

Minutes EBCOG & Section Council Meeting

Hotel Bristol Stephanie, Brussels

June 14th & 15th, 2003

Present:

**Professor A .Van Assche, President
EBCOG
Dr.H.H.Wagner, President Section O
& G
Dr.R.Kirschner, Vice-President
EBCOG
Professor J.Wladimiroff, Acting
Secretary-General EBCOG
Professor W.Dunlop, Treasurer
EBCOG
The Lord Naren Patel, President
EAGO
Dr.S.Brostrom, President ENTOG
Professor O.Axelsson (Sweden)
Professor C.Benedetto (Italy)
Dr.G.Cession (Belgium)
Professor G.Creatas (Executive)
Professor G.C.Di Renzo (EAPM)
Professor J. Feyereisl (Czech
Republic)
Professor V.Giambanco (Italy)
Dr.A.Goverde (The Netherlands)**

**Professor W.Holzgreve (Switzerland)
Dr.P.Hornnes (Denmark)
Professor A.Kalogeropoulos (Greece)
Professor L.Kovacs (Hungary)
Professor Erkki Kujansuu (Finland)
Dr.S.Lenz (Denmark)
Professor M.Lahousen (Austria)
Professor M.Litschgi (Switzerland)
Professor S.Mancuso (Executive)
Professor J.Martinez de Oliveira
(Portugal)
Miss Heather Mellows (UK)
Professor Z.Novak Antolic (Executive)
Professor E.M.Rutanen (Finland)
Dr.K.Salvesen (Norway)
Professor C.Santos Jorge (Portugal)
Dr. I. Reis Torgal (Portugal)
Dr.N.Tsatsaris (Greece)
Professor V.Unzeitig (Czech Republic)
Dr.G.Van Doorn (The Netherlands)
Dr.J.Van Wiemeersch (Belgium)**

Invited: Dr.Bernard Maillet, Secretary-General UEMS

The President opened the meeting by welcoming Dr.Maillet.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Professor Norbert Pateisky (Austria), Professor Jacques Lansac (France), Professor Luis Cabero Roura (Executive), Professor Ulf Ulmsten (Chair Scientific Committee), Professor Gerald Gitsch (ESGO), Professor Istvan Szabo (Hungary), Dr.Bente Mikkelsen (Norway), Professor Mark Brincat, Professor Daniel Pereira da Silva (Portugal), Dr.Elisabeth Magnusson (PWG), Professor Bo Von Schoultz (Sweden) and Professor Patrice Lopes (France).

2. Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of 9th & 10th November 2002

The Minutes were adopted and accepted as a correct record of this meeting.

3. EBCOG, the Section and UEMS

The President reported that the President of the Section, the Acting Secretary-General of EBCOG and himself had been to the meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries-General of the UEMS Sections and Boards. He remarked that it had been an interesting opportunity to see how other specialties were organised and he congratulated Council members on all their work for EBCOG.

The President told Council that at this meeting he and the President of the Section and the Acting Secretary-General of EBCOG had spoken to the President of UEMS, Dr. Halila, and that he had accepted their invitation to attend one of the Section and EBCOG's Council meetings in the near future to talk about the recognition of specialist qualifications and the relation of healthcare programmes to the disciplines. The President said that this was particularly important because the situation at the moment may enable other specialties to take over parts of other specialties and subspecialties i.e., reproductive medicine by endocrinologists and materno-foetal medicine by perinatologists. He reminded Council that this had been one of the reasons that EBCOG and the subspecialties had felt it was an excellent idea for the subspecialties to join with EBCOG, under the umbrella of the Section and UEMS.

The President then gave the floor to Dr. Maillet.

3.1 The Doctors' Directive

Dr. Maillet thanked EBCOG for the invitation to attend the meeting. He began by talking about the Doctors' Directive and explaining that the current situation remains unchanged. He explained that the Italian Presidency of the EU recognised the concerns of doctors about this Directive and had no intention of putting it on the agenda for their term of office. Dr. Maillet went on to say that the lack of movement with this Directive was also related to the problems that it may cause for the accession countries if it were to be adopted and put into force.

