

**Minutes of the 2012 EFAS General Assembly,  
Cernobbio, Italy**

**Thursday, June 7th at 12-13 hrs**

**Villa Erba, Room Falstaff**



Participants: Kurt Stephan (Austria), Jan Wouters (Belgium), Josef Syka (Czech), Erik Kjaerbøl (Denmark), Birger Kollmeier, Frans Coninx (Germany), John Xenelis (Greece), J.G. Kiss (Hungary), Fernando Grandori, Salu Polux (Italy), Kas Smits, Wim Graef, Wim Soede, Anneke Meuwese-Jonqueurt (The Netherlands), Ole Tvette (Norway), Wieslaw Sulkowski, Paulina Kamyli, Anita Obrycka, Armea Piotrowska (Poland), Julieto Martins (Portugal), Alexandru Pascu (Romania), George Tavartkiladze (Russia), Branka Mikic (Serbia), Majda Spindler (Slovenia), Enrique Salesa (Spain), Arne Vik (Sweden), Norbert Dillier, Carlo Prestih (Switzerland), Ahmet Atas, Bulent Serbetcioglu (Turkey).

**1. Welcome from Chair (Stephan)**

Kurt Stephan opens the General Assembly with a delay of 15 minutes (due to technical problems that could not be resolved before because the conference room was not accessible earlier). He welcomes the new vice-chairman Jan Wouters and the new secretary-general Birger Kollmeier who have been put in office after the Warsaw meeting in 2011. He thanks Ferdinando Grandori for his kind invitation to have the EFAS General Assembly take place during the NHS/AHS congress in Cernobbio.

**2. Attendance and Apologies**

18 from a total of 34 member societies are represented. Apologies were received from Bosnia Herzegowina (Sanja Spiric), Croatia (Borut Marn), Finland (Sari Mykkänen), France (Rene Dauman), Ireland (Jean Hegarty), Israel (Joseph Attias), Lithuania (Ingrida Uloziene), Malta (Elania Pace Balzan), Sweden (Inger Uhlen), Ukraine (Tatjana Golubok-Abyzova) and United Kingdom (Linda Luxon).

No message was received from Latvia (Ligija Kise), Slovakia (Milan Profant). No message has been received since several years (and also neither an apology nor a remark with regard to the current meeting) from Estonia (Karin Kruustyk), and Iceland (Einar Sindrason, no valid E-MailAddress is known).

	<u>Action Point</u>	All member states that have neither confirmed nor denied their attendance are kindly requested to contact the secretary-general B. Kollmeier. EFAS-member state representatives who have contact to representatives from these states are kindly requested to inform them about EFAS activities.	<b>(Defaulting) member societies</b>
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The attendance was checked carefully as a voting was planned for the change of EFAS bylaws. The required quorum of more than 50% of representatives of all member societies (i. e., 17 of 34) was reached.

### **3. Minutes of the General Assembly in Warsaw, June 2011.**

On behalf of the former secretary-general who was absent at the Warsaw meeting, Norbert Dillier (treasurer) completed the minutes of the Warsaw meeting and distributed them. The representatives were asked by the chairman to check the minutes carefully and to request changes if deemed necessary.

	<u>Decision</u>	The General Assembly accepts the 2011 Warsaw minutes unanimously.
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A copy of the minutes will be available on the EFAS-website shortly.

### **4. Chairman's report (Stephan)**

Kut Stephan reports about current activities in EFAS and about new topics which the board has considered to be worked on in the nearest future:

- **Biennial EFAS Congresses:**  
 EFAS 2011: Kurt Stephan thanked Henryk Skarzynski and his team for the excellent organization of the EFAS Congress 2011 in Warsaw and for his initiative on establishing hearing screening of pre-school and school age children during the Polish EU presidency. (A booklet reporting about this topic was handed over by the Polish delegation to all representatives at the end of the GA).  
 A report about congress statistics and budget was also prepared and handed over by representatives from Poland.

EFAS 2013: The preparation of EFAS 2013 is in progress. Keynote speakers and scientific topics for EFAS 2013 are fixed. A flyer announcing the congress was provided at the current NHS/AHS meeting.

