



## First Meeting of the EBSA Executive Committee, Vienna

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Location: Room 3.96, Congress Centre Vienna

**Present:** Jesus Perez-Gil (President); Elena Pohl (Vice President); John Seddon (Secretary); André Matagne (Bursaries); Mauro dalla Serra (IUPAB cross-representative); Nuno Santos; Dejan Žikić; László Mátyus (co-opted: EBSA Webmaster); Helmut Grubmüller (co-opted: future congresses); Pierre Emmanuel Milhiet (co-opted: EBSA Workshops Coordinator).

**Present via Zoom:** Anthony Watts (Past President), Maria Sunnerhagen (co-opted: 2023 EBSA Congress); Ilpo Vattulainen (co-opted: EBSA Newsgroup); Tony Wilkinson (Treasurer); Rob Gilbert (EBJ).

The meeting was recorded on Zoom for the purpose of taking Minutes.

## Minutes

### 1. Welcome and Apologies (JPG)

Jesus Perez-Gil welcomed the Committee and reported that Apologies were received from Sarah Köster and Jacqueline Cherfils. He mentioned that all of the EC are invited to attend the EBSA National Societies' Presidents meeting on Monday 26<sup>th</sup>.

### 2. Minutes of the meeting of the EC on 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2021 on Zoom (JMS)

Following noting a few minor corrections, the Minutes were Approved and can now be put on the EBSA website.

**Action:** John and Laszlo

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

Tony Wilkinson made an online presentation of the current state of EBSA finances, and reported that the balance was €217K at 31st March 2021. He stressed that €40K is still to be paid out for the EBSA Congress, and reminded the EC that the EBSA funds are mainly held in Euros. The Publication Committee met with Springer to discuss the renewal of the EBJ contract. Over a two-year cycle the new contract will yield €122K, against overall commitments (including four EC meetings) of €96K, leaving a surplus of €26K over the two-year cycle. Thus going forward we will only have €13K per year to spend on other activities, such as support for meetings.

Tony Watts mentioned that Avanti has been sold, so it is possible that we will lose the \$3K biennial funding for the EBSA / Avanti Award. Jesus proposed that we look for a new sponsor for this Award, and also for sponsors for EBSA Workshops. Tony Watts suggested Bruker or Zeiss as two possibilities. Jesus wondered whether other publishers might be interested in sponsoring EBSA events. Tony Watts mentioned that Springer had previously given Congress support in the region of €7K - €10K, but not this time.

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Rob agreed that the recent changes at Springer have had a negative effect from this perspective. Tony Watts suggested we should be more hard-nosed and get in touch with someone more senior at Springer. Jesus thought that Elsevier would be interested in providing some sponsorship to EBSA. Tony Watts remarked that it would be fine if they wish to sponsor a meeting, but then they would want to publish it. Jesus suggested that a sub-group of the EC could look into this before the Stockholm Congress. Rob remarked that we need to be a little careful – EBJ is in a fragile state and we could harm it by weakening its links with EBSA. John suggested that perhaps the Publication Committee can look into this. Tony Wilkinson reminded the EC that it is Rob's work for EBJ that generates the income to EBSA from Springer.

**Action:** Publication Committee to look into the possibility of sponsorship from other publishers.

Tony Watts pointed out that the EBSA subscription is only €2 per member, and that this is very low when compared to IUPAB. Tony Wilkinson stated that this had not been well received when previously raised, and Nuno thought that the timing was not good. John mentioned that Norway has been removed from EBSA membership due to a long period of not paying their subscription. Tony Watts had contacted Switzerland, Denmark, Israel and Romania in the last two months – Denmark and Switzerland had now paid, as confirmed by Elena.

Jesus raised that question of the value of EBSA Bursaries for the Vienna Congress. Our normal practice is to give free registration, plus free accommodation, to a nominal total value of approx. €400 inclusive cost per student. For Vienna, on top of the original subvention of €25K, we have given an additional €33K for Bursaries. Elena confirmed that the some of the costs from the bursary were free from VAT, but that the accommodation element includes VAT charged at 10%. A number of EC members expressed surprise at VAT being charged on a flat contribution from EBSA to the congress, and Jesus stated that we need to clarify the situation for future Congresses.

Maria confirmed that the situation will be similar in Sweden, with VAT being payable on the student accommodation. Jesus asked Maria to clarify how much funding will be needed per student, on top of the Registration Fee, which should be waived. Maria stated that lunches will be included in the Registration Fee.

**Action:** Maria to confirm the total funding needed to cover 60 EBSA Student Bursaries.

#### 4. Report on European Biophysics Journal (RG)

Rob presented a report on EBJ. The number of papers submitted this year was a bit low at around 150. There have been a number of Special Issues: for example, ARBRE/MOBIEU (over 30 papers), Regional Biophysics Congress 2018, Analytical Ultracentrifugation 2020, and the CRG-SFB (Göttingen) Final Report. Rob stated that reviews in EBJ tend to get well-cited.

Springer have not provided a publisher's report this year.

The journal IF is declining, but the value for 2021 is not yet known. Nuno expressed concern, and stated that EBJ has slipped down into the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile. Jesus agreed that the situation is serious, and should be discussed further at the next EC meeting, and that EBJ is now dependent on Special Issues. Rob thought this was going a little far, but confirmed that reviews are important.

