



EUROPEAN BOARD OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

Executive Board Meeting

Minutes of the EBO General Assembly, which took place on Sunday 7 June 2009 in the Diplomat Hotel in Prague, Czech Republic.

In Attendance:

Marko Hawlina (Slovenia)	President EBO
Wagih Aclimandos (UK)	President Elect EBO
Peter Ringens (The Netherlands)	Secretary General EBO
Marie-Jose Tassignon (Belgium)	Past-President EBO
Catherine Creuzot-Garcher (France)	Chairman of Education Committee
Vytautas Jasinskis (Lithuania)	Chairman of Residency Exchange Committee
Ivan HAEFLIGER (Switzerland)	Former Chairman of Education Committee
Gordana Sunaric Mégevand (Switzerland)	Chairman of CME Committee
Kirsten Baggesen (Denmark)	Treasurer
Yves Kastelyn (Belgium)	Former Treasurer
Danny Mathysen (Belgium)	EBOD Executive
Dara Conlon (Ireland)	EBOD Executive Officer
Christina Grupcheva (Bulgaria)	
Sarka Pitrova (Czech Republic)	
Pavel Rozsival (Czech Republic)	
Eija Vesti (Finland)	
Jaana Hietanen (Finland)	
Jean-Luc Seegmuller (France)	
Friedrich Flohr (Germany)	
Tina Xirou (Greece)	
Andrea Facsko (Hungary)	
Aoife Doyle (Ireland)	
Denise Curtin (Ireland)	
Edoardo Midena (Italy)	
Guna Laganovska (Latvia)	
Marija Klindzane (Latvia)	
Vytautas Jasinskis (Lithuania)	
Marc Theischen (Luxembourg)	
Jan Janula (Malta)	
J Bonnemayer (The Netherlands)	
Kristin Eidal (Norway)	
Gunnar Hovding (Norway)	
Wojciech Lubinski (Poland)	
Florindo Esperancinha (Portugal)	
Andrej Cernak (Slovak Republic)	
Vlasta Strumbelj (Slovenia)	
Jose-Luis Menezo (Spain)	
Rafael Martinez Costa (Spain)	
Renata Ivekovic (Croatia)	
Werner Spileers (EUPO Representative – Belgium)	

Apologies:

Maria Stefaniotou (Greece)
Panicos Philippou (Cyprus)

Absent:

Talin Barisani-Asenbauer (Austria)
Werner Kulnig (Austria)
Jean-Marie Rakic (Belgium)
Petia Vassileva (Bulgaria)
Michel Constantinides (Cyprus)
Morten La Cour (Denmark)
Pait Teesalu (Estonia)
Artur Klett (Estonia)
Hannele Nykanen (Finland)
Klaus Peter Stuehl (Germany)
Balint Kovacs (Hungary)
Fridbert Jonasson (Iceland)
Kristjan Thordarson (Iceland)
Fulvio Carraro (Italy)
Grazina Juodkaite (Lithuania)
Franco Mercieca (Malta)
Agnieszka Kubicka-Trzaska (Poland)
Rui Pinto (Portugal)
Cornel Stefan (Romania)
Marian Burcea (Romania)
Milan Izak (Slovak Republic)
Bjorn Johansson (Sweden)
Kristina Tornqvist (Sweden)
Roger Humphreys (UK)
Bora Eldem (Turkey)

Welcome by the President, Apologies, Greeting to New Members.

President Marko Hawlina opened the meeting by welcoming all in attendance. He specifically welcomed all new members of the Board as well as Werner Spileers, Secretary General of EUPO. He then offered the regrets of those unable to attend and advised the General Assembly that slight amendments would be made to the agenda in order to accommodate the time constraints of some members in attendance.

Approval of the minutes of the previous General Assembly (Krakow, Brussels)

The minutes of the previous meetings were unanimously approved.

Financial Report and Plans (K. Baggesen)

EBO Treasurer, Kirsten Baggesen, offered a summary of the financial report for EBO. She acknowledged the time which was required to move the account from Belgium to Denmark and thanked Yves Kastelyn (former treasurer) for his help in this regard. It was explained that both the move of account, as well as the deferral of payment have an effect on the spreadsheets. It was confirmed that for 2008, with benefits of €104,000 approximately against expenses of €128,061.77, there was a slight deficit at the end of the year. It was reported that the Education Committee spent just under €40,000 more than projected, while Residency Review, CME and the Finance Committee spent very little. The Residency Exchange Committee came in at €4000 under budget.

