



2nd EHHF VIRTUAL FIKA

24th May 2021

MINUTES

PARTICIPANTS

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Giuliana de Francesco (Italy)	Siim Raie (Estonia)
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Wolfgang K. Göhner (Germany)	Desire Hopen Standal (Norway)
Gwilym Hughes (Wales)	Petr Spejchal (Czech Republic)
Joakim Malmström (Sweden)	Sergio Vidal (Spain)
Sarah-Jane Marsden (Scotland)	Ben de Vries (The Netherlands)
Tiina Merisalo (Finland)	Duncan Wilson (England)
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Alex Paterson (Scotland)	

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AGENDA

An informal meeting for the Heads before summer. In the context of the covid-19 outbreak and after the Tallinn meeting had to be postponed twice, the participants were invited to a second Virtual Fika, to give **an informal and brief overview of the situation in their respective administrations**, before they are able to meet again in Estonia in September.

The recording of the session (1h45) is available upon request: secretariat@ehf.eu

WELCOME

The second EHHF Virtual Fika was once again moderated by Siim Raie, Director General of the National Heritage Board of Estonia, host of the next annual meeting and current chairman of the troika.

This informal format was implemented in 2020 after the Tallinn meeting was postponed. The first time, the session gathered 17 participants from 15 member-administrations. For this new edition, 19 participants from 15 member-administrations participated. Everyone agreed that the session would be recorded for EHHF archives and minuting purposes. The participants were also reminded about the chat and the possibility to reach the secretariat to circulate any additional information.

The session began in a very friendly atmosphere. The members started an informal conversation and were very happy to see each other again. Siim Raie reminded the very reason of such an EHHF meeting, that the Heads would be able to share their experience on how to organize and run public departments in this context, and to give updates and news from their respective regions. Digital meetings count for the EHHF too, in a matter of maintaining contact and membership, and in order to welcome new colleagues as well. In this case, from Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

AN INFORMAL ROUNDTABLE

Siim Raie thus opened the session before he gave the floor to the other participants. Everyone was able to say a few words about **how their work had been affected and what was implemented in the last year**. The discussion centered on management and conservation issues in the time of the pandemic. The following allocutions are listed chronologically, Estonia being the first country to take the floor, Ireland the last.

ESTONIA

Mr. Siim Raie – DG, National Heritage Board

Overall situation:

- Everything is getting a bit looser now and figures have gone down
- Vaccination numbers are still very modest but it is going well
- The most impacted sector was the museum sector. An emergency government package was distributed last year, and unemployment fund had special support for the museums. Second package is being distributed.
- Museums and art halls are open but the number of visitors is far less than what it used to be, in addition to public restrictions
- It remains to be seen how the museums will survive
- Indoor tourism remains quite high, but we are missing all foreign tourism and Tallinn medieval Old town, which had become quite monofunctional and tourism-oriented, is now deserted.

- From the perspective of preservation, we hope tourism will recover at least to some sustainable level. Our next interesting question: what will be the sustainable level for tourism and museums.

Impact on heritage management:

- Our staff was surveyed on whether or not they would be ready to come together again physically, 80% had some kind of immunity (vaccines or past infections)
- From a practical point of view: most of us are working from home but offices are open. You can't do archaeology and restoration surveillance from your desktop.
- Guidelines were published for those who have to meet other people and go on sites
- Construction and restoration, business as usual. No setbacks nor declines, real-estate is actually having a small boom in Estonia

FINLAND

Ms. Tiina Merisalo – DG, Finnish Heritage Agency

Overall situation:

- Ms. Merisalo started in her position in 2020 and attended both the first virtual fika and the September web-conference.
- "A very strange year": starting in a new position, learning the organisation but is going ok. Very much looking forward to have more normal meetings.
- Throughout the pandemic, the situation in Finland was relatively good compared to many countries, but museums have been closed for half a year now.
- All the events and businesses and restaurants, deeply in trouble. We do not have the theaters nor movies, but museums are opening up again slowly, with huge restrictions (6-10 people maximum).

