



## Meeting of the EBSA Executive Committee

09.30 BST (10.30 CET), Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020 via Zoom

*The EC agreed that the meeting can be recorded to help capture the Minutes.*

**Present via Zoom:** Jesus Perez-Gil (President), Elena Pohl (Vice President), Anthony Watts (Past President), John Seddon (Secretary), Tony Wilkinson (Treasurer), Rob Gilbert (EBJ), André Matagne (Bursaries), Mauro dalla Serra (IUPAB cross-representative), Sarah Köster, Nuno Santos, Dejan Žikić, László Mátyus (co-opted: EBSA Webmaster), Helmut Grubmuller (co-opted: future congresses), Maria Sunnerhagen (co-opted: 2023 Congress). Ilpo Vattulainen (co-opted: EBSA Newsgroup) and Pierre Emmanuel Milhiet (co-opted: EBSA Workshops Coordinator).

## Minutes

### 1. Welcome and Apologies (JP-G)

Jesus Perez-Gil welcomed the Committee, welcomed Maria Sunnerhagen, and reported that Apologies were received from Jacqueline Cherfils.

### 2. Minutes of the January 2020 meeting of the EC in Vienna (JMS)

Item 2: The **Action** on Jesus to check with Ilpo and Carine Saint Rose whether all the participants at the Madrid Congress have been emailed, asking them to opt into the Newsgroup is still pending. This email should also advertise the Vienna Congress.

Item 5: The **Action** on Jesus, Tony Wilkinson and John to update the EBSA Constitution is still pending. The **Action** on Tony Wilkinson, Pierre-Emmanuel, André and John to introduce a twice-yearly deadline for applications for meetings support is still pending. There was discussion, in light of Covid, whether we should reconsider the block on supporting any more meetings this year. However, it was felt that it would be useful to replenish some of the reserves, and also a number of the meetings from this year will be postponed till next year, so we may end up making an exception to our usual rule for the Congress year, and carry over the offered funding from this year to next.

Item 6: The **Action** on Elena to send the advert for the Vienna Congress to the EBSA Presidents is still pending. It was suggested that she could either email the flyer, or send a link to the Congress poster on the Congress website. The **Action** on John to divide up member countries among the EC is still pending, awaiting a suitable poster from Elena for people to send out to their National Committees. The **Action** on Tony Watts and Jesus to investigate links to India, via a visit to India, has been postponed due to Covid.

Item 7: The **Action** on Tony Watts to liaise with Elena about running a School before the Vienna Congress has been done, and this will go ahead. It was pointed out that this time it will not be possible to obtain any funding from IUPAB (previously they awarded €4,500

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in support), as it will be the year of the IUPAB Congress. The following Congress will be in 2023, in Kyoto, and there is an **Action** on Tony Watts to find the dates.

Item 8: Rob reported that Springer are keen to renew the EBJ contract, and an **Action** was agreed for Rob and Tony Watts to speak with Meran at Springer to see what offer they can make, then bring this to the Publication Committee to decide whether to accept the offer, or to put the renewal out to competition.

**Action:** Rob and Tony to report back to the EC with a recommended course of action.

Item 13: The **Action** on André to get Ilpo to advertise the Bursary scheme via the Newsgroup is still pending.

*The Draft Minutes of the January 2020 EC meeting were Approved.*

### 3. Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> June Zoom meeting of the EC subset (JMS)

Minor corrections were noted.

Tony Watts confirmed that Eric Qiniou is willing to look after Abstract submission for the Vienna Congress, without payment. As usual, Springer will publish the Abstract book as a Special Issue of EBJ.

Laszlo reported that the Hungarian Committee is uncertain how best to proceed with the postponed RBC, Pécs. John suggested that Elena should assume that there will not be a joint meeting with the EBSA Congress. Elena confirmed that in any event she will need to know by the end of July. **Action:** Laszlo to ask Miklos Niyitrai and Beata Bugyi to contact Elena to explore possibilities.

Tony Watts reported that the British Biophysical Society's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference has been postponed from July to September, and will be only online.

**Action:** John to write to EBSA Presidents in September, informing them that the Vienna Congress is going ahead during the planned dates in July 2021, asking them what is happening to their scheduled national meetings, and reminding them of the 31<sup>st</sup> December deadline for nominations for the EBSA Young Investigator's Award and the Avanti-EBSA Award.

### 4. Treasurer's report (TW)

The EBSA accounts have been submitted to accountants Sam Rogoff.

