts are a promising start to make it also hands-on...* »

**C.1. Appoint ‘coordinators’**
The CoR-EU is not a structured organisation with specialised staff. But it possesses enormous strengths thanks to its qualitative membership (active citizens from various Member states, Belgians in contact with the EU institutions). Mobilising these strengths is a key-objective.
We are looking for volunteers, experienced members who are ready to organise and manage a group of members willing to work on one of the 5 CoR priorities, the so-called ‘Hubs’ : climate change, finance, new economics, emerging new civilisation initiative and youth. Other topics like agri/food can be added to the list.
The coordinators would work closely with the Board of the CoR-EU and with the person in charge at CoR level.

**C.2. Projects, conferences, tutorials,**Next to this coordination of permanent thematic topics, there is room and need for transversal and systemic approaches.
It would be a shame not to disseminate the knowledge available within our membership, by using the many new tools available (see point F. here-under). It could result in interesting discussions and proposals which could then be shared as ‘best practices’ with our colleagues in the CoR network.
Several subjects have been proposed during the meeting (see also under point F.):

a) Jacques de Gerlache reminded that *the DNA of the CoR is the integration of a systemic dimension in the methodological thinking and management. This is more important than ever while this lack of systemic dimension explains most of the failure to manage our complex and irreducible societal issues*. A 5’ introduction to systemic thinking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=BE&v=hxWYczOoUzI>.
Jacques and Patrick Corsi have agreed to propose a seminar to a group of interested Members.

b) Other members mentioned the necessity of looking at the systemic transformation of public institutions. Patricia Scherer proposed to help with the preparation for participatory interactive meetings, starting with this one.

**C.3. Cooperations with other groups, …**

. Nearly all Members favour the cooperation with other organisations as they see the added value from and to the Club of Rome when we work with colleagues having similar goals.
Otherwise, we will hear a cacophony instead of music and fail to achieve any result.

. The example of the successful webinar co-organisation with ‘The Shift’ has been mentioned.

. The connections with the Youth should be developed. Certainly with JEE (Junior Enterprises Europe) with which we already have established a two way street (we invite them to our events ; they take us in the jury for their ‘excellence awards’).
Students from AIESEC and the young Belgian supporters of <https://theshiftproject.org/> were also mentioned.

. It was also suggested to increase our contacts with the business federations.

. Daniel Schaubacher suggested to approach Princess Elisabeth in order to propose her to become Honorary Chairwoman of the CoR-EU.

**D. Offer a better visibility to our Members**

. The first and obvious action is to make sure that the lists of the various categories of Members published on our website are correct and complete. We are working internally with spreadsheets to keep an up-dated information on our Members. But we have decided to use the lists on the website as the only ‘authentic’ ones. Which means that you are key in the process by checking the data on <https://www.clubofrome.eu/organisation> and advising us at info@clubofrome.eu of any error or need/desire to amend the entry (name only or with title and/or organisation).
A newsletter will be sent shortly to our Members asking for their eventual improvements of the mentions in the database.

. As explained, we want to offer to our active Members the possibility to publish their work related to the activities of the Club on our website. According to the nature and scope of the document provided, it will be placed under <https://www.clubofrome.eu/articles-by-our-members> or <https://www.clubofrome.eu/publications-of-our-members>
NB : there is a preference for material written in English but we publish texts in FR or NL as well.

**E. Other topics covered**

**. Content**The AGM is not the place to discuss content in detail. Worthwhile though to mention two interrelated comments made by Members :
Leida Rijnhout: acknowledge planetary boundaries, resource and energy-justice (**Sufficiency**) and social innovation
Thomas Arnold recommends this reading on ‘**Affluence**’ and the need of far-reaching lifestyle changes to complement technological advancements : <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-16941-y>

**. Choice of the Tool.**We had opted for the Zoom ‘webinar’ option rather than the Zoom ‘meeting’ one. Although it worked well, this choice can be questioned as the fact that we do not see the participants to a webinar reduces the interaction with them (which certainly is not the intention!). Fair critics on the fact that the names were not displayed in the ‘chat’.
Roland chose to test unanimity for the administrative voting sessions (accounts, discharges,…). The voting sessions for the election of Béatrice Richez-Baum (a ‘personal’ matter requiring a secret vote) proved to work perfectly and very easily. It could/should have been used for all votes (will be the case next time).