Impact on heritage management:

- The state supported museums, there is new package to which museums can apply now. We received 2.3 million EUR to compensate the loss of our 10 museums. And we are getting a little bit more this year.
- But because of the closing, we had to lay off all the people at the frontdesk for a certain period of time. Very happy now that national museums will open again on May 17th, with restrictions. But is going to be better now.
- All the other work has been going on, archaeology, collection, planning of future exhibitions, and a new archaeology law is in revision.
- Cultural Heritage strategy is in the making and the Agency is involved in the drafting.
- A new listing of archaeological sites is going on.
- New reflexion on Sustainable tourism is ongoing, together with the ministry of culture and education and Visit Finland.

Links shared with the other participants:

Two very interesting international projects the Agency is currently involved in:

- MOI EU project about evaluation systems and tools for museums.
<https://www.museovirasto.fi/en/museum-sector-development/moi-museums-of-impact>
- Charter : developing skills and knowledge in cultural sector in Europe
<https://charter-alliance.eu/about-us/>

SWEDEN

Mr. Joakim Malmström – DG, National Heritage Board

Overall situation:

- Mr. Malmström started in his position in April 2021. He first introduced himself briefly to the participants.
- Regarding the situation Sweden, it has been quite severe, but is now very similar when it comes to national levels. The vaccination scheme is working pretty good.
- Museums are opening up again, since march with a lot of restrictions.
- The CH sector, museums have been very strongly hit, a lot of focus on emergency package, lot of money were allocated to museums but situation is still very severe.

Impact on heritage management:

- Museums will not go bankrupt but some of our biggest sites were quite close from bankruptcy.
- The positive thing: there has been a strong national debate about the role, the need and the importance of museums and the heritage sector. What a poor world we would live in if we were to lose the museums.
- Massive surge of people going on into the biggest museum in the world: the cultural environment, local cultural heritage, visiting cultural landscapes and so on. Unprecedented.
- There is a positive movement and recognition towards our sector and there are lots of expectations for us to become more visible and to take the lead in this debate.
- The Swedish National Heritage Board is a very professional agency and administration, perfectly functioning administration framework. The National Heritage Board should now be at the center of the debate. Interesting journey.

SCOTLAND

Mr. Alex Paterson – Chief Executive, Historic Environment Scotland

Overall situation:

- Lot of similarities with other countries.
- Scotland has quite a good position at the moment, good progress in coming out of the lockdown situation.
- Since April 22nd, things have been opening up gradually. Museums, shops, restaurants, cinemas are all open again but with big restrictions.
- Progressing in the right direction. First touristic international holiday flight from Edinburgh to Portugal.
- People are going back to restaurants, but going back to museums is quite a slow process
- We are on our way out of the crisis. It is slow but we make good progress. Last year, we all thought going out of lockdown would make everything good again. Here we are many months later, and hopefully we won't have to lock down again.
- Small steady steps are the right way to go.

Impact on heritage management:

- Sites are open but the boom has not yet happened. It might be too early, but people seem to be quite cautious.
- Planning and regulatory functions kept on going, as busy as ever.
- Now is an opportunity to influence recovery plans and government policy. Wellbeing is now part of everyday language. We are all in the position to share the views that CH can be a bigger contribution to some of this national projects.
- The challenge is that we, as public servants in the heritage sector, understand its importance and potential. For others, the connection is hard to make. We need to share our knowledge and expertise in the building of the recovery plans.

ENGLAND

Mr. Duncan Wilson – Chief Executive, Historic England

Overall situation:

- We are just emerging from the darkness.
- Museums and historic buildings are opening again. Slightly different arrangements throughout the UK but broadly similar. The vaccine programme has been very quick and successful.
- Brexit caused shortages of supply of heritage craft and construction materials
- Shortages of skilled labor as well, but it is difficult to tell the extent of Brexit impact on CH because there is a lot of other factors at play in this context.

Impact on heritage management:

- We have managed to make the case for heritage to be an important part of the government programme of recovery.
- A very large cultural recovery fund, 1.5 billion allocated for all of the UK. Most of that went to art institutions, museums
- 180 millions went directly to heritage and capital programmes of works and the recognition of heritage craft skills and specialists construction in heritage sector. A real lifeline. It remains to be seen what the long term position will be.
- Positive response from government to the needs of our sector. Probably thanks to something we have been discussing with the forum as well, in terms of good data, demonstrating the significance of CH on economy, and recognizing the position of heritage stakeholders, large or small.
- Providing good data was the key to persuading the treasury to put that money in. It helps all of us, we might want to come back to it and discuss it further in the future. Nobody knows what we face in the upcoming 18 months.

