

SOCIAL POLICY COMMISSION 17/18

Meeting #1

University of Malta, the KSU Common Room

13th July 2017, 18.00

MINUTES

1. Approval of Agenda

Dario Cacopardo (UoM Rowing) asked to add a point to the agenda

Agenda approved

2. Dario Cacopardo - KPS election independence

Dario Cacopardo: on the 12th of May a letter of mine was posted on Insite where it was alleged that SDM manipulated and tried to influence the KPS elections which occurred on the 10th of May. On the 10th of May, SDM president Gabriel Micallef encouraged more independent candidates to contest for KSU elections. On the 12th of May, I received messages from friends and organisations telling me that Micallef warned them to not to vote for him.

Robert Napier (KSU): Any issues with a specific organisation should be addressed directly to the concerned organisation not in KPS meetings. It is important to reiterate that KSU is elected independently from SDM. Any concern within the ambit of the Commission or if you seek an answer from the council, the issue may be brought up during KPS meetings, otherwise, this is not the place. The commission has a year of work ahead of it; let's allows it to do what it's meant to do.

Cynthia Chircop (We Are): Proposal to take a vote on whether to continue discussing this. Why is this being brought up again?

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): I'm here to clear my name.

Fleur Abela (Pulse): At the beginning Dario did ask whether he could bring it up and no one opposed so let's give him some time and move from there.

Robert Napier (KSU): If your issue is directed to one organisation, the commission is not the place for it.. Talk about what you want to clear from your end, but don't make allegations.

Dario Cacopardo (UoM Rowing): My proposals were spun and I fell victim to a dishonest campaign. You can't have the cake and keep it all to yourself. SDM denied any allegations. Subsequently, on the 23rd of May I received an email with printscreens.

Robert Napier (KSU): I will not accept that people who are not present are discussed during a KPS meeting. Let's bear in mind what the commission is here to do.

Clive Aquilina (Pulse): There's a representative from every organisation and Dario has every right to speak.

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): *distribution of printscreens* I require an explanation of what happened.

Robert Napier (KSU): Everyone can question the credibility of KSU during a KPS meeting

Luca Arrigo (IAESTE): Everyone has a right to influence how someone votes.

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): SDM outright denied.

Robert Napier (KSU): as KSU we do tremendous amounts of work. SDM elects 11 of us. You can all attest to it and you all know that once we're elected in KSU there's no partisanship. This is reflected in our work. Any issue concerning KSU may be tackled here but an issue concerning one specific person or organisation should be tackled directly with them. The 12 people on the exec with me have no control over what anyone says or does and we have no control over what political organisations do. We also push for independence. From our end, I can assure you that transparency is always ensured. What I can attest for is the transparency of the voting system. I want the commission to be our forte. I fully believe that the power of KSU stands within the commissions.

I have no control over third parties and if you have any evidence that any members of my team tampered with the elections bring them forward.

John Luke Ellul (Pulse): Gabriella Sutton, were you approached by SDM to contest, did KSU know that SDM was helping you and do you condemn the altering of results?

Robert Napier (KSU): I condemn any altering of results. Let's not discuss organisations that are not present.

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): I expected SDM to be here.

Ayrton Mifsud (Pulse): You have every right to defend KSU's position but certain aspects implicate KSU. It is not fair on KSU that through this irresponsibility, the council is put in bad light. There are some questions that need to be answered.

Robert Napier (KSU): This is my concern: the election was in May and it is now July. Anything that comes out from KSU has passed through the commission.

Ayrton Mifsud (Pulse): This will be in the media and KSU should not be put in bad light.

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): These are serious allegations

John Luke Ellul (Pulse): I propose that KSU releases a press release regarding these implications stating that KSU was not involved.

Cynthia Chircop (We Are): By releasing such a press release, you're implying that you have something to hide.

John Luke Ellul (Pulse): The press release should be done to take care of KSU's name.