The President of EBCOG informed Council that Dr. Cession had arranged to meet the European Commissioners Frits Bolkestein (DG Internal Market) and Philippe Busquin (DG Research) and that the Acting Secretary-General of EBCOG, the Liaison Officer of UEMS and the Secretary-General of UEMS will also attend this meeting. The President urged Council members to continue to lobby their politicians at both national and European level to oppose this Directive.

3.2 CME

Dr. Maillet told Council that he believed the relationship between UEMS and the national authorising authorities for CME was highly important. He told the meeting that UEMS now has a formal agreement with Spain about this issue and that the intention is to make the same kind of agreement with each member country of UEMS. Dr. Maillet explained

that whilst this sort of agreement would have no effect upon national accreditation, it would have a beneficial effect on how credits are accepted for people attending congresses outside their own countries. He said that national codes would mean that the national authorising authorities could better accept each other's credits.

3.3 Distance Learning

Dr. Maillet told Council that distance learning is not accredited by UEMS, but that a working group exists as UEMS recognises that Internet long-distance learning can be useful because of the fact that it is interactive. The President told Dr. Maillet that EBCOG and the Section would very much like to develop links with this UEMS working group. He also expressed EBCOG's interest in having office space within UEMS and he and Dr. Maillet agreed to discuss this. The President told Council he would report on the progress of these discussions at the Council meeting in November.

3.4 Web Site

Dr. Maillet reported that UEMS was setting up a new web site, the address of which will be www.uems.net. He explained that this site would contain more pdf files than in the past and that it would also be possible to submit forms for accreditation

On behalf of Council, the President thanked Dr. Maillet for his contribution.

4. Report on the Executive Meeting of 13th & 14th June 2003

The President reminded Council that they had received the Minutes of the Executive Meeting of 15th and 16th March 2003. He told Council that the Executive had met the previous day and earlier the same day and that they would be sent the Minutes of this meeting. The President went on to say that a large part of the recent meeting had been devoted to preparing issues on which Council would be asked to take a decision.

4.1 Visiting

The Acting Secretary-General and Chair of this Committee, Professor Wladimiroff, reported that recent visits had taken place in Germany to Halle, Jena and Heidelberg. He told Council that, including these visits, nine visits had been carried out in Germany over the last three years. A visit had also taken place in Enschede. Professor Wladimiroff explained that the visitors had recommended that Halle, Jena, Heidelberg and Enschede should all be recognised for a five-year period.

4.2 CME/CPD

The Acting Secretary-General told Council that the Executive had discussed the fact that it was important for EBCOG to develop a dialogue with the EACCME. He reported that the Standing Committee on CME/CPD met the previous day.

Dr. Van Wiemeersch and Dr. Maillet agreed to discuss CME.

4.3 Sub Committee on CME/CPD

The Acting Secretary-General informed Council that the Sub Committee on CME/CPD had met the previous day and that he would report on this later.

4.4 The Reports of EAPM, ESGO, ESHRE and EUGA

The Acting Secretary-General gave Council an overview of the presentations of the subspecialties:

EAPM

The Acting Secretary-General reported that EAPM was intending to strengthen its links with EBCOG via its Education Committee, of which Professor Di Renzo is the Chair. He reminded Council that EAPM had a new Journal with a high circulation. The Acting Secretary-General explained that Professor Di Renzo had offered to publish information from EBCOG in this Journal.

Finally, the Acting Secretary-General told Council that he had been invited to attend the EAPM Executive meeting, which will take place in Athens.

The Report of ESGO

The Acting Secretary-General reported that the next meeting of ESGO would take place in Geneva on 5th September 2003 and that EBCOG was invited to participate.

