



UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES
EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS
Association internationale sans but lucratif International non-profit organisation

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UEMS 2021/08

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

UEMS COUNCIL MEETING

23-24 APRIL 2021

1. Introduction

My third Secretary-General report focuses, as was the case with the two previous reports, on the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our organization.

I must confess that one year ago, I was far from imagining that one year later, this report would still be dominated by this issue. Nevertheless, this is indeed the case, and although the vaccination process that is ongoing around the world, permits us to hope that soon we will be able to regain some sense on normality in our day-to-day life, the fact of the matter is that the UEMS should be prepared for the possibility that this “normality” could be substantially different from the pre-pandemic period.

Consequently, I would like to start this report by showing my never-ending admiration for the UEMS Office team. Their work ethic, camaraderie, and unbreakable will to achieve the goals that the Enlarged Executive Committee (EEC) defined, amidst a very difficult situation, always with a good spirit and a smile, never ceases to amaze me.

Secondly, I would like to thank all my colleagues of the UEMS EEC for their willingness to always be present and active, while at the same time dealing with very busy professional agendas that were only made worst with the extra clinical responsibilities that they had to tackle during the public health crisis that was (and still is) the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thirdly, I would like to acknowledge and show my support and deep appreciation for all the hard work done by so many colleagues in all of the UEMS NMAs and UEMS Bodies during this difficult period. Amidst the difficulties, they were able adapt and face the new reality, as can be witnessed by the numerous virtual assessments that were put in place in record time, the new ETR's that will be up for discussion and approval in our virtual UEMS Council Meeting, and the capacity shown by the reviewers to adapt to the adjustments that EACCME put in place to face the pandemic.

Those are the great assets of the organization that made it possible for the UEMS to enter this year's long tunnel and amidst a very difficult environment, facing huge number of uncertainties and doubts, but never losing sight of its mission and objectives. This is what permits us to look to the future and be sure that our organization will emerge from this situation stronger and better prepared for the future.

2. The UEMS Enlarged Executive Committee (EEC)

2.1. Composition of the EEC

The UEMS EEC for the 2020-2024 mandate is composed by the following colleagues:

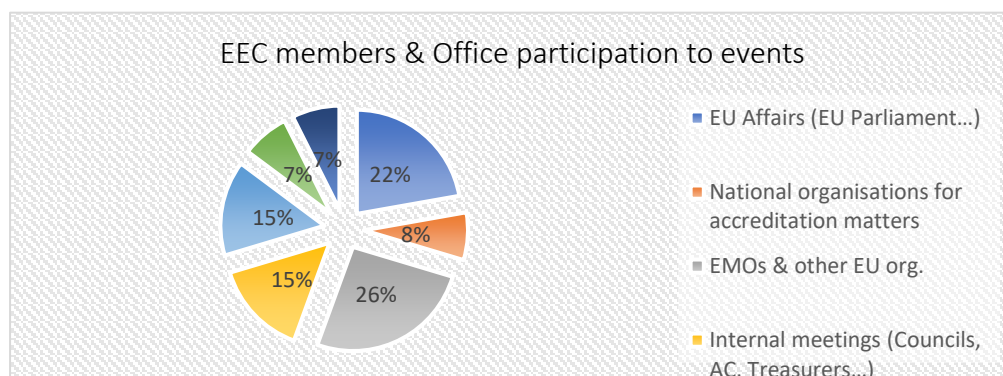
President: Vassilios Papalois	Vice-Presidents:	Chairs of the Groupings:
Secretary-General: João Grenho	Andreas Papandroudīs	Group 1: Rijk Gans
Treasurer: Othmar Haas	Mark Hermans	Group 2: Patrick Magennis
Liaison-Officer: Romuald Krajewski	Nada Cikes	Group 3: Paolo Ricci
	Tomás Cobo	

2.2. EEC members meetings and participation to external meetings.

The UEMS Executive (EC) and EEC kept their weekly teleconferences during 2020. In total there were 47 teleconferences of the EC or EEC and 1 EEC live meeting.

During 2020, a great number of scheduled meetings and events was cancelled and many of them were not substituted by virtual events. The EEC members attend 27 meeting in this period which amounts to a 55% reduction on the number of events attended when compared to the previous year.

Figure 1. Percentage of meetings, that were attended by EEC members during 2020.