Robert Napier (KSU): Can you clarify the situation with Gabriel and the organisation involved?

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): I want action.

Fleur Abela (Pulse): You stand here, you stated something that is neither directed towards Gabriella Sutton nor towards KSU. As Dario trying to clear your name, what do you want from either Ms Sutton or KSU?

Robert Napier (KSU): We are mocking the commission

Ayrton Mifsud (Pulse): This is not mocking.

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): I was called a liar from certain people.

William Farrugia (SDM): I'd like to clear my name.

Robert Napier (KSU): You can clear your name and we'll take a vote on whether to move forward or not.

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): I received an email with certain allegations towards your organisation.

William Farrugia (SDM): Everyone has a right to his own opinion. A media organisation had already approached SDM with these printscreens and we are aware of them. Others have other commitments.

Robert Napier (KSU): KSU has no control over an individual. If you have an issue to sort out between you, you can discuss it between you another time and in another place.

William Farrugia (SDM): These printscreens were sent illegally and a facebook conversation does not imply that the election was not clean. Everyone's vote depended on what they felt was right.

Gabriella Sutton: We should now take a vote on the whether to move on from this.

John Luke (Pulse): I proposed that we take a vote on KSU issuing a position stating that it wasn't aware of any tampering with the election.

Robert Napier (KSU): I condemn the hijack of the election. This is something that has to be understood. The election was not hijacked. Just because a

person had an opinion does not mean that the result of the election was tampered with. Let stop throwing shade at KSU.

Sean Ellul (KNZ): These printscreens show lobbying between personal individuals.

Robert Napier (KSU): This stops here with regards to your motion. That does not fall within the scope of the commission. If the accusations were directed towards KSU yes, otherwise no.

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): Gabriella, Before we proceed I want to hear your statement.

Gabriella: I have said this before, I have met with both pulse and SDM and all I wanted was feedback. I had no control over the election and I have no control over what other people say about me.

Proposal to move forward.
Approved Nem Con.

3. Approval of candidates for RAR board

Candidates to be approved: Gayle Lynn Callus, Alexander Hili, Omar Shamala

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): We need voting cards.

John Luke Ellul (Pulse): There can be someone from viewing gallery.

Distribution of voting cards

Vote of approval
Abstentions: Pulse
Board members approved

4. Review of standing orders

Gabriella Sutton: Attendance to KPS meetings is crucial. Organisations are allowed to miss 3 meetings prior to losing their right to vote in the commissioner election. After missing 2 meetings the organisation will be

asked to provide a justified reason. In absence of this and upon missing a third meeting, voting rights will be revoked.

An amendment is also being proposed.

Current article reads:

2.4 Other matters on the agenda will not be included if the Social Policy Commissioner or Coordinator have not been informed prior to the meeting. This article also extends to the ‘table a motion’ facility available through the KSU website.

Amendment:

2.4 Other matters on the agenda will not be included if the Social Policy Commissioner or Coordinator have not been informed prior to the meeting, unless urgent. Urgent matters may be raised at the discretion of the Social Policy Commissioner or Coordinator.

2.4.1 This article also extends to the ‘table a motion’ facility available through the KSU website.

John Luke Ellul (Pulse) : Guidelines as to what defines an urgent matter should be provided.

Gabriella Sutton: This will be at the discretion of the commission. The intention behind it is to be as sufficient as possible during meetings.

5. Student Societies Guidelines

Gabriella Sutton: Guidelines will be revamped thus it is very important that every organisation sends feedback.

Robert Napier (KSU): I only received feedback from one organisation. These are matters that will actually affect you as the requirements will have to be abided by by every senate-recognised organisation. The administration gave us the authority to consult with you. Let’s make the most out of this opportunity. If I don’t receive a sufficient amount of feedback I will not compile a report but let’s not complain afterwards.

Cynthia Chircop (We Are): How will the regulations be implemented?

