



EHHF VIRTUAL FIKA

5th June 2020

MINUTES

PARTICIPANTS

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AGENDA

An informal meeting for the Heads before summer, in the context of the covid-19 outbreak and after the postponing of the Tallinn meeting to 2021. The participants were invited to give a **brief overview of the situation in their respective administrations**, before a larger and more formal web-conference takes place, in September.

WELCOME

Siim Raie, Director General of the National Heritage Board of Estonia and current chairman of the troika, was very happy to welcome the **17 registered participants** for this virtual fika; stressing that a few days before, the whole forum was supposed to gather in Tallinn for the usual annual meeting.

Mr. Raie first asked everyone's approval before the secretary started recording the session. He also thanked Kristin for initiating the discussion of meeting online, and reminded the choice of having **a purely social and informal discussion**.

He then warmly introduced **Ms. Tiina Merisalo, new Director General of the Finnish Heritage Agency**, who was joining an EHHF meeting for the first time. Mr. Raie reminded that this informal virtual reunion was also meant to maintain contact in between the members, and to **welcome the new members** of course.

He finally initiated the roundtable and invited each participant to say a few words about the situation in their respective regions.

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 was impacted by the covid-19 situation**. The discussion centered about management and conservation issues, as well as the Heads's expectations towards the September web-conference.

The following allocutions are listed chronologically, Estonia being the first country to take the floor, and Switzerland the last.

ESTONIA

Mr. Siim Raie – DG, National Heritage Board

Overall situation:

- Emergency situation is now over
- Tourism has been completely shut down
- Still a lots of restrictions for public events
- Museums are open but with specific measures
- Emergency funds for museums, 6M EUR

Impact on heritage management:

- Lots of administrative work, especially reg. permits requests
- The archaeology field is very active, also because of the amateur detectorists who suddenly had a lot of time to practice, ending up with a very busy season with the collection and the evaluation of the finds
- Currently, mainly managing the funds
- "We have survived the crisis"

Links shared with the other participants:

- Estonian Heritage Act (2019), now translated in English
<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/504062019001/consolide>
- Criteria for the Protection of Monuments
<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/517122019001/consolide>

SWEDEN

Mr. Lars Amréus – DG, National Heritage Board

Overall situation:

- Similar picture as in Estonia, although not completely shut down
- Half of the museums were closed and are re-opening up now
- Lots of them were dependent on visitors' revenue (usually 85-90% of foreign visitors at Vasa Museum, where we had dinner last year in Stockholm),
- National Museums were compensated by the state
- Specific emergency funds were also allocated to private museums

Impact on heritage management:

- Construction and archaeology carried down, pretty much as usual
- Summer is going to be crucial for culture and tourism
- For now, everything is good but how will it evolve? Travels will not come back to normal before one or two years
- Positive side: huge development in the digital field, very reactive, innovative and successful initiatives, attracting a lot of visitors and interest online
- But digital does not give you money
- No staff cutbacks for us until now

Side effects:

- Major railroad constructions in the coming years. Lots of archaeology will follow, (estimated +100 M€), we are concerned there may be a shortage of archaeologists.

SCOTLAND

Mr. Alex Paterson – Chief Executive, Historic Environment Scotland

Overall situation:

- Compared to Sweden and Estonia, still behind, very much still in a crisis situation
- Limited scope to travel or socialize
- A four-phase plan was implemented, only at phase 1 and without a clear timeline
- Museums and cultural institutions will not open until phase 3 (august at the earliest)
- Emergency funds are regarded as useful in the sector, but probably not enough
- Very challenging, no obvious fast way out

Impact on heritage management:

- Loss of visitors is very significant
- HES: 60% of our income come from visitors
- Tourism and culture will lose all of the summer season
- Construction has just been given OK to go back to prepare, but not to restart
- Two main things now:
- Lots of preparatory work and planning, to be able to move up when the time comes
- Cross sectorial approach, thinking and going forward up to 3-4-5 years from now, to reimagine what heritage will look like in Scotland