Hannele Nykanen of Finland addressed the board for approval of the 07/08 Financial Accounts. These were unanimously approved.

The Financial Report continued later, addressing on this occasion the 2009/2010 figures. The detail of the benefits and expenses for both years were presented with the figures for 2010 being based on projections. With regard to 2009, having compared the anticipated out-going costs with the actual expenditure for the year, a drop of €11,600 was recorded while 2010 is expected to come in at an increase of €4,000 approx.

Strategy of EBO 2009-2010 (M. Hawlina)

Marko Hawlina introduced the strategic plan for 2009-2010 (circulated to those in attendance) and thanked Marie-Jose Tassignon for her input. This strategy emphasises the requirement for harmonisation in learning between Eastern and Western Europe. Professor Hawlina then introduced the Chairperson of each of the EBO Committees as follows:

Committees

Education	Catherine Creuzot-Garcher
Residency Review	Wagih Aclimandos
Residency Exchange	Vytautas Jasinskis
CME	Gordana Sunaric-Megevand

He then requested of the General Assembly that each National Delegate should deliver an active input and he encouraged their involvement as committee members or workgroup participants.

Marko Hawlina then identified the seven key elements of the strategic plan of EBO as the following:

1. To accelerate harmonisation of education
2. To increase the profile and awareness of education
3. To offer support to Eastern Europe
4. To increase mobility
5. To offer support to young ophthalmologists
6. To collaboration with other societies and bodies (EUPO, Concordia, societies)
7. To increase professionalism

The new grant proposals for 2010 were also put forward to the General Assembly. This included the provision of grants to enable candidate participation at the EBOD exam 2010 (10 per year @ €500, plus free registration) as well as Chairperson/Programme Director visit grants (10 per year @ €500). These opportunities will supplement the existing grant scheme of 40 resident and 10 teacher grants, with suitable candidates being means-tested.

Professor Hawlina then presented a summary of the various EBO symposia due to appear in upcoming European congresses. This was followed by a brief outline of the development plans for the EBO website.

Finally Marko Hawlina closed the presentation by acknowledging two major achievements in 2008 for EBO. Firstly it was reported that Latvia saw an increase in resident training from three to four years, while Austria accepted the EBOD exam as the equivalent to their national exam.

He appealed to National Delegates to encourage such developments in their own countries and also to promote the accreditation of their training centres as a matter of urgency.

The Strategic Plan was unanimously approved by the General Assembly.

Mandates, Functioning and Composition of the Sub-committees (P. Ringens)

General Secretary, Peter Ringens, opened by explaining the EBO framework and the various facets of which it is made up. He explained that the Executive Committee comprises of the President, President Elect, Past President, General Secretary, Treasurer and Chairperson of each Committee (Vice-Presidents) It was then explained that the Board is a culmination of the Executive Committee and up to two National Delegates from each EU membering country and associate countries. Professor Ringens addressed the importance of the National Delegate in the development of the EBO, stating that the Executive Committee acts through the National Delegates while its activities are focused in sub-committees.

Eligibility criteria of the National Delegate were outlined as follows:

- appointed by national society
- EU members, Norway, Switzerland (two National Delegates)
- associate members: Croatia, Turkey (one National Delegate)
- four year terms; second term possible (or finish office on Executive Committee)
- 1 academic; 1 professional practitioner
- Delegates must be less than 65 years of age

He highlighted the importance of close ties between the National Delegates and both the Executive Board and EBO Sub-committees, all of whom share the common goal of promoting and developing the EBO.

The specific roles of the EBO sub-committees were presented to the Assembly, including examples of tasks required of committee members. Professor Ringens reiterated how crucial it is for national delegates to take on an active role in helping the committees to thrive and in translating EBO policy to national societies.

Marie-Jose Tassignon proposed in conclusion that Committees should report to the Board with their goals and agendas for approval.