Our balance in Euros has dropped from €263K at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, to €125K at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

Dejan asked what was happening about the agreed support for meetings that are now postponed [See item 8]. Tony Wilkinson pointed out that many meetings may now not take place at all. Nuno asked whether there was any problem transferring expenditure from one year to the following, and Tony Wilk. confirmed there was no problem in principle. He also reminded the EC about setting an annual limit on the budget for meetings (nominally €50K) to ensure we do not over commit. André reminded the Committee that there is an annual limit of €10K on Bursaries, and that we never exceed this sum; he agreed that we need to have a limit on the amount of Meetings support. Sarah suggested we ask for a letter confirming what the support was used for. Tony Wilkinson pointed out that André and Pierre-Emmanuel look at statements of what funding will be for (typical Meeting support is for 4 Bursaries plus one EBSA Lecturer;

~€2,400), and we ask for reports. We want to see that the funding helps promote biophysics across Europe.

*The Treasurer's Report was Approved.*

## 5. EBJ (RG)

The Impact Factor of EBJ has gone down from 2.5 to 2.1. There have been 104 submissions, which is up on last year. There will be a number of Special Issue: ARBRE-MOBIEU, Analytical Ultracentrifugation (Ren Dodson and Trisha Patel), and one on a final Collaborative grant report (Claudia Steinem). Megan Marlow has replaced Frances Separovic on the Editorial Board, and Trisha Patel has taken over responsibility for social media. Rob reminded the Committee that there are no page, Figure or access charges (apart from for Gold open access), and most articles are free. Springer do a very good job of production.

Maria mentioned that she is an Editor for JBC and they do mini-reviews. Rob stated that EBJ does techniques reviews, and a recent review on ion channels and cancer got lots of citations. Tony Watts mentioned that IUPAB set up Biophysical Reviews (to replace Quarterly Reviews of Biophysics) some time ago, but it still does not have an IF. Maria observed that reviews are a way of raising the IF. Rob stated that the ARBRE-MOBIEU Special Issue, which comes out in March 2021, but sooner online, should have a big impact. He believes EBJ should encourage techniques reviews.

Renewal of the Springer contract for EBJ was already dealt with under item 2.

## 6. ISE (NS)

Nuno reported that he attended a meeting of ISE in Brussels on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. There were 16 societies represented. Since then, all meetings have been online. ISE is preparing a position paper for the EU on science funding in the new Horizon Europe programme. This will address the balance between Eastern and Western Europe, as well as fundamental versus applied science and the need for interdisciplinary / multidisciplinary research. Tony Watts asked whether there is anything specific from ISE to report now. Nuno replied that they were mainly things such as limitations for collaborative research, East/West issues in obtaining ERC funding, difficulties for young scientists embarking on their careers, etc. He will send round the position paper when it is ready.

## 7. EBSA website (LM) and Newsgroup (IV)

Laszlo reported that the website is running well, although he is now receiving a lot of spam since the GOTCHA button was removed. He plans to remove the "Contact the Webmaster" link.

Ilpo reported that the Newsgroup is stable at approx. 1,500 members. It is currently managed from Tampere, but he will need to move it to Helsinki in 2 years' time, and is looking into how best to do this. **Action:** Ilpo to investigate. Jesus commented that it is an important activity to maintain, and Tony Watts agreed that it works very well. Elena asked whether Ilpo had sent info to the Newsgroup on the Vienna Congress. Ilpo replied that she can either do this herself, or can send the information to be distributed to his private email address, and he will do it. **Action:** Elena to send relevant info on Vienna Congress either directly to Newsgroup, or to Ilpo for distribution.

## 8. Requests for EBSA support, and reports (PEM)

Pierre-Emmanuel stated that the Croatian school is planning to go online, and they will then request €2K from EBSA. Helmut commented that Tom Vuletic has not been able to raise funding. [It was subsequently confirmed to Pierre-Emmanuel by Tom that the

School has been cancelled]. The Les Houches School on Fluorescence Markers has been postponed to 2022. The Graz Membranes meeting has been postponed to 7-9 April 2021, and the EBSA contribution of €2,400 has already been paid. The Perugia meeting on Mechanobiology is being moved to 29 Nov – 2 Dec 2020, so still qualifies for its €2,400 funding from EBSA. The Erice School, The Iberian Meeting, Coimbra, the Regional Biophysics Congress, Pecs, the IC-ANMBES Conference, Brasov, and the Felix Goni/Alicia Alonso/Tony Watts EBSA Membranes School are all being moved back to 2021. There was a debate about what to do about EBSA support which had been agreed for 2020, given that these meetings are now moving into the Congress year, but payment had only been made for one. It was agreed that Pierre-Emmanuel will check with the organizers of each meeting to confirm which meetings are going ahead, and in what form, and whether they still need EBSA support. **Action:** Pierre-Emmanuel to check situation with each organizer, and report back to the EC with a recommendation.