THE NETHERLANDS

Ms. Susan Lammers – DG, Cultural Heritage Agency

Overall situation:

- Really gradual easing of restrictions
- Museums and monuments are slowly re-opening
- Restrictions on frequentation but also on staff, with great impact on volunteer work
- 300M EUR emergency funds cultural sector
- Including 50M for heritage, afraid it won't be enough

Impact on heritage management:

- Archaeology is still going on, outside work did not stop as long as social distancing is respected, difficult but keeping on
- With less visitors and thus less income, the conservation of monuments is often struggling, especially for small organizations
- Events related to the 75th anniversary of the end of WW2 were cancelled, very sad for the communities and people's efforts
- Lots of digital efforts and especially with webinars: think about the next 5 years at least

ICELAND

Ms. Kristin Huld Sigurðardóttir – DG, Cultural Heritage Agency

Overall situation:

- Less restrictions than in other countries
- Schools and preschools were open
- Museums were closed
- Icelanders behaved, and we were trusted as an organization
- Fundings and compensations to people who lost their jobs in the travel and culture industries
- Opening of the country on June 15th with restrictions

Impact on heritage management:

- Very strange winter for our Agency: first problems with fungi in our building, and then covid19, half of the house was already closed when the virus hit us
- Two doctors and a policeman advised our administration, meetings every day to discuss the implementation of projects, the continuation of work, etc.
- Funds were also put in for the restauration of buildings
- And for the registration of archaeological sites, which is surprising as they are usually not considered that much
- Archaeology has started again with social distancing
- Overall digital system was really improved

GERMANY

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

Uwe Koch, former Head of the German National Heritage Board and active member of the EHHF for many years, was replaced by Dr. Ulrike Wendland.

Overall situation:

- Different handling with coronavirus in Germany than in other countries
- Some parts in Germany where the virus did not hit, some other parts very close from other countries with higher impact
- Main measures: very strict lock down since the very beginning
- But not for the production and the construction area,

Impact on heritage management:

- Nothing changed so much in the heritage sector, people are working, construction are continuing, social distancing apply and this is perhaps the main problem, especially for the cultural sector (great concerts, theater, etc.),
- Fear that we cannot gather for such events until 1 year or two
- Very challenging times for the administrative and legal departments
- The hype of using digital services is decreasing, especially in the museums sectors, we can do many things but there is nothing like standing in front of a painting
- Data protection and digital services, some systems like zoom have some problems

SLOVAKIA

Ms. Katarina Kosova – DG, Monuments Board

Overall situation:

- Small country, very low infection in Slovakia
- Government was very reactive and implemented a quick and strict lock down
- Main problem in addition to the CH and tourism decrease is the closing of car factories, our whole economy is down
- Very similar measures everywhere, and we know how problematic it is for culture

Impact on heritage management:

- We are public authority, no problem with external funds.
- We decided to revise our public budget and to give money back to the ministry of culture to help museums, galleries and theaters
- Lots of activities that can be postponed, conferences etc
- During lockdown, we had permissions to go to sites in case of emergency
- Positive side: no stress with everyday office management
- Opportunity to catch up with late work
- This situation also brought lots of various answers, especially regarding digital: despite my critics, it helped us a lot for the preparation of our new permission system, a really big project and time at home helped us a lot developing this new system (Monuments information system)

LATVIA

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

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

Overall situation:

- Doing very good in Latvia, we did not have full lock down
- 32M EUR for culture, including heritage, no more details so far
- We could come to work

Impact on heritage management:

- The number of construction and ask for permits is increasing
- The need of the owners were the same, we worked the consultation and advice exactly the same
- We also took this time to think through a lot of side problems, for instance the lifts in historic buildings, we might need advice from our EHHF colleagues (accessibility and cultural monuments)
- State grant system, as usual, small amount of money but still flowing
- We were concerned about small restoration works and we hope we can continue supporting them

FINLAND

Ms. Tiina Merisalo – DG, Finnish Heritage Agency

Overall situation:

- Sanitary wise: quite good compared to many countries
- Lock down of museums and shops and restaurants and businesses, for three months
- Museums are opening up, our own museums are opening too. Quite strict conditions with distancing, frequentation, etc.
- The whole sector has been working very obediently to the recommendations
- Loss of income, events were cancelled in museums, restaurants were closed, the whole tourism sector has been affected
- The Helsinki province, with higher demography was closed for 20 days
- Bigger problem is with the economy of course, government has been supporting several sectors, cultural institutions and museums as well

Impact on heritage management:

- The lock down, and especially the closing of the Helsinki province affected a little the work of archaeologists etc, but permissions were given out
- We are very dependent on the income we receive from national museums, but we have received 2.3M to compensate so far
- This is the biggest worry for us: how shall we survive this year's budget, but now it looks better
- The expert work and the digital worked very well, we already had a lot of online tools and suddenly everyone was playing along
- A very creative period also, quite fun to see how quickly museums would adapt to new ways of sharing contents and data
- Cultural environment portal service: people are looking for online service and are using it a lot. We need to look very carefully at what we will provide digitally, and this means re-think many services from the start
- There is also the question of people's confidence: when to get back in museums...

AUSTRIA

Mr. Paul Mahringer – Head of Dept., Federal Monuments Board

Chair of the EHHF Task Force on Economy and Statistics

Greetings from Mr. Christoph Bazil, appointed last year as new President of the Bundesdenkmalamt

Overall situation:

- More discussion about living arts and museums, what to do with performers and concerts, etc. Huge discussion at the moment
- But not that much of a discussion for the material heritage yet

Impact on heritage management:

- Mixture of home working and going to work, we were allowed to travel for work
- Business for us was quite stable, the most fundings will go to museums because of the missing visitors, and also to performers

LITHUANIA

Mr. Alfredas Jomantas – Head of Division, Cultural Heritage Dpt

Greetings from Mr. Vidmantas Bezaras, Head of Cultural Heritage

Overall situation:

- We have managed quite well this uneasy moment, the government has put a lot of additional funding for artists and cultural organization
- Quite a lot of efforts from the tourism and the heritage sector (“discover Latvia and Estonia”), solidarity between the Baltic countries
- Museums were closed

Impact on heritage management:

- CH was not that much impacted, although ministry of culture would like to make some changes in the future
- Archaeology: the use of metal detectors increased, like in Estonia,
- An interesting and challenging development as well: the increasing of isolated damages perpetuated by lone adventurers in nature and on sites (4x4 wheels, detectors, etc.)
- We had the possibility to come to work for specific purpose, other than that at home

Links shared with the other participants:

- Covid-19 measures in Lithuania: <http://lrkm.lrv.lt/en/news/covid-19-measures-for-culture-and-creative-sector-in-lithuania>
- Information available on Compendium: <https://www.culturalpolicies.net/covid-19/country-reports/lithuania/>

ROMANIA

Mr. Stefan Balici – DG, National Heritage Institute

Overall situation:

- Museums were closed. Allowed to open, not all of them chose to open, depending on the possibility to maintain security for visitors and staff.
- Museums, operas, etc are still close, huge blow
- Lock down for a while as well, did not affect construction and archaeology, except for the situations where security could not be guaranteed by the companies
- No budget increase for us, but they did provide additional subsidies for independent workers. The most vulnerable, the government took over and is still paying their salary.
- Romania not the most visited country, but we are feeling the diminishing of tourism. Now is time to redesign the strategies of CH in relation with tourism, emphasize local and national level. We now know the impact such an international crisis might have.

Impact on heritage management:

- No formal close down of these construction and archaeology sites
- Conservation work continued
- We carried down with our grant scheme, an additional grant scheme for private historic monument owners was added
- Moving to the digital was quite challenging, it forced us to transform some of our processes into online services, we would very much like to discuss it with the EHHF
- Also, online debate on the importance of cultural heritage intensified during this period, we had a lot to do, also with putting up webinars and digital content
- Negative: we rely on state budget, we are worried our budget will be under immense pressure from other sectors in needs (public health, or economy)
- We are Interested to see how it is tackled in other countries: what will happen with state budget for CH? Even though we are not all in the same position.

