



# ISKCON

## REGIONAL GOVERNING BODY

Founder-acarya His Divine Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada

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**Euro RGB meeting  
New Vraja Dhama, Hungary  
October 2-3, 2023**

Total number of members: 26  
Voting members: 16  
Quorum: 8  
Voting members present: 11  
Global GBCs present: 3 (out of 6)  
Non-voting members present: 9

### **Attendance**

#### **PRESENT – VOTING MEMBERS**

##### **GBCs**

1. Hrdaya Caitanya dasa (GBC of Andorra, Gibraltar, Portugal, Spain, New Mayapur; coGBC of Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and France except Dole)
2. Madhu Sevita dasa (GBC of Cyprus, Greece, Italy except Villa Vrndavana and Prabhupadadesh; Malta; San Marino; Co-GBC of Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and France except Dole; Co-GBC for Villa Vrndavana and Prabhupadadesh)
3. Radha Krsna dasa (GBC for Hungary, Romania, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey)

Note: As there wasn't a majority of European GBCs present at the meeting, it was decided that the meeting will be held but that the voting on resolutions, which require approval of majority of GBCs to pass them, will be held over email after the meeting.

#### **OTHER MEMBERS**

1. Janesvara dasa (Almviks Board; Regional Secretary for Sweden, Norway, and Denmark)
2. Jai Nitai dasa (Euro RGB 1st vice-chairman, Zonal supervisor for the UK)
3. Krsna Premarupa dasa (Euro RGB Chairman, Zonal supervisor for Switzerland and Lichtenstein, chairman of National Councils of Switzerland and Germany/Austria)



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4. Lalitanatha dasa (Regional Secretary for Denmark)
5. Mahaprabhu dasa (Minister of ISKCON Communications Europe)
6. Mahendra dasa (Chair of Bulgarian National Council)
7. Trilokatma dasa (Euro RGB 2nd vice-chairman, Zonal supervisor for Slovakia, Albania, and Macedonia)
8. Trisama dasa (Chair of the Polish National Council)

### NON-VOTING MEMBERS

1. Dayanidhi das (Chairman of the Greece National Council)
2. Devasri Radhika devi dasi (Head of Legal Department)
3. Divya-prabandha dasa (Chair of the Croatian National Council)
4. Madhava das (Regional Secretary for Spain)
5. Nrsima Krsna das (Zonal supervisor for Turkey)
6. Parabhakti dasa (IGPO Continental Officer for Europe)
7. Tapo-divyam dasa (Chair of the Finnish National Council)

### GUESTS

1. Prabhu das (Regional Secretary for Italy)
2. Sandhya devi dasi for the morning session of the 1st day (Chairwoman of the Dutch National Council)

### NOT PRESENT

### VOTING MEMBERS

1. Bhaktivaibhava Swami (GBC for Albania, Czech Republic, Finland, Macedonia, Slovakia, Co-GBC for Bulgaria and Romania)
  2. Dina Sarana devi dasi (GBC of Germany-Austria-Liechtenstein + Switzerland-Dole)
  3. Krsna Ksetra Swami (Minister of the Ministry for Cow Protection and Agriculture)
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4. Prahladananda Swami (GBC for Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Montenegro, Poland, and Serbia; Co-GBC for Slovenia; Sannyasa Minister)

5. Tapas dasa (Regional Secretary for Sweden)

### NON-VOTING MEMBERS

1. Dayananda Swami (Zonal supervisor for UK)
2. Svayam Bhagavan Keshava Maharaja (Zonal supervisor for UK)
3. Tarakanatha dasa (Zonal supervisor for UK)

## MINUTES

Verses from Srimad Bhagavatam (4.9.11) and Caitanya Caritamrta (Mad., 25.101) were read for the inspiration of the assembled devotees.

### 1. Membership

#### a) Composition

Krsna Premarupa dasa is Euro RGB Chairman.

Jai Nitai dasa is Euro RGB First Vice-Chairman.

Trilokatma dasa is Euro RGB Second Vice-Chairman.