Robert Napier (KSU): There will be a transitory period.

6. Current Affairs

Gabriella Sutton: As a country we are renowned for our catholicism. Yet, a lot of progressive laws have been enacted recently. We want to be proactive rather than reactive and would therefore like to ask the question: should there be a separation between the church and the State? We want to get your opinion to see how we can direct this discussion.

JC (Siera): When it comes to religion, we are not diverse. At school, students only learn Roman Catholicism. State and church separation can allow the State to be more inclusive.

Dario Cacopardo (UoMRowing): The first thing we have to do is we have to amend art. 2 of the Maltese Constitution, which states that the official religion of the republic of Malta is Roman Catholicism. I don't want to lessen the importance that catholic culture has had on our history. Therefore, we need to amend our constitution in a way that accepts all different religions - it wants to work with all different beliefs and wants to legislate for everyone. As we go along, the culture will change itself. If you take a look at the youth generation there's already a concept of secularism. We have to be patient and wait until more people become aware that other values are important as well.

Jean Gové (GhST): Outlawing traditions such as feasts does not make sense. The feast is a religious event where the cultural aspect tends to take over. The question to ask is whether there actually is something to separate. While art. 2 of the Constitution stipulates that the State is Roman Catholic, the constitution itself holds there can be no discrimination on the basis of creed. Legally speaking, there can be no preferential treatment over other religions.

It is also important to point out that with regards to marriage, when there is a church annulment, it's also recognised by the State through a particular mechanism. Where education is concerned, if the church closes down schools, there would be an educational crisis. Moreover, national curricula are followed in church schools. In state schools there is an ethics class to

replace Roman Catholic religion lessons. The Church also runs foster homes that the State relies on. Does separation imply silencing the church?

Members of Parliament are free to take an oath on any religious book or symbol or by affirmation. Moreover, no MP is forced to attend mass.

Therefore, one goes back to the initial question: is there anything to separate apart from art. 2?

JC (Siera): Legally, there is nothing forcing the different institutions to join religious beliefs. However, norms still heavily prevail. It is expected of children to go to church or museum and at school it's expected to go to religious class, which is equivalent to Roman Catholic lessons.

Chiara Vassallo (Aiesec): Traditions will still be important.

JC (Siera): Perhaps one should focus on educational reform.

Jean Gové (GhST): Perhaps, one should focus on more pressing issues such as the fact that since 2004 there have been no human traffickers judged in court. This is modern day slavery which we are not talking about.

We should take a vote on whether to continue discussing secularisation.

Vote for further discussion

Votes against: GhST

Abstentions: MUHS

Vote passes

7. Standardisation of meetings

Gabriella Sutton: We would like to standardise KPS meeting dates to the 2nd Thursday of every month. This wouldn't apply in the event of any urgent matters.

Jake Boyle (CSA): Due to part time students, many of our lectures are in the evening. Standardisation may be detrimental to organisations as if we have a lecture on that particular day, we'll never be able to attend. Maybe it's better to wait till timetables are out and choose dates semester semester. Moreover, it cannot be held against the organisation if it cannot attend due to lectures.

Chiara Vassallo (Aiesec): Perhaps a viable solution is that of alternating days within the second week of the month.

Hanien Alouzi (SHS): This makes it more flexible.

Gabriella Sutton: We can set up a poll with a list of proposed dates during the second week of the month.

8. Sub-committees

Gabriella Sutton: a number of sub-coms need to be set up. These include:

- Current affairs
- Equal opportunities

JC (Siera): Will these sub-coms provide particular training to the members?

Gabriella Sutton: Where necessary, yes.

Robert Napier: On a final note, I'd like you all to bear in mind the scope of this commission. Let's not undermine the strength of this commission and focus on healthy discussions. Let's leave the political ball outside. I will not be allowing any political games or politics to be discussed during the meetings. Let's take a stand together as a student body. Thank you.

Meeting adjourned: 19.45