**Action:** Discuss EBJ further at the Jan 2022 EC meeting.

Many of the journal citations come from India and China. It is desirable to have more papers from the US and Europe, but the quality of such papers is variable.

The Editorial Board has been renewed, with mixed success.

Helmut stated that other CRGs are being encouraged to publish their Final Reports in EBJ.

Maria suggested that we need a more explicit connection/encouragement between our activities (Bursaries, Prizes) and publishing papers in EBJ.

## 5. **13<sup>th</sup> EBSA Congress (EP)**

Elena reported that 650 Abstracts had been submitted to the Vienna Congress, and there were 420 on-site, and 250 online participants. The organization has gone well and according to plan. The budget has been brought into balance.

Jesus expressed the thanks of the EC to Elena and her team for taking on this particularly difficult task and seeing it through to a successful conclusion.

Elena stated that it is great that we can open the Congress today, but there are still risks. If someone in the organizing team were to test positive, the Congress would have to be switched to entirely virtual.

## 6. **Agenda of the General Assembly (JMS/JPG)**

John summarized how the General Assembly will be run, using a mixture of in-person and virtual attendance and voting. Agenda items include Approval of revised versions of the EBSA Constitution and Rules of the Association, and introduction of a Privacy notice.

## 7. **Proposals for new officers and ordinary members of the EC (JPG)**

Jesus stated that André, Mauro and Jacqueline are standing down from the EC, and on behalf of the EC gave thanks to them for all the hard work they have done for EBSA over the last few years. He proposed that Jacqueline be Co-opted onto the EC with responsibility for Bursaries, and that Tony Watts be Co-opted with responsibility for International Societies. It was also proposed that Laszlo, Helmut and Pierre-Emmanuel remain Co-opted for the EBSA Website, Future Congresses, and Workshops, respectively.

Maria asked whether the EC is too large and too expensive. John clarified that the proposals keep the EC at its current size of 17 members, with the possibility of one further Co-opted position at a later date, if needed (for example, for the Chair of the 2025 Congress once appointed). Tony Watts explained that EBSA doesn't pay for a Secretariat, that the cost of the EC meetings is not high in percentage terms, and that the journal is run quite cheaply. He stressed the importance of having active and committed people on the EC. Jesus suggested that one way of reducing costs would be to run some EC meetings virtually, or as hybrid meetings.

## 8. **Member Societies (JPG)**

The Greek Society (Hellenic Crystallographic Association) will request approval from the General Assembly for HeCrA to be admitted as a Full voting Member of EBSA. The EC thanked Tony Watts for facilitating this. John asked what the situation was with regard to Ireland. Tony Watts confirmed that the British Biophysical Society sends an Annual Lecturer to Ireland, and plans to hold a joint BBS/Irish Meeting in Galway in summer 2022 to help them establish a Society, with a view to joining EBSA.

## 9. Any other business relevant for the General Assembly (JPG)

Tony Watts reported that Peter Pohl has been re-elected to IUPAB Council, and that he will give a report on IUPAB activities at the beginning of the IUPAB sponsored Plenary Lecture (Francesco Benzanilla), during the congress.

Laszlo gave some statistics on Website activities: UK highest, followed by USA, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, India and China.

Helmut reported that the Erice meeting has been moved back to Autumn 2022, and requested that the previously-agreed financial support be carried forward.

Jesus stated that no School associated with the Congress had been held this time. He also reported that he has been in discussion with Felix Goni about the possibility of holding a Membranes School in 2022 in Spain (Bilbao?). A complication is that Felix is due to retire in September 2022. He noted that the next Iberian Congress will be held in June 2022, and wondered whether the Membranes School could be associated with this. He proposed that we discuss this further once more details are available. Tony Watts stated that this would be a great solution, that Bilbao would be a great location, and that he is happy to help. He wondered whether any other Workshops will be happening that summer across Europe, and whether links could be forged to them. Maria reported on regular meetings/workshops in the Swedish LINXS Membrane Protein Working Group affiliated with MAXIV, with possible synergies to explore.

Helmut pointed out that the IUPAB and EBSA Congresses will clash again in 2027. The German Society is bidding to host the 2027 IUPAB Congress in Berlin, and we will need to allow for this in planning the 2027 EBSA Congress.

**Action:** John add as an Agenda item for the January 2022 EBSA EC meeting.

Jesus mentioned that we still need to select a venue for the 2025 EBSA Congress.

## 10. Any other business

Tony Watts will be giving an EBSA-badged lecture (at no cost to EBSA) at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Hellenic Crystallographic Association, 15 – 17 Oct 2021.

Maria reported about MOSBRI, which is a Horizon 2020 activity (€5M over 4 years starting on 1/7/2021), led by the Pasteur Institute. It has 15 partners (13 academic and 2 industrial). MOBSRI intends to take an active part in the EBSA 2023 congress. The Protein Society has actively expressed interest in sponsoring a speaker and/or session in the 2023 EBSA Congress. Maria will discuss further with them during fall together with Tony Watts who is the EBSA EC member responsible for interactions with other societies.

**Action:** Maria to discuss with colleagues, then report back to the EC.

Jesus reminded the EC that the Biophysical Society (US) sponsors lectures at the EBSA Congress.

The meeting closed at 16.12.