He said that the recent ESGO meeting in Brussels had attracted over 900 participants and that ESGO was very interested in EBCOG's support in developing a site visit programme and with regard to CME accreditation. The Acting Secretary-General told Council that ESGO has a Journal with a circulation of about 2,000 – 2,500 and that ESGO had offered to publish information from EBCOG in the Journal.

The Acting Secretary-General told Council that the new representative of ESGO within EBCOG would be Professor Gerald Gitsch, who would replace Professor Tiziano Maggino.

The Report of ESHRE

The Acting Secretary-General told Council that all of the subspecialties were collaborating closely with EBCOG, and together, in the Subspecialist Sub-Committee. He said that ESHRE also co-operates with EBCOG on ethical issues and that ESHRE's standing Task Force on Ethics and Law met twice a year to produce guidelines on certain topics.

Report of EUGA

The Acting Secretary-General reported that the President of EUGA, Professor Ulmsten, was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting. He reminded Council that the First General Assembly of EUGA would take place during the Congress in Athens in 2004.

4.5 Amalgamation of EBCOG and EAGO

The Acting Secretary-General reminded Council that the formal amalgamation of EBCOG and EAGO would take place during the Opening Ceremony of the Congress in

Athens. He explained that the financial and legal issues were in the process of being finalised.

The President of EAGO reported that the last Executive meeting of EAGO had taken place earlier in the day and that the Treasurer of EAGO had agreed to send the names of all those EAGO members who had paid-up to the Treasurer of EBCOG. He reported that the Treasurer of EAGO had also agreed to transfer all of the funds in the EAGO central account to the EBCOG bank account and he reminded the meeting that the profit from the European Congress in Prague had been paid directly to EBCOG.

The President of EAGO explained that the process of dissolving EAGO was well underway and that two finance commissioners had been appointed to check the legality of the dissolution of the accounts.

The President of EBCOG congratulated Lord Patel on his election as President of EAGO and paid tribute to the outgoing President of EAGO, Professor Kovacs. He congratulated Professor Kovacs on his work and thanked him for all his efforts over the past three years.

5. Report of the Treasurer of EBCOG and the Section

5.1 EBCOG and Section Accounts 2002

The Treasurer presented the EBCOG and Section accounts for 2002. He told Council that in 2002, the income for EBCOG had been slightly higher than the budget's projections and the expenditure slightly lower.

The Treasurer reported that the balance of the EBCOG account as at 31st December 2002 was: Euro 24,4293.92. (Please see Annex 1).

The Treasurer reported that the balance of the Section account as at 31st December 2002 was: Euro 24,718.27. (Please see Annex 2).

The Treasurer told the meeting that as at June 2003, EBCOG's income had been lower than expected although the percentage of the membership fees from the Section that was payable to EBCOG annually had still to be transferred. He told Council that the income from the diplomas in 2003 was, to date, very low compared to 2002. He said that although EBCOG would remain within budget, the balance at the end of the year would not be as healthy as that of 2002.

5.2 ENTOG Account

The Treasurer told Council that a joint ENTOG/EBCOG bank account had now been opened.

6. The European Congress

6.1 Scientific Programme

The President informed Council that the Congress Management Committee had met the previous day and reminded Council that all national delegates had received information

on the scientific programme. He reported that the Scientific Programme was almost finalised and that 90% of the responses from the invited speakers and Chairs had been positive. The President said that communication with Erasmus, the local PCO in Athens, was excellent.

The President then gave Council a brief overview of the Scientific Programme (Please see Annex 3). He explained that Dr.Lenz had proposed that “Office Ultrasound” be included in the plenary session on “Breast Cancer – Hot Topics” and that this had been agreed.

The President reported that he, the Acting Secretary-General and the Treasurer would go to Athens in July to meet with Erasmus and the Greek Society. The President reported that the Congress Management Committee and the Executive had both agreed, in principle, that he might sign the Contract with Erasmus. Council also agreed that he might do so. The President informed Council that ERASMUS had agreed to transfer the database that they had developed for the Congress to EBCOG at the end of the Congress.