	<p><u>Action Point</u></p> <p>All member states are kindly requested to distribute the announcement flyer (available on the EFAS website) to their members (see below, separate point).</p>	<p><b>Member societies</b></p>
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- **Education in Audiology:**  
 The topic is considered by the EFAS council as an important issue for the future work. Details on current status and progress will be discussed in a separate item (10, see below).
- **Scholarships and exchange programs:**
  - 4 scholarships were granted to students for visiting the meeting in Warsaw. All representatives of EFAS are kindly requested to distribute the information about scholarships in good time prior to EFAS 2013. Application forms can be downloaded from the EFAS website.
  - Exchange programs:  
 Joseph Attias (chairing) sent a report on this topic. See separate item below.
- **Implementation of hearing screening of pre-school and school age children:**
  - at the EFAS meeting in Warsaw an initiative was started by H. Skarzynski during the Polish presidency of the European Union council. A consensus session was organized at EFAS 2011 and a consensus paper was signed by EFAS delegates. This paper was published later on in the Int.J. of Pediatric ORL.

In February 2012 a working group was nominated by the EFAS board with the aim to promote the implementation of hearing screening programs in Europe. The working group held its first meeting in Cernobbio, see separate report (item 11).

- Guidelines for the organization of EFAS congresses:  
The conditions for the organization of future congresses were defined by the members of the EFAS council. This should help potential congress organizers with their decision to bid for the organization of future EFAS congresses. Main contents:
  - general outline of congress
  - timelines
  - responsibilities

The chairman then explained the change of EFAS bylaws planned for the GA:

- email voting by non-attending voting representatives is admitted.
- a rule was included which should fasten the procedure during GA meeting when votes are tied. This situation was not yet defined by the EFAS bylaws and required to contact the absent voting representatives by email. In the future, the council members should make the final decision directly during the GA. (Details see topic 6.)

## 5. Treasurers report (Dillier)

Norbert Dillier reported about the previous balance from 2011 (48.386.42 €) and the net increase by approximately 2.000.00 € in 2011/2012.

	<u>Action Point</u>	Some membership contributions are still pending. The defaulting member states are kindly asked to balance their account.	<b>Defaulting member societies</b>
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The current positive balance allows EFAS to spend money on

- Contributions to workshops and meetings (none in 2011/2012)
- Participation in international organizations (e. g., EAORL)
- Granting EFAS scholarships to young scientists (4 in 2011)
- Internet services for audiology (EFAS website, Hearcom internet presentation association)

- Exchange projects for audiologists (proposals expected, no submissions yet received).

The auditors Wieslaw Sulkowski (Poland) and Alexandru Pascu (Romania) reported about their checking the accounts with no points to be corrected. They recommend to the General Assembly to accept the report of the treasurer. The chairman asked the GA to accept the budget presented by an open ballot.

 <u>Decision</u>	The treasurers report was accepted unanimously by the GA.
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## 6. Vote on proposed changes in EFAS Bylaws

§10 of the current Bylaws requested by the board to be changed as follows:

### §10. ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS

**Current:** Election shall occur by a majority vote. Postal voting by non-attending Voting Representatives or written transfer of voting rights to a Non-Voting Representative is allowed.

**New:** Election shall occur by a majority vote. **Email** voting by non-attending Voting Representatives or written transfer of voting rights to a Non-Voting Representative is allowed.

**When votes are tied, the council members will make the final decision during the General Assembly.**

 <u>Decision</u>	The General Assembly accepts this change in EFAS Bylaws unanimously. The quorum has been reached (18 out of 34 representatives of member societies were present), so that this change of EFAS Bylaws is formally correctly performed and becomes effective immediately.
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Note: During or shortly after the meeting e-mails were received from representatives from France, Sweden and Great Britain voting for the above changes, too.

## 7. Report on progress of Budapest Congress 2013 (Kiss)

Joe Kiss reports about the organizational progress of the Budapest Congress. Information about EFAS 2013 is included in a flyer which was distributed at the conference and is also available on the EFAS website.

 <u>Action Point</u>	A PDF-version of the flyer will be sent to the national representatives. They are kindly requested to distribute that among their members and give reference to the EFAS 2013 website as follows: <b>www.efas2013.eu</b>	<b>B. Kollmeier/ J. Kiss</b>
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The conference venue is the Hotel Boscolo in Budapest. It is located in the centre of Budapest with many other Hotels (some of them with moderate prices nearby). The rates for attendance are calculated to give a high performance/price ratio. A special discounted rate will be provided for young researchers (PhD-students or equivalent under the age of 30).