[It was subsequently confirmed that the Brasov Conference has been rescheduled for 2 – 4 June 2021.]

Tony Watts suggested that the EBSA Membrane School could revert to Bilbao for 2021 (no Eurofootball as a clash this time), and could be either just before or just after the Iberian Meeting in Coimbra. He stated that we will need to inform Felix Goni and Alicia Alonso by the end of 2020 whether it will go ahead. Cancellations can be made as late as 2 months before, without penalty. **Action:** Jesus and Nuno to confirm the date of the Iberian meeting and then inform Tony Watts, who would then re-start planning and discussions with Felix and Alicia. **Action:** Tony Watts would get the web site updated and the previously registered participants will be contacted.

Lazlo pointed out that Covid is not over, so we should keep our support as a dynamic process, with Tony Wilkinson transferring money as late as possible to organizers. Tony confirmed that there is usually no reason to pay in advance. Nuno asked whether the support of €2,400 for the Coimbra meeting is still available. Pierre-Emmanuel and Laszlo felt that it would be acceptable to carry over support for meetings into 2021 so long as they are not scheduled within a month before or after the Vienna Congress. John asked whether we wish to allow new proposals for 2021, but Jesus felt this was not appropriate. Maria suggested we should encourage Satellite meetings; Jesus agreed, even if quite far from Vienna, so long as quite close in time to the main Congress. Maria felt the RBC Pécs meeting would be good to consider as a possible Satellite (but see Item 3 above).

## 9. Student bursaries (AM)

André noted that 5 requests for bursaries had been received, and 3 have been funded, to a total of €4,720 so far this year. The annual limit awarded in total is €10,000.

## 10. Future EBSA Schools / Biophysics Courses (JP-G)

Already covered under Item 2.

## 11. EBSA 2021 Congress in Vienna (EP)

Elena confirmed that the EBSA Congress will go ahead as planned from 24-28 July 2021. The location is being moved from the Hofburg to the Austria Center Vienna (ACV), and the Congress will either be face-to-face, hybrid physical and virtual, or fully online, depending on the Covid situation next summer. The website is now active at [www.ebsa2021.org](http://www.ebsa2021.org)

The Abstract submission tool and the Registration and Payment tool need to be set up.

The ACV is easily reached by metro line U1 and allows for flexibility in the number of participants. It has been half renovated in 2020. The estimated cost based on 500

participants are €74K rental plus €91K catering, significantly cheaper than the Hofburg (€118K rental plus €118K catering).

Jesus mentioned that we have opened the possibility of reducing the size of the EBSA Vienna Congress. He asked about the airflow through the building. Elena confirmed that it is fully prepared for Covid conditions.

Sarah mentioned that googling EBSA2021 leads to the EBSA webpage, and then hitting the Congress button leads to the Austrian Society homepage. [This has now been rectified].

In terms of sponsoring, Jesus noted that these are new times. Elena replied that they will offer online workshops if the meeting goes hybrid.

Sarah asked for a clarification of how hybrid mode will operate. Elena explained that there would be perhaps 500 face-to-face participants attending normal talks, which will be broadcast for online participants. Sarah warned that technical issues will need to be addressed, but Elena reassured her that the AVC is already well set up to deal with this. John and Tony Watts suggested that Elena should attend one (or more) meeting at the AVC (ideally a hybrid one) sometime this year to check out how well the technology works. **Action:** Elena to attend a meeting at the AVC.

There was an extended discussion on the appropriate Registration Fees to charge for online participants. Sarah pointed out that online participants will not be provided with lunches and coffees. Maria pointed out that scientists in Sweden cannot plan for travel in 2021, so will need to attend online. Also, 2021 will be a very busy year for meetings. The consensus view was that the online registration should be significantly cheaper, perhaps 50% of the face-to-face fee. It was suggested that there should be both upgrade and downgrade options for registration, so that people whose situation is uncertain will still be comfortable registering. Elena felt we could wait till September to decide on the Fees, but Helmut advised that since this impacts on the budget, we should decide as early as possible. Jesus summed up that we should pursue a hybrid mode, that we need to decide on the Fees in time to announce them in September, and that we need to explain to sponsors that they will be able to exhibit whatever the situation is next July. Elena will be meeting with the local Scientific Committee next week. **Action:** Elena to ensure that the Registration Fees for face-to-face and online participants (Full and Student) are agreed and circulated in time to announce publicly in September.