Reports and Plans of Education Committee (C. Creuzot-Garcher)

Catherine Creuzot-Garcher, Chairperson of the Education Committee, addressed the key roles of the Committee as follows:

- Organisation of the EBOD Exam: MCQs, Viva-Voces & Examiners
- Curriculum workgroup
- Accredited courses
- Development of Eu

She proposed that a main objective of the EBO Examination was to establish common European Standards in Ophthalmology. The ways in which the EBO Exam has expanded since 2003 were identified, with six countries currently either obliging or highly recommending residents to sit the exam.

A brief description of the mechanics behind both the MCQ and the Oral Examination was given, offering an insight to the scoring process behind both. A comparison was drawn between the success rates of specialists and residents in the participating countries. It was agreed that, as the level of candidates participating tends to be good, the overall EBO examination success rate is usually high.

Difficulties arising with regard to both the MCQs and Viva-Voces were addressed. These largely centred on the issue of language and translation. With regard to the question bank it was agreed that the greatest challenge the Committee faces is to increase and improve the volume and level of questions in the bank. The procedure in submitting questions to the bank was agreed as follows:

1. Original MCQ sent to Tero Kivela and Education Committee Chairperson
2. Modification done by Tero Kivela (format) and then by the expert of the field (content)

3. Final MCQ sent to Tero Kivela and Education Committee Chairperson
4. Level of question assigned by field expert (easy, moderate, difficult)

Professor Creuzot-Garcher proposed a list of experts for each of the fields examined. These were primarily Executive Committee members, plus Tero Kivela and Bahram Bodaghi. Procedures were also agreed to increase the volume of MCQs in the question bank, as well as to validate those already existing. It was agreed that requests would be sent to all National Delegates, as well as those applying for course accreditation, to forward MCQ questions.

The following course of action for EBOD 2010 was agreed as follows:

- MCQs selected for the EBOD 2010 from the current question bank (Education Committee/CCG)
- Final selection of MCQ questions in October (EVER/Board)
- Correction of MCQs by the experts (TK, MJT, WA, MH, CCG - 15 December)
- Translation (CCG plus help with German - 15 February)
- Correction (PR, MJT - 15 March)
- Final check (CCG, MJT - 1st April)

Professor Creuzot-Garcher concluded the presentation by addressing plans to cement relations with SFO with a view to strengthening our future work together. It was confirmed that plans for EBO/SFO joint symposia, as well as provisions to accommodate the increasing numbers for EBOD 2010, are already underway.

Wagih Aclimandos put forward the suggestion that the stage to sit the exam be reviewed from 'last year of residency' to requiring a 'minimum number of years of training'. This was reported as a recurring grievance within the UK given the length of their training compared to other countries. Edoardo Midena of Italy proposed that the MCQ should just be provided for candidates in English and that there should be improved clarity of the Viva-voce instructions for examiners.

Tina Xirou of Greece enquired as to who should select examiners to take part in the EBOD Examination. Marko Hawlina answered that this should be the job of the National Delegate of each country as they know best the capability of those applying. Experience in education as well as multi-lingual abilities should be considered in this selection process. Ivan Haefliger proposed that it is also advisable where possible to rotate those examining. Christina Grupcheva of Bulgaria proposed that each examiner should send a sample slide to ensure continuity from jury to jury.

It was agreed that Catherine Creuzot-Garcher would draft a document outlining necessary criteria as to who should be nominated to examine. This would be circulated to all National Delegates to assist with this selection process.

In conclusion Marko Hawlina advised the Board of the new requirement for examiners to submit five MCQ questions for the question bank.

Report and Plans of CME Committee (G. Sunaric-Megevand)

Gordana Sunaric Megevand, Chairperson of the CME Committee, opened her presentation with a brief explanation of the components and objective of the UEMS. The General Assembly was informed that it is EACCME which has provided the means for accrediting CME events. This can be applied for on-line through the common internet platform at www.eaccme.eu. The applicable fees, rules and conditions of accreditation were outlined and Professor Sunaric-Megevand informed the group that there were 26 EBO accredited meetings and workshops between February 2008 and May 2009.