***The conference deadline for submission of abstracts and for early registration is February 28, 2013.***

The list of plenary speakers and the list of special sessions is announced. For more up- to- date details please refer to the website.

#### **8. Report on progress for Istanbul Congress 2015 (Atas)**

Ahmet Atas presents the current planings for the Istanbul meeting in 2015 which will be performed in the Sheraton Hotel close to the central Taxim place and the Atatürk Airport in central Istanbul. The public transport to reach Istanbul is excellent and the Hotel rates are moderate. A more detailed planning of the keynote talks and structured sessions will start after the 2013 EFAS Congress.

#### **9. Update on EFAS scholarships 2012/2013 and exchange programs**

Kurt Stephan reports in place of Joseph Attias, who was running this activity in the past and who had sent a report of the current status. While the scholarship program including its terms and regulations are well defined and accepted, the envisaged EFAS exchange programs have not yet been launched. One reason for this might be, that the conditions were not defined in detail in the past. The EFAS council is therefore determind to work on the precise conditions for such

exchange programs. After finalizing, they will be published on the EFAS website together with an application form. This will take approximately until the end of 2012.

## 10. University Education in Audiology (Kollmeier)

Birger Kollmeier reports about the current action of the EFAS board to produce an up-to-date overview of the existing bachelor and master programs in audiology across the EFAS member states. This overview should enable potential students to select appropriate study programs (also for exchange periods) and should, in addition, enable the respective program leaders to identify potential partner programs and possible joint program development possibilities. It should also help to create a more uniform European study space in audiology.

Prior to the meeting of the General Assembly, all member states were asked for input to provide details about their study programs. Responses have so far been received from Belgium, Germany, Israel, Norway and Finland (totaling to 5 master and 9 bachelor study programs). Four more member states have sent apologize or have announced the information to be provided on a short-term notice.

	<p><u>Action Point</u></p> <p>All member societies and EFAS representatives are kindly requested to provide this information in the format sent around.</p>	<p><b>Member society representatives</b></p>
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For the Budapest meeting, a market place of university education programs is planned where each program should be represented both by students and by program leaders to make their specialties known to the other programs and to provide a contact point for advancing exchange programs. The development of this exchange of programs is jointly driven by B. Kollmeier, Jan Wouters and

Norbert Dillier.

	<p><u>Action Point</u></p> <p>All university education programs are invited to be represented both by students and by program leaders at the Budapest congress.</p>	<p><b>Audiology program representatives</b></p>
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## **11. Working Group „Hearing Screening of Pre-school and School Age Children” (Wouters)**

Jan Wouters reported about the meeting of the working group which has been nominated by the EFAS council in February 2012. The group’s aim is to prepare an EFAS-statement and program to support and promote pre-school and school age children hearing screening across Europe. The initiative by Hendrik Skarzynski during the 2011 EFAS Conference in Warsaw (creation of a consensus statement by several of the European experts present at the Warsaw meeting) is greatly acknowledged. This statement has been adapted by the council of the European Union (2011/C361/04) and has been published in the Journal of the European Union. The EFAS working group has been installed on March 21st, 2012 with the members Frans Coninx (Germany), Adrian Davis (Great Britain), Wout Dreschler (TheNetherlands), Fernando Grandori (Italy), Einar Laukli (Norway), T. Sirimana (Great Britain), Hendrik Skarzynski (Poland, Chair), Jan Wouters (Belgium, Co-Chair). The first meeting took place in Cernobbio on June 5th, 2012 chaired and initiated by Jan Wouters. The workplan and consensus reached during this meeting was to request information from the different countries about hearing screening (for four until eighteen years of age) and its organization. In addition the aim of this initiatives and the way how to optimally perform such a hearing screening will be considered.

Both issues will be reported at the EFAS meeting in 2013 in Budapest. In a first phase, a list of requested information per country will be worked out.

Collection of the information from all SHS partners should be finished by December 2012.

	<u>Action Point</u>	Jan Wouters will collect all Infos and will edit a Draft report.	<b>Jan Wouters</b>
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## **12. Any other business**

**Next meeting of the General Assembly:**

**June 20th, 2013, during the Budapest meeting.**

Cernobbio, June 2012

B. Kollmeier