Mahendra d became a voting member. After this meeting, Mahendra d will become a Second Vice-Chairman of the Euro RGB EC.

Nominations for the next EC member were called upon as at the May meeting s/he will have to be elected to join the EC in September.

Two new members were accepted over the email, prior to meeting: Devasri Radhika dd and Dayanidhi d. With this meeting, their membership officially started. Two devotees were welcomed as guests at the meeting, Sandhya dd and Prabhu d.

Praghosa d was elected as a Euro RGB Emeritus.



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### **b) Members' platform**

Members' platform was presented as a reminder for the existing Euro RGB members and as an introduction for new members. The platform is used for electronic storage of all documents which helps to have less printing. Agreeing to Confidentiality Agreement and Oath of Allegiance was also done electronically, over the Members' platform.

Point regarding following the Robert's Rules for the meeting was raised. According to Euro RGB's paper on conducting the meetings from 2018, Euro RGB doesn't follow Robert's Rules at the moment. If it is decided to follow them, Euro RGB members should first be educated in what these rules are and how they are applied.

### **2. Minutes from the previous meeting**

EC Chairman reported that all action points were done except contacting IGPO Continental Officer for Europe to give information regarding properties and property trustees.

### **3. Activities of the EC in the past period**

Krsna Premarupa d gave a report on topics and issues EC has been dealing with since the last meeting. Some of them include: complaints raised by different individuals/yatras that couldn't be solved locally, forming a legal department, forming the Ombud's Office for Europe, working on forming a Book Distribution department, forming Internal Communications Committee, and working on the 'Roles and Responsibilities' paper.

### **4. GBC Succession**

If we want to make a plan for future, we need to understand the mentality of new generations which is very different to older generations. The urgency of this question has been pointed out as devotees on top leadership positions are mostly in their 70's.

An update on nomination of Krsna Premarupa d was given that there hasn't been much development mostly due to lack of staffing within the GBC Nominations Committee.

### **5. Legal Department**

Devasri Radhika dd gave a presentation on the newly formed Euro RGB Legal department.



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The Legal Department of the Euro RGB is envisioned as an advisory team with specified duties and obligations providing legal assistance to the RGB body. Its role is both in terms of precautionary/preventive measures as well as corrective action. It shall also act like an in-house counsel, a link to the ISKCON Law Department (other devotee-lawyers) as well as a link to the ISKCON General-Counsel. The vision is to observe the needs of the European yatras and gradually form a legal department of at least three lawyers from relevant legal fields. The legal department can also be approached by the EC for assistance in drafting of procedures that further support the leadership structure.

### **6. Book Distribution Department**

The Book Distribution Department was initially formed of Trai das d (ACBSP) and Divyanama d with the vision to expand by including area Sankirtana leaders in Europe who can represent a certain set of countries, as per defined GBC areas. These leaders can take the lead on the two main global campaigns: Bhadra Campaign (Srimad Bhagavatam), running from April till September, and the Live to Give Campaign (Bhagavad Gita), which runs from October till December, with the general goal of increasing book distribution in countries from their area. Any challenges can be brought to this team in order to get support, inspiration and practical solutions. The plan is to meet once every quarter as a team to keep the communication going and move things forward in Europe.

### **7. 'Roles and Responsibilities' paper**

A draft document 'Roles and Responsibilities' for the Euro RGB has been prepared by the EC members in advance of the meeting. During the meeting, group work was conducted where 3-4 members discussed and worked on smaller sections of the paper. During the joint session, each group presented their comments and suggestions for amendments. These will be inserted into the paper which will be edited by the Euro RGB's legal department. The final draft will be presented to the Euro RGB members prior to the meeting in May 2024.

### **8. European Ombud's Office initiative**

The Euro RGB EC initiated the European Ombud's Office. The goal of this office is to support devotees with the opportunity to communicate with an independent, trained ombuds for solving potential issues and conflicts. To that end, the training with Braj Bihari d, founder of ISKCON Resolve, will be organized in October 2023 and later as well according to the need of devotees in Europe who are willing to take up this important service.



