



Meeting of a Subset of the EBSA Executive Committee

13.00 (UK time) Monday 1st June 2020 via Zoom

Present: Jesus Perez-Gil (President), Elena Pohl (Vice President), Tony Watts (Past President), John Seddon (Secretary), Tony Wilkinson (Treasurer), Rob Gilbert (EBJ), Helmut Grubmuller (co-opted: future congresses)

Guests from the Congress Organizing Committee: Klaus Groschner, Gerhard Schuetz, Thomas Stockner

Minutes

1. Welcome and Apologies (JP-G)

Jesus Perez-Gil welcomed the Committee, and the Guests from the Congress Organizing Committee: Klaus Groschner, Gerhard Schuetz, Thomas Stockner, and reported Apologies from Birgit Plochberger (President of the Austrian Biophysical Society).

2. Update (EP)

Elena reported that the Vienna Congress website is now live at www.ebsa2021.org, and is still planned for 24 – 28 July 2021. The Organizing Committee have considered what size of Congress should be planned for, and what the financial impact will be if the number of participants, in the light of COVID-19, is reduced from 1,000 to 500. Three venues were considered: Austria Center Vienna (ACV), The Hofburg, and Vienna Universities. The Universities were ruled out, in part because the University of Vienna is already fully booked, and in part because of low flexibility. The costings for 500 participants for the other two venues are as follows:

	Venue hire	Catering	Flexibility of space
ACV	€74K	€91K	Flexible
Hofburg	€118K	€118K	Rigid

The ACV has a number of advantages, and is significantly cheaper (€60K) than the Hofburg, based on 500 participants. The space at the ACV can be adjusted upwards to accommodate 1,000, 1,500 or even 2,000 participants.

Helmut commented that if social distancing is still needed next summer, this space flexibility would allow us to put the participants in a larger space than would normally be needed, and that this flexibility is vital given the uncertainties around COVID-19.

Elena reported that 130 companies have so far been contacted with regard to sponsorship.

She reported that it was intended to hold a Hybrid meeting, including virtual elements within the Programme. This will increase the flexibility in case of possible restrictions being in place in summer 2021. A completely online Congress will be possible, if the

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physical Congress needs to be cancelled. The best online platform to use will need to be identified, and issues such as the need for permission to film lectures will have to be considered.

The costs so far incurred are for two contracts with the organizing company RAM:

- €11,375 is due to be paid by July this year;
- Approx. €20,000 will be due in December this year for registrations, development of an abstract handling tool, sponsors/exhibitors, etc. according to the time plan.

Costs relevant for EBSA are:

- Approx. €25K deposit for the ACV will be due this summer ;
- Fees for putting in place the legal permission for the Austrian BPS to run such a large meeting. Elena has now been advised that €2500 was only the planned budget. The real fee is now approx. €7,500.

Jesus pointed out that admin costs of €18-€20 per participant are usually paid at the end, and that the costs should reduce if the number of participants is smaller than originally envisaged. Elena confirmed that the charges would be €12 per participant based on 1,000 participants, and €15 per participant based on 500 participants, and the overall costs will be reduced.

Tony Watts stated that Eric Quiniou from France has looked after Abstract submission in many previous EBSA Congresses (2005, 2013, 2015, 2017) and is set up to handle all aspects of this through to production of the Abstract book, thereby avoiding the need for any editing by EBJ. Eric has previously not charged for this service. Rob pointed out that the production costs of the Abstract book are covered by Springer, and the timelines are already agreed. Jesus did not know about the possibility of using Eric for the Madrid Congress and so handled the Abstract submissions locally, which was a bit of a nightmare. Thomas Stockner confirmed that they will be happy to use Eric.

Action: Tony Watts to check whether Eric is willing to do it, and then send his details to Elena.

Action: Rob to send details of the Abstract book Springer timelines to Elena.

Elena listed a number of possible Satellite meetings, including EU COST Meetings:

- CA 19105 Pan-European Network in Lipidomics;
- EU Consortium Proton (speaker: Peter Pohl);
- MOBIEU CA 15126, proposed by Gerhard Schuetz (speaker: Patrick England);
- Multimodal Imaging CA 17121 (speaker: Andreas Walter).

In addition, it has been suggested that the postponed 2020 Regional Biophysics Congress, Pecs, could either be made into a joint meeting, or a Satellite. Tony Watts stated that EBSA has previously supported this meeting, which rotates around the region. Laszlo Matyus from the EBSA EC is closely involved. Helmut's view was that this needs careful discussion, and that one possibility would be to hold the RBC in Vienna, overlapping for one day with the EBSA Congress.

Action: Tony Watts to investigate the options further

Tony Watts mentioned that he has organized Student Pre-Congress Workshops just before a number of previous EBSA Congresses, and would be happy to do so in Vienna.

Rob mentioned that the AUC Meeting will be held virtually in Canada on week before the

EBSA Congress, and wondered whether it could be a Satellite. There was not much enthusiasm for this, but Elena pointed out that we don't need to make a decision yet.

Helmut asked which other Biophysics meetings will take place in 2021. He stated that the German Society is moving its 2020 meeting by two years, to 2022, to remain out of step with the EBSA Congress. Jesus mentioned that the Joint Spanish / Portuguese Conference planned for July 2020 may need to be moved to Spring 2021, and this will be discussed at a Committee meeting tomorrow (2nd June). It was agreed that everyone would report back on developments with all national societies we know about, to make sure we are aware of other meetings, and let other National Societies know about EBSA2021.

