



Meeting of the EBSA Executive Committee via Zoom

Wednesday 29th June 2022 16.30 CET (15.30 UK time)

Present online:

Elena Pohl (President); Jesus Perez-Gil (Past President); John Seddon (Secretary); Tony Wilkinson (Treasurer); Sarah Köster; Dejan Žikić; Nuno Santos; Helmut Grubmüller (co-opted: future congresses); Pierre-Emmanuel Milhiet (co-opted: EBSA Workshops Coordinator); Anthony Watts (Co-opted: International Societies).

Apologies: Maria Sunnerhagen (Vice President); Arwen Pearson; Ilpo Vattulainen (EBSA Newsgroup); Primoz Zihelr; Jacqueline Cherfils (Co-opted: Bursaries); László Mátyus (co-opted: EBSA Webmaster).

Guests online: Mauro Della Serra (Chair of 2025 EBSA Congress), Alberto Diaspro, Valentina Mussi, Velia Minicozzi.

Approved Minutes

Welcome and Apologies (EP)

Elena welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded the EC that the purpose was to discuss further the plans for the 2025 EBSA Congress in Rome. Specific questions that the EC wished to be addressed were as follows:

1. The proposed conference site of the Parco della Musica is spectacular, and the EBSA EC committee expressed excitement about the site, not being fully aware of the price. Now that we know how expensive it is, have other cheaper options been explored, or could they be explored?
2. It is peculiar that WIFI is not included in the room cost, but is listed as a separate item of €20K.
3. Is there any evidence that the target of €150K of Industrial Sponsorship, plus €30 K Sponsors, is achievable? This is more than twice as high as the sponsorship obtained for the last few EBSA Congresses.
4. The amount of €10K budgeted for Speakers seems too low; for example, €52K is being budgeted for Keynotes, Invited Speakers and Chairs for the Stockholm 2023 Congress, and €10K

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is budgeted for 5 plenaries alone (2xUS, 1xCanada, 1xSingapore, 2xEurope; only travel and accommodation).

5. Is it really necessary to budget for a concert?
6. Is €45 per person realistic for the conference dinner, including drinks? It seems far too low?
7. The €25K direct support from EBSA does not seem to appear in the budget? Is this hidden under 'Industrial Sponsoring'? EBSA will also provide a further €25K to cover 60 Bursaries.
8. What about hotel costs in Rome? This is important to consider since the regular fee is already €650, and high hotel costs may thus be limiting for PIs from lower-budget countries who will be too senior for individual support.
9. Have you considered the cost of housing for the Bursary students? Is there cheap accommodation available? Will the EBSA funding for Bursaries of €25K suffice to cover registration and housing for the 60 students awarded Bursaries?
10. Can we be confident that some 800 participants will attend an EBSA Congress held in April – we have no experience of this time window. It would be useful to have an estimate of the deficit if only 600 participants attend the Congress (there were fewer than this attending in-person in Vienna).
11. What is the timescale for payments required to secure venues?

Mauro, as Chair of the Organizing Committee, gave an update on the planning, which attempted to address the questions raised.

He agreed that the originally proposed venue at the Parco della Musica is still very expensive, although the local organizing team (Valentina and Velia) had managed to secure a substantial discount. Two other commercial Rome venues were considered, but these are even more expensive. Mauro returned to the idea of holding the Congress at La Sapienza, which is conveniently located in the centre of Rome, close to Termini station and other transport links (Metro, buses). He has spoken to senior staff at La Sapienza, and it appears that the venue could be used essentially for free. It has a Main Lecture Theatre with 1,000 – 1,200 seats, and smaller lecture theatres in Physics (Amaldi, 300 seats and Cabibbo, 250 seats), Chemistry (La Ginestra, 400 seats) and Maths (Room III, 360 seats). All are located on the same site within 5 minutes walk of each other, and are air-conditioned. Overflow rooms are also available if needed. In terms of available dates, it would have to be in February, or in the period mid-June to mid-July. It was agreed that the latter option is much better in terms of timing. It is hoped that the opening lecture will be given by Giorgio Parisi, followed by a dinner, at the Parco Della Musica.

Jesus asked about space for Posters, and Mauro confirmed that there are lots of wide corridor spaces suitable for displaying Posters and to use for exhibiting. Elena asked about Parallel sessions, and Mauro replied that four lecture theatres will be available, although it is planned to have three parallel sessions.

Jesus stated that La Sapienza is a great option for the Congress, and the EC agreed. John suggested the best time would be the end of June / beginning of July, as a number of countries have intensive exams and marking periods in June. The periods starting Saturday 28th June or Saturday 5th July are probably optimal. Pierre-Emmanuel confirmed that June is the month of exams in France, and Tony Watts commented that July is vacation month in Sweden.

Jesus asked whether there will be an issue with accommodation in the summer, due to the Jubilee being held in Rome in 2025? Mauro replied that they were originally worried about this as they anticipated more than 1,500 attendees. However this figure is now estimated to be more in the range of 600 – 800 in-person participants, and it should be possible to book hotel rooms in advance. With the good transport links of La Sapienza it will be possible to look over a quite wide area for accommodation if necessary. Jesus stated that since the venue is essentially free it will be possible to keep the Registration Fees fairly low, and so attendees will be better able to pay hotel costs.

Nuno stated that the new proposed venue is much better on a number of grounds, including its central location. The Parco Della Musica had many additional costs. He thinks that the predicted industrial support seems too high, but that this is less important given the very low cost of the new venue. He agrees that the February date would be bad, and clashes with the American Biophysical Society meeting.

Jesus asked whether there will be a problem with using La Sapienza at the weekend. Mauro stated that there would not be, although Valentina mentioned that there would be some costs. Velia confirmed that La Sapienza is normally open on Saturdays, although she is not sure about the situation on Sundays.

Elena commented on the timing of the Congress that in Vienna 2021, some people cancelled their talks because of clashes with their vacation, rather than clashes with their teaching. She stated that we cannot predict the weather, but one way or another we will manage. She also stated that the budget for Speakers (€10K) seems too low. Mauro agreed, and said this can be increased to the more typical figure of €50K.

Helmut stressed that we need a realistic budget, and asked about the estimate for sponsorship. Mauro agreed that it was perhaps a little optimistic. He thinks that we might lose a few sponsors in moving the Congress to La Sapienza, but that most will still come. Helmut stated that most previous Congresses raised €70K - €80K in sponsorship. Alberto stated that he thinks that €100K - €120K is achievable; he also noted that Giorgio Parisi will be free, if he comes.

John asked whether the EBSA Bursaries of €400 will cover the student costs. Mauro confirmed that they would, by placing students in shared Double rooms. Tony Watts reminded the EC that the Bursaries should also cover the students' Registration Fees.

For the Opening Ceremony, projected to cost €40K, Nuno suggested waiting till closer (6 months?) to the Congress before committing to this expenditure. Valentina commented that Parco della Musica may not be available for a one-day ceremony in June/July. They will look into other possibilities.

Helmut asked when it will be necessary to book the rooms. Mauro confirmed this would be need to be done within the next few weeks; Alberto stressed that it should be done as soon as possible, before things get booked up.

Elena stated that we need to see the new financial plan.

Action: Mauro and team to check dates and prepare a new financial plan to circulate to the EC.

John suggested that the EC can make a rapid decision to approve the new dates, location and financial plan by email, without the need for another Zoom meeting.

Elena thanked Mauro and the Italian team for their hard work and for coming up with a very attractive option for the Congress.

The Zoom meeting ended at 17.20 CET.