MALTA

Mr. Kurt Farrugia – Superintendent of Cultural Heritage

Overall situation:

- Mr. Farrugia started in his new position in November 2020.
- More or less the same situation as anywhere else, Covid has not been pleasant to the CH sector in Malta either.
- But the recovery is going quite well, the pandemic slowed down and Malta is one the

most effective countries in the EU in terms of vaccination.

- Restaurants were open for lunch, they now open for dinner.
- Museums have reopened slowly. Hopefully, tourism will be back this summer.
- The government introduced a funding scheme: each employee who could not do their job had minimum wage. Very little portions of the population lost their job.

Impact on heritage management:

- Superintendence is the regulator, Heritage Malta is the operator. They operate all the sites and museums. They were impacted way more than we did.
- Planned recruitments stopped.
- 100 million recovery fund.
- Work continued increasing, Construction continued, we monitored work affecting CH as usual. We needed more staff but we had to do our job with the resources we had.

THE NETHERLANDS

Mr. Ben de Vries – International Affairs, Cultural Heritage Agency

Greetings from Ms Susan Lammers, Director General

Overall situation:

- In September we had a small presentation during the EHHF webconference about the situation in the Netherlands. The situation is getting better but it is very slow.
- Museums are still closed and will be able to reopen again in June. Until now, malls and Ikea were open, but not the much-loved museums.
- Tourism is very slow. The song contest was a big relief, *not the results but the organisation.*

Impact on heritage management:

- Lots of restaurations and funding schemes were implemented and worked well. One could see the effects on restoration industry and the construction industry.
- Interesting what Duncan (England) is telling us about the collection of data and the shortage of craft skills and labor, very much the same in the Netherlands.

Links shared with the other participants:

The Dutch questionnaire on 'Cold War' heritage which was spread through the secretariat is still open for reactions : <https://ehhf.eu/forums/topic/dutch-questionnaire-on-cold-war-heritage-management/>

CZECH REPUBLIC

Mr. Petr Spejchal – Senior Adviser, National Heritage Institute

Greetings from Ms Nadezda Goryczkova, Director General

Overall situation:

- As I was reading the minutes of our last meeting in September, it seems the situation is still the same.
- Looking forward to next month, opening the sites again. So far only the gardens were open.
- Employees in the cultural sector could apply for an 800 EUR / month compensation

Impact on heritage management:

- An emergency government budget was put in action. Most of it went to museums, theatres, translators, not so much of it went to organisations and nothing was made for private owners, unfortunately.
- Government explained an extra budget would come for private owners, debate is still ongoing and it has been more than a year of crisis already.
- Times were tough, everything slowed down except for the reconstruction but we had problems with construction materials, as in other parts of Europe. We have people, companies and money, but nothing to build with. We did not see it coming.
- I would like to stress a new research project we started, about the sanitation of historical surfaces. Sanitize everything, also a problem in historical sites.
- We will produce guidelines on how to sanitize interior and exterior, we do that together with the universities. First guidelines will be published in about a year.

NORWAY

Mr. Audun Skeidsvoll – Deputy DG, Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage

Overall situation:

- Mr. Skeidsvoll was participating for the first time, he was appointed last year as Deputy Head and took this opportunity to briefly introduce himself.
- The ongoing period is a learning curve for the norwegian administration. A lot of organisations were afraid of digital meetings, but now it has become quite natural.
- The situation in Norway is quite similar as in most of the EU countries. Vaccination is progressing.
- Some organisations should be back in office after summer.
- Museums are still closed and will soon begin to open up again slowly.
- Hopefully, Norwegians will soon have the possibility to travel around.
- Areas called 'Hotspots' open up and close down regularly

Impact on heritage management:

- Currently, we are establishing a new department of analysis and statistics. We also emphasize high quality data, we have a lot, but we want to get new standards and figures on socioeconomics, tourism, etc.
- It will make CH relevant for the rest of society. We did some research on Tourism last year, CH is on top, people are getting more and more interested and we were quite happy to share this data with the media and the public.
- A new paper is out with a focus on the connection between CH and climate change. Widely discussed in Norway and also a way to make us relevant. A follow up with new the strategy for CH and Climate Change will be out this autumn.
- There was also a finding of a new Viking ship recently. *Our local Eurovision*. Quite interesting to bring this out to the public digitally. A lot of people have actually been following the dig minute by minute, digitally.

