



**Minutes for 2011 General Assembly,
Warsaw, Room HM9, Hilton Hotel
Thursday, 23rd of June at 17.30 – 19:30**

1. Welcome from Chair (Luxon)

Luxon welcomed the participants of the General Assembly. She thanked Prof. Skarzynski and the congress organization committee for hosting the EFAS congress and the EFAS General Assembly. She thanked Pace Balzan, who had sent her apologies for not being able to attend the meeting for her excellent work in assisting with the preparation and distribution of the agenda.

2. Attendance and apologies:

Voting representatives (24 present) : Atas (Turkey), Attias (Israel), Barajas (Spain), Dauman (France), Dillier (Switzerland), Grandori (Italy), Golubok (Ukraine), Holgers (Sweden), Kiss (Hungary), Kollmeier (Germany), Luxon (U.K.), Marn (Croatia), Mykänen (Finland), Pascu (Romania), Pitt (Ireland), Stephan (Austria), Sulkowski (Poland), Tavartkiladze (Russia), Vatovec (Slovenia), Verschuure (Netherlands), Vik (Norway), Wajn (Denmark), Wouters (Belgium), Xenelis (Greece)

Non-voting representatives (12 present) : Artières (France), Avan (France), Farkas (Hungary), Georgescu (Romania), Hegarty (Ireland), Kabatova (Slovakia), Laukli (Norway), Raglan (U.K.), Skarzynski (Poland), Uhlen (Sweden), Versfeld (Netherlands), Zenker (Spain)

Observers/Invited (16 present) : Belgin (Turkey), Coninx (Germany), Davis (U.K.), Dimov (Bulgaria), Hazell (U.K.), Hizalan (Turkey), Hoppe (Germany), Karawani (Israel), Kompis (Switzerland), Lalayants (Russia), Mirchev (Bulgaria), Serbetioglu (Turkey), Sliwa (Poland), Syka (Czech Republic), Sziklai (Hungary), Usun (Turkey)

Apologies: Kiessling (Germany), Pace Balzan (Malta), Uloziene (Lithuania), Verheyden (Belgium)

3. Minutes of GA in Cernobbio, June 2010.

There were no corrections/comments and the minutes were accepted by the General Assembly.

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

None

5. Chairman's Report

Luxon started her report by congratulating Prof. Henryk Skarzynski for his initiative to assemble representatives of the European societies of audiologists and phoniaticians, ENT physicians, ophthalmologists, psychologists and speech therapists to endorse a European Consensus Statement on Hearing, Vision and Speech Screening in Pre-school and School-Age Children. The aim of this initiative is to identify hearing, vision and speech disorders by screening programs with the potential to implement effective

identification and treatment of at-risk children and in remediating its detrimental effects to both the individual and society. EFAS will be actively involved in a committee detailing the system of quality control as an essential part of all components of a school screening program and in fostering cooperation between the European countries in order to provide a high level of public health services, by means of knowledge exchange and good practices, continuously improved methods and procedures.

Luxon then mentioned having attended the meeting of the Confederation of European Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery (CE-ORL-HNS) in Barcelona representing EFAS, although EFAS was not asked to run a session. In future meetings an EFAS representation would be preferably considered if EFAS were invited to actively participate, for example by organizing a special EFAS session with audiological topics.

Luxon then reported about the European Board Examinations in Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery (EBEORLHNS) which was created by the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) ORL section and board. Examination questions had been sent from EFAS following the first request for questions, but no EFAS questions were received from country representative following the second call. In order to stress the importance of audiology in the field of ENT it will be useful to contribute to EBEORLHNS also in future requests for examination questions. The EFAS council will continue to coordinate these efforts

6. Treasurer's report

Dillier presented the Treasurer's report and showed the sources of income and expenditure of EFAS. This year there had been a net increase of about 10,500 Euros in the account. A large portion of this increase was due to the revenue from the Congress in Tenerife and reduced expenses as congress scholarships will be paid only after the congress and no payments for EFAS exchange programs (no submissions received yet) nor EFAS workshops were made during the last year. Some membership fees were still pending.

Dillier then asked for statements from the auditors. Pascu was satisfied with the report. Sulkowski said that he too had no reservations and congratulated Dillier for his good work.

7. Awards of EFAS scholarships 2011 (Attias)

EFAS awards up to five congress scholarships of maximally 1000.00 EUR to qualified young scientists, who would like to participate with a scientific contribution in the EFAS congress. Four scholarships were awarded 2011 for the 10th EFAS congress in Warsaw: Ms. Hania Karawani, Israel; Dr. Maria Lalayants, Russia; Ms. Anna Warzybok, Germany; Dr. Julia Deyeva, Ukraine. Each of them gave an oral or poster presentation during the congress. Ms. Karawani expressed the gratitude of all scholarship recipients in her short speech during the GA and gave some examples of the importance of attending such an international conference for the professional career of a young scientist.

Attias then continued to give some information about the EFAS Exchange Program. This program of research and clinicians fellowships will serve to build cooperative networks among practitioners and scholars from European countries whose research and professional interests focus on studying and developing audiology and related hearing sciences. The program may support young scientists to travel and stay at other institutions in order to learn different scientific methods. It may also initiate or

pursue bilateral audiology and hearing related sciences research projects with collaborating investigators, exchange and exploit complementary skills and material. The program will draw on the resources, facilities, and contacts of leading clinical and research centers located in Europe to enable the recipients to further their research and to build professional networks in and among the host centers/countries. The short fellowships are intended to serve scholars who have already obtained a MD, MA or Ph.D. in audiology or related hearing sciences and who wish to undertake a specific research project at an overseas research center in another country.

Proposals or project plans for exchange programs should be submitted to Attias.

