

Minutes of the (Annual) General Meeting of the EANS

Sunday 18th October 2015 - Madrid

Those present: Nejat Akalan (Turkey), Alexander Andreou (Greece), Toomas Asser (Estonia), Naci Balak (Turkey), Juan Barcia (Spain), Vladimir Benes (Czech Republic), Ciaran Bolger (UK), Alexander Brawanski (Germany), Eva Brichtova (Czech Republic), Andras Buki (Hungary), Alexandre Campos (Portugal), Paolo Cappabianca (Italy), Nikolaos Chaftouras (Greece), Hans Clusmann (Germany), Shlomi Constantini (Israel), Alberto Delitala (Italy), Andreas Demetriades (UK), Nicolas Foroglou (Greece), Mansoor Foroughi (UK), Andre Grotenhuis (Netherlands), Andreas Gruber (Austria), Sasha Gulati (Norway), Antanas Gvazdaitis (Lithuania), Peter Hutchinson (UK), Ekkehard Kasper (USA), David Kis (Hungary), Nikolay Konovalov (Russia), Jesus Lafuente (Spain), Martin Lehecka (Finland), Radim Lipina (Czech Republic), Juan Lourido (Spain), Marin Marinov (Bulgaria), Niklas Marklund (Sweden), Bernhard Meyer (Germany), David Netuka (Czech Republic), Fatos Olldashi (Albania), Mustafa Necmettir Pamir (Turkey), Andreas Raabe (Switzerland), Ricky Rasschaert (Belgium), Lukas Rasulic (Serbia), Bernardo Ratilal (Portugal), Florian Ringel (Germany), Saulius Rocka (Lithuania), Martin Sames (Czech Republic), Karl Schaller (Switzerland), Panagiotis Selviaridis (Greece), Franco Servadei (Italy), Jari Siironen (Finland), Volodymyr Smolanka (Ukraine), Ulrich Sure (Germany), Laurent Thines (France), Magnus Tisell (Sweden), Miroslav Vukic (Croatia), Daniel Walsh (UK), Frank Weyns (Belgium), Igor Vasilievich Yakovenko (Russia)

Susie Hide and Lucinda Foster

Apologies: Ronald Bartels (Netherlands), Moncef Berhouma (France), Mohamed Abdelatif Boukebir (France), Jannick Brennum (Denmark), Domenico d'Avella (Italy), Steven De Vleeschouwer (Belgium), Marcel Ivanov (UK), Cumhur Klinger (Turkey), Aki Laakso (Finland), Luciano Mastronardi (Italy), Jamil Rzaev (Russia), Massimo Scerrati (Italy), Dirk Van Roost (Belgium), Colin Watts (UK)

Vladimir Benes (VB) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved with no amendments

President's Report

VB said we had run the following courses/events during his four years as President:

- 8 very good training courses under Nejat Akalan which were the flagship of the EANS
- Franchised courses; 2 in