Elena displayed the provisional Programme of the Congress and asked the EC to suggest further Sessions, Speakers and Chairs. She stressed the need to ensure gender and country balance. There is a potential problem with the relatively high proportion of US speakers, who may be unable to attend in person. Elena has written twice to the National Societies but most have not yet added suggestions (only Italy, Portugal, France and Slovenia so far). Sarah asked why there are so many US speakers, and Elena replied that it was based on excellence. There may need to be 3 online Plenaries, which is not ideal. Nuno, thought this would be acceptable, but was concerned if every session has a significant number of online speakers. He recommended we focus going forward on choosing European speakers. Rob, Jesus and Sarah suggested that Elena go back to Carol Robinson (Tony Watts also to approach her) and Ben Feringa (who are unsure of their availability) and confirm that they would be able to give their Plenaries online, if necessary. Rob is concerned that we may lose them if we wait too long. Elena agreed. **Action:** Elena to contact Carol Robinson and Ben Feringa, and Tony Watts to contact Carol Robinson.

Tony Watts asked whether the plan for sponsors is that they set up on Saturday, exhibit Sunday/Monday/Tuesday, then take down on Tuesday evening / Wednesday morning. He stated that many sponsors prefer to stay for shorter times. Jesus suggested they

could wait till Sunday to set up, or even Monday if they only wanted to exhibit for 2 days.

For Satellite meetings, there will be a pre-Congress Young Investigators School in Neusiedlersee, organized by Tony Watts. There may be four COST Action meetings (ARBRE-MOBIEU, Comulis, ERNEST and EpiLipidNet). There is a possibility that the RBC, Pecs could be a Satellite, or even a joint meeting.

Rob asked whether there was already a plan for an Instruct-ERIC session at the Congress. He confirmed that they have very successfully run sessions at previous Congresses, and will provide excellent speakers. André and Jesus strongly advised Elena to ask someone to invite Instruct to organize a session, and Elena replied that he should go ahead and do this. There can be 4 parallel sessions if necessary. **Action:** André to contact Instruct. Tony Watts to contact ERNEST.

Elena advised that the Programme will be discussed at the meeting of the Scientific Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> July, and finalized by the end of July.

Nuno asked whether Maria do Rosario Domingues has been invited to run a Satellite meeting on Lipidomics based on Cost Action EpiLipidNet. He offered to contact her, but in fact Elena is also part of this network. Elena stated that ideally Satellites should take place on the Friday / Saturday before the main Congress. **Action:** Nuno / Elena. Nuno asked whether the Austrian borders are open, and Elena confirmed that they are for surrounding countries.

John asked what was happening about selecting Co-Chairs. Elena replied that they will be selected by the Chairs. Tony Watts asked Elena to report back to the EC after the 9<sup>th</sup> July on the confirmed Sessions and Session Chairs and Co-Chairs, and in particular to send these to Eric Quinou. **Action:** Elena.

Helmut suggested that there should be another meeting of the Subset of the EC, roughly one week after Elena's meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> July. Jesus suggested that Elena should send the EC the list for last minute corrections / adjustments. André asked how many sessions were planned, given that there are already 28? Elena replied that not all from the current list may take place. Sarah commented that a balance is needed between different fields, and she feels it is currently too weighted towards molecular biophysics, and not enough towards cellular biophysics or systems biology. Elena agreed with this. Jesus stated that the Scientific Committee should have representation from a wide range of topics and regions, and that the current Committee is quite local. Elena explained that it was hard to separate the Organizing and the scientific Committee. Jesus replied that this is why the EBSA EC needs to be closely involved. Helmut stated that she needs to steer the EC with what she needs from us: we want an overview of the process. Elena confirmed that they want suggestions from the EC for sessions and speakers. Maria commented that she didn't receive such a request from Elena. Rob stated that it hasn't really felt as though the EC has been invited to participate in choosing sessions, and reminded the EC that Arbore chose one of the Madrid sessions to run, and Instruct organized their own session. Pierre-Emmanuel asked how we should proceed. Jesus stated that the Programme is in a preliminary state and is too raw just now. He proposed that EC members send suggestions to Elena in the coming week to incorporate. Then she will circulate an updated version of the Programme to the EC for a final polishing and completion by the end of July, and then invitations will be sent out. She confirmed that no one has yet been invited (apart from the Plenary Speakers). **Action:** Elena to circulate an updated version of the Programme to the EC after her meeting with the Organizing Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

Jesus asked whether September is too early to open Registration. Tony Watts stated that a December date would be fine. **Action:** Elena to set the date for opening Registration.

