



**Minutes of the 2016 EFAS General Assembly,
Cork, Council Room in Main UCC 1850s building
Friday, Sept 16th, 2016, 12.10- 13.40 hrs**

Attendance: Belgium (Jan Wouters), Czech Republic (Libor Czerny, endorsed by J. Syka), Finland (Jukka Kokkonen), France (Francoise Sterkers-Artieres), Germany (Birger Kollmeier), Portugal (Jorge Humberto Martinez, Margarida Serrano), Romania (Madalina Georgescu), Sweden (Inger Uhlen), Switzerland (Martin Kompis), United Kingdom (Piers Dawes, Sethi Jagjit), Norway (Arne Vik), Ireland (Theresa Pitt)

Guests: Songul Aksoy (Istanbul)

1. Welcome from Chair:

EFAS president Dr. Theresa Pitt welcomes everybody in the historic council room of the main university building of the University of Cork.

2. Attendance and Apologies:

Secretary-General B. Kollmeier reports that N=12 member societies are represented in the meeting (see above), N=11 apologies with a positive vote for the byelaw changes have been received (Austria (K. Stephan), Bosnia Herzegovina (S. Spiric), Croatia (A. Veselic), Greece (Thanos Bibas), Hungary (J. Kiss), Israel (J. Attias), Lithuania (E.Uloziene), Poland (W. Sulkowski), Russia (G. Tavartkiladze), Spain (J. Barajas), Ukraine (J. Deyeva).

One apology without vote was received from Turkey (A. Atas, Ö. Konukseven).

No reaction was recorded from Denmark (Wajn), Estonia (Kruustyk), Italy (Martini), Latvia (Kise), Malta (Balzan), The Netherlands (Soede), Serbia & Montenegro (Mikic), Slovakia (Profant), Slovenia (Vatovic). This is unfortunate because some of these representatives have been active before and did not take their time to respond this time while some other representatives have already

given no feedback in previous years, so that also no membership fees have been collected.

	<u>Action Point</u> EFAS board wants to definitely include these countries and their representatives in the ongoing EFAS activities and urgently asks these representatives to update their contact information/e-mail addresses in case that they have changed which may have led to the lack of communication.	EFAS voting members without reaction to the GA invitation
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In addition, it is appreciated if the voting and non-voting representatives from each country are not only given by their name and address as prominent audiology researchers and clinicians in their respective country, but also are addressed by their respective function in their audiological society (e. g., president or secretary-general or head office of the audiological society if applicable).

3. Minutes of General Assembly in Istanbul, May 2015:

B. Kollmeier has sent around the minutes shortly after the Istanbul meeting and received no further reaction. Hence, the minutes were accepted and were put on the EFAS website. Nevertheless, the EFAS General Assembly unanimously votes for accepting the minutes.

4. Matters arising (not otherwise covered on Agenda):

No points to be added to the agenda.

5. Chairperson's report:

EFAS president Theresa Pitt says that the e-learning in audiology workshop has been attended by a good mix of clinicians, teachers in university of applied sciences, university and audiology scientists from at least 13 different European countries. EFAS part-sponsored the meeting with a project grant to enhance activities aiming to improve uniform standards of university audiology education in Europe.

EFAS Congress 2017 Interlaken, June 7 – 10th, 2017: Significant board activity within the last year was devoted to setting up the 2017 EFAS Congress in

Interlaken, including a site visit in May, 2016. The congress president Martin Kompis explained the status during a separate point on the agenda.

Preparation of the byelaws update: Clearing the way for an update of the byelaws and preparation of the voting procedure was also time-consuming (see separate point).

The EFAS working group on school aged hearing screening (SHS) has been active both in data collection and preparation of what measures to be included to screen at school entry, and which methods to combine for optimum screening efficiency. A report of activities will be given at the Interlaken Congress in 2017.

EFAS working group on Audiology and Intellectual Disabilities (AID):

An EFAS project grant has been given to this group to meet several times. Georgescu reported about this group within the e-learning meeting. Another report on current progress will be given at EFAS Congress in Interlaken 2017.

