



IN THIS ISSUE:

Foreword	2
The EFAA / OTOC Conference 2015	3
The EFAA Annual General Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting 2015	4
Meet the New Man on the EFAA Board of Directors – An Interview with Ezequiel Fernandes (OTOC)	5
Meeting our Members – EFAA's President Enhances Member Relations Through Initiative For Improved Dialogue	6
EFAA Meeting with PIOB	7
Brunel University 5th Accounting Symposium	7
EFAA Audit Expert Group Chair David York	7
EFAA Publishes Its First Member's Update	8
EU Update	9
Upcoming Events	9

The EFAA / OTOC Conference 2015

Good things take time – that is probably why all panellists at the EFAA Conference 2015 took a bit longer than the allotted seven minutes for their opening addresses. Each year, EFAA organises an EFAA Conference together with the host organisation of the EFAA Annual General Meeting. This year, the event was organised by EFAA and its Portuguese Member the Ordem Dos Técnicos Oficiais De Contas (OTOC) at the auditorium of Lisbon's remarkable Museum of the Orient.

Two panels of international experts from professional associations, academia and the private sector presented, debated and answered questions from the audience on the conference theme "The Global Economic Crisis and Recovery – A Critical Review of Financial Reporting". EFAA President Bodo Richardt and OTOC President Antonio Domingues Azevedo opened the conference, welcoming all Portuguese and international guests and participants. In their opening addresses both Presidents highlighted that the themes of the conference were highly relevant for the profession at this point in time. EFAA President Bodo Richardt noted that the global economic crisis had been indicative of how important high quality financial reporting was for economic stability in Europe and around the globe, providing an important momentum for the interests of professional accounting associations. OTOC President Antonio Domingues Azevedo referenced the shocks the crisis created and pointed to the fact that they had induced important changes in the profession, particularly in Portugal.

The topic of the first panel, moderated by Richard Martin, Head of Corporate Reporting at ACCA and Chair of the EFAA Accounting Expert Group, tied in perfectly with these opening thoughts by focusing on "The Evolution of

Accounting and Financial Reporting in Europe." The panel featured the President of the French Conseil Supérieur de l'Ordre des Experts-Comptables (CSOEC) Philippe Arraou as well as professor Avelino Antão of Aveiro University and the OTOC Accounting Expert Sérgio Pontes. CSOEC President Arraou gave the audience exiting insights into the development of accounting in France embedded in the European context of the Accounting Directive. Avelino Antão on the other hand focused on the remarkable development that financial reporting has gone through in Portugal – and noted that OTOC contributed more than its fair share to this positive development.

On the second panel moderator Jules Muis, member of the Public Interest Oversight Board (PIOB) opened the discussion by explaining convincingly why being a good accountant is essentially the same as being a good cartoonist – both have to summarize and encapsulate a complex aspect of reality whilst making it comprehensible for others. This image was the perfect starting point for the discussion of Professor Graca Azevedo of Aveiro University, Eamonn Siggins, CEO of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants (CPA) of Ireland and Financial Management Consultant Jon Hooper, who were debating "The Role of Accounting for a Sustainable Europe."

OTOC's President Domingues de Azevedo and EFAA President Bodo Richardt concluded the conference by highlighting the rising importance of international cooperation especially

Living the international SMP alliance – in their closing addresses, both Bodo Richardt (EFAA) and Antonio Azevedo (OTOC) stressed that international cooperation will become ever more important for Europe's SMPs.

for SMEs and SMPs in an ever more globalized world. After the event OTOC generously invited the international participants to a remarkable social program. The visits to Sintra with its romantic Pena Castle, Cabo da Roca as the most Western point of Europe and a traditional Portuguese dinner provided a memorable conclusion of a successful EFAA / OTOC Conference 2015.



Getting ready for the show – the Presidents Philippe Arraou (CSOEC), Antonio Azevedo (OTOC) and Bodo Richardt (EFAA) together with panellist Sérgio Pontes (OTOC).



"Quality Accounting is an economic fundamental!" – PIOB Member Jules Muis, giving his passionate opening address on the second panel.



The EFAA Annual General Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting 2015



All on board! – The Delegates to the EFAA AGM 2015 in Lisbon.

On 26th June EFAA held its members-only Annual General Meeting (EFAA AGM) 2015 in Lisbon. Sticking to tradition, the meeting was scheduled for the day after the EFAA Conference 2015 at the OTOC headquarter's auditorium.

EFAA AGMs are EFAA's highest governing body with representatives from all EFAA member organisations and have important statutory rights and duties.

Due to the high-level representation, EFAA AGMs and the accompanying social program are also excellent

opportunities for EFAA member bodies to liaise with one another. Furthermore, EFAA AGMs serve as an open forum for EFAA and its members to exchange ideas and discuss how their partnership could improve even further. Apart from its political steering function the EFAA AGM thereby provides EFAA with concrete and valuable decisions for its operational direction. One such inspiration from this year's EFAA AGM was the idea to produce Country-Focus Reports that inform members about the political challenges and best practices in one EFAA member country. Since listening and subsequently working

with the input from members is one of EFAA's top priorities, the concept for these Country-Focus Reports is currently being developed.