ENGLAND

Ms. Alexandra Warr – Head of International Affairs, Historic England

Greetings from Mr. Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of Historic England

Overall situation:

- You know what has been going on in England, most infection rates in Europe
- Things are getting a little easier. Non-essential shops are re-opening (June 15th), including the shops that are attached to cultural sites (but not the cultural sites)
- Some historic gardens and outdoor sites are re-opening with social distancing. Vast restrictions with great impact on frequentation.
- Museums and cultural sites reopening will come with Phase 3, only at Phase 1 now.
- Government is creating Ministerial Task forces to look at roadmaps for sector recovery, and how they are able to re-open safely. One of those task forces will take care of recreation and leisure (CH, tourism, entertainment, sport, etc.). Some of our colleagues were retasked to focus on some specific areas to feed in those task forces.
- Amongst the subjects that are being documented: Covid-19 intelligence and analysis / Sector recovery / Contribution of heritage for the country's recovery / Cultural property in jeopardy / Contingency planning and engagement strategies

Impact on heritage management:

- Historic England: 2M pounds emergency response fund, heavily subscribed
- Discussion to extend the fund or not after the period.
- Staff is working from home with some positive impacts: less travels...
- The virtual meetings: appreciating the fact that nothing replaces the human contact. But in some cases, you can use digital means to save time and avoid travels
- Our office is a test base to see how offices can be re-opened, but no-one is obliged to go to work unless they are comfortable to work.
- International: the survey has been continued and updated on a weekly basis. Economic measures, re-opening of sites, grants allocation...
- Useful talk for later: common EHHF data collection, the impact on the heritage economy, what measures were put in place to address it and how effective they were

SWITZERLAND

Mr. Oliver Martin – Head of Section, Federal Office of Culture

Overall situation:

- We are pretty much back to normal. Fortunately, it is getting better, although restrictions are still in use.
- Lock down softer than in Italy or France, we were allowed to travel but all non-essential shops and activities were closed.
- All big events were cancelled or postponed.
- Borders will open on June 15th, things will be normal, but will social distancing. Recommended to work from home.
- Severe impact on economy. Government took quite important measures to support all economy, including cultural sectors, contemporary arts and civil society associations working with art. Built heritage sector was kept out, because we considered there was no immediate and urgent need for the built sector.

Impact on heritage management:

- Now, the crisis itself has not big impact on buildings, archaeology etc. Conservation and restauration kept going. Negative impact: private owners might cut investments from their own conservation work in the coming years.
- The parliament is discussing programme and budget until 2024. There was an intervention wanting to increase CH budget, because it helps smaller companies, as a steering wheel. Afraid that it won't come through but good sign that it is considered.
- Go back to office in mid-june, we will get used to work again. Half of staff wants to come back. Need to come up with new rules anyway.
- Digital tools are fantastic, but obvious limits.
- No cutbacks on staff yet, but afraid the covid-19 debts will impact later programs

For the duration of the session, a chat enabled the participants to share messages, documentation and potential links of interest with the rest of the group.

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

CONCLUSIONS

THE VIRTUAL FIKA ITSELF

This first attempt was **very 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 nature of this first virtual fika.

The participants are now all **looking forward to the more formal September web-conference**, and agreed on the few principles which will guide its preparation:

- The conference will be held virtually, around the European Heritage Days
 - The format will include one or two speakers and an open discussion with the Heads
 - 2-3 hours maximum
 - All members will be surveyed, in order to scope expectations better
- Speakers and date will be confirmed as soon as possible.

OVERALL SITUATION

It was clear that **similar measures were implemented almost everywhere** throughout Europe. Although, **the members did not experiment the same reactions and repercussions on their sectors and daily work**. The impact differs greatly from one country / administration to another, depending on where the budget comes from (state or visitors income), if they are responsible for museums or not, if the construction and outdoor work was locked down as well or if it was able to continue. In general, the restrictions are now easing up, even though some countries and administrations might confront slower and more careful re-openings. Experts have been asked to come up with sectorial "exit strategies", or in some cases, with "**living-with-the-virus strategies**".