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3. The UEMS Office in Brussels

In Table 1 you can have a view of the current work force of the UEMS in our office in Brussels:

Staff and working time structure

(Based on data of March 2021)

	Full time	Part time			Total (FTE)
	5/5	4/5	2.5/5	2/5	
Accreditation	3	2			4.6
Administration and finances	-		2		1
Administrative support to UEMS bodies	2				2
Internal & External affairs	2				2
Internship/temporary staff	0				0
TOTAL Number of staff	7	2	2		11
Full Time Equivalent (2020 Vs 2019)					9.6 (Vs 9.6)

Some points are important to highlight at this stage:

- 1- Although there was a decrease in the activities of the UEMS Bodies due to the pandemic, the amount of work done by the UEMS office increased significantly. This is easily explained by the fact that the UEMS Office team supported the UEMS EEC and UEMS Bodies with all issues related to the adjustments that had to be made to face the challenges posed by the pandemic, be it cancellation or the postponement of events or the transition from live assessments to virtual ones. This extra workload was done without increasing our workforce. New additions will most probably be required in the foreseeable future as our activities (and consequent administrative support) will return to its former level and foreseeably will continue the growth trajectory that we were observing before 2020.
- 2- From the middle of March until the end of May 2020, teleworking was made obligatory by the Belgium government. UEMS complied with its obligations and the staff worked from home during all that period.

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- 3- In May 2020, the anti-epidemic measures were relaxed but the recommendation was that, whenever possible, employees should work at home. The UEMS Office team started some activities at the Domus. A decision was made to have a minimum of one person in each department (management/-finances/accreditation) present at the Domus in order to assure the good running of the work. Instructions were regularly sent to the staff in order to allow everyone to work in a safe environment. This is still the situation at present and the UEMS EEC and Office team are exploring the possibility of implementing some of the working practices during the pandemics in a future where the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer present.
- 4- Accreditation related to EACCME activities remains our busiest department. Although the number of events submitted has decreased, the measures that were implemented by EACCME to help providers face the pandemic (and that will be discussed further along this document), constituted a substantial increase in the amount of the work done. Also, in this department, it is foreseeable that the return to the pre-pandemic levels coupled with the changes that were implemented and the observable explosion on the new forms of education that keep on being brought to our attention, with more national accreditation authorities seeking to either reach and sign an agreement or expand the existing ones to encompass the accreditation of small national events, will most probably require more resources to allow us to continue offering a robust and efficient service.
- 5- The amount of administrative work needed to support the work of our Bodies (Sections, Multidisciplinary Joint Committees, Thematic Federations and Working Groups) is difficult to compare with previous years for the reasons explained before. If on one hand the activities of the UEMS Bodies decreased due to the pandemic (and consequently the administrative support needed to support those activities) on the other hand the substantial number of events and assessments that had to be either cancelled, postponed or turned into virtual ones, largely balanced that decrease. Adding to this is the fact that much of that work was done on an “urgent” basis due to the fact that, at the time there was a great amount of uncertainty about the duration, extent and consequences of the pandemic and, as such, many events had to be postponed or cancelled in a very short notice.
- 6- The professional handling of our finances keeps on expanding as more and more information is directed to the UEMS office from UEMS Bodies. Regarding this issue, as stated for the previous ones, the foreseeable return to a normal situation, with the subsequent increase in UEMS activities, will likely lead to an increase on the amount of work needed to further harmonize and advance our financial management.

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- 7- Continuous assessments of this situation are being and will continue to be made as UEMS activity returns to normal.

4. The DME

The DME income in 2020 has decreased 7% when compared with 2019.

The income generated by the DME can be seen on the following Table 2.

	2016 (VAT excl.)	2017 (VAT excl.)	2018 (VAT excl.)	2019 (VAT excl.)	2020 (VAT excl.)
Tenants	41.000,00	84.000,00	85.516,03	96.000,00	88.492,15
Meeting rooms	19.018,12	21.370,25	11.232,50	7.496,75	2.704,50
Services	4.440,00	5.475,00	3.120,00	4.200,00	4.422,00
Parking	5.600,00	1.305,12	1.050,00	2.850,00	7.140,00
TOTAL	€ 70.058,12	€ 112.150,37	€ 100.918,53	€110.496,75	€102.758,65

This result is explained by the following facts:

1. A 30% discount was granted to DME tenants for 2 months to reflect that DME facilities were not used during the 1st and 2nd lock down in Belgium.
2. ESR decided to close its office in the DME. Consequently, an office for 4 employees is for rent.
3. There were no meeting rooms rented to external companies in 2020.
4. Only 4 meetings were held by UEMS Bodies in the DME in 2020.