Links shared with the other participants:

Regarding the Economic impact of Cultural Heritage on Society and high quality data collection and analysis: the secretariat invites all the EHHF members to visit the page of the EHHF Task Force on Economy and Statistics, and to have a look at their collaboration with ESPON: <https://ehhf.eu/standing-bodies/task-force-on-economy-and-statistics/>

LATVIA

Ms. Baiba Murniece – Head of Development Div., National Heritage Board

Greetings from Mr Juris Dambis, Head of the National Heritage Board

Overall situation:

- Museums are still closed, but there was an experimental opening of the International Art Museum recently, with prior appointments. Huge response from the public and a successful event. We are now hoping for the reopening.
- Historical outdoor environment is not closed, people are enjoying the cultural monuments and the landscapes around their home, which helps us raise awareness about heritage being a source of well-being even in times of darkness

Impact on heritage management:

- Last year, we were really busy with the inventory of listed monuments, a process now reaching its final phase with the dividing into three separate levels: State / regional / local value of historical monuments
- Local monuments will go under the responsibility of the local authorities (some municipalities are happy and feel responsible, some others don't care that much and we have a lot to do and to discuss with them).
- We are also elaborating the new cabinet rules on protection and use of CH, quite challenging to get in line with the visions of the other sectors
- The construction sector has been growing quite intensely
- We have not experienced any shortages in construction materials but they are getting extremely expensive because of a construction boom
- Also working on the heritage protection strategy for the next 5 years

WALES

Mr. Gwilym Hughes – Chief Inspector, Historic Environment Cadw

Overall situation:

- Gradual reopening of all our sites and monuments.
- Situation is similar to other countries.

Impact on heritage management:

- One thing I wanted to raise, I found very interesting: heritage on your door step, very close from where you live. Suddenly, people became far more aware about heritage that is just around the corner. We have tried to build on that.
- We have been encouraging lots of small projects, with a focus on exploring localities.
- "15min heritage". Really well-received and people got really excited about this concept. We are looking at ways to funding and exploring projects
- Everybody has an interest in historic sites 15min away from their doorstep

GERMANY

Mr. Wolfgang K. Göhner – Senior Legal Advisor, Bavarian State Conservation Office
Chair of the European Heritage Legal Forum

Overall situation:

- Quite difficult to speak on behalf of all Germany
- We are making progress, and vaccination is growing.
- Things are going quite well for now
- Some attempts to have more freedom or progress but in the last week, it was allowed to reopen restaurants outside.
- Last days in Germany, severe discussions about freedom rights. Really difficult to comment, because the situation in Germany is really good compared to other countries of course and the economy is strong. It can and will survive. But some in Germany are comparing the situation to dictatorship and it raises concern that such comparisons could be made.

Impact on heritage management:

- Rather difficult for the economy, not for our restoration work. It never stopped.
- In 2013: Simon Thurley (English Heritage, founder of the EHHF) spoke about CH as a pillar for sustainable politics. Unfortunately, it seems that CH voice is not really important, and that it is always the last sector to be taken into consideration and to reopen.

EHLF/ Legal Forum update:

- The EHLF Report is available in the overall EHHF Annual Report 2020-2021
- The main part of our work was done by emails
- The main focus for this year would be the rescuing of our climate. Monuments also must get more effective-efficient. Really difficult discussion with the EU Renovation Wave. We have been very attentive with this issue and we have been trying to circulate relevant information with the Heads as much as possible in that matter.
- The EHLF will most certainly meet in Tallinn prior to the Heads meeting.