Further to an email request by the CME Committee to all National Delegates, Professor Sunaric-Megevand summarized the feedback from each National Society with regard to their involvement in CME. While it was outlined that involvement and interest in CME varied from country to country (with some having a legal obligation, others with a professional obligation and finally some being simply voluntary)

Professor Sunaric-Megevand urged all National Delegates to promote CME within their own countries. It was agreed that a common European standard would be required in order to harmonise and improve European Ophthalmology.

E-Learning, it was told, will also play a significant role and should become operational this year. Strict standards of evaluation and training will be called for. The focus of e-learning is to promote education in a non-biased manner to an international audience.

EACCME will appoint two specialists who will manage e-learning applications, although the applicant should also ensure that their work is assessed by one independent authority prior to this point. It was concluded that it will be the goal of EBO to encourage the creation of e-learning material, to obtain the right from EACCME to play a central role in evaluating quality of applications and, finally, to help accredit the material. The role of the CME Committee meanwhile is to develop an efficient team of individuals from various sub-specialties.

Marko Hawlina posed the question as to whether challenges experienced in the past with regard to CME accreditation still existed. Professor Sunaric-Megevand reassured all that changes have been implemented through the help of a previously conducted survey of opinions and that the process is also faster as a result of this. Professor Sunaric-Megevand concluded by thanking volunteers from Austria, Ireland and Spain who have agreed to join the CME Committee.

Report and Plans of the Residency Review Committee (W. Acimandos)

Wagih Acimandos, Committee Chairperson, opened his presentation by defining the motivation for any existing centre to become an EBO accredited training centre. He proposed that the incentive of this accreditation should be to acquire a certification and mark of recognition that their unit is above a certain standard. Professor Acimandos noted that when he asked the question as to why certain centres had not applied, their reason was generally a lack of awareness. It was drawn from this recurring challenge that there is a great need to promote the idea of accreditation as well as to explain the process of application.

The second challenge which arose was addressed by the question of 'What's in it for me?' Professor Acimandos proposed that it would be a definite asset to provide a certificate which could be displayed in the centre, offering a tangible reward for the mark of approval. Also it was agreed that the competition to keep up with others will offer a motivation to centres.

The third obstacle was identified as the application process which involves a complex and lengthy application form. It was agreed that the questions in the form are too in-depth and may act as a deterrent to those initially interested. The first task would therefore be to revise and simplify the form in order to entice applicants.

Finally he proposed that the cost aspect of such visitations also needs to be reassessed, in order to make the idea of residency review more appealing. The current situation, whereby the centre in question incurs the cost of the visitation of two delegates, will be reviewed. All tasks including the staffing of these visitations, revision of the application forms and generation of awareness amongst centres will need the assistance of a full committee. Professor Acimandos appealed to those in attendance to consider taking part.

It was noted in conclusion that Denmark currently has two centres showing interest, while Lausanne presents a third. An article will be put in the College News to further promote the service.

Marie-Jose Tassignon put forward the suggestion that residency review can often improve the facilities for those working in the centres. Where it is decided post-review that insufficient funding or facilities are available, then this is the first step in improving the situation. This advantage should be put forward as a selling point to potential applicants.

Report and Plans of the Residency Exchange Committee (V. Jasinskas)

Chairman of the Residency Exchange Committee, Vytautas Jasinskas, thanked Marko Hawlina for his input and help with translation for the presentation. He then summarized the number and nationality of grant applications as well as the eventual allocations for 2008. It was suggested that the same criteria should apply for 2009 and that the grant procedure will also follow a similar course in terms of timings, correspondence process and payment procedures. Conditions including existence of observership fee and offer of assistance with accommodation remain under the discretion of the training centre in question.

The list of currently approved training centres was then presented to the General Assembly. These calculate to a total number of 27, nine from Western Europe and three from Eastern Europe. An outline of the questions included in the report questionnaire for candidates was presented. These results were previously sent to National Delegates and the centres in question.