**. Communication**Bernard Mazijn and Jorn Verbeeck brought to the attention of all members that we have a LinkedIn account (look for <https://www.linkedin.com/company/club-of-rome-eu-chapter/?viewAsMember=true>) and a Twitter account (see @ClubofRomeEU).
Please follow us ! You can 'Like' or 'Share'/'Retweet' our messages. By doing so we create a snowball effect for our messages/announcements. Thank you for that.

**. Board Members :**Chris Vanden Bilcke explains why he has to make a step back for medical reasons. He quits the Board but will remain a dedicated Member. Many colleagues congratulate him for the done, especially for his great work in this transition and wish him the best.

**F. Next on the agenda**

**. 7 July**: Sergi C. is organising a webinar with the European National Chapters. Sandrine DD will participate. The goal is to mutually reinforce our work in order to push for an ambitious implementation if the EU Green Deal.

**. 8 October : c**ombined event Palace of the Academies:
- AM: **Tribute to Raoul Weiler**, co-founder of the EU Chapter, organised by Mark Dubrulle.
- PM : ‘**From Farm to Fork**, Sustainable Food Systems and the EU Green Deal’, a high level conference-debate co-organised with IPES-Food and Agroecology Europe. The 3 Directors-general from Agri, Health and Envi will participate.

. End of September/early **October (1/10 to be confirmed)**
**Second ‘Agora meeting’** : ‘ALL’ members will discuss their own role(s) in contributing to the vision and objectives of the CoR-EU. We will use all the data available: summary of Agora meeting of 2 April (with results of the members’ survey), suggestions made by the Working Group, comments from today,… in order to be coherent with points A. and B., Sandrine DD and representatives of the European National Chapters will be present.

. The ‘**Conversation tables**’ will restart in September (candidates to take over from Chris VDB are welcome)

. End of October/early **November (exact date to be confirmed)**
First event of the **new “Innovation for Sustainability” Web-Conference series**: Board Member Cristina Vicini will host a series of web-conferences (panel+Q&A from the audience) on “Innovation for Sustainability” (including industrial, technological, societal, governance-related, systemic, public sector-related, new generations, etc. …) gathering high level panelists from the various stakeholders’ communities and including expert COR-EU members around the addressed topics. It could result in ‘best practices’ to be published quarterly and shared in the network.
*NB: All members interested in joining the web-conferences team, in being invited as a panelist and/or in proposing discussion topics and panelists are encouraged to reach out to Cristina Vicini.*

**. Access to ‘Events on line’ organised by other National Chapters**.
Example: USA COR, ZOOM conference/workshop on “Wellbeing and growth”, with the participation of David Korten (July/August). Also programme of CoR-Canada.
Interested? Just mention it to info@clubofrome.eu

**. Webinar Tool to be used by our Members**.
Call to our Members: “Take the lead to organise a Lecture, a Debate, a Seminar,…”
Yonh Oh is pleased to announce that we plan to launch the CoR-EU’s webinar series.
You have an idea to share that you believe will contribute to implement the vision of the Club of Rome. We will assist you to realize it by organising two info-sessions with the Q&A:
**1st session: 13:00 – 14:00, 23 July 2020 (Thursday)
2nd session: 13:00 – 14:00, 10 September 2020 (Thursday).**Enquiries may be sent directly to Yong at treasurer@clubofrome.eu.

**G. Appendix
.** List of participants
. Info : some reading here <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-16941-y>

1. This ‘acronym’ will be used in this text although, with reason and as observed by a few Members, it can create a confusion for those used to the acronym of the ‘Committee of Regions’ from the European Union! [↑](#footnote-ref-1)