André asked how Bursaries will be organized? He is willing to Chair the Bursary Panel, and suggested that we use the same Panel as last year (Jacqueline, Mauro and John). **Action:** André to organize Bursary selection. Jesus noted that we should inform Society Presidents about the Bursaries in our September letter to them. **Action:** John. Tony Wilkinson reminded the EC that we usually award 50-60 Bursaries in the form of Registration and accommodation – no money changes hands. This came to approx. €21K in Madrid, where student accommodation was cheap.

Tony Wilkinson stated that EBSA usually pays an upfront subvention to the Congress organizers of some €25K to cover costs such as deposits. Elena informed the Committee that €11,375 to RAM and €6,500 legal costs will be due by the end of July, and a deposit for the ACV will be due soon (this may be in the region of €20K). Tony stated that we need to see a more detailed breakdown of the costings. John confirmed that from the Subset meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> June there was an Action for Elena to provide a budget for the full EC meeting. Helmut stated that he felt very uncomfortable approving a subvention of up to €38K without first seeing a budget. Jesus stated that the original budget needs to be remodeled. He asked Elena what funds need to be advanced, and why are they so much? He also asked what the €6.5K legal costs are. Laszlo stated that he didn't understand why there are legal costs. Elena explained that these costs were incurred to change the constitution of the Austrian Society to make it able to be the official organizer of the Congress, and will be reimbursed to EBSA. John asked Elena how much she needs Tony Wilkinson to send her now. She replied, definitely €18K, and possibly up to €38K by the end of July. Jesus proposed that we send €25K to Elena, and ask for more details of company costs and the ACV deposit. Helmut agreed, but stated that we would be negligent to approve without seeing the updated budget. **Action:** Elena to send more detailed updated budget to the EC. **Action:** Tony Wilkinson to transfer €25K if the budget is satisfactory.

## 12. EBSA 2023 Congress in Stockholm (MS)

Maria confirmed that the 2023 Congress will take place in Stockholm from 30<sup>th</sup> July – 4<sup>th</sup> August. Not much additional planning has been done recently, but they are forming a larger Organizing Committee. They have massive support from academia and institutes in Sweden. They have made contact with the Finnish and Norwegian societies to involve them. The venue is confirmed as Stockholm University. Other venues are available for pre- and post-meetings. The ESS and MAXIV have offered to contribute. There will be a free banquet in the City Hall. Hotels are in the price range of €60 - €230. The official organizer is the SFBBM, of which Maria is Chair. The budget has been prepared on the assumption of 1,000 participants, but can be scaled down. All Meetings in Sweden scheduled for 2020 have been moved back to 2021. Universities are reopening on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020. They have experience already of running virtual meetings, should this prove necessary. Under these circumstances the number of participants may increase from 1,000 to 2,300 or more. They have access to virtual reality tools – the Avatar platform was developed in Sweden. They plan to have Keynote Speakers in place by January 2021. Jesus thanked Maria for preparing the information and presenting it clearly.

## 13. Any other business

Tony Watts informed the EC that the online 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Encyclopedia of Biophysics is ongoing.

Jacqueline warned the EC that she had received a scam email appearing to come from Jesus, requesting transfer of funds. The EC should note that all such requests are scams and should not be actioned.

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- 14. Next EC meeting:** Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, or 30<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Date to be chosen by DoodlePoll. Location still to be agreed (Lisbon, Belgrade, Montpellier, Athens or Zoom).
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**1. Sub-Meeting of EBSA Trustees (TW, AW, RG and JMS)**

Tony Wilkinson stated that the Trustee Indemnity Insurance has just been renewed. He confirmed that the present Trustees are himself, Tony Watts, Rob Gilbert and John Seddon. This position will be revisited after Brexit is completed since the new insurance policy now also covers Trustees from mainland Europe. He noted that the policy does not cover failed conferences or any cancellations costs.

The meeting closed at 4pm.

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