6.2 PCO

The President told Council that it was important to make a decision about a PCO for future Congresses. He reminded Council that EBCOG now had a strong Congress Management Committee, which had built up a lot of experience during the past year in working on the 2004 Congress.

The President went on to outline to advantages and disadvantages of using a permanent PCO. He said that a permanent PCO was more expensive and less flexible than using a local PCO but that a permanent PCO ensured more continuity. The President pointed out that there was less continuity with a local PCO, but that there was more flexibility and better co-operation with the National Society and local Congress facilities, hotels, etc..

The President told Council that the Congress Management and Executive Committee had proposed that a local PCO would be the best solution, and that the Congress Management Committee should meet with the local PCO of the venue for 2006 and they should be asked to present the 2006 Congress in Athens.

There was some discussion about this issue and Council members expressed their view that EBCOG should use a local PCO to assist the Congress Management Committee to organise the European Congress 2006.

The President asked Council to vote on the motion that a local PCO should be used for the European Congress 2006. This motion was carried unanimously.

The President of the Section and the President of EBCOG thanked Professor Unzeitig on behalf of Council for all his work for the European Congress in Prague, 2002, and congratulated he and his team on their success.

6.3 Bids for 2006

The Acting Secretary-General told Council that three bids to host the Congress in 2006 had been received from: Dresden, Lisbon and Turin. He emphasised that all three bids had been endorsed by the National Societies concerned. The Acting Secretary-General explained that each of the venues had been asked to make a ten-minute presentation including information on the venue, the range of hotels, the venues for social events and potential costs, after which Council would be asked to vote. The order of the presentations was decided by a draw.

Professor Benedetto presented the bid from Turin, Professor Martinez de Oliveira presented the bid from Lisbon and the Lord Patel presented the bid from Dresden (as no national delegates from Germany were able to be present).

The result of the vote was as follows:

- Turin – 9 votes
- Lisbon – 5 votes
- Dresden – 2 votes

Turin was therefore duly elected to be the venue of the European Congress, 2006.

The President thanked all of the bidders and congratulated Turin on its successful bid.

7. Strategy

The Vice-President gave Council an overview of his proposed Strategy Paper for 2004-2006. (Please see Annex 4). He told Council that he had revised his original proposal after he had seen some of the reports on the activities of the National Societies that national delegates had sent to the Acting Secretary-General before presenting them the following day. The Vice-President emphasised the fact that EBCOG strategy should be developed in collaboration with the national societies of EBCOG, via the national delegates.

The Vice-President explained that he proposed that the Strategy Paper should essentially be an action programme covering a three-year period.

He went on to say that he proposed that:

- The strategy document should be revised annually, and should be presented as a draft version to the Executive at its meeting in the beginning of the preceding year. The finalised draft should be taken to Council in June, and the definitive version presented at the meetings in the autumn.
- The success criteria should be measured and discussed at the Executive meeting in March, and taken to Council in June.
- The Executive should prepare and present the action-programme for the coming year to Council at its meeting in the autumn, where it should be discussed and adopted.

The Vice-President told Council that he would revise the Strategy Paper following the presentations of national societies the following day and would then circulate this paper to Council for consultation.

8. Report on the Subspecialist Sub-Committee (SSC)

The Chair of this Sub-Committee, Professor Wladimiroff, told the meeting that this body had met for the first time earlier the same day. He explained that the focus of the meeting had been on training via the recognition and accreditation of subspecialist centres in Europe and on the development of a possible subspecialist visiting system.

Professor Wladimiroff said that the following issues had been discussed:

- The definition of a subspecialty

Professor Wladimiroff reminded Council that EBCOG and the subspecialties have produced an agreed definition of a subspecialty.

- The definition of a subspecialist centre

Professor Wladimiroff explained that the SSC had agreed that a definition should be produced which covers the entire subspecialist field. The SSC agreed that a subspecialist centre should not have a modular approach and should have dedicated personnel in a multi-disciplinary setting, which should be part of a department of O & G within a hospital (with the exception being for highly specialised techniques).