EFAS project grant for e-learning: A project grant had been granted to J. Attias and his group to develop the QSIA-system (Question- and responses-based knowledge base for Audiological training), which is based on a certain software system at the University of Haifa. In the report from these activities during the e-learning workshop this morning, Hanna Mormer (Assistant to J. Attias) reported about implementation problems, e.g. accessibility difficulties for users outside of the University of Haifa and other problems indicating that the current implementation might not be the appropriate solution for EFAS purposes. Hence, the project will be directed at securing the knowledge base and the developed content for EFAS purposes and checking which kind of (professional) software platform can be used for implementing the same system across different European institutions.

Overall, Theresa Pitt reports that it was an interesting year; reviewing different curricula for general audiologist and audiologist specialist to promote and enhance was invigorating.

6. Treasurer's report:

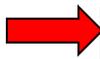
EFAS treasurer Martin Kompis reports about the incomes and the outcomes within the reporting period from April 16, 2015 – July 31, 2016 which resulted in a net decrease of EFAS balance by 41.85 €. Hence, the income (primarily due to membership fees and due to a surplus by the EFAS Conferences in Budapest and Istanbul) is about equal to the money spent by EFAS on project grants, conference stipends and running costs (like EFAS website and “Goto meeting” internet fees). Overall, EFAS is financially solidly healthy, and the finances are well balanced as intended, i. e., the income equals approximately the expenses.

The auditors Arne Vik (Norway) and Wislaw Sulkowski (Poland, via e-mail) indicated that all financial affairs were regulated in a correct way and that the General Assembly can be recommended to accept the treasurers report.

	Decision	As a consequence, the General Assembly unanimously (with one abstain by the treasurer) accepts the treasures report.
	Decision	Vote for new auditors: The current auditors have agreed to serve as candidates for the next year. The General Assembly unanimously votes for the two now auditors Arne Vik (Norway) and Wislaw Sulkowski (Poland).

7. Report on progress for Switzerland Congress 2017 June 7th -10th, 2017 in Interlaken:

Martin Kompis reports shortly about organizational matters, the scientific program, sponsoring and the social program. The website www.efas2017.org is up and running and will be shortly updated to include registration and abstract submission etc. All the congress center and the social event arrangements have been made. Hotel rooms are blocked and secured and finalized sponsoring has been agreed upon by Med-EL, Cochlear, Amplifon, and Neuroth. Negotiations with other sponsors are ongoing. The greatest current challenge is that the e-mail addresses for promotion to potential participants could not be distributed to the following countries:

	<u>Action Point</u> The delegates and head offices from the respective audiological societies are urgently requested to either relay the promotional materials to their members or to provide the respective addresses to Martin Kompis.	Voting and nonvoting members from Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom
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The registration fees have been fixed at 530 Swiss francs (approx. 480 €, early bird until April 10th) and late registration 630 Swiss francs (approx. 570 €). In addition, the networking event on the Harder Kulm will be charged with 110 € (120 Sfs).

As plenary speakers, the following distinguished scientists have agreed to participate:

Shelly Chadha (World Health organization, Switzerland): Economic impact of hearing loss and relation with public health

Christine Petit (France): Genetics of hearing loss

Ad Snik (The Netherlands): Implantable bone-conduction aids

Tobias Moser (Germany): Hearing with light

In addition, 8 structured sessions organized by leading experts have been planned (details see www.efas2017.org). The welcome evening will be at the conference site (Kursaal) with a Folklore Show either outside or (in case of rain) inside. The networking event on the Harder Kulm will be on Friday, June 9th in a spectacular mountain restaurant: Don't miss it!

Important dates:

February 12th, 2017: deadline for abstract submission

April 10th, 2017: deadline for early bird registration

June 7th – 10th, 2017: EFAS Congress 2017

The congress president Martin Kompis would be happy to welcome all the EFAS delegates and a large scientific contribution from all EFAS member states.

