



NIAS

Netherlands Institute
for Advanced Study
in the Humanities
and Social Sciences

Minutes - General Assembly of Members of the NIAS Fellows Association

Wednesday 18 June, 15:00 – 16:00 (CET), online (Microsoft Teams)

NFA Board:

Aysenur Korkmaz (chair)
Matthew Hoyer (secretary)
Emmanuel Berger (treasurer)
Jacob Thaisen (board member; online)
Jan Willem Duyvendak (Director NIAS)
René Biemans (NIAS staff support member)

Not present: María Arche (board member)

Attendees:

Trinette Zevevic-Boulogne
Maria van Daalen
Shengyu Wang
Letezia Chiappini
Andrés Vélez Posada
Wout Troost
Joseph Bauman (online)
Tetiana Gardashuk (online)
Dindy van Maanen (online)
Arvydas Guogis (online)

Proxies:

None

The agenda:

1. Appointment of chairman and secretary of the meeting
 2. Opening of the meeting
 3. Establishment of attendees present or represented at the meeting
 4. Minutes of the General Assembly in 2024
 5. Minutes of the Extraordinary General Assembly in February 2025
 6. Financial Report 2024. Report of the Auditing Committee (NFA – Financial Report 2024)
 7. Appointment of a New Auditing Committee
 8. Appointment of the new treasurer (voting item)
 9. NFA Workplan 2025-2028
 - a. Setting up NFA Committees (incl. Academic Freedom Committee)
 - b. Creating the NFA Blue Sky Fellowship
 10. Report by the Golestan Foundation
 11. This year at the NFA
 12. This year at NIAS
 13. Questions and answers
 14. Any other matters
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1. Appointment of chairman and secretary of the meeting

Aysenur Korkmaz (chair of the NFA board) serves as chair to the meeting. Matthew Hoyer (secretary of the NFA board) serves as secretary to the meeting.

2. Opening of the meeting

Aysenur Korkmaz (AK/chair) opens the meeting at 15:05 (CET). She introduces her fellow board members present at the meeting (see above). She also points to the agenda of the meeting plus the documents to be discussed; all members had received these beforehand by email, and these were available online (NIAS website) and as handout to all members physically present.

3. Establishment of attendees present or represented at the meeting

The chair asks René Biemans (RB/NIAS staff support member to the NFA board) to establish all attendees present, both physically and online, and by proxy. See list above.

Important notice: due to technical issues online attendees had no sound and image during agenda points 1, 2 and 3. These were fully reiterated for all online attendees by Aysenur Korkmaz after these issues were solved.

4. Minutes of the General Assembly in 2024

The chair asks all attendees to state any questions or objections. There were no questions and no objections. The minutes of 2024's General Assembly were thus approved.

5. Minutes of the Extraordinary General Assembly in February 2025

The chair briefly reiterates the goal of the Extraordinary General Assembly in February: to appoint new board members to replace those stepping down (Philip Spinhoven as chair, Roxane Farmanfarmanian as secretary). For a full report, please check the minutes of the Extraordinary General Assembly.

The chair asks all attendees to state any questions or objections. There were no questions and no objections. The minutes of February 2025's Extraordinary General Assembly were thus approved.

6. Financial Report 2024. Report of the Auditing Committee (NFA – Financial Report 2024)

Emmanuel Berger (EB/treasurer) walks through 2024's Financial Report with all attendees. What strikes is the high bank fees of the NFA's German bank account. In 2025 this German bank account will be replaced by a Dutch bank account. The treasurer states that in 2024 26 new



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members joined the NFA, as opposed to 22 in 2023. The NFA's financial situation is healthy due to low expenses.

Emmanuel states that the Auditing Committee has approved the Financial Report of 2024. The committee consists of Josep Quer (did not attend) and Joe Bauman (attended online). Joe Bauman confirms the committee's approval. None of the attendees has questions or objections; thus the financial report was also approved by the General Assembly.

7. Appointment of a New Auditing Committee

The treasurer states that Josep Quer, who joined the committee in 2025, will stay join. However, Joe Bauman will step down after being on the committee for three years. Due to Joe Bauman stepping down as member of the Financial Review Committee the board will start actively looking for a new member to this committee to replace him.

8. Appointment of the new treasurer (voting item)

Emmanuel Berger will step down this year as treasurer after serving on the board for four years. The chair thanks him for his years of service and for all his work for the NFA.

Mark de Rooij (year group 2024-2025, semester 1) was the candidate to become the new treasurer of the NFA. Because Mark had to attend a conference abroad, he could not attend the meeting. Mark's bio and his motivation were shared with all members before the meeting. Letizia Chiappini, who is from the same year group as Mark, spoke on his behalf by reading his bio and motivation to all attendees.

The chair asks all attendees to vote. Voting method:

- Those physically present raise hand if yes
- Those online present: camera on = yes, camera off = no

The vote was a unanimous yes, which means Mark de Rooij was officially elected new treasurer of the NFA. Mark will cooperate closely with Emmanuel to take over the latter's role as treasurer this year.

9. NFA Workplan 2025-2028

The chair summarises the NFA workplan and mentions its goals.

9a. Setting up NFA Committees (incl. Academic Freedom Committee)

The chair introduces the NFA's ambition to set up committees (of members; thematic, geographical, cohort etc.). NIAS has stated its wish for an Academic Freedom Committee. Aysenur invites Jan Willem Duyvendak (JW/Director NIAS) to elaborate on this committee.

