

Minutes of the ESP General Assembly
13th September 2023, 12:00 PM IST
Dublin Convention Centre, Wicklow Hall 2
Chair: ESP President (Professor Aleš Ryška)

1. The President, Prof. Aleš Ryška, welcomed Society members present at the General Assembly (GA).
2. The Agenda of the GA was approved by simple vote.
3. The Minutes of the last GA were approved by simple vote.
4. **Report of the President (Prof. Aleš Ryška)**
 - I. *General overview*

The 3 major missions of ESP are: high quality diagnosis, up-to-date education and supporting cutting-edge research.

At the time of the Basel congress last year ESP had 3536 members from 100 countries, 29% were trainees. Today, ESP has 4860 members from 103 countries, 30% being trainees. We witnessed 37% increase of membership within just one year.

The Dublin congress got the highest number of registrations (4450) in the history of ECPs. The top 10 countries are: United Kingdom 324, Spain 208, USA 207, Germany 188, Switzerland 161, Italy 155, The Netherlands 154, Ireland 147, Greece 134, France 130.

There were 1604 abstracts submitted and 286 bursaries awarded. Twenty industry symposia were held, and 86 exhibitors were present.
 - II. *Overview of ESP activities*
 - European Congresses of Pathology (ECPs)- Dublin 2023 & Florence 2024
 - European Society of Pathology Academy 2024 (ESPA) will take place in May 2024 in Malta.
 - European School of Pathology (EScoP): two courses were successfully completed and two will be organized in Q4 2023
 - Giordano Fellowship and new Advanced Training Centres: for the 2024 edition 19 applicants have been awarded out of 35 applications
 - ESP Pathology Progress Test: edition 2023 will take place in November
 - ESP Masterclass 2023: the first one was held in June and the second will be held in December
 - ESP Virtual Preceptorships: the following lecture series are already available on ESP Educational portal: Prostate carcinoma, Ovarian carcinoma and Cholangiocarcinoma. Lung cancer and Breast cancer series are being prepared.
 - ESP Corporate Partnership Program: 2nd Corporate Advisory Forum took place in March 2023. The meeting with industry partners was very successful.
 - ESP New Office: due to increasing activities, expansion of staff is necessary. The new office has more space and is situated in the EU Parliament area of Brussels.
 - III. *Current and future strategy of ESP support*
 - Membership: there has been no change of membership fee in the last 10 years despite inflation: €50 for ordinary members and €0 for trainees. Basic Membership dues for all categories will not change until 2025.
 - Fellowships serve education and training of residents and young pathologists. Over €100.000 were dedicated for this purpose.
 - Scholarship: Master of Molecular Pathology (Université Côte d'Azur, Nice, France): €50.000 were allocated to young ESP members who successfully apply for the 3-year course.

Executive Committee

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- ESP Academy (ESPA) is a “niche” for future leaders of European pathology. €50.000 were allocated for participation of 20 selected young pathologists.
- Congress bursaries: in 2023 there are 283 awardees. €141.000 have been allocated to cover their congress participation costs.
- Special congress fund: 80 Ukrainian pathologists were supported by ESP during the Dublin congress costing €35.000.

IV. *ESP Alumni program*

The young pathologists awarded Giordano Fellowship or who were given the opportunity to partake in ESPA form ESP Alumni group. There are over 150 members. They will help with questions to be included in the Pathology Progress Test (PPT). The young pathologists who attend large oncology meetings (ASCO) and give the summary during ECPs will also come from this group.

V. *Financial situation of ESP*

The treasurer will report on the finances in details.

Briefly, ESP will be able to fulfil its educational and scientific commitments in 2023, thanks to our loyal members and sound outcome of current and former years (ECPs, Virchows Archiv, Membership, Grants).

VI. *Elections*

During this GA election of new Officers and Council members will take place:

Election of two Officers (President-elect and Treasurer)

Election of six Council members

New appointment for the following posts became also necessary due to term ending:

Chair of the Advisory Board

Chair of the Education Subcommittee

Editor and Associate Editor of the ESP Newsletter

Prof. Aleš Ryška as immediate Past President will be the *Chair of the Working Groups (WGs)*.

ESP, and the President personally, expressed his appreciation for the work of those colleagues who demit office after the GA: Profs. Holger Moch, Marco Santucci, Xavier Matias-Guiu, Irene Esposito, Marina Kos, Ronald de Krijger, Carolin Lackner, José Palacios, Gitta Turowski.

Members present at the GA unanimously approved the report of the President.