5. Finances

The financial report of 2020 has been circulated and will be discussed in the Board and Council meetings that will be held virtually on the 23rd and 24th of April 2021.

We choose to highlight the following issues:

1. UEMS continues to honour all its financial obligations be it the loans for the DME or our financial obligations to external parties.
2. In the year 2020 UEMS had a positive end of year position of 463.045,10 €.
3. This result, albeit excellent is only possible because the great decrease in income that happened during this year was accompanied by a bigger decrease in expenditure.
4. The income of the UEMS exams was, in 2020, 494.782,88 € which shows a marked decrease when compared with the 1.041.821,64€ of 2019. This is a hallmark of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in our organization.

Given the travel restrictions imposed by the European governments many of the European exams were either cancelled or postponed.

This result stresses the importance of establishing platforms for online examination and developing them with the aim of being a plan B but also as plan A once the pandemic is in the past.

The UEMS should be prepared for the possibility that, once the pandemic has passed, the “day after” will be very different. As such, the EEC along with our Bodies and our Partners are taking the necessary steps to have the organization prepared for a moment when travelling will be reduced not only to deal with the pandemic but also aiming to minimize costs for the examinees and the UEMS Bodies and, most importantly, protect the environment.

5. EACCME income was 986.129,35€ in 2020, which, again is a marked decrease compared with the 1.211.302,10€ income of 2019. Here again, the result is a hallmark of the COVID-19 situation. Nevertheless, it is safe to state that the measures that were put into place by EACCME and the flexibility showed to providers helped in containing the losses and reaffirmed EACCME as an innovative and flexible system that is able to implement in a timely manner, solutions to that meet the needs of the providers.

6. EACCME

As already showed on this report, EACCME activity was greatly impacted by the unfolding of the pandemic,

6.1. EACCME meetings

The Virtual UEMS Advisory Council meeting took place on 11 March 2021.

The Virtual UEMS Conference on CME-CPD in Europe titled “EACCME: Facing the COVID challenge and beyond” took place on 12 March 2021.

6.2. EACCME Agreements

- Accreditation Council for Oncology in Europe: Agreement signed on 11th January 2020.
- Finnish Medical Association: Agreement signed on 11th January 2020.
- Renewal of the Agreement of Mutual recognition of Accreditation with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada was signed in December 2020. This agreement is a 1-year extension of the existing agreement. During that time, conversations will continue aiming to reach an agreement on the subject of the mutual recognition of accreditation of ELM's which were not included in the previous agreement.
- Renewal of the Agreement with the European Society of Cardiology was signed in March 2020.
- Negotiations to sign of an agreement of Mutual Recognition of Accreditation with the Dutch Medical Association are currently underway and are expected to be concluded in the second semester of 2021.
- Negotiations to sign an agreement with the Pan-Hellenic Medical Association for the recognition of Accreditation of events held in Greece in the Greek language are underway and are expected to be concluded in the first semester of 2021.

6.3. IT Developments

A new pathway for the faster accreditation of webinars related to COVID-19 was implemented in April 2020.

The creation of an alternative pathway for accreditation of packages of webinars was concluded and implemented in August 2020.

A new pathway for the accreditation of integral recordings of Live Educational Events was concluded and implemented in April 2021

6.4. Support of allied healthcare professionals to develop accreditation systems

Discussion with the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) continues. The signing of a MoU is projected to occur by the first semester of 2021.

Discussion with the European Union of General Practitioners continues. The signing of a MoU is projected to occur by the first semester of 2022.

6.5. Measures implemented to respond to COVID-19 impact on EACCME

Early in the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, EACCME was faced with the necessity to adjust its rules in order to accommodate the requests that started coming from providers. The following measures were put into practice and are still in place at this time:

1. Implementation of a special review and accreditation process for COVID webinars: this special review and accreditation process allows providers to submit an application for a webinar on COVID 19 up to one week prior to the start of the webinar. The UEMS-EACCME will take care of having the review done as expeditiously as possible and have it completed before the date of the webinar.
2. Reduction of the deadline for submission of events for accreditation from 12 to 7 weeks prior to the date of the event.
3. Possibility to postpone an accredited event or an event in review at no extra cost.
4. Possibility to stream or transmit live an event that had been accredited as a LEE at the date planned for LEE or at another date, with the option to shorten the original programme for organizational purposes, at no extra cost.
5. Composition of a brochure “How the EACCME adapted its services this year” available on https://www.uems.eu/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/125412/EACCME_Brochure.pdf

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The implementation of these changes had one major principle in mind, which was to allow some flexibility related to the process without compromising our principles and the robustness of the EACCME Review.