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### 9. Preaching strategy

A unified approach to preaching in Europe has been discussed as a standing point for Euro RGB meetings. It was decided to invite Akhandadhi d, who previously successfully helped UK yatra to formulate their strategy, to attend the next Euro RGB meeting and help to formulate a strategy.

### 10. ISKCON Global Property Office

Siva Sankara d, the CEO of the ISKCON Global Property Office addressed the assembly over the Zoom, while Parabhakti d, the European Continental Officer for Europe, elaborated further on what can be locally done to help protect ISKCON properties. These goods belong to Krishna, therefore, protecting and taking care of them is an essential duty entrusted to those directly responsible for them but also to all devotees. Careful cataloguing the assets, verification of their compliance with state and ISKCON laws and continuous monitoring are the insurance to maintain them over time as Srila Prabhupada requested us.

The IGPO will create a functional online platform, easily accessible by interested parties, where all the information and status of European ISKCON properties will be gathered. An important part of the program is the training that will progressively update the existing property trustees, educate the new ones, and then reach the presidents of the temples. A new Handbook is in the final stage of revision and within 3 to 6 months it will become operational. This Handbook will provide the information necessary to secure properties and deal with potentially dangerous situations and will create competence and establish a shared language and method with which to operate in a unified and professional way across ISKCON.

#### Action points

- Secretary shall find out in which way the policy on data access is defined in the IGPO.
- Parabhakti d will find out the criteria for appointing property trustees and send it to the secretary to be put on the members' platform.

#### Resolution 23/10-01

1. By the end of November 2023, all Zonal Secretaries (GBCs) and Regional Secretaries-Zonal Supervisors with the help of local chairs of National Councils identify their Property Trustees and submit the names to the European Continental Officer;
2. By April 2024 all existing and new property trustees will receive updates or training;
3. By April 2024 all information/data for European properties should be sent to the European Continental Officer;
4. By May 2024 all information regarding the properties will be available in an easily consultable archive made under the coordination of European Continental Officer, with strictly limited access;



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5. By September 2024 allot the budget for the IGPO for Europe.

-end-

### 11. European Leaders' Meeting proposals

After three years of pause, European Leaders Meeting took place on the 30.9. and 1.10., just prior to the Euro RGB meeting, which was attended by around 90 ISKCON leaders from all parts of Europe. The main topics discussed at the ELM were protection of children in ISKCON and 'Unity in diversity'.

Three proposals were submitted from the European Leaders Meeting for the consideration by the Euro RGB. Two proposals were accepted and ratified, while for one proposal devotees from the ELM organizational team were asked to work on the wording, clarify it, and then resubmit it to the Euro RGB.

#### Resolution 23/10-02

Whereas the ICPO has been in existence since 1998;  
Whereas ISKCON Europe's first CPO training took place in 1999;  
Whereas ISKCON law states that all ISKCON temples must have an active CP team in place;

Whereas many temples in Europe do not currently have a CP team in place;

It is resolved that:

The GBCs, Zonal supervisors/Regional secretaries and chairs of National Councils shall ensure that all ISKCON entities, including but not limited to its temples, unless otherwise exempted, which hold public programs in their jurisdiction must have a CP team in place by the 30th of September 2025.

Explanation: Such an exemption can be provided solely under report and authorisation of the Global CPO.

-end-

#### Resolution 23/10-03

Whereas ISKCON takes Child Protection and Child Safeguarding very seriously;  
Whereas ISKCON has put into place the CPO office and funds it for many years now;  
Whereas there is need of organising training and educating leaders on the importance of Child Protection and safeguarding;

Whereas the CP officer for Europe needs to travel for his/her service;

Whereas materials and resources need to be developed and produced;



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It is decided to allot a budget for the CPO for Europe by September 2024.