5. **Report of the Treasurer (Prof. Maria Rosaria Raspollini)**

The Treasurer presented the Independent Auditor's report: *„In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view, in all material respects, of the association's net equity and financial position.”*

Balance Sheet 2022:

Total income of ESP in 2021: €1.383.331,95; and in 2022: €2.243.154,63

Total expenses of ESP in 2021: €836.116,98; and in 2022: €1.145.358,51

Details of Income and Expenses sides of the Balance sheet were presented: on the Income side support received for educational activities considerably increased (to €372.200). On the Expenses side the General costs increased (to €411.906,64). The latter was shown in detail: major items here are ESPA, WGs' expenses, Educational portal and various meetings.

Surplus over expenditures in 2022 December is €1.097.796,12.

Total assets in 2022 December are €4.341.780,54.

In the 2023 Budget, expenses are planned to cover EScOP courses, Giordano Fellowships, Working Group expenses, Virtual webinar sessions, Educational Portal, Meetings, travel and accommodation costs, Bursaries to support the attendance at ECP and refurbishment of the new office. Major incomes are expected from VIAR, Membership fees, Congress profit, and support received for educational activities.

Members present at the GA unanimously approved the report of the Treasurer.

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6. Election of President-Elect, Treasurer and six members of the Council (Prof. Janina Kulka)

The Secretary announced that at the ESP General Assembly in September 2023 Prof. Peter Schirmacher (Germany) will demit office as President-Elect, following completion of his 2-year tenure, and Prof. Maria Rosaria Raspollini (Italy) will conclude her first 4-year tenure as Treasurer.

According to the ESP Statutes and Bylaws, the Nomination Subcommittee consisting of the former Presidents of the Society and chaired by the immediate Past President advises the President and the Council in nominating candidates for Officers.

Following advice from the Nomination Subcommittee ESP Council nominates Prof. Xavier Matias-Guiu (Spain) for President-Elect for the years 2023-2025, and Prof. Maria Rosaria Raspollini, who is willing to serve ESP for a second 4-year term from 2023-2027, for Treasurer.

Members present at the GA unanimously approved Prof. Xavier Matias-Guiu as President Elect for the years 2023-2025.

Members present at the GA unanimously approved Prof. Maria Rosaria Raspollini as Treasurer for a second 4-year term for 2023-2027.

At the ESP General Assembly in September 2023 the following six regular members of the Council will demit office upon completion of their 4-year term as Councillors:

Prof. Irene Esposito (Germany)
Prof. Marina Kos (Croatia)
Prof. Ronald de Krijger (The Netherlands)
Prof. Carolin Lackner (Austria)
Prof. José Palacios Calvo (Spain)
Prof. Gitta Turowski (Norway)

According to the ESP Statutes and Bylaws, nominations for Council members are sought from a variety of sources, including the President, the Council, the Advisory Board, and the membership at large.

The Council reviewed all nominations and proposed the following six candidates for 2023-2027 as ESP Council members:

Prof. Catarina Eloy (Portugal)
Prof. Roger Feakins (United Kingdom)
Prof. Falko Fend (Germany)
Prof. Renate Kain (Austria)
Prof. Arno van Leenders (The Netherlands)
Prof. Miriam Cuatrecasas (Spain)

Members present at the GA unanimously approved one by one the proposed Council members.

7. Report of the Chair of the Advisory Board (Prof. Marco Santucci)

The meeting of ESP Advisory Board took place on 9th September 2023.

During the meeting current activities of the National Societies (NS) and challenges on national level were overviewed. Most NS's representatives mentioned lack of pathologists as a major issue.

ESP support for pathologists (in Training) via different educational and scientific programs: Fellowships (GF: 19 awardees for 2024, Scholarship: up to 10 awardees for EMMP, and Bursaries: 286 awardees) were presented at the AB meeting.

Position of National Societies (NS) in ESP's new strategy for Education was discussed:

Constant promotion of ESP membership is necessary to all national members. The need of active participation in and contribution to the virtual courses, pathology progress test, EScoP courses, webinars, ESP Academy, ESP Masterclass programme, European Master in Molecular Pathology (EMMP), specialized webinar series and GF Fellowships was discussed.

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NS members should be encouraged to submit outcome of their scientific projects to the official journal of Society (Virchows Archiv). The decision of VIAR Editorial Board and ESP to establish a new prize for Best Paper in VIAR submitted by Young Investigator was presented. National Societies contribute to ESP Congresses: participation in the Dublin ECP (Joint Special session with the Educational and Trainee Subcommittees); preparation of the Florence ECP in 2024 is ongoing.

