

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING
EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL MUTAGEN SOCIETY
September 9, 2007
Pharmacentre, Basel, Switzerland

Officers present:

Micheline Kirsch-Volders	President
Eugenia Dogliotti	Vice-President
Krzysztof (Chris) Szyfter	Past-President
Robert Baan	Treasurer
Marlies De Boeck	Secretary

Officer excused:

Jim Parry	Executive <i>ex officio</i>
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Invited:

Francesca Pacchierotti	ICEM 2008 Organizer/ EEMS Secretary 2007-2009
Hans-Jörg Martus, Pablo Tosin	EEMS 2007 Local Organizers
Jasna Franekic Èoliã and Verica Garaj	EEMS 2008 Local Organizers

Councillors present:

Kim De Ruyck (Belgium)
Jasna Franekic Èoliã and Verica Garaj-Vrhovac (Croatia)
Pavel Rossner (Czech Republic/Slovak Republic)
Hannu Norppa (Finland)
Elisabeth Lorge (France)
Soterios Kyrtopoulos (Greece, replacing Dimitros Kouretas)
Livia Anna (Hungary)
Alberto Izzotti (Italy)
Metka Filipic (Slovenia, replacing Bojana Zegura)
Hans-Jörg Martus (Switzerland)
Steve Dean (UK)

1. Approval of Agenda

Agenda was accepted.

2. Report from the Secretary

2.1. New EEMS Councillors

New appointments were made for the following countries in 2007:

Belgium: Kim De Ruyck (Luc Verschaeve)

Finland: Hannu Norppa specifically requested for permission to continue his term as Councillor, although he has served already two times a 2-year term. After consulting Micheline, it was decided that he could stay on.

Spain: Ricardo Marcos (Jordi Surreales)

Italy: Alberto Izzotti (Ricardo Crebelli)

Hungary: Livia Anna (Erika Gyorffy)

Slovenia: Bojana Žegura (Metka Filipic)

Still to be replaced: Ase Krokje (Norway) and Seikbay Abilev (Russia)

2.2. Electronic membership directory

Most Councillors sent their membership list according to the template. Some societies specifically requested to keep all info confidential. Some societies provided only names and e-mail addresses, others the full details (as far as available). At present, there are approximately 1409 members registered in our society. Of 1303 of those, we have an e-mail address, of 52 we have only a postal address and of 54 members we have no contact details at all. No membership info has been received from Norway, Russia and Slovenia. An e-mail address is required to obtain a password to access the members' section of the EEMS website for the electronic voting of the new vice-president. The membership directory (local Excel file at Secretary's office and online database) will need to be updated by the new Secretary. The Councillors will be requested to indicate changes to their membership directory to make this update easier.

2.3. Newsletter

Version 47 was available in December 2006 and was posted on the website. It contained contributions from different national societies and an update on International Validation trial of the in vivo comet assay and other genotoxicity testing initiatives that are currently ongoing. Version 48 was available in July 2007 and contained contributions from different national societies on past and upcoming activities. The Newsletter page on the general EEMS website is one of the most popular; it received 1084 visits since the launch in March 2007.

2.4. Website

Since the launch of the general and conference websites in March 2007, it has been a continuous learning and updating process. Small adaptations were required upon first use and feedback from users and we needed to "learn to work with it". A major problem was

discovered by Lutz: after the deadline for early (and cheaper) registration had passed, the amounts to be paid were adapted but in the background calculation these were not adapted. Hence, registrants were requested to pay the original (cheap) amount. This resulted in a loss of income of 3400 euro. NewLink correctly reimbursed this loss to the society and this was taken into account in the invoice sent to the Basel meeting organizers.

Specific menu items on general EEMS website:

Vacancy tool: has been used by 3 companies so far

CV tool: no CV's uploaded → should be advertised more to members by new **Secretary**

Discussion forum: no activity so far → should be advertised more to members by new **Secretary**

SIG: info for only 3 → chairs should be contacted by new **Secretary**

Other conference announcements: several have been posted (Gordon conference, UKEMS, Comet Workshop, ...)

Links: no update received from executive committee members or others

Training and courses: idem

Statistics:

homepage visits 70000 since March 2007 → ± 400 /day

Conference homepage 17000

Most popular pages: Regional societies and Newsletters

3. Report from the Treasurer

Rob provided the report of the EEMS accounts from January to December 2006 and from January to August 2007. For 2006, the membership fees from the different local Societies were the major source of income. A major point was the money that was paid back to the EEMS by the Organizers of the Kos Meeting; this was the loan plus extra profits (2250 Euro) that were made. Expenses included payment of the auditors and the different EEMS Awards (including 1 poster award and 8 YS Travel awards). The ICEMHP organized by William Au in Turkey was sponsored as was done previously (to support YS).

