

EUROPEAN BEAT STUDIES NETWORK

2016 Mission Statement; updated 2018

In 2010 the EBSN was established by Polina Mackay and Oliver Harris as a light touch organisation with a mission to promote high quality scholarly work in an informal, creative and open context, bringing together people interested in the Beats beyond the traditional Anglo-American academic world.

In the past eight years it has expanded to include nearly 250 members from across Europe and the world, has organised highly successful annual conferences in six different countries (The Netherlands, Denmark, Morocco, Belgium, England and France), edited special issues of journals featuring EBSN scholarship, and run a constantly improving and increasingly multi-lingual website. In keeping with its mission, membership remains entirely free, and conference registration has stayed inexpensive and very good value for money. It complements rather than duplicates or competes with the Beat Studies Association (of America).

In 2015, a five-member Board was established, consisting of Oliver Harris (President) and Polina Mackay (Vice-President), Ben Heal, Raven See, and Frida Forsgren. A 12-member Advisory Council was also created that year. In 2017, Paul Aliferis and Chad Weidner joined the Board, and roles were defined. In addition to the President and Vice-President, who take the lead in promoting the vision and growth of the EBSN, Paul Aliferis was named Secretary-Treasurer; Ben Heal, Webmaster and Membership Officer; Raven See, Webmaster and Conference Administrator. Chad Weidner and Frida Forsgren have no specific role.

In September 2017, the EBSN became a formal Association under German Law (EBSN e.V.), with a registered office in Hamburg. As an independent legal entity, the Association was able to open its own bank account and to apply for charitable status with the German tax authorities, which was granted in January 2018. The Executive Board of the Association is the same as the Board of the EBSN, so in practical terms the Network continues to operate in exactly the same way.

In terms of procedures, the EBSN Board is the equivalent of a “governing body” and the President retains a casting vote. The intention is to keep decision-making as simple and streamlined as possible, preventing the EBSN from becoming mired in the kind of bureaucratic processes that dominate university institutions.

Membership of the Board is for a 3-year (renewable) term and is by appointment. The Board receives an annual report of the EBSN’s finances, and is expected to be involved in all major decisions. Invitation to join the Board is made by the President, but any member of the EBSN interested in serving on either the Board or the Advisory Council is welcome to put themselves forward.

Each year, the EBSN holds an AGM at its Annual Conference, a meeting that is open to all members. The AGM is chaired by the President, Vice-President, or deputised Board member. The meeting receives informal reports (e.g. on past, present, and future conferences and on major proposed initiatives) and enables members to propose ideas in keeping with the EBSN’s mission statement. It is not the role of the AGM to vote on proposals, although the Board is expected to hear and respond to the views of members.