-end-

### **12. Increasing the readiness of temples for humanitarian crises**

Given the recent geopolitical events, natural calamities, and potential for civil unrest, ensuring the safety of our devotees, deities, and infrastructure is paramount. It is important to start thinking about our current state of preparedness, essential safety measures, and required improvements. The discussion will continue at future Euro RGB meetings.

### **13. Budget**

The new system for calculating the fees has been approved in 2023. The rollout hasn't been as smooth as anticipated. Different yatras had questions regarding the way the fees were calculated and the way the laksmi is spent.

It was decided that EC will, with the help of Parabhakti d, work on upgrading the system and present it in May 2024 if possible.

The proposed budget for 2023/24 has been accepted.

## **REPORTS**

### **14. Ahimsa milk**

Report was given by Syamasundara d (UK) from the Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture. There are 60+ temples with the Deities in Europe amongst which around 40 are not developing a dairy plan, especially in the areas where there are no devotee farms. Local leaders are encouraged to give support by discussing this topic during their meetings, as well as dedicating human and financial resources to it. More details on the topic are available on request and will be disseminated through Euro RGB communication channels to wider devotee audience.





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### 15. Child Protection Office (CPO) Europe

Citrarupini dd (ACBSP) gave a report on recent activities of the Child Protection Office. She informed the Euro RGB that the relationship with child protection organisations that had been shaken previously was restored as they recognized the efforts ISKCON's CPO is investing. At the moment, there are 10 ongoing cases in Europe (which is 33% of all the cases in the world). There are several CPO trainings coming up (in Italy, November 2023, and in the UK, February 2024) while one-on-one trainings are regularly being conducted. More details on the topic are available on request and will be disseminated through Euro RGB communication channels to a wider devotee audience.

### 16. Report: ISKCON Environmental Initiative (IEI)

The IEI Coordinator for Europe Kamala Priya dd, gave a report and update on the activities and projects of the IEI Team. The IEI has started a seminar series called "Divinity and the Environment" and launched the first seminar in April 2023 (Earth Day) with Radhika Ramana d speaking on "The Principles of Vaishnavi Ecology". The IEI has also started a Newsletter "Bhumi Mangalam" which can be downloaded from the IEI website. A poster with tips on "Please Green Your Temple and Home Today" has been presented, a video of the sustainable activities done by New Mayapur in France, and a GBC resolution which strongly encourages its temples and communities to not use single-use plastic. More details on the topic are available on request and will be disseminated through Euro RGB communication channels to a wider devotee audience.

### 17. Internal Communications Committee

A report on the work of the ICC was given by Lalitanatha d who has been elected as a chair of the Committee.

Basic composition of the Committee is as follows:

- one representative of ISKCON Communications
- Euro RGB EC chairman
- an RGB member (currently represented by Lalitanath d as a chair)
- Euro RGB secretary (non-voting member, meant to support the chairmen who change on yearly basis and help in maintaining the continuity)

The plan for the future work of the Committee is to:

- collect information on activities happening across Europe and leader data,
- start communicating important decisions made,



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- start communicating activities happening across Europe with wider devotee audiences.

The aim of the ICC is to:

- 1) facilitate communication from the RGB to the leaders of Europe,
- 2) facilitate communication from the RGB to the greater devotee audience in Europe,
- 3) open up for more communication with the global GBC, and
- 4) facilitate communication within the RGB.

The topics of communication will mainly be about RGB related matters and activities/initiatives endorsed by the RGB, although the broader topic of general activities in Europe may also be communicated at our public outlets, such as social media.

ICC reached out to Sukanti Radha dd who has taken the task of Facebook posting. For the beginning, she is reposting news on events happening in ISKCON Europe and announcements on behalf of the Euro RGB EC.

### Action point

- ICC is asked to prepare one page document with its vision and mission for the meeting in May 2024.

### 18. Youth Ministry

It was decided that the initiative to have European Youth Ministry be put on hold until there is more clarity and communication between the potential members of the Ministry and the Euro RGB. Euro RGB continues to support the initiative to have such a Ministry and is enthusiastic to pursue it further under more favourable circumstances.