For 2007, the largest expense was for the development of the new EEMS website. Eight YS travel awards will be given during the Basel meeting. For more details on the finances, see Rob's report.

4. Report from the Vice-President

Eugenia reported on the difficulty to find candidates for the FS award; from the majority of Councillors, no feedback was received at all. Finally, UKEMS proposed Alan Lehman who was accepted by the committee. Unfortunately, Alan will not be coming to the Basel meeting due to previously made commitments. Hence, he will give his award presentation next year. Thus, during the Cavtat 2008 meeting, there will be 2 FS award presentations.

For the YS award, three CV's were presented which all were valuable and of high scientific quality. It should be mentioned that no CV was received from candidates from Eastern European countries. Karen Brown (UKEMS) was selected.

5. Report from the Past-President

Chris reported on the results of the Vice-President election:

Total number of paper votes:	7
Total number of electronic votes:	205
Invalid votes:	0
Number of valid votes:	212

The results will be reported during the General Assembly.

6. Report from the President

Advice of the EEMS Executive Committee concerning representation in Council:

- the current number of representatives is old-fashion in the frame of the political evolution in Europe;
- after consulting a number of Past-Presidents, the average minimum number of members for a regional society is 10-30. Ten was selected since this would give to small countries a maximum possibility to participate;
- the decision to allow a second councillor was considered to be a secondary problem since in general we do not vote for certain issues and since the Executive Committee wishes to attract the most "active" persons to become councillor.

The Council is an organ aiming at contribution, interests and needs of different EEMS sections. Therefore, the minimum number of members was considered to be 10; societies of more than 200 members can have 2 councillors. Societies composed of different political entities (e.g. GUM) are allowed to have a councillor for each of the political units. This new

approach does not take into account the current maximum number of members of the Council, i.e. 32. Therefore, this maximum rule will be deleted.

The proper procedures to adapt the rules will need to be followed (during Cavtat meeting).

Soterios Kyrtopoulos suggests that small countries with less than 10 members each could unite and have a common Councillor. There is also the possibility to become a direct member, independent from a country. The main issue for the Executive Committee is that we want Councillors who are active.

YS Travel Awards

Only 8 awards will be given since not many nominations have been received. Some of them were received too late after the deadline.

SIG

Currently the following SIG's are active:

Molecular Epidemiology (chair: Soterios Kyrtopoulos & Stefano Bonassi)

Industrial/Regulatory Issues (chair: David Kirkland)

DNA repair (chair: Vasiliki Pletsas)

Children genotoxicity (chair: Lisbeth Knudsen)

Nano(geno)toxicology (chair: Hannu Norppa)

Immune response and genotoxicity (chair: Lutz Müller)

The Molecular Epidemiology SIG is planning on organizing a meeting in Spain in 2008: a group from UK and Spain is intending to form a European Molecular Epidemiology group. They are requesting financial support from EEMS.

Hannu Norppa indicates that he will collect a list of interested people for his SIG during the Basel meeting.

7. Report on EEMS Online Journal

The European Journal of Genetic and Molecular Toxicology

Introduction

The online journal was created to provide both a rapid and convenient place to publish research in genetic toxicology (particularly the abstracts of our annual meeting) and to provide an income to the EEMS. This latter potential is illustrated by the very substantial income the UKEMS now receives from the journal **Mutagenesis** (which I founded in 1985), mainly from electronic publishing.

Currently, the online journal publishes the abstracts of our annual meeting, the young scientist lecture, the Frits Sobels lecture (difficult to persuade the lecturer to produce manuscript) and original papers. We are currently highly effective in a "Google search" in that we appear in the top ten hits using combinations of our name.

The conversion of the journal into a generator of income is highly dependent upon the publication of original papers .We now receive a small flow of submitted manuscripts ,which thus far most have been of poor quality and have been rejected by the referees.

I have had an informal discussions with two publishers who have shown an interest in managing the journal. They have both indicated that their interest is currently limited by the shortage of original papers.

Key to financial success is the publication of original research papers which can be linked to products and thus use the Google model to charge companies when someone links from our journal to their product. This model would allow the journal to be free to users. The alternative model requires a subscription from users or from those submitting manuscripts.

Proposal

The new EEMS web site provide and opportunity to re-invigorate the online journal. We should attempt to correlate a switch to the EEMS site with a drive to input manuscripts . I fully appreciate that Impact Factor is critical in the current scientific environment but this is less important to our more mature colleagues.

Suggested steps :

1. The EEMS member societies nominate committed editorial board members
2. We insure that our prize winners fulfil their obligations to the society by supplying their manuscripts
3. Undertake a concerted campaign to recruit manuscripts
4. Transfer the journal to the EEMS web site
5. Undertake further discussions with potential publishers

I am sorry I can't be with you on Sunday but I would be happy to discuss the proposals with you during the course of the week in Basel.