In addition to the regular EFAA AGM, EFAA held an EFAA Extraordinary General Meeting (EFAA EGM) on 26th June. EFAA EGMs are called for if urgent matters arise or in the case that a vacancy arises on the EFAA Board of Directors. This year, three candidates applied for a seat on the EFAA Board of Directors that was open due to the resignation of its longstanding German member Hans-Michael Korth (DStV). EFAA members had to choose from three candidates who had been nominated by their respective associations in Azerbaijan, France and Portugal. Ezequiel Fernandes from Portugal (OTOC) was ultimately able to attain an absolute majority of the votes and was welcomed by EFAA President Bodo Richardt as the new member on the EFAA Board of Directors.

After the official program, EFAA invited its members to participate in an engaging social program. The social program following on from EFAA's AMGs is also open for non-members to attend, for example honorary guests or participants of the EFAA Conference the day before the EFAA AGM. The program started with a boat cruise on the Tagus River. It ended at the historical Praça Do Comercio, right in the heart of Lisbon, granting all participants the same spectacular view of Portugal's capital city that explorers and merchants had enjoyed for hundreds of years. After some free time in the historic city centre the group met at Lisbon's renowned Clube de Fado where participants reflected on the insights and experiences of the past days over a traditional Portuguese dinner and the unique tunes of Fado.



Set the sails! – After discussing EFAA's future at the EFAA AGM 2015, the CEO of the Chamber of Auditors of the Republic of Azerbaijan (CAAR) Qasham Bayramov, CAAR representative Lamiya Bayramova and EFAA President Bodo Richardt enjoy the boat cruise on the River Tagus.

To new shores! – EFAA Board Member Michele Testa (CNDCEC), tirelessly looking for innovative perspectives on the SMP/SME nexus.



Meet the New Man on the EFAA Board of Directors

An Interview with Ezequiel Fernandes (OTOC)

EFAA: Before we start with the interview, allow us to congratulate you on your election Mr. Fernandes!

EF: Thank you very much for the good wishes and the interview. I also wanted to thank EFAA's members for the trust they put in me throughout the election process.

EFAA: You are not a stranger to those who attend our EFAA events on a regular basis. Could you tell us how long you have been following EFAA's activities?

EF: Since the moment I became a member of the OTOC Board of Directors some years ago, I have been following EFAA and attending events. I have seen the organization evolve and strengthen its relevance in the international SMP and SME context. In the European context, EFAA is the most important organisation for its members to understand, develop and consolidate international solutions for SMPs and create synergies around common goals and purposes.

EFAA: Mr. Fernandes, you are a Professor of accounting at the University Lusíada in Lisbon and a member of the OTOC Board of Directors, thus you bring remarkable technical expertise to EFAA's Board of Directors. As a European organization EFAA is of course all about international cooperation and coordination of interests. We therefore want to ask: what is your international experience?

EF: On the "technical" side, I have been working as a financial analyst and university professor in accountancy and professional ethics. Through OTOC I have been assigned with the skills and qualifications recognition process for



PHOTO: OTOC

Congratulations! – EFAA's new Board Member Ezequiel Fernandes of the Portuguese Ordem dos Técnicos Oficiais de Contas.

the accountancy profession – Academic qualifications, professional internships and professional evaluation exams. In my capacity as a representative of OTOC I have been very active internationally. I have been attending international meetings, sometimes as a speaker, from ISAR – UNCTAD round-tables in Geneva, to IFAC and CILEA events all around the globe and of course with EFAA in Europe. At these events, I have been working on relevant topics for the profession with the goal to improve and implement better and more efficient mechanisms internationally.

EFAA: EFAA focuses on SMPs. Why do you believe it is necessary for SMPs to have political representation when bigger firms are investing a lot into lobbying? Couldn't the SMPs simply sit back and let the big firms "do the job"?

EF: Accountants, as independent and responsible professionals for SME accountancy, are a knowledge resource for SME owners, not only in accountancy and taxation, but also in consulting and other business related areas, such as finance and transfers of business. Usually, SMPs are the most qualified and experienced professionals working with SMEs. And these SMEs have a key role in the global economic system, employment, social stability and governmental tax incomes. They

are the muscle that keeps the bones of our economy together and moving. Because of the SME sector's special features, its professionals have a wide range of needs and competences. In an SME, accountants are forced to have a holistic approach and a complete understanding of the whole business. Therefore the SMPs' needs and requirements for financial reporting or providing services to their SME clients differ greatly from those of the Big Four. Taking these factors into consideration, it is very important to have someone giving a voice to and representing to this reality. Without this representation, only the interest of larger firms will be taken into consideration. By the way, in as much as we can make the smaller professionals' interests and rights count we will also have a more balanced and stable economy.

EFAA: Your speech before the election at the EFAA Extraordinary General Meeting in Lisbon was very well received. In that speech you outlined several ideas for EFAA's future engagement. Could you portray your favourite idea from that speech for us in a few sentences?

EF: Strategically we have to work from the basis of understanding our stakeholders' interests, and then find the intersection of that interest and the public interest. We should for example look into professional mobility in Europe as one of the major developing topics. We should also think about international standards in a more integrated way, for example to consider the whole area of education and training and not only professional standards. But since we are in the middle of a term, my biggest wish is to work with the EFAA Board effectively to achieve the Federation's objectives to the highest degree possible. I am fully committed to, available and motivated for the work that lies ahead of us.

EFAA: We wish you all the best for your work on the EFAA Board and thank you very much for your time Mr. Fernandes.

EF: Thank you.