8. Report on progress for Lisbon Congress 2019:

Jorge Humberto Martin presents a slide show on the state of the preparations for the Lisbon Congress. A PCO (Conference Organization Company) has been secured, the Lisbon Conference Center has been agreed upon as the congress venue which was already booked. In addition, up to 2000 hotel rooms can be blocked if required (next step). A more detailed administration frame (incl. financial plannings) and scientific program details will be discussed in 2017.

9. Change of EFAS bylaws

The changes to be introduced in the byelaws have been discussed already during the last two General Assemblies. The basic idea behind these changes is presented by EFAS past president Jan Wouters: The decisions are to be taken at the General Assembly meeting, but all representatives can vote (also the ones not present). The deadlines should be simplified, i. e. instead of having deadlines of three, two, one and zero months before the General Assembly, all deadlines are synchronized to be one month before the General Assembly, but exceptions for late applications are still possible). The voting mechanisms are homogenized, i. e. instead of three different voting approaches for conference host, nominee elections and amendments it should be the same procedure for all votings. Also, e-mail voting is introduced for all voting occasions, i. e. instead of only the nominee elections being possible by e-mail, the new byelaws would indicate e-mail votings received 24 hours before the GA-meeting to be added to the GA-votes. Finally, the election criterion should be homogenized and simplified, i. e. the majority of votes is the criterion for all three elections (host of next conference, nominee elections, amendments).

These principles are implemented in the revised byelaws as follows:

- use of wording: Board, Chairperson, Secretary-General, search committee
- possibility of e-mail voting
- homogenized voting mechanisms: Identical ways for the election of conference venue, board members and amendments
- simplify deadlines, homogenize and simplify election criterion
- addition of info that guidelines are available
- a reformulation or rephrasing of a number of sentences

During the present GA, 12 member countries all voted for the new byelaws. In addition, 11 member countries have previously given their positive vote by e-mail (see above), indicating that 23 positive votes of 34 current member countries are in favor of the byelaws. This means that even with the strictest criterion (majority by two thirds of all members of EFAS to be voting in favor of new byelaws) is fulfilled.

	Decision	The new byelaws (as added to these minutes) are accepted by the EFAS General Assembly.
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10. EFAS Website

The EFAS website is hosted by 2.0 Media. A number of changes and updates have been incorporated during the last two years in order to make the website more attractive and to represent better the activities and the objectives of EFAS. However, the website addresses mainly the administrative staff from the member societies and the EFAS representatives and is not primarily geared towards the audiologist at all European countries (where the respective member societies provide much more up-to-date and focused information, such as, e. g., the British Society of Audiology or the Belgium Audiological Society). Also, the effort that can be spent by the EFAS board on keeping the website updated is limited, indicating that a major re-design of the website can only be done if additional volunteers from EFAS agree to put in some work.

	<u>Action Point</u>	All members of the General Assembly and all staff members of participating societies are requested to nominate or to ask for volunteers for serving as EFAS website editor.	Voting and nonvoting members
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Some well-received suggestions for improving the website were given by Piers Dawes, i. e.: the homepage should contain less text and should include the key statement/EFAS mission statement as clearly and as pronounced as possible. The structure of the webpage should represent the aims of the mission statement, such as, e. g., education and training/ promoting science in audiology (grants, conferences)/ engagement in international patient groups.

In addition, the currently English website might be translated into the most common languages in the EU. Also, the statistics (“where are the hits on EFAS website primarily coming from ? And where are the countries where we need more work to do? ”) might be recorded.

In addition, Jagjit Sethi reported that the world hearing day by the world health organization (3rd March, 2017) should be highlighted and that the BAA (British Association of Audiology) keeps up its lively web pages and Facebook/Twitter links, mainly through volunteers.

11. Any other business

Location and date for next General Assembly :

Friday, June 9th, 2017 at Interlaken (during the EFAS Congress)

September 2018 Montpellier (Francoise Sterkers-Artieres will invite the EFAS delegates to a 1,5-day meeting in combination with the General Assembly in two years' time.)

May/June 2019, Lisbon.

12. Close of meeting at 13.40 hrs.

Signed: B. Kollmeier, Secretary-General of EFAS