8. Report of the Chair of the Working Groups (Prof. Holger Moch)

Working Groups Chairs & Affiliated Societies Meeting was organised on 9th September 2023. During the meeting activities of WGs and affiliated Societies were reviewed with Chairs and Representatives.

- Highlighting key challenges and potential suggestions
- Inviting Chairs to conduct election of Chair/Co-chairs for certain WGs and to discuss options to carry out new scientific programs, joint clinical guidelines and improve performance and responses

- Responding to the increased number of delegates attending scientific sessions (adjust congress room capacity accordingly)

European Congresses of Pathology (ECPs):

- *Dublin 2023*: All WGs have had scientific programs. Number of WG sessions was 132, some had been jointly organised with other WGs or clinical Societies.

- Abstract submission and acceptance: acceptance rate was 91% (1604 submitted abstracts), OFP 12%, Physical Posters 23%, E-Posters 65%

Prof. Moch thanked the Scientific Committee and especially Prof. Fatima Carneiro for the work done to assemble the scientific program of the 35th ECP and also for the preparation of the Florence congress next year.

- *Florence 2024*: All WGs have submitted scientific programs for evaluation by the Scientific Committee

- WGs are collaborating with ESP Education Subcommittee on:

- Submitting new questions for the Pathology Progress Test (Edition 2023)
- Supporting and contributing to other ESP education and scientific initiatives which require WGs active input (new EScOP courses for 2023 & 2024, Giordano Fellowship program at ESP Advanced Training Centres, ESP Academy, Masterclass, etc.,)

9. Report of the Chair of the Education Subcommittee (Prof. Xavier Matias-Guiu)

Prof. Matias-Guiu thanked the membership for approving him as President Elect of ESP. ESP is continuing the organisation of educational activities (online and onsite)

Online

- In November-December 2022: ESP Pathology Progress Test (883 participants from 70 countries). New edition will follow in November 2023.

- In spring 2023 new virtual education series for Cholangiocarcinoma were published.

Two new platforms (Breast and Lung Cancer) will be ready by the end of 2023.

- Three webinars were held in 2023, a couple more are in the planning phase for the next months

Onsite

- Two Masterclasses (Thyroid and Breast) were held in the Brussels office. Soft tissue pathology Masterclass will be held in November 2023.

- Three EScOP courses (two in the new format) were organized. Next one will be in November 2023 (Thyroid). More courses are on the way for 2024. In 12 months so far there were 203 participants from 31 countries.

Fellowships

- Giordano Fellowship 2024 edition: 19 awardees

- ESP Scholarship for European Master in Molecular Pathology

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-In 2023 the ESP Alumni has been formally formed: past ESP awardees were invited to join on volunteer basis: 53 out of the 124 agreed to join. Their activities include creating questions for the PPT, pool for invited speakers, organising webinars, ambassadors to other organisations.

10. Report of the Chair of the Trainee Subcommittee

Dr Alexandra Vilaia thanked ESP Alumni members for helping to organize the Joint session with National Societies and the M&M of Pathology session, as well as the social event. She thanked ESP for the financial support provided for this latter event which was attended by 100 trainees.

Proposals for the Florence congress (Joint Session & Stand-alone session) are under Scientific Committee review.

Trainees' General Assembly will be held after the ESP GA. There will be a Round table discussion with Prof. Fatima Carneiro and Prof. Fred Bosman.

Last year in Basel solid relations with trainees were created. The goal is to increase the engagement of/with trainees.

Collaborations with local trainees and trainees from other societies will continue.

11. Report of the Editor in Chief of Virchows Archiv (Prof. Abbas Agaimy)

Editorial Board was reshaped with addition of highly productive young investigators from different countries.

Time from submission to first decision decreased from 24 to 17 days.

36% of papers are rejected upfront (resulting in lower workload for associate editors and reviewers).

Acceptance rate is 33%.

As of today, 75 papers are online ahead of print.

ARI-2023 in January on "Hempath" received significant attention.

One review article/issue starting in April + joint ESP/ESGO/ESTRO guidelines for cervical cancer were published in the June issue.

Minireview series (5 articles + editorial) in September issue on "Reports of the EA4HP workshop".

ARI-2024: Molecular pathology as basis for timely cancer diagnosis & therapy for 01/2024.

Joint ESP/Virchows Archiv special session: Challenges and controversies in Hematopathology was very well attended. Maybe a bigger room will be needed for Florence?