KEY QUESTIONS / SEPTEMBER WEB-CONFERENCE MATERIAL

Tourism & frequentation: cultural institutions and heritage sites are obviously suffering from an unprecedented loss of visitors, visibility, and thus perspectives for the future. Mass-tourism as we know it will be considerably affected, putting jobs and budgets at risk. The question of quality / quantity is central in the management of sites that might not be able to welcome the same amount of people for many months, if not years.

Budget: there might be considerable cuts. So far, staff was not impacted but what about activities, public outreach or investments for our administrations? For those of us who rely on state budget, pressure might increase drastically from other sectors in need, such as public health and economy.

Digital: either good or bad, the effects of substantial digital development need to be discussed. Administrations are now even more expected to deliver useful and effective online services. This implies to re-think processes from the start. The EHHF could greatly benefit from sharing innovative digital practices, in order to maintain contact with the society and to better anticipate peoples' expectations in the future, especially in the context we are now living in.

EHHF CURRENT AFFAIRS

Siim Raie invited the EHHF Secretary to say a few words before the session ends, about the situation in Brussels and eventual EHHF internal affairs. Administrative secretary Cyril Meniolle de Cizancourt briefly mentioned the situation for smaller institutions, the independent workers and the small associations in charge of heritage sites, which were considerably affected by the loss of frequentation and the uncertainty in regards to immediate funding and subsidies.

GREETINGS

The secretary then passed on greetings from a few members who were not able to participate due to technical reasons. It was brought to everyone's attention that **Zoom might not be the most convenient option**, and that alternative apps could be considered for the September web-conference. In the meantime, Director General **Sonja Vanblaere** (Flanders Heritage Agency), Director **Patrick Sanavia** (*Service des Sites et Monuments nationaux du Luxembourg*) and Dr. **Markus Harzenetter** (German Association of State Conservators) asked the secretariat to share their best wishes with the participants.

SEPTEMBER CONFERENCE

The concept of the September web-conference was already introduced in the newsletter / invitation to the virtual fika. On this occasion, the Heads were already invited to **contribute with potential key questions**. These early answers and orientations were collected by the secretariat. All the participants of the virtual fika supported the idea and agreed with the proposed concept and format.

As we saw, the virtual fika itself raised other questions, especially towards **the increase of digital solutions, the impact on the construction sector, the impact on mass tourism, and also people's confidence** in going back to what was considered as 'normal' before the outbreak.

In addition to this, **Historic England** reminded that the survey that was shared early with all the other members was updated on a weekly basis, and that it could contribute to the debate as well. The Head of the Romanian Institute of Heritage, Stefan Balici, also raised the question of **digital innovations** amongst the members.

Another survey will be conducted by the secretariat to collect questions from all the members, and to prepare the September web-conference in the most constructive and collegial way possible.

EHHF PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE

Before the end of the virtual fika, it was reminded to the participants that due to this year's unusual circumstances, the **annual report** would be distributed by digital means only. The **Heads' Booklet**, which gathers photographs and biographies from all members, will be the only printed item for 2020, and will be distributed by post.

It was also reminded that the **website will be entirely renovated**.

INVITATION & CONCEPT NOTE

As experienced last year by the EHHF members in Stockholm, Fika is an institution in Sweden. It is often described as an informal break with coffee and pastries, and is very popular in the work space. The perfect way to meet-up before summer, and to keep our Forum alive!

Les membres de l'EHHF ont eu l'opportunité de s'y essayer l'an passé à Stockholm, le Fika est une institution en Suède. Il est souvent décrit comme une pause informelle, avec café et pâtisseries, et est très populaire sur le lieu de travail. La plus belle des manières pour se revoir avant l'été et faire vivre notre Forum !

