

ESPA President's Report, September 2010

The European Society for Paediatric Anaesthesiology (ESPA) was created during the Federation of European Associations of Paediatric Anaesthesia (FEAPA) Congress in Warsaw in September 2009. During meetings of the Executive Committee and the European Advisory Board of FEAPA it was decided to dissolve the federation and transfer its capital to ESPA within 12 months. It was decided to hold an election for officers and members of the Executive Board of the ESPA in 2010 using electronic voting. An interim Executive Board, consisting of Marcin Rawicz as President, George Meakin as Vice-President, Ton Schouten as acting secretary, Nigel McBeth Turner as Treasurer and Francis Veyckemans as member was to run the Society in the transition period.

As soon as ESPA was founded the Tax Inspector investigated the society and decided that ESPA could well be liable for corporation tax and capital transfer tax as well as value added tax (VAT) on money received by ESPA in respect of services provided by the society. Any one of these taxes could jeopardise ESPA's financial situation.

The Executive Board decided to delay transfer of capital from FEAPA until the capital transfer tax situation became clear. This meant delaying the dissolution of FEAPA. The Executive Board hired a tax Consultant from the renowned company of PriceWaterhouseCoopers to help to solve the problem. Dr Turner worked very hard with the consultant and with our legal advisor, to get a favourable result but the whole process took time. In the end ESPA was judged not be liable for capital transfer tax and was granted the a status of an *organisation for the common good* meaning that we can accept donations without capital transfer tax liability. In August we heard that ESPA had also been officially removed from the corporate tax register. ESPA could still be liable to levy VAT on things such as registration fees for congresses, but this liability differs from country to country and the issue will not affect ESPA directly if we employ a professional congress organisation to arrange our congresses.

As the result of these activities FEAPA was not officially dissolved until 1st June 2010 without assets, because all capital had been transferred to ESPA before the dissolution.

All official documentation for FEAPA needs to be kept for seven years following the dissolution and ESPA has been appointed legally responsible for this material.

In January 2010 we held a meeting of the Executive Board in Utrecht to which the following guests, who had indicated and demonstrated their willingness to be involved in the future activities and promotion of the new society, were invited: Karin Becke of Germany, Peter Crean, of the UK, Ignacio Gálvez, of Spain, Walid Habre of Switzerland, Ida Salvo of Italy, Kerstin Sandström of Sweden and Ehrenfried Schindler of Germany. The meeting was also joined by the members of the last Executive Board of the FEAPA: Olli Meretoja of Finland and Krister Nilsson of



Sweden. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the strategy of the new society. Members of the panel expressed their views on all the items discussed; the most important of which were:

- Improvement of the exposure of the society and the recognition that there is a lot of expertise in the field of paediatric anaesthesia in the ESPA;
- Improvement in the contact between anaesthesiologists from different countries;
- Promotion of membership of young colleagues and residents;
- Focusing on:
 - general anaesthesiologists with a paediatric interest and those doing occasionally paediatric anaesthesia;
 - individual members;
 - quality (education, training, daily practice);
 - co-operation with other paediatric specialists;
 - improvement of the transparency of ESPA's activities.

Membership

Between the Warsaw and Berlin Congresses 768 colleagues from 31 European and 31 overseas countries applied for membership of ESPA, by filling in questionnaires distributed during Warsaw Congress or via the ESPA website. Partly due to the lack of administrative staff, the registration process was sometimes delayed. Another reason for this delay was that we also received a large number (58) of false registrations at a certain moment, filled in with the names of non-existing people. This forced us to verify the existing registrations, which was time-consuming and delayed the process of confirming membership. This will be done after the Berlin Congress.

Newsletter

In May 2010 the first issue of the ESPA newsletter, prepared by Ehrenfried Schindler, Peter Crean and Ton Schouten was published on the website. To avoid rejection by spam-filters only the link for downloading the newsletter was sent to the members.