6.6. EACCME in figures (data for 2021 until 31st of March)

LEE: Live Educational Events

ELM: e-Learning Material

REV Pack: Journal revision package

WEB PAC: Webinar Package

Table 3: EACCME Activities from 2010 to 2021 (LEE)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
January	131	180	177	112	178	175	147	178	206	237	237	104
February	153	161	199	154	166	160	205	178	176	255	232	121
March	169	191	181	161	149	146	157	150	174	210	144	216
April	120	106	140	77	96	107	113	110	114	135	35	
May	96	91	106	137	131	128	157	119	171	159	67	
June	128	161	151	166	179	179	233	220	227	219	102	
July	166	181	254	163	178	178	157	207	225	276	167	
August	129	156	142	102	89	104	137	144	150	207	138	
September	132	154	116	57	87	98	76	74	108	103	106	
October	97	95	114	117	95	94	132	122	142	165	80	
November	89	115	96	91	141	113	135	130	166	156	68	
December	114	149	195	114	120	143	189	137	172	196	114	
Total	1524	1740	1871	1451	1609	1625	1838	1769	2031	2318	1490	441

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In 2020 the number of live educational events submitted to EACCME to accreditation fell 36% despite the measures that EACCME implemented and that were discussed above. This is fully attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and to the impact that that situation had in all aspects of quotidian life.

Table 4: LEE in 2020 based on the number of participants

Number of participants	Number of applications
< 100	715
101-250	378
251-500	172
501-1000	106
1001-2000	56
2001-5000	42
> 5000	21

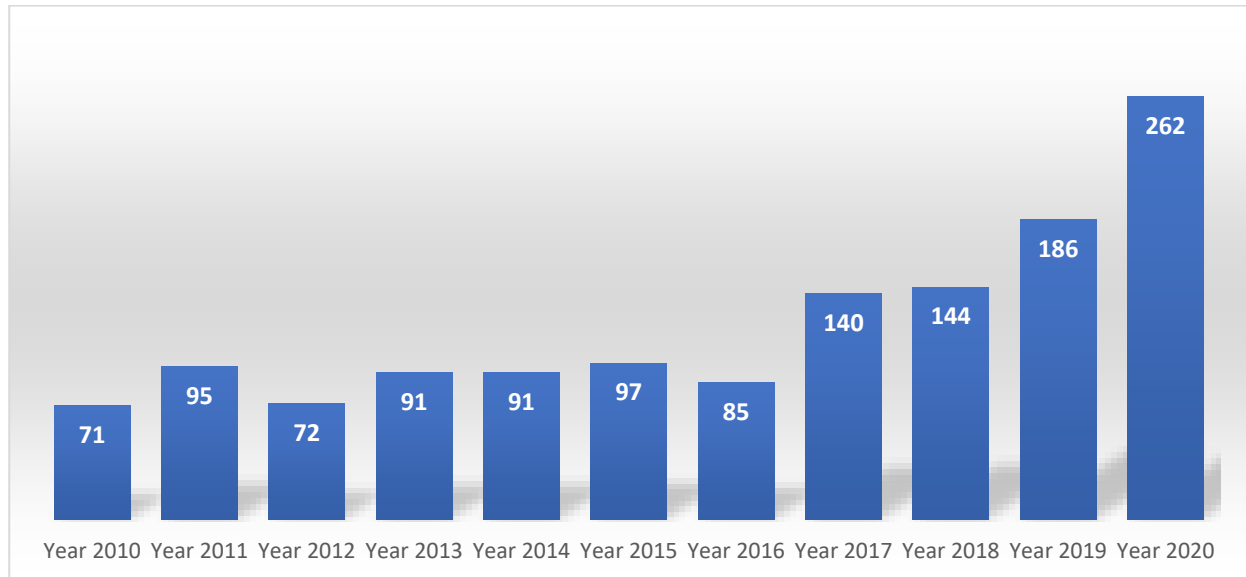
EACCME accredits LEE regardless of the number of participants. Beyond the major events of international status and gravitas taking place in Europe and beyond, we proudly accredit smaller but high-quality educational events.

Table 4 demonstrates that the majority of the events accredited in 2020 had less than 100 participants. Those events offer more targeted and top-class specialist education. EACCME wishes to offer the opportunity to all credible providers to apply for accreditation.

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Figure 2: ELM accredited by EACCME between 2010 and 2020



In 2020 there was a 41% increase in the number of ELM's accredited by EACCME when compared to 2019.