Dear members of the EHHF,
Chers collègues,

ENG _ As you know, the Tallinn meeting had to be postponed to 19-21 May 2021. But we could not wait another year without seeing you again! Remembering the nice time we had **last year in Gamla Stan**, when we **gathered for coffee** before walking around Stockholm's old town, we wondered how this could happen again in this context. **We thought it would be nice to share this moment, virtually.**

Let us try this out! Let us enjoy each other's company, as if we were about to start our usual 3-days conference. Discussions will come later this year. We promise we will do our best to offer you an EHHF look-alike web-conference. We thought we could have it in September on the occasion of the European Heritage Days, once everyone will have caught their breath, and once we all have some perspective on the situation we are all dealing with right now. Of course, this must not keep us from exchanging through the usual means, and from answering each other's call by email and with the help of the secretariat.

Dear friends, until then, we would love to **have you on board our first informal Zoom online meeting on June 5th @15.00 Brussels time**. Please refer to the registration link below and confirm your participation the secretariat and the Estonian National Heritage Board, who offered to introduce and moderate these virtual moments we are about to share until we meet again in the same room.

Our forum is not only about lectures and workshops, it is a unique place for long-lasting collaboration, mutual inspiration, solidarity and support. **We care about our side-moments as much as we care about our keynotes and management issues.** Let us keep it alive, let us welcome the new members as we should and let us share some nice time together before summer.

See you very soon, hopefully online, And with all our best wishes to you and your colleagues until then,

Lars Amréus,
Director General
National Heritage Board of Sweden

Siim Raie,
Director General
National Heritage Board of Estonia

FR _ Comme vous le savez, la réunion de Tallinn a du être reportée au 19-21 Mai 2021. Mais nous ne pouvions nous résoudre à attendre une année de plus avant de tous vous revoir ! En repensant au **café qui nous a réuni l'an passé, avant notre visite de Gamla Stan**, nous nous sommes demandés comment reproduire cela, dans le contexte que nous connaissons aujourd'hui. Et **pourquoi ne pas essayer par voie virtuelle ?**

Tentons le coup ! Profitons de retrouvailles méritées, comme si nous étions sur le point de débiter nos trois jours conférence annuelle. Nous prendrons le temps de discuter plus formellement dans un second temps. Nous vous promettons de tout faire pour vous offrir une web-conférence à la hauteur de l'EHHF, peut-être en Septembre à l'occasion des Journées Européennes du Patrimoine, une fois que nous aurons tous repris notre souffle, et un peu de recul sur la situation. Bien sûr, cela ne doit pas nous empêcher de continuer à échanger par les voies habituelles, par email ou via le secrétariat.

Chers amis, d'ici là, réunissons-nous à l'occasion du **premier Zoom informel de l'EHHF, le 5 Juin à 15:00 (heure de Bruxelles)**. Inscrivez-vous via le lien ci-dessous et confirmez votre participation au secrétariat et au Conseil National Estonien du Patrimoine, qui animera ces rencontres virtuelles jusqu'à ce que nous puissions enfin nous retrouver.

Notre forum est un lieu unique pour la collaboration à long-terme, l'inspiration mutuelle et la solidarité. **Nous nous soucions autant des moments informels que des conférences officielles.** À nous de conserver ceci, d'accueillir les nouveaux membres comme il se doit et de partager un bon moment tous ensemble avant l'été.

À nos retrouvailles prochaines, et virtuelles ! Et avec nos meilleures pensées pour vous et vos collègues,

Alex Paterson,
Chief Executive
Historic Environment Scotland

See you soon!