For more information about the Legal Forum (EHLF): <https://ehhf.eu/standing-bodies/european-heritage-legal-forum/>

ITALY

Ms. Giuliana de Francesco – International Affairs, Ministry of Culture

Italy is currently trying to review their participation in the EHHF. Giuliana shared regards from the new Director General of International Relations of the Secretariat General of the Ministry of Culture

Overall situation:

- Situation quite difficult in Italy, I will try so summarize, very hard third lockdown
- Today, all Italy is yellow zone. Red is highest level, orange and yellow are intermediate and white is relatively safe. Yellow means you can dine outside or visit museums but only during the week, not during weekend to avoid crowds.
- Public administration workers are requested to visit the office more than half of the time. 70% in the office, 30% home for now

- We feel like we are slowly going out of the pandemic. Italy should be white mid-June and hopefully where won't have any more waves.

Impact on heritage management:

- The Ministry of Culture (which changes name recently) is responsible not only for cultural heritage but also for cultural activities and institutions (museums, libraries, archives...). We had reorganization during the lockdown.
- Support measures were adopted, 4 billion euros to support the sector including museums, performing arts, etc. We should receive additional support and loans, so the sector can effectively contribute to the recovery.
- 15min heritage initiatives. Also in Italy, we have experienced a big increase and interest in proximity and sustainable heritage. Rural activities are very trendy at the moment, as it was one of the only things that could be done.
- Culture and CH partnership of the urban agenda for the EU, currently ongoing project involving the Ministry of Culture alongside several other partners from national, regional local governments and stakeholders. Partnership entered in its third year, action plan was approved in 2020 and is now being implemented. We are currently running pilot experimental actions with regards to CH and climate change.

SPAIN

Mr. Sergio Vidal – EU Affairs, Ministry of Culture

Overall situation:

- Mr. Vidal participated for the first time to an EHHF meeting.
- Situation is quite similar in Spain as it is in other countries.
- Things are getting better and we are hoping for the tourism sector to recover quickly.
- Very good expectations for local tourism but not much for international visitors.

Impact on heritage management:

- People want to go back to sites and museums. They want to experience places they had never visited. But not everything could reopen yet. We use a section by section approach and we are currently planning what can open and what can't be opening yet, and why.
- Diversity: 17 regions with their own laws, they decide what they want to open and when. Barcelona is very restrictive, Madrid is not.
- Museums were open in June 2020, it might have been too early but things are getting better.

IRELAND

Ms. Catriona Ryan – Principal Officer, Department of Heritage

Overall situation:

- We are opening up again. Last week, with non-essential retail, etc
- We have been working remotely as much as we could and we won't return to office until September.
- We hope that the majority of people will be vaccinated by that time.
- May 10th, they could travel again in the country.
- Tourism will only be national this summer.

Impact on heritage management:

- Administration structure has changed. The heritage area has now moved to the department of housing, local government and heritage; and the cultural sites have stayed with new department of culture, arts, sports, Gaeltacht and media.
- We deal with built and natural heritage, natural parks and diversity. But cultural heritage (national museums, national gallery, national library are with a different department.
- Local heritage was a huge focus, especially during the first lockdown. Successful initiatives such as 'Heritage in your 2k', 'heritage at your door step'...
- At that point, all outdoor sites were kept open.
- Museums and national gallery are open since May 10th as well but with restrictions.
- Big focus on town centers: restoration, try to attract people and bring them back to live in down centers.

The recording of the session is available upon request to the EHHF permanent secretariat: secretariat@ehhf.eu.

TALLINN MEETING – 8-10 SEPTEMBER 2021

Siim Raie was very happy to share some of the programme details with the participants, after the registration to the Tallinn meeting had opened, just few hours before the Virtual Fika. The detailed programme and the practical information had indeed just been distributed to all EHHF members, prior to the Fika. Hotels prices have dropped and the National Heritage Board of Estonia was able to negotiate special rates and pre-booked rooms in a selection of hotels. Siim Raie was hoping for planes to fly again and for the Heads to be able to travel in September.

The 15th edition was built up following EHHF tradition and expectations. The participants would get together and have a welcome reception on the Wednesday night. The Thursday would be time for plenary sessions and speakers. The Friday would then bring the participants outside of Tallinn to discover some of Estonia's most representative features. A boat-trip is also to be organized on the Saturday for volunteers.

The topic and programme remained quite close from what was already planned for 2020. The Heads will still discuss the theme of Reconstruction, but of course, with a new flavor to it, as it is also time to discuss the reconstruction of a whole sector, if not society.