Jan Willem starts by stating that the theme 'Academic Freedom' most likely needs no introduction, seen the worldwide threats to it. NIAS has stepped up by providing a safe haven for



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scholars. Also, NIAS has published a book on it, and, Academic Freedom, has been the theme of the Opening of the Academic Year (OAY) 2024-2025 (4 September 2024 at Waalse Kerk) with keynote speaker Michael Ignatieff. Jan Willems tells that During the OAY 2025-2026 (3 September 2025 at Waalse Kerk) Claudine Gay will be the keynote speaker.

Jan Willem reports that NIAS is currently looking for funds, and that the institute is in talks with the Royal Academy (KNAW) to explore the possibility of fellows studying Academic Freedom for more than one year. He tells that NIAS previously thought about having this done by staff members but now specifically is seeking for an Academic Freedom fellowship of more than one year due to the fact that fellows' stipends are not taxed (and staff members' salaries of course are).

Jan Willem explains that setting up an Academic Freedoms Committee within the NFA, is seen by NIAS as an important means for former and current fellows to share experiences and to (re)connect with other (former) fellows. Jan Willem envisions an interactive map with contributions from fellows worldwide.

There were two questions on the Academic Freedom Committee:

Q1. Maria van Daalen ask if she might be overly cautious, because she sees the dangers for some scholars to share (negative) experience on this topic on an open platform

A1. Jan Willem answers that there would indeed be the risk of exposing people, but that we (NIAS and the academic community as a whole) need the knowledge and experiences of those involved to better understand the dynamics, and to improve on being able to provide a safe haven. Jan Willem does understand that "we at NIAS" are speaking from a privileged position.

Q2. Matthew Hoyer asks about the option for NIAS to apply for Dutch academic grants, specifically aimed at an Academic Freedom fellowship to last several years, or the possibility of in kind contribution to NIAS by universities or other institutions.

Q2. Jan Willem answers that this is indeed possible.

9b. Creating the NFA Blue Sky Fellowship

Aysenur explains about the NFA's ambition to fully sponsor a NIAS fellowship in the future, the NFA Blue Sky Fellowship. This is a grand ambition as it requires a growth in members, but more specifically this means that the NFA will have to look for funding; funding amongst the NFA members but more importantly within the broader network that the NFA members have to offer.

Aysenur asks the attendees to think about any possible options for funding. The NFA will actively seek advice from its members, e.g. by newsletter.

10. Report by the Golestan Foundation

Joe Bauman (present online; treasurer of the Golestan Foundations) reports on 2024 for the Golestan Foundation. Joe explains that pre-covid the foundation would sponsor one fellowship at NIAS per year. Covid caused stagnation and eventually a short "hibernation" from which the foundation has now reemerged. During the first semester of 2024-2025 Antoine (Toine) Pieters



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(Program director of History and Philosophy of Science at the Freudenthal Institute, Faculty of Science, Utrecht University) was the Golestan fellow at NIAS.

The objective for the coming years is to again sponsor one NIAS fellowship per year. Dr. Luc Coffeng (chair Golestan Foundation) and Dr. Franjo Weissing (secretary Golestan Foundation) are responsible for the selection of candidates.

11. This year at the NFA

Matthew Hoye (MH/secretary) reports on the past year at the NFA. Philip Spinhoven stepped down as chair, Aysenur Korkmaz became the new chair. Roxane Farmanfarmanian, who alongside Philip Spinhoven and Emmanuel Berger, later joined by Jacob Thaisen, formed the heart of the NFA board, stepped down as secretary with Matthew replacing her. María Arche became a new board member, completing the board and making it ready for the next few years. Matthew thanks all board members who have stepped down for their service and work for the NFA.

Matthew candidly asks Emmanuel if he perhaps would like to join the Auditing Committee now that he is stepping down as treasurer.

Matthew also reports on the success of the 'Summer Stays' for former fellows. In 2024 nine former fellows signed up and revisited NIAS in July and August. In 2025 ten former fellows have signed up for a Summer Stay.

12. This year at NIAS

Jan Willem Duyvendak reports on the past year at NIAS. He starts by thanking the former and the new members of the board. At the time of the meeting the penultimate week of semester 2 of 2024-2025 is ongoing. Jan Willem tells about the mainly positive evaluations that the NIAS staff has received from fellows. Another positive note is that by academic year 2025-2026 NIAS raises its stipends (expect those for a Dutch University Grant; DUG) from € 2500 to € 3500 per month. Jan Willem also states that NIAS will focus on providing better/more childcare services to fellows with young children.

The SEP (Self Evaluation Protocol) took place in November of 2024. The report was not yet available, but Jan Willem reported that, overall, it was extremely positive; e.g. highlighting the diversity of NIAS' fellows cohorts and the seminars by fellows.

One worry of the SEP-committee was the fact that not all Dutch universities are represented at NIAS. A worry that NIAS shares and will address accordingly. In the past the University of Leiden was overrepresented (proximity to Wassenaar, NIAS' former location), currently the University of Amsterdam (UvA) is overrepresented (proximity to NIAS' current location).

A reason for some universities not being represented could be that the DUG-stipend might be too low (see above). The aim is to raise this stipend to the level of all other stipends by 2026-2027. Another positive note is that NIAS has contracted both UvA and Maastricht University as partners (sponsors) in its Safe Haven Fellowship Programme. At the moment of this meeting the Royal Academy (KNAW) was a potential partner (sponsor) for this programme; this partnership has since been confirmed.

Jan Willem reports that the SEP-report will be published after the official response by the KNAW.



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13. Questions and answers

There were no questions.

14. Any other matters

Aysenur thanks Jan Willem, who will step down as director of NIAS per May 2026. She also thanks her fellow board members and all NFA members attending the meeting. She thereby declares the meeting adjourned.