Elections

The election committee, consisting of myself, Ehrenfried Schindler, Ton Schouten and Stephan Hubner, a lawyer in Germany, conducted electronic voting for the positions of President to take office in 2011, Secretary, Treasurer and six members of the Executive Board. Details will be given in a separate item of the agenda. Beside those, nominated by the Executive Board, some other candidates were nominated by the members. The election process, albeit difficult, was completed successfully and



the following distinguished anaesthesiologists were elected by majority: Nigel McBeth Turner of the Netherlands (President-Elect), Ton Schouten of the Netherlands (Secretary), Ehrenfried Schindler of Germany (Treasurer), Karin Becke of Germany, Peter Crean of the UK, Ignacio Gálvez Escalera of Spain, Olli Meretoja of Finland, Ida Salvo of Italy and Kerstin Sandström of Sweden (members of the Executive Board). Dr Turner will take over the presidency in 2011, during the Congress in Palma de Mallorca. I express my deepest thanks to the members of the election committee for efficient conduction of this difficult process.

Congresses

Warsaw

The 1st ESPA Congress in Warsaw in 10 – 12th September 2009 was attended by 316 delegates and speakers from 44 countries. The exhibition space was sold out; 19 companies contributed generously to the budget of the congress. There was a positive balance of € 20,554, which was split, according to the contract between FEAPA and the local organising committee. The Hilton Congress centre was a great venue and delegates highly rated the organisation and catering offered during the meeting. The gala dinner was celebrated in the Sabat music theatre; the multinational show was greatly appreciated by those who attended the event.

Berlin

The 2nd ESPA Congress in Berlin, organised by Professor Jochen Strauss and his team has attracted many delegates from all over the world. The final number of attendants is still to be announced. Professor Francis Veyckemans, helped by the members of the scientific committee, prepared an excellent scientific programme. Ninety-five abstracts were received; the best 6 were selected for the prize competition, 27 for oral presentation and 30 as posters. The exhibition space has been sold out.

Palma de Mallorca

In April, an ESPA team, consisting of myself, Ton Schouten and Nigel Turner visited Palma de Mallorca, where the 3rd ESPA Congress will be held. The date of the congress was set for 22 – 24th September 2011 and an excellent venue in the centre of the town, close to the harbour was chosen. The Organising Committee, led by Dr. Paul Garrido and Dr Ignacio Galvez hired an experienced company - Bellver Events - who made an excellent impression. The preparations of the scientific programme are advanced but more input from members of ESPA is most welcome. Following discussion among the members of the Executive Board and the Local Organising Committee it was decided that number of plenary sessions will be limited and replaced by workshops, problem-based learning discussions and other interactive sessions.



Links with other societies

ESA

In March 2010 we received letter from the Professor Paolo Pelosi, ESA President, inviting ESPA to join the ESA as Specialist Society Member at an annual fee of € 500 and thus giving the right to organize scientific sessions during the ESA meetings as well as to send a representative to the Subcommittee 10 of ESA. After a teleconference we decided to postpone the decision until after the election and present the problem to the newly elected Executive Board. Also, Professor Walid Habre, chairperson of the Subcommittee 10, suggested recently that the chairperson of that subcommittee could be involved in the scientific committee of ESPA anyway and, likewise, the chair of the scientific committee of the ESPA might attend the Subcommittee 10 meetings. This suggestion will also be discussed within the newly elected Executive Board.

SPA

The Society of Pediatric Anesthesia has extended two invitations to the ESPA: to participate in the international meeting "International Assembly of Pediatric Anesthesia" to be held in Washington, DC on 10 – 12th October, 2012. The president of the ESPA was supposed to be invited to the Organising Committee, but so far, no such invitation has been received. The other invitation is for a joint meeting of the ESPA and SPA in Geneva, in 2013 which is currently being organised.

APA

Professor Andrew Wolf has suggested the possibility of organizing a joint meeting with the APA in Cambridge in 2013. This would involve us in an additional meeting in that year, and the proposition needs to be discussed within Executive Board.

Marcin Rawicz
President, ESPA