Editorial board meeting was successfully held on Monday.

VIAR Impact factor came down from 4.5 to 3.5. This is a COVID-19 phenomenon for almost all pathology journals. Journal rank did not change significantly (25/76). H5 index: 48 (VIAR ranks 11/ 76).

There were 742,181 article downloads in 2022, significant increase was witnessed this year as of August. Social media visibility/ impact has been increasing.

OA publishing via transformative agreements increased to >50% of published articles in 2023.

VIAR Best Paper Prize of the year 2022: Antonio Lopez Beltram et al. T1 bladder carcinoma with variant histology: pathological features and clinical significance.

A new prize has been proposed for the best paper published by Young Investigator, beginning in 2024.

12. Appointment of the new Chair of the Advisory Board: Prof. Dina Tiniakos (Greece) 2023-2027

13. Appointment of the new Chair of the Educational Subcommittee: Prof. Catarina Eloy (Portugal) 2023-2026

14. Appointment of the new Editors of the Newsletter: Prof. Marta Cohen (UK) 2023-2025 and Associate Editor Prof. Falko Fend (Germany) 2023-2025.

15. Approval of honorary membership

The ESP President proposed two ESP Honorary Members for 2023:

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Profs. Vincenzo Eusebi and Jean-François Fléjou.

Members present at the GA unanimously voted for the honorary membership of Professor Vincenzo Eusebi (in his absence) and Professor Jean-François Fléjou.

16. Progress report of the 36th European Congress of Pathology in 2024, Florence, Italy (Prof. Gabriella Nesi)

Prof. Gabriella Nesi expressed her thanks for this year's organizers of a wonderful congress. A site visit in Florence took place in August. Members of the Scientific/Organizing committee are Profs. Peter Schirmacher, Aleš Ryška, Fatima Carneiro, Xavier Matias-Guiu and Dr Raed Al Dieri. Members of the Local Organizing Committee are Profs. Gabriella Nesi, Filippo Fraggetta, Angelo Paolo Dei Tos, Daniela Massi.

The venue will be Fortezza da Basso providing overall surface of over 80,000 sqm (of which 55,000 are roofed). The Opening ceremony will take place in Fortezza da Basso.

The Presidential dinner is planned for Monday, the Congress concert for Tuesday and the Farewell party for Wednesday. Venues for these events are under confirmation.

17. Progress report of the 37th European Congress of Pathology in 2025, Vienna, Austria (Prof. Renate Kain)

Prof. Renate Kain expressed her thanks for being elected ESP Council member for the next 4 years.

Preparations of the Vienna congress have started. The LOC will be supported by a young pathologist.

The Venue – Austria Centre Vienna- is a modern venue surrounded by the Danube. It is ideally placed to meet future environmental standards. It is equipped with digital branding opportunities including individual controllable LED panels and wide LED banner. The Venue has 19 halls, 180 meeting rooms (100 – 1800 pers.) and more than 26,000 sqm of exhibition space and offers space for more than 22,800 participants.

Members of the LOC of the Vienna congress: Prof. Eva Compérat, (President-elect ÖGPath), ao. Prof. Luka Brcic, (International Secretary ÖGPath), Prof. Renate Kain, (Past president, ÖGPath).

There are many opportunities for social programs: City Hall, Konzerthaus (Concert), at the Orangerie Schönbrunn, Danube Cruise, Van Swieten Saal of the Medical University of Vienna, Josefinum, Society of Physicians Billrothhaus, Natural History Museum.

18. The 19 awardees of the Giordano Fellowship (Edition 2024)

Seventeen awardees are ESP funded, two awardees are self-funded. The awardees are from Europe, Saudi Arabia, Asia and South America.

Their photos and names were presented to Members of ESP present at the GA.

19. Any other business

Dr Alfons Nadal from Spain mentioned that it would be useful to have the congress material in printed book format. The President, Prof. Aleš Ryška answered that all material will be available on the Educational Portal and that the time for printed books is over. Dr Raed Al Dieri added that ESP would like to be as sustainable as possible and produce less printed material.

20. Place and date of the next General Assembly of the ESP

11th September 2024 in Florence, Italy

There were no other comments and Prof. Aleš Ryška closed the GA meeting saying this was his last official meeting as ESP President. Great applause followed his words. Prof. Peter Schirmacher thanked Prof. Holger Moch for driving ESP through the difficult times of COVID pandemic and Prof. Aleš Ryška for his tremendously hard work for the benefit of ESP and for the seminal achievements during the two years of his presidency.

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