Table 5: Type of ELM accredited by EACCME in 2020

Type of ELM	Number of applications
Individual module(s)	218
E-platform	40
E-library	1
App	3

Table 5 demonstrates that the accreditation of new forms of e-learning material that has been introduced with EACCME 2.0 keeps on attracting new applications of excellent educational e-platforms and e-libraries.

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Figure 3a: LEE accredited in 2020 through the agreement of EACCME with SEAFORMEC

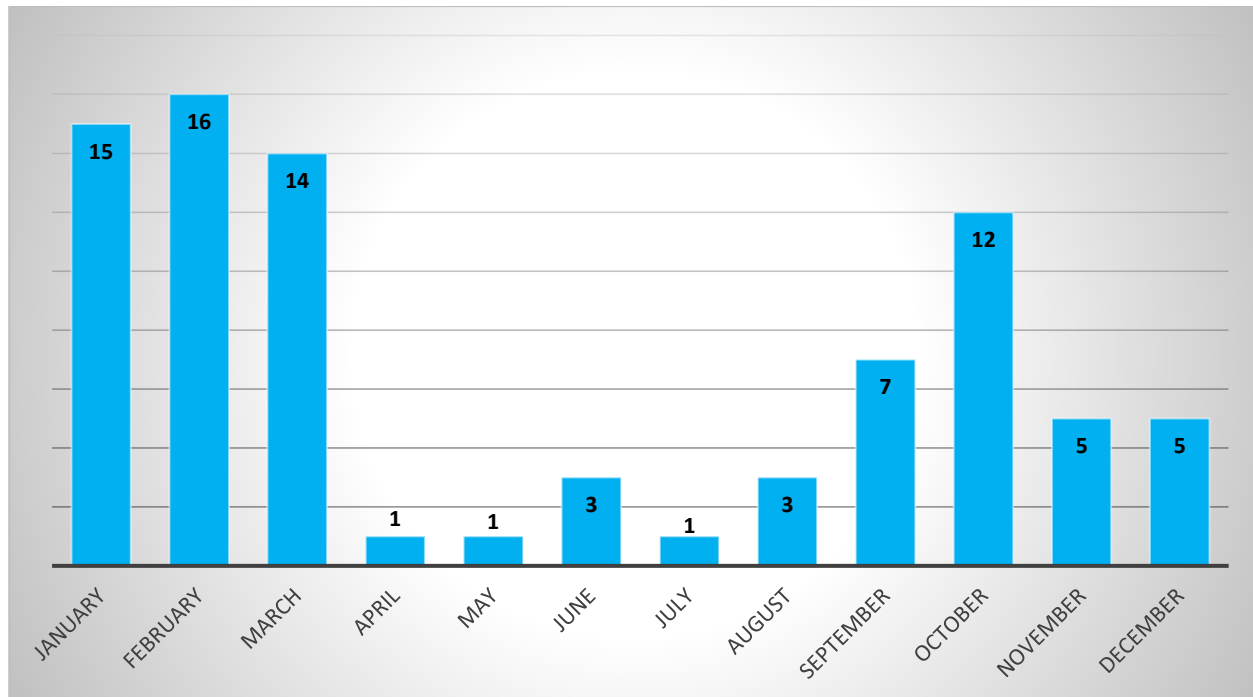
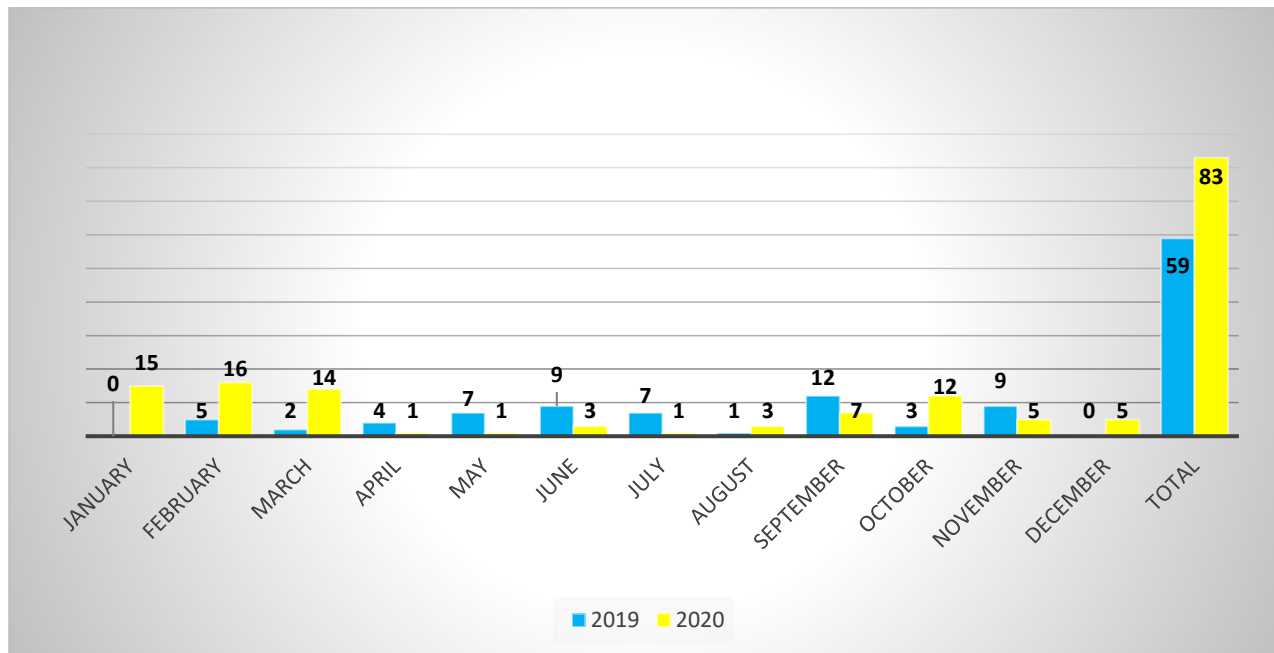