The conference itself will be organized in a hybrid way. Participants who would not be able to travel would have the opportunity to attend the conference online, and to participate actively through digital means. The possibility of continuing digital meetings in between the annual meetings was also briefly mentioned as an opportunity to strengthen the collaboration between the Heads throughout the year.

CONCLUSIONS

THE VIRTUAL FIKA ITSELF

The Virtual Fika was once again very much appreciated by the participants, who were able to exchange informally about their concerns and expectations, in a warm and collegial atmosphere. Half of the usual amount of member-administrations were represented, which was **considered as a success by the troika and the secretariat**, given the context and the very format of this session.

OVERALL SITUATION

Although the pandemic did not hit all the countries equally, and responses to the sanitary crisis were not exactly the same everywhere, one can clearly see **similarities and common developments throughout Europe in terms of lockdown and recovery strategies**. Emergency budgets have been distributed, museums and sites are reopening gradually but are still facing drastic restrictions, everyone is longing for some normality and hoping that tourism and visitors will soon be able to circulate again, under certain conditions of course.

KEY ASPECTS

Some key topics and elements raised common interest from the participants.

- Most of the members could relate to the “15min heritage” topic brought by Wales. The growing interest for immediate cultural environment is something that could be felt in every country. In times of lockdown and restrictions, people would turn to some of the features close from home but often forgotten or underestimated. This turnout is something the Heads will keep in mind in building and exploring future initiatives and support schemes.
- Another unexpected concern for the Heads was the shortage of construction materials which impacted the restoration and preservation sector as well. Work was still ongoing, staff and money were available, but for some reason, bricks, plastic and other supplies would be missing due to the slow-down of economic flows and retail. Although this was one of the only sectors that could keep on the work during the pandemic, the shortage made it very complicated for some administrations to monitor and operate in the good conditions.
- Exceptional budget reorientations and time availability seemed to have encouraged restructuring and administration changes for some of the members. It seems that in most of the countries involved in the EHHF, time was used to think of new strategies and eventual structural changes in the organisation of cultural heritage management and protection; and to reconsider some aspects of the work.

Siim Raie closed the session with optimistic words for the ongoing projects that were presented during the Fika by the EHHF members. Everyone seemed very happy to see all the development and reflexive work being done, and they looked forward to discussing it further in Estonia with their European colleagues and counterparts.

EHHF CURRENT AFFAIRS

GREETINGS

The secretary then passed on greetings from a few members who were not able to participate. Director General **Sonja Vanblaere** (Flanders Heritage Agency), Director **Patrick Sanavia** (*Service des Sites et Monuments nationaux du Luxembourg*), Mr. Paul Marhinger (Austrian Monuments Board Deputy and Chair of the EHHF Task Force on Economy and Statistics), Mr. Oliver Martin (Head of Section, Federal Office of Culture in Switzerland), Mr. Iain Greenway (Director, Historic Environment Northern Ireland) asked the secretariat to share their best wishes with the participants.

EHHF PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE

The participants were reminded about the recent publication of the Annual Report for the period 2020-2021 and of the 2021 Heads' Booklet, which gathers recent photograph and information about the EHHF members. The secretariat remains available for any feedbacks and eventual updates.

Registration to the Tallinn meeting had also just been made available, together with the detailed programme and practical information. All the necessary information and publications are available on the www.ehhf.eu website. Members were kindly reminded about the private online forum and the Members' section, available for everyone to use.

SECRETARIAT TRANSITION

Before the session would come to an end, Siim Raie kindly reminded the participants about the secretary's upcoming transition, the departure of Cyril Meniolle de Cizancourt, and the hiring process in which the EHHF will soon engage in. A job description for the part-time secretary position in Brussels had been distributed a week before the Fika.

First, Cyril was thanked for his thorough and diligent work with the EHHF, especially in regards to the digital developments (online meetings and new website), and for the upcoming transition. "Whoever gets to organize a meeting in the future and join the troika, Cyril had made it very smooth and very well prepared for the future secretary and troika".

In return, Cyril respectfully thanked all the members of the EHHF for the 5 years spent at their service and for the wonderful experience it has been. "We have tried to make things as smooth as possible for the transition, for the troika and Siim, and of course for the next secretary. Thanks again and best of luck in your future appointments and projects."

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Monday 24th May, 2021 on ZOOM