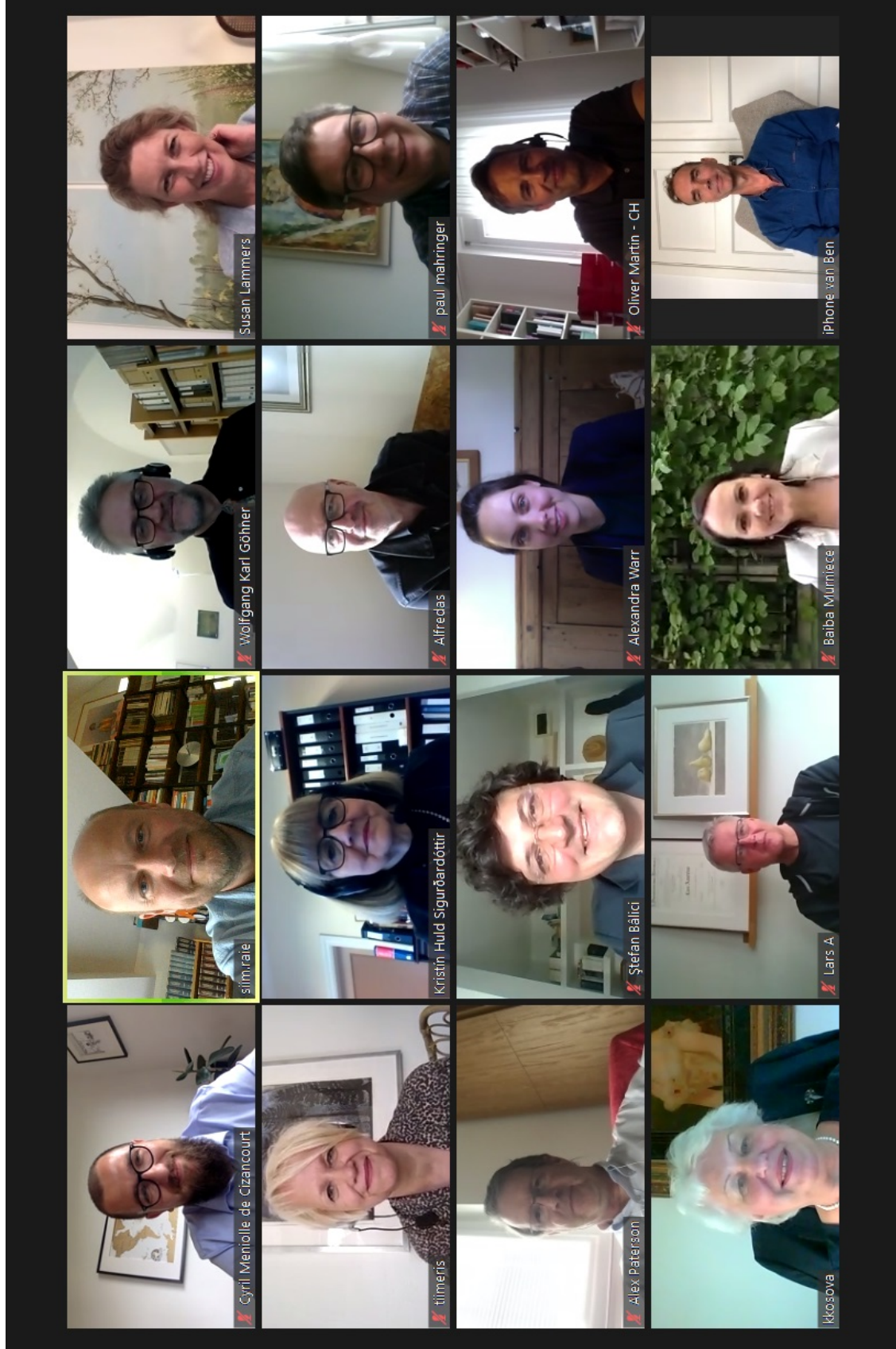
The decision to host a virtual, informal meeting was taken by the EHHF steering committee - usually referred to as the *troika*, on May 14th, on the occasion of a meeting on Zoom (cf. *Minutes Visio-troika meeting 14052020*).

The invitation to the first EHHF Virtual Fika was sent out by the permanent secretariat to the members the week after.

Registrations were collected via Google Form, access details were sent to registered participants only.

*Invitation to the
EHHF Virtual Fika,
25th May, 2020*

EHHF VIRTUAL FIKA



Friday, 5th June 2020 on ZOOM