Figure 3b: Comparison of LEE accredited in 2019 vs 2020 through the agreement of EACCME with SEAFORMEC



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Figure 3c: ELM accredited in 2020 through the agreement of EACCME with SEAFORMEC

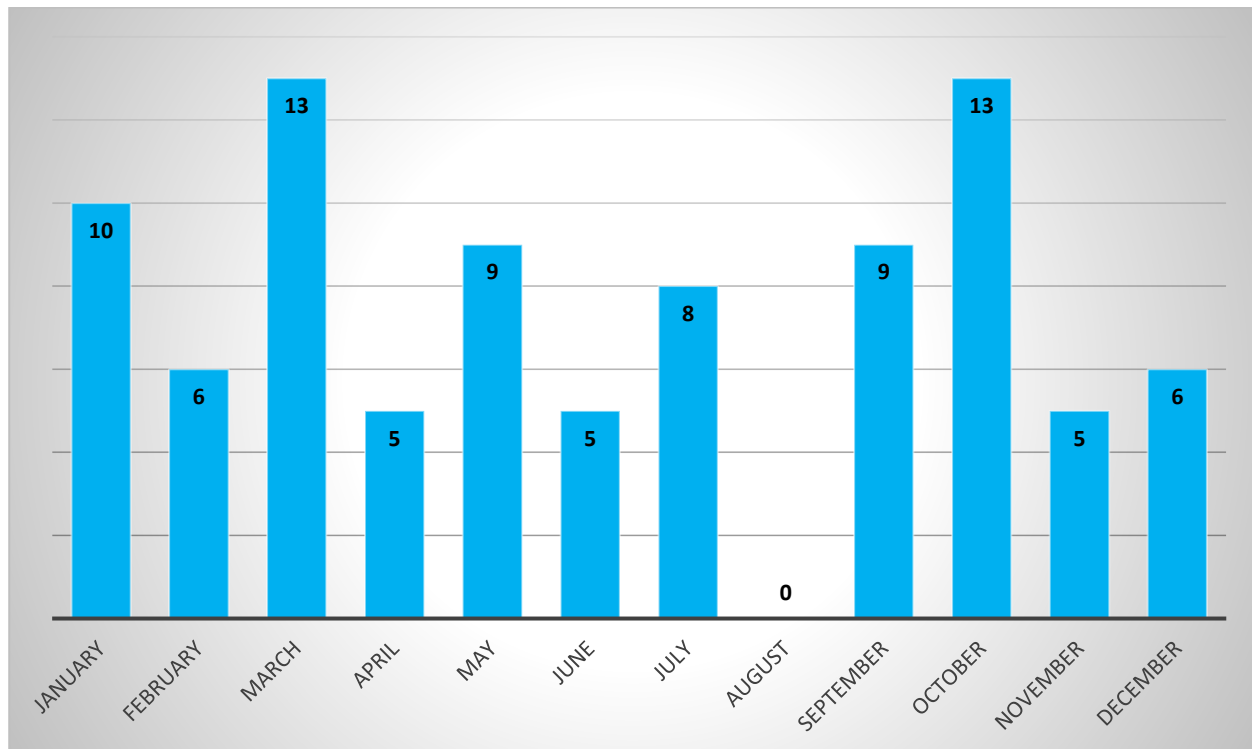
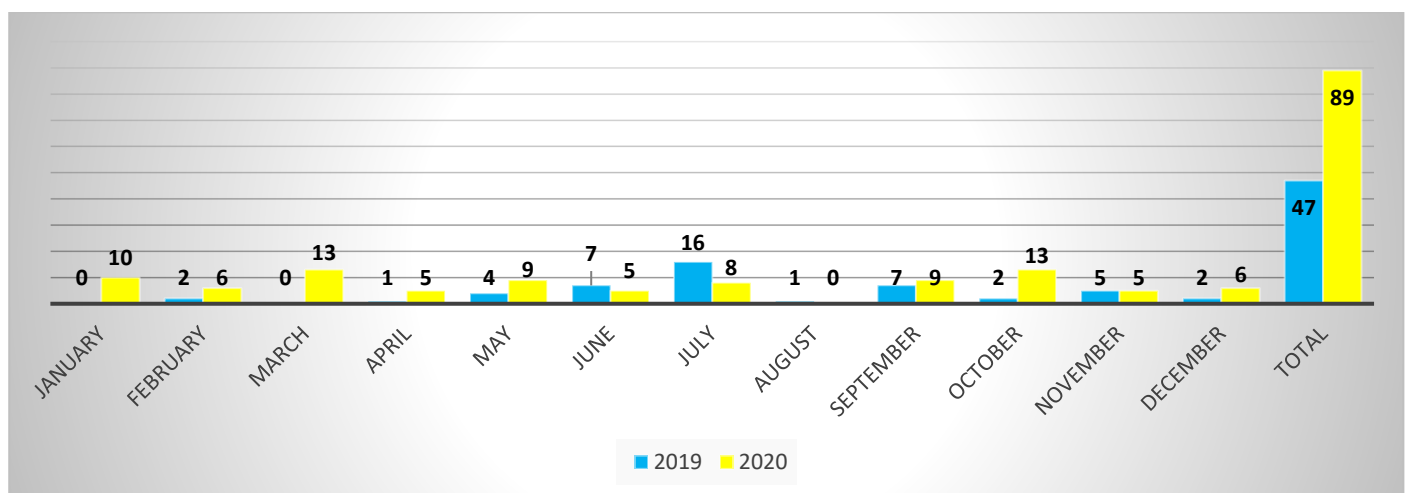


Figure 3d: Comparison of ELM accredited in 2019 vs 2020 through the agreement of EACCME with SEAFORMEC



Figures 3c to 3d demonstrate that our agreement with Spain/ SEAFORMEC for accreditation of Spanish LEE and ELM events is getting more and more popular and that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw an

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increase on the number of both types of events submitted for accreditation. We hope that more countries will follow this model and have their national events accredited by EACCME.

6.7. EACCME income

EACCME income was 946,511.62€ in 2020 which represents a 22% decrease in income when compared to 2019.

Table 6: Comparison of EACCME income from 2019 and 2020.

