



Dear ESP Members, Dear Colleagues,

We hope you and your families and colleagues are doing well during these difficult days. We want to use this opportunity to express our gratitude for the tireless commitment and efforts of pathologists around Europe and worldwide for patient care. The COVID-19 outbreak has been described as “the biggest public health emergency in a generation”. Our core values of commitment, solidarity and responsibility towards our members across the globe have never been stronger as we face these challenging times.

In due consideration of the Coronavirus situation evolving rapidly and dramatically across the globe, ESP is closely monitoring the announcements and legal frameworks where events are to be held, to make sure that any decision will abide by such rules, for the safety of all involved. The impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on the educational and scientific activities, routine practice and the daily life is evidently challenging and unprecedented. We continue to confidently plan for our educational and scientific activities though treating the health and safety of our members and delegates as our number one priority. We will follow the official health and the recommendation of local governmental bodies.

The COVID-19 pandemic will have a major impact on the education of young pathologists. ESP is aware that education at academic centres and board examinations has been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The learning process at home is sometimes difficult. Therefore, the executive committee has established the following action plan:

Action Plan of ESP

32nd ESP Congress & XXXIII IAP Congress

(29 August – 2 September 2020, Glasgow, UK)

We are closely monitoring the situation and are in regular contact with our partner (the British Division of the IAP) and collaborators. We would like to reassure you that a contingency plan has been set so as to cope with the impact of COVID-19 on our meeting in Glasgow. The Organizing/Scientific Committee of Glasgow Meeting has decided to extend the Early Bird Registration deadline to 14th May 2020 and all members and delegates will be informed soon through a special Newsletter.

ESP Academy in 2020

The ESP planned to organize the 2nd ESP Academy in Waterloo, Belgium (20-23 June 2020). Although the reviewing process of 37 applications and the scientific program have been finalised, ESP has decided to postpone this workshop to 2021, owing to the length of the COVID-19 outbreak. The invited speakers and successful applicants will be invited to participate in the 2021 Academy.

Pathology Progress Test 2020

The ESP in close collaboration with the UEMS Board of Pathology will announce soon the 2020 progress test for pathology trainees. From 8th until 19th of June those interested will be invited to take the 2020 Pathology Progress Test, which is primarily intended for trainees, but any pathologist curious to submit her or his knowledge base to the test is welcome to participate. ESP also plans to offer a second edition of this test in the last quarter of 2020, if there is enough interest by ESP members.

ESCoP Courses and Giordano Fellowship (GF) programs in 2020

ESP greatly appreciates the commitment of the ESCoP Courses organisers, faculty members and the ESP - Advanced Training Centres Chairs to providing outstanding educational and training programs for our members in this uncertain period. ESP invites all organisers of these programs to consider the official health, travel advice and the instruction of the local authorities and to coordinate it with the faculty and participants of the program. In the event that such educational or /and training programs have been rescheduled for another date in 2020 or in 2021, owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, ESP reassures that the newly scheduled program will be endorsed by ESP and that the respective stipend dedicated to GF awardees will be provided accordingly.

Introduction of ESP Knowledge Focus on SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19

An educational knowledge hub will be available very soon on the ESP website. This platform will enable ESP experts to communicate which COVID-19 guidelines about autopsy/biosafety are supported/recommended, as well as to propose COVID-19 research publications of interest for pathologists.

Finally, although different EU countries have diverse strategies to circumvent this health problem, some cooperation and cross-border help is taking place. Pathologist across Europe and the whole world will play an active role in fighting against this virus. Home office will inevitably be introduced, and digital pathology solutions will be used to maintain the pathology service.

Other Potential Activities:

ECPs in 2024 and 2025

The process to select cities to host the ECPs in 2024 and 2025 has been completed. Three shortlisted applications have been reviewed by the ESP Council in February 2020 in Brussels. The Council has selected Florence and Vienna to host ECPs 2024 and 2025 respectively and advised for the approval of the ESP General Assembly which will convene in Glasgow this year. ESP would like to send special appreciations to all national societies which expressed interest in this opportunity or submitted full proposals to the Council and urges those non-selected in this round to resend new applications for the upcoming years.

ESP Companion Session at USCAP 2020

The 2nd European Society of Pathology Companion Meeting was successfully organised in Los Angeles, USA on 29th February 2020, which highlighted recent advances and updates in histopathology of head and neck, renal cancers, neuroendocrine neoplasms, soft tissue sarcoma and different types of thyroiditis. The symposium was well-attended and the level and diversity of discussion during the session were outstanding and every theme was engaging and insightful. The ESP plans to continue this activity and to strengthen our collaboration with USCAP.

I am convinced that research and cooperation between countries will raise effectiveness in fighting of this virus outbreak to stop this crisis.

Please keep strong and stay safe and healthy,

Holger Moch, MD
President of the European Society of Pathology