8. Vote on continuing EFAS contribution to the HearCom Internet Portal Association.

Dillier reported on the HearCom Internet Portal Association (HIPA) in which EFAS is one of 16 partners. The portal provides Internet screening tests for Europe, information about hearing for the general public and for professionals and also has a rehabilitation eService called HearCompanion in different languages. Currently, information in seven languages (English, German, Dutch, Swedish, Polish, French, Greek) is available. More languages (Russian, Turkish, Spanish, US English) will be added. The website encountered more than 290'000 visits during the last year, whereby nearly 6000 screening tests were done in different languages. The financial contribution for HIPA members was reduced from 500 to 250 Euros for the current year.

The EFAS General Assembly was asked whether they approved this contribution. The representatives unanimously voted by acclamation for continuing support of the HIPA.

9. Report on Warsaw Congress 2011 (Skarzynski, Sliwa)

Skarzynski reported on the 10th EFAS congress in Warsaw which attracted 875 registered participants. The congress organizers very generously had provided scholarships for 150 students from Eastern European countries and invited many distinguished guests for keynote lectures and round table sessions. Attached to the main congress were the 6th National Conference of the Audiology and Phoniatics Sections of the Polish Society of Oto-Rhino-Laryngologists and Head and Neck Surgeons and the 2nd International Congress of Young Scientists and Students.

Sliwa then provided some information about the budget of the congress and other organizational aspects. Thanks to a grant from the Polish Government and a number of generous industry sponsors and exhibitors the expected deficit will probably be kept within reasonable limits.

10. Report on progress for Budapest Congress 2013 (Kiss)

Kiss presented details of the planned venue and program of the next EFAS congress which will take place in Budapest from June 19 – 23 2013. A website with information about travel and hotel accommodation has been set up already and more content about the program will be added continuously. There will also be reduced registration fees for students and young scientists and EFAS scholarships will be available as in previous congresses. A promotional video showing the beautiful and attractive sides of Budapest and the great cultural and scientific history of Hungary ended his presentation.

11. Presentation of bids and vote for next EFAS Congress 2015

Two countries had prepared bids for the EFAS Congress 2015 and presented their projects with booklets, animated presentations and video clips. The first proposal, Istanbul, was presented by Atas and colleagues from Turkey, the second proposal, Rhodes, was presented by Xenelis and colleagues from Greece. Both teams demonstrated excellent venues and ideas for an EFAS congress.

In a ballot vote the GA decided by majority that the 2015 congress should take place in Istanbul.

12. Nominations Committee Report and votes for Vice Chairman and General Secretary and New Nominations Committee members

Four nominations for the position of Vice Chairman were presented by the nominations committee and CVs had been sent to the EFAS representatives by email. The candidates, George Tavartkiladze, Henryk Skarzynski, José Barajas and Jan Wouters presented themselves to the GA in brief statements before the voting ballots were collected. None of the 4 candidates reached the absolute majority of votes in the first round. Therefore, in a second round ballots for the two candidates with the highest number of votes (Skarzynski and Wouters) were collected. The two candidates reached an equal number of votes which led to a discussion on how to proceed as the EFAS bylaws had not foreseen such an outcome. Before a decision was taken, Skarzynski announced that he would withdraw his candidature and give way to Wouters. Luxon thanked Skarzynski for this generous solution and Wouters accepted the election.

Two persons had expressed their candidature for the position of General Secretary: Grandori and Kollmeier. They presented themselves to the GA in short speeches and described the goals and ideas for their work within the EFAS council. When the voting ballots were collected and counted it appeared that again both candidates had received equal amounts of votes. It was proposed that the council should make the final decision. However, as the bylaws did not foresee this mode of action it was decided that representatives who had not been able to attend the GA should be contacted by email and asked for their vote within the next week. Also, it was discussed that the bylaws should be modified such that for tied votes the council should make the final decision. The email voting resulted in a majority vote for Kollmeier who accepted the election.

The nominations committee had been provisionally appointed at the GA in Tenerife consisting of 4 past-chairmen of EFAS. Verschuure announced during the GA in Warsaw that he would resign from the committee. Luxon then asked the GA whether a new committee should be elected or the current nomination committee should continue its work for another two years. The vote was unanimous in favor of continuation of the current committee. The members of the nomination committee therefore are: Attias, Dauman, Holgers.

The nomination of auditors of EFAS was then discussed. Luxon asked Sulkowski and Pascu whether they were willing to continue. Both agreed and the GA approved the assignment by acclamation.

13. Any other business

EFAS has lost contact with some country representatives. Correspondence via surface mail or email was not possible since several years. Luxon asked the GA to help establish new contacts for the following countries: Bosnia, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia.

Luxon finally reported that Grandori had offered to hold the EFAS Board and GA meetings in Cernobbio at the next NHS/AHS meeting in June 2012. The GA welcomed this proposal by acclamation.

14. Handover of duties of Presidency

Luxon thanked the council members for their support during the last two years of her chairmanship and expressed the belief that EFAS should continue its leading role in coordinating audiology societies and working groups all over Europe and establish Audiology both as a scientific discipline and hearing health service.

She then invited Kurt Stephan to take over her duties as EFAS chairman and wished him a successful and fruitful activity.

15. Vote of thanks to retiring Council Members and Close of meeting

Stephan thanked Luxon for the excellent collaboration during the last year and mentioned the positive development of EFAS which he promised to support in the future.

He then spoke about the various projects and work areas in which EFAS would put energy and activity. He specifically mentioned the European hearing screening program for preschool and school children, the European coordination of University education in Audiology, the student and young scientists scholarship and exchange programs and the current and upcoming EFAS congresses.

He thanked all representatives and guests for their active participation during the GA and closed the meeting.