	2019			2020			
	Income LEE	Income Review	Income ELM	Income LEE	Quality Control	Income Review	Income ELM
Jan	116.900,00		3.000,00	106,620.17		500.00	8,500.00
Feb	125.107,50		3.500,00	114,061.75		1,750.00	6,000.00
Mar	107.095,75		3.500,00	69,135.50	500.00	-	11,000.00
Apr	37.225,00		21.000,00	10,475.00	500.00	-	29,130.00
May	99.550,00		8.000,00	44,450.00	250.00	20.00	14,500.00
Jun	127.411,75		23.500,00	57,420.50	250.00	-	18,000.00
Jul	122.639,60		15.000,00	100,981.75	1,250.00	2,500.00	24,500.00
Aug	98.275,00	5.000,00	10.000,00	80,161.45	500.00	-	9,000.00
Sep	41.502,00		5.000,00	56,700.00	500.00	1,500.00	23,000.00
Oct	70.970,00		5.000,00	34,450.00	750.00	-	17,000.00
Nov	76.661,75		1.000,00	22,490.00	750.00	-	6,500.00
Dec	82.288,75		2.000,00	52,415.50	500.00	500.00	17,500.00
Total	1.105.627,10	5.000,00	100.500,00	749,361.62	5,750.00	6,770.00	184,630.00
Total	1.211.127,10			946,511.62			

This result has to be looked upon in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic during which many providers had to cancel or postpone their educational events.

It is our firm belief that the measures that were implemented very early on the beginning of the pandemic had the effect to greatly minimize this decrease in income, but it was, unfortunately not enough to avoid it all together.

7. Internal Issues

7.1. Section of Surgery

The situation that led to the resignation of the Bureau of the Section of Surgery was discussed in detail in the last Secretary-General report.

As per UEMS rules, the UEMS Secretary General, acted as interim President of the Section until a new Bureau of the Section could be elected.

This election was held, and the new Bureau was elected in February 2021.

The new Bureau of the Section is composed by:

President - Prof. Daniel Casanova

Vice-President - Prof. Ferdinand Köckerling

Secretary – Dr Sebastian Roka

President of the Board - Mr. Arthur Felice

7.2. Clinical Leadership Academy

The preparatory work to establish a Clinical Leadership Academy performed by European Association of Hospital Doctors (AEMH) in partnership with the UEMS has been completed and will be presented to the UEMS constituency during the virtual UEMS Council meeting that will be held on the 23rd and 24th of April 2021.

UEMS has high expectations for this project and hopes that this is the first of many projects that will be developed in partnership with other European Medical Organizations.

AEMH and UEMS will organize a webinar to present the project.

7.3. Thematic Federation on diversity and inclusivity in medicine.

The UEMS Enlarged Executive has decided to start an internal discussion within the UEMS focused on the problems related to diversity and inclusion in medicine.

We hope that this discussion will lead to the creation of a UEMS Body that will serve as forum to further discuss issues related to this topic and to present proposals aimed at increasing diversity in medicine not only in Europe but also in the UEMS.

This discussion is being led by UEMS Vice-President Nada Cikes.

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7.4. Doctors in Private Practice survey

The issue of Doctors in private practice that were exceptionally affected by the pandemic since many of them saw their activity reduced or completely halted with the consequent reduction in income was brought to the attention of the EEC by the UEMS Section of Dermato-Venereology. The UEMS Enlarged Executive decided to make a survey to better understand all challenges faced by doctors in private practice and form relevant proposals.

The results of that survey were compiled by the UEMS Office and are currently being analysed by UEMS Vice-Presidents Marc Hermans and Andreas Papandroudakis. The results and relevant proposals will be available by summer of 2021 and will be circulated for consultation.

7.5. Webinars on ETR's Appraisal Process and Assessments in the Pandemic

The UEMS EEC decided to produce a series of webinars related to several aspects of the projects of the UEMS.

The first webinar on the new ETR's Appraisal Process is scheduled to take place in the first week of June and the second dealing with the issue of Assessments during the Pandemic is scheduled to take place in the last week of June.

8. Conclusion

2020 was a difficult year for UEMS. The COVID-19 pandemic brought enormous challenges to our organization and those challenges severely impacted our activities.

This impact is widely visible throughout the Secretary-General report, the financial report and many other documents. It was specially felt on a day-to-day basis by all colleagues that work on all levels of the UEMS.

But, being a difficult year, 2020 was also a year of learning opportunities. We learned that the UEMS has the capacity to adapt itself and, if needed, is able to turn its live events into virtual ones. And that this can be done even to the biggest one of all, the Council meeting.

This is precious experience that, if well used in the future can help the UEMS to reduce the need for work absence from its members, reduce costs and, most importantly, the organization's carbon footprint.

This learning experience can also be used by the UEMS Bodies, for instance, in the organization of their assessments. The opportunity to turn live assessments into virtual or hybrid events may increase their

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popularity and open them to a wider pool of candidates by reducing the travel and hotel costs in which examinees need to incur to take them.

EACCME also has much to gain by learning from its experiences during this period. Having a motivated team, that is able to find timely solutions that best fit the needs of providers, without compromising our principles, is of paramount importance in our objective to reinforce EACCME's position as the leading European accreditation authority.

In order to help us accomplish its objectives, EACCME is set to begin a revision of its criteria that we hope, will help us answer more efficiently to the challenges that a fast-changing landscape pose. We have high expectations on the work of this revision and also of the 3 working groups created in January 2019 (Assessment of needs of participants and outcome of educational events, New forms of CME-CPD and EACCME fees: sustainable/ affordable).

I hope to meet you all in Limassol in October.

João Miguel Grenho

UEMS Secretary-General