The SSC agreed that the number of personnel should be in proportion to the clinical workload. The centre should have appropriate diagnostic and treatment facilities including equipment and laboratory facilities and the spectrum of patients should cover the entire field of the subspecialty concerned. Training in such centres should meet the criteria for training as defined in the relevant EBCOG/subspecialist training programme and Log Book.

The SSC believed that such centres should have quality measures in place such as protocols, audits, reports and annual statistics and an ethics review board. Such centres should also raise funds for research and publish their research in international and peer-review journals.

- The development of a set of minimum requirements for recognition

Professor Wladimiroff reported that the SSC had agreed to develop a set of minimum requirements for recognition, which it would then present to the Executive and Council. He explained that the SSC had also agreed to develop a system for visiting and to define the criteria for the recognition of a subspecialist.

Professor Wladimiroff told Council that the SSC would meet again in November 2003.

There was some discussion about the different status of the subspecialties in Europe. The President reminded Council that at its meeting in Rome in 1999, the Council of the Section and EBCOG had agreed that its goal was to have one specialty of O & G in

Europe with the four subspecialties of Reproductive Medicine, Gynaecological Oncology, Materno-Foetal Medicine and Urogynaecology under the umbrella of EBCOG and the Section.

Dr.Maillet told Council that one means to try and increase harmonisation with regard to the recognition of subspecialties in Europe was to speak to each member country and he explained that UEMS could assist in this process.

The President reminded Council that it had agreed with Dr.Van Doorn's request the previous year to organise a joint experimental training programme between the Netherlands and the UK. Dr.Van Doorn told Council that the Dutch regulator had given its full approval and support to this programme and that the successful candidates would begin their training in Enschede on 1st August.

9. The European Journal

The President began by reminding Council that EBCOG had no formal or legal ties to the EJOGRB, and that it was EAGO that had the formal links with this publication. He went on to explain that Mrs.Cherrington from Elsevier had made a presentation to the Executive Committee in March which had been reported in the Minutes of that meeting. The President told Council that it was important that EBCOG decide whether a Journal was necessary and, if so, whether EBCOG should continue to use the EJOGRB as its official organ or develop its own Journal.

The President told Council that whilst EBCOG received no monies from the EJOGRB, developing a Journal could nonetheless be risky and expensive. He explained that he, the Lord Patel and the Treasurer, who is also the President of the RCOG, had met with three publishers: McMillan, Springer and the Royal Society of Medicine in London to find out more about the interest in and implications of EBCOG's developing a Journal.

There was discussion about the pros and cons of EBCOG's developing a Journal and some concern expressed about the large number of Journals that are currently in existence. A number of members felt that it was important for EBCOG to have a strong, individual identity. There was agreement that the principle that the national delegates of EBCOG should act as the conduits of information and communication between their national society and EBCOG should always remain paramount.

Some members raised questions about the issue of what niche an EBCOG Journal would fill. The Lord Patel told Council that the publishers mentioned above had been very interested and had all expressed their confidence in the fact that a new Journal would be able to find a target audience and a niche in the market.

The Treasurer remarked that a Journal could generate quite a substantive income for EBCOG, whereas currently EBCOG was receiving no financial benefits from its links with Elsevier.

Council agreed that EBCOG should end its link to the EJOGRB and agreed to make further decisions about EBCOG's own Journal at the Council meeting in November.

Council agreed that the President, the Lord Patel and the Treasurer should make further enquiries with the publishers regarding marketing, costs etc. and report back to Council on this in November.

10. ENTOG

The President of ENTOG reminded Council that ENTOG had decided to revert to holding its Exchange Programme at the same time as the EBCOG and Section Council meeting.

He reported that the ENTOG Exchange Programme would take place in the Netherlands from 23rd -28th November, 2003 and told Council that the Exchange Programme would be followed by the 13th Meeting of European trainees in O & G, which will take place at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. The President of ENTOG urged national delegates to try and ensure that their national societies would support trainees to take part in the exchange programme.