The final part of the presentation dealt with the plans for the 2010 grants. As last year, there will be 40 resident grants and 10 teacher grants. These will also be accessible to associated member countries. However Professor Jasinskas also announced two new additions to the residency exchange programme. The first will be the Chairman/Programme Director visit grant. It was explained that this will involve three to four day visits to accredited centres and will be available at a proposed number of 10 grants per year to the value of €500 each. Secondly Professor Jasinskas announced plans which were in place to offer grants to attend the EBOD Examination in 2010. Again the proposed number is 10 per year to the value of €500 each, plus free registration. Criteria for such grants will be based on excellence of candidate (on recommendation by head of department) and proof of financial hardship. The decision will ultimately be made by the Residency Exchange Committee.

Update Curriculum Workgroup (C. Creuzot-Garcher; W. Aclimandos)

The range of curriculum options available for use by the EBO was discussed. These included the curriculum of the ICO, Royal College and National College. All existing French curriculum would need to be translated. It was proposed that it would ultimately be a European Curriculum that could be applied to all countries.

It was agreed by Catherine Creuzot-Garcher that an exhaustive list would be ready in November and displayed on the website. This would entail a combination of Royal College and ICO curriculum based on the following six topics:

- Optics, refraction and visual physiology
- Pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus
- Neuro-ophthalmology and orbital disease
- External disease and ocular adnexa
- Anterior segment of the eye
- Posterior segment of the eye

Professor Creuzot-Garcher added that, in the case of the questions, it is important to give objectives rather than answers. These objectives should be designed to emphasize the recall of basic science information.

The key factor in the curriculum is to instil within candidates the following elements:

- Basis (anatomy, physiology, pathology...)
- Knowledge (epidemiology, genetic, signs...)
- Skills (to know how to interpret, treat, explain to the patient)
- References and terms linked to this topic (English and native language)

Examples from the French curriculum were provided to illustrate these points. It was agreed that these would be completed in November 2009 in French. These could then be translated into English before being forwarded to the various countries to be adapted to national preferences.

Evaluation of 2009 Examination (D. Mathysen; C. Creuzot-Garcher; M. Hawlina)

Danny Mathysen opened the presentation with an outline of the history and goals of the EBO exam. Knowledge, skills and professionalism were highlighted as the key focuses. The structure and priorities of both the written MCQ and viva-voce exam were also outlined, followed by an analysis on the merits of true/false marking with regard to the MCQ. Danny updated the General Assembly on the change of supplier from Cito to Speedwell and the advantages that came with this transition.

The candidate demographics of the 2009 exam were compared to those of 2008. Several comparisons were drawn between the results in terms of country, language and status of resident or specialist. The mathematical background of the analysis including the calculation of the mean, assessment of the level of difficulty of questions, detection of sick questions and discriminative power were explained and illustrated. Through the application of a combination of analysis techniques it was put forward that the introduction of negative marking was necessary to increase the discriminative power of the EBOD exam and reduce the guess factor (by penalizing for 'wild' guesses).

Mr Mathysen concluded that 18 Residents and 14 specialists failed the EBOD 2009 exam, calculating a general failure rate of 10.4 %. He proposed that items for further investigation in the future are the validation of MCQ-bank and standardisation of oral examination.

Report of CESMA Meeting / MCQ Banking (D. Mathysen; C. Creuzot-Garcher; M. Hawlina)

Danny Mathysen then presented details on the eligibility criteria of other European Societies. It was reported that opinion varied over the inclusion of non-UEMS countries. In some cases academic achievements (such as publications) play a part in candidates' eligibility for exams. Formats also vary between societies, although MCQs are included in all cases. These MCQs covered curriculum, syllabus and written textbook. The example of Anaesthesiology was presented as a case-study, whereby its MCQ exam takes place in Brussels and is presented in the native language of the candidate (11 languages in total), while oral exams are conducted at different locations.

Speedwell was confirmed as the primary exam analysts amongst societies across Europe. It was agreed that a Speedwell representative be invited to attend the EBO Executive Meeting in Portoroz in September to explain the benefits of their Question Bank system.

With regard to negative marking, Mr Mathysen found that all societies using true/false items also used negative marking. It was remarked that the majority of societies only had a written examination. Anaesthesiology maintains full control over oral examination, with the society providing examiners with questions. Their question bank, therefore, contains both MCQ questions and questions for oral examination.

Friedrich Flohr enquired as to whether negative marking resulted in an increase in the failure rate and if this as a result made the exam unattractively difficult. It was clarified that negative marking will not result in a higher volume of failures, but simply eliminates wild guessing and unmerited passes. It was concluded that negative marking will have a positive discriminatory effect overall on the exam.