Best wishes to you all

Jim Parry

The Executive Committee does not see any future for the online journal. Soterios Kyrtopoulos refers to the principle of open access articles → BioSciences federation: societies that generate money through a journal, lose money through open access articles. Steve Dean mentions that for UKEMS and Mutagenesis, this is not the case at all; they are still winning money through the journal.

8. Future meetings

2008 Cavtat

Verica Garaj presented the meeting venue and reported on the status of the scientific programme.

2009 Florence

During General Assembly → Satellite meeting can be organized around the period of the ICEM; there should not be any overlap in subjects with the ICEM.

2010: possibly, a joint meeting with Eurotox will be organized.

9. Activity reports of Councillors

Hungary

The Forum for Primary Prevention (for heart and cancer diseases) was organized in Budapest in May. Dr. Sarolta Gundy participated in workshops on the harmonization of methods applied in hereditary cancer risk. She also represented the Hungarian EEMS section on Continuation courses for toxicologists and radiologists, Budapest, February, 2007.

The Forum of the Young Hygienists was held with the auspices of the Society of Hungarian Hygienists in Sopron in May-June.

Two new members have joined the society, the membership fees will be transferred.

Croatia

In September 2006, members of the Croatian EMS co-organized the Eurotox congress in Cavtat.

Czech Republic and Slovak Republic

Activities have been reported in the last EEMS Newsletter. The Annual Meeting of the Czech and Slovak EMS was held in Brno in May. The next meeting will be in the fall in Bratislava.

The new scientific committee has been appointed. For the next four years, Dr. Jan Topinka became the president; Dr. Alena Gábelová and Dr. Hana Lehocká were elected vice-presidents of our society.

Greece

The Greek EMS is a small society with less than 10 members. An effort will need to be made to mobilize interested people outside the area of environmental mutagenesis to become involved.

GUM

Many GUM members were actively involved in the organization of the 2007 EEMS Basel conference.

Belgium

The 2007 Annual meeting of the BEMS will be organized in Brussels on December, 14th and will cover the impact of REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of Chemicals) on Chemical Safety Assessment (testing). In 2006, there were 42 members in the society and a joint meeting with the Belgian Society for Toxicology and Ecotoxicology (BelTox) was held. This joint meeting was devoted to "New methods in (geno)toxicology and ecotoxicology". The Belgian delegate for the Young Scientist symposium ("Highlights on mutation research from young investigators") at the EEMS meeting in Basel is Julie Muller. Julie is a PhD student at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) who won the Young Scientist award at the national BEMS 2006 meeting.

NordEMS

The membership list of the society were out of date and will now be updated. No scientific meetings have been organized during the last years. Every other year, there was a joint meeting with the Nordic Society for Toxicology but the society was in general not very active. During the 2006 Prague EEMS meeting, a symposium on ecotoxicology was organized. A joint meeting with UKEMS will be organized in 2008.

Poland

A meeting of the Genetic Society will be held next week.

Italy

SIMA is organising its annual meeting in September together with the Italian Life Sciences Federation. The congress will be held in English to stimulate the attendance of non-Italian delegates. Many SIMA members are actively involved in the organization of the 2009 ICEM.

Slovenia

The Slovenian EMS is a section within the Slovenian Genetic Society. A conference was held covering breakthrough events in environmental mutagenesis which were neglected before: e.g. molecular epidemiology, gene-environment interactions, DNA repair and regulatory issues. The aim is to revitalize the section and to attract some new students/PhD's involved in environmental mutagenesis.

UK

UKEMS has three subgroups (interest groups): Industrial Genotoxicology Group (IGG), Molecular Epidemiology Group (MEG) and Genome Stability Network (GSN). The GSN has organized the recent UKEMS annual meeting. In 2006, UKEMS had a joint meeting with the British Toxicology Society.

In 2008, there will be a joint meeting with NordEMS in Newcastle; the design of the scientific programme will be discussed next month. The Masters course in Genetic Toxicology has moved from Swansea to Surrey and is now connected to the Masters in Toxicology programme.

France

The annual meeting of the SFTG will take place in Toulouse next week. This meeting is co-organized with the German Society for Research on DNA Repair and is entitled: "DNA repair, damage signaling and carcinogenesis". Approximately 200 participants will attend.

The SFTG delegated a YS for the special session at the 2007 Basel meeting and also a YS Travel award was received by a French EEMS member.

A new session of the training course in genetic toxicology, organised by Pr D. Marzin, will be organized this year.

10. Reports from SIG coordinators

Nihil

11. Any other business

Nihil

Marlies De Boeck, EEMS Secretary