Action everyone: Report back on national society meetings and dates in 2021, when available.

Jesus asked whether the Congress costs will be covered if the number of participants is only 500. Elena confirmed this to be the case, as long as the ACV is used as the venue. Tony stated that the numbers physically attending the Congress can be controlled, and it is important to keep maximum flexibility. He feels that the ACV is an excellent choice of venue.

Helmut stated that he strongly supported offering online registration, with a Fee which should be less than for those physically attending, but not negligible. Elena reported that RAM thinks that the online Fee should be lower, and she mentioned that there will be some advantages for online participants (for example, the ability to hop between sessions). Rob pointed out that some purely online meetings are free to attend. Helmut remarked that if it were free for online registration, we might find that no one will come to Vienna in person. He proposed that a Fee of about half the normal amount might be a good compromise.

Tony Watts mentioned that the British Biophysical Society Biennial meeting scheduled for July 2020 is being moved back to September and will be entirely virtual. The UK EC members can report back on how well this works.

Action: John and Tony to report back on the BBS meeting

Jesus asked whether the EBSA Congress could be pushed back by one year or even two years. Tony Watts responded that he had discussed this extensively with Elena and she has decided for now to go ahead with the original July 2021 dates. This may need to be revisited if there are further flare-ups of COVID-19. It is important to keep the options open as long as possible. Helmut was very supportive of this view, and stated that it is important for EBSA to play a leading role in the return to a more normal scientific life. Jesus agreed that it is vital to keep options open, and is of the view that the ACV looks like an excellent choice.

Tony Wilkinson asked about the degree of financial exposure for EBSA. Elena responded that the contract with ACV will need a deposit of around €25K, but she will try to reduce the amount due, and will check whether we can delay paying it. Elena will also estimate further costs that will be incurred in 2021, and for what they are required.

Helmut agreed that the ACV looks like an excellent location for the Congress, and the members of the subset of the EC present at the meeting all strongly support the new location. He suggests that Elena should present detailed information on the upcoming checkpoints when decisions have to be finalized, as well as budgets based upon different numbers of participants, and present this to the EBSA EC on 4th July. There should also be a detailed discussion at the EC meeting of the level of Fees for physical and virtual participants.

Action: Elena to put together checkpoints and budgets for EBSA EC on 4th July.

Tony Watts reiterated the desirability of renegotiating various costs. He suggested that potential sponsoring companies should be told that there will be opportunities for Webinars. Elena responded that the letter sent out to companies already mentions that there a Hybrid model may be adopted for the Congress.

Jesus asked if we are liable for a cancellation Fee from the Hofburg. Elena confirmed that no deposit has been paid to the Hofburg, and no cancellation fee is due.

Tony Watts suggested that we should write to all the EBSA Presidents / Secretaries, informing them that the EBSA Congress is going ahead in Vienna during the planned dates in July 2021, and ask them what is happening to their scheduled national meetings. We should also take the opportunity to remind them that nominations of candidates for the EBSA Young Investigator's Award and the Avanti-EBSA Award will be due by 31st December 2020. Helmut proposed that this information should also be sent round the EBSA membership.

Action: John to write to EBSA Presidents / Secretaries and send info to Ilpo to send out to the EBSA Newsgroup.

Jesus mentioned that we should keep an eye on potential platforms for running a hybrid Congress. Elena responded that there are many companies in Vienna offering suitable platforms. Helmut warned that we should not over-state the advantages of attending the Congress online for fear of damaging the numbers who will physical attend.

Tony Watts stressed to Elena that we and the whole EBSA EC are available to help with any aspects of the organization of the Congress.

Jesus asked for details of the current situation with the Scientific Programme. Elena replied that a number of names are confirmed as Plenary speakers, including Thomas Suedhoff, Francesco Bezanilla, Marina Rodinina, Raimond Dutzler and Karolin Luger. In addition, Jesus has been in contact with Ben Feringa, who is likely to accept an invitation. Other names mentioned were Carol Robinson, and Gerhard Hummer.

Action: Elena send invitation to Ben Feringa

Tony Watts suggested a crystallographer as a Plenary, but it was felt that someone doing cryo-EM was a better choice, and Rob proposed Dave Stuart, who is doing work on COVID-19. Elena stated that he has already agreed to organize a Symposium within the Congress. Rob reiterated that he was suggesting him for a Plenary. Elena replied that they are still gathering in proposals and will then decide.

Action: Elena and her Committee to finalize the choices of Plenary Speakers and send them official invitations

John asked about the plans for the Sessions and Session Chairs. Elena explained that the Session Chairs will come from the Organizing and Scientific Committees, and perhaps the EBSA EC. The Sessions will be organized by the Chair, who will also invite the Co-Chair. John asked if Elena will be ready to present the list of Sessions and Session Chairs at the 4th July EBSA EC meeting, and Elena replied that she will.

3. Any other business

There was no other business, Jesus thanked everyone for attending, and the meeting ended at 14.30 BST.

European Biophysical Societies' Association

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www.ebsa.org



4. Next EBSA EC meeting: Saturday 4th July, 09.30 – 16.30 (UK time) via Zoom.