European Network of Education (Marie-Jose Tassignon)

Marie-Jose Tassignon explained to the General Assembly that the function of ENET is to promote European collaboration for the benefit of European Standardisation of Ophthalmic Education. The criteria which define an ophthalmic specialist were discussed as well as the means through which these are tested. The collaborative relationship between CME (for accreditation of the ENET programmes) and Education (for EBO syllabus/curriculum) was also looked at. It was explained to the General Assembly the process through which the Application form will appear on the website. Information required and an outline of those eligible to apply was presented to the group. Accreditation can only be granted to

submissions which fit in with the EBO standard of curriculum and therefore cover the four Viva-Voce topics covered in the exam. It was noted that no society has ever been refused EACCME points. ENET are responsible for the collection of application forms and their classification into A-B-C-D topics. These are then forwarded to the CME Committee for accreditation. In order to monitor the quality of courses, evaluation forms are provided through ENET to both participants and reviewers. With regard to MCQs it was established that these are prepared by the faculty of the accredited course and will reflect the EBO true/false format. They will be collected by ENET and evaluated by members of the exam workgroup. Once approved, these questions will be included in the MCQ bank, the process behind which was presented in greater detail.

The presentation then dealt with the accreditation of e-learning materials by EACCME. The objective here was identified by Marie-Jose Tassignon as the generation and maintenance of an educational website of accredited material. Throughout this process it will be necessary to consider such factors as educational needs, expected educational outcome, target audience, content of the material, expected time to learn the material, updating of the material and finally confidentiality and privacy aspects. A demonstration was then given which offered an insight to sample MCQs and the process of answering/scoring these.

ENET was summarised as encompassing the following four roles:

- Generation of educational material
- Standardisation of educational programmes
- Validation/ accreditation of educational programmes
- Spreading the information of EBO approved educational programmes

The final question of this presentation was with regard to the technical platform and whether ENET should develop at the level of the universities or source the assistance of an external, independent company.

Website and Logo Update (Dara Conlon; Marko Hawlina)

Dara Conlon outlined the key elements to be communicated through the website as the EBOD Examination, EBO Grants, Continuous Medical Education and Accreditation of teaching centres and courses. The website is the first point of contact between the EBO and its audience and as a result should offer a professional and up to date image of the EBO. The changes planned for the site were outlined to the General Assembly. These included simplifying the navigation of the site by reducing clutter, fine-tuning the information displayed and re-organising the content. On-line EBO exam application forms will be available for both candidates and examiners, making it a database driven site. The site will also be updated both aesthetically and on a technical level and images of the proposed design and sample pages were shown to the group.

Plans for a personalised EBO logo was then unveiled to the General Assembly. This new design will feature the EU stars and will come as a secondary logo to compliment the official EU logo currently used to represent the EBO. It was proposed that both logos will appear on all official stationary and diplomas. The purpose of the new design is simply to offer something more personalised to the EBO.

It was suggested by Marie-Jose Tassignon that we should copyright the logo to avoid any issues with the European Board of Orthopaedics.

Participation of EBO at SOE 2009, EVER 2009, WCO Berlin 2010 and Regional Meetings.

Marko Hawlina confirmed details of EBO's participation at SOE in Amsterdam. It was also confirmed that EBO will participate in EVER with two Training the Trainer symposia.

EBO, EUPO and EVER (W. Spileers; M. Hawlina)

Werner Spileers, Secretary General of EUPO addressed the General Assembly, firstly explaining the history of the group. EUPO was founded 20 years ago and currently arrange annual courses. Four of the topics featured in the EBO viva-voce are covered in these courses.

It was explained that currently there are only two people heading EUPO and Werner Spileers therefore extended an invitation to all present to nominate themselves or a suitable contact to join their cause. It was proposed that each National Delegate would nominate one representative to join EUPO in order to give it a second start. This suggestion was put to vote, with all in favour except for, Spanish National Delegate, Jose-Luis Menezo.

Next General Assembly (Marko Hawlina)

It was confirmed that the next General Assembly will take place in Estonia.