The President of ENTOG said that the preliminary programme for this meeting would focus on the personal experiences of three exchange participants, on postgraduate training in O & G across the borders (including double track training), on models for local trainees' committees and on quality aspects of training in O & G. He reported that Dr. Van Doorn had accepted ENTOG's invitation to speak about the joint UK/Netherlands training programme at this meeting.

He stressed that EBCOG Council and Executive members were invited to participate in the Trainees' Meeting and expressed his hope that many members would accept this invitation.

The President thanked the President of ENTOG on his work and also extended his appreciation to the Past-President of ENTOG, Dr. Goverde, who is a member of the Dutch Organising Committee for these events.

11. Elections

The nominees for the posts of Secretary-General of EBCOG and Executive member of EBCOG were uncontested. Council agreed that as this was the case, it was not necessary to hold a formal election.

Professor Wladimiroff was therefore unanimously elected as Secretary-General of EBCOG and Professor Rutanen was unanimously elected as an Executive member of EBCOG and the Section.

The President congratulated Professor Wladimiroff and Professor Rutanen on behalf of Council and the Executive.

12. Reports from National Societies

Prior to the meeting, all national delegates had been asked to make a presentation on the activities of their national societies. National delegates had been asked to include the following information in their presentations:

- The activities of the national society;
- The activities of the national society in relation to the Doctors' Directive;
- Communication between the national society and EBCOG;
- The activities of the national society to publicise the European Congress in 2004.

The national delegates made their reports in the alphabetical order of their countries.

The reports submitted by national delegates are in Annex to the Minutes of this meeting. However a number of issues were identified as topics of common concern:

- Visits to accession countries;
- Gender ratio of gynaecologists and trainees per country;
- Litigation, a claims register and the 'no-fault' system;
- The organisation of office gynaecology at national level;
- The re-organisation of national systems from small scale to large scale;
- The incidence of C-Sections;
- Examination systems;
- Collaboration of societies at national and international level;
- Who is responsible for training in O & G – universities or societies?
- Who is involved in visiting if a visiting system exists in a country?
- Consumer representation;
- Human resources;
- Impact of the EU Working Time Directive.

The Vice-President agreed to summarise the main issues arising from these discussions and to circulate this summary to Council together with the presentations of each national delegate. Council agreed to send him their comments on the summary and on any other issues of note arising from the presentations. The Vice-President told Council that it was imperative that national delegates send him this feedback, because it will be crucial in developing EBCOG's strategic aims.

13. Date and Place of Next Meeting

- EBCOG and Section Council: Amsterdam, Saturday 29th November, 12h00-19h00
- EBCOG and Section Council: Amsterdam, Sunday 30th November, 09h00-16h00

Points for Action

1. The President and Dr. Maillet agreed to discuss EBCOG's link to the UEMS Working Group on Distance Learning. The President agreed to report back to Council on this issue in November (3.3)
2. The President and Dr. Maillet agreed to discuss the possibility of EBCOG's having office space within UEMS. The President agreed to report back to Council on this issue in November (3.3)
3. Dr. Van Wiemeersch and Dr. Maillet agreed to discuss CME (4.2)
4. The Vice-President agreed that he would revise the Strategy Paper following the presentations of national societies the following day and would then circulate this paper to Council for consultation (7)
5. The President, the Lord Patel and the Treasurer agreed to make further enquiries with the publishers regarding the creation of EBCOG's own Journal (9)
6. National delegates agreed to encourage their National Societies to support their trainees to participate in the ENTOG Exchange Programme (10)
7. The Vice-President agreed to summarise the main issues arising from the reports of the National Societies and to circulate this summary to Council together with the presentations of each national delegate (12)
8. National delegates agreed to send the Vice-President their comments on his summary of the reports of the National Societies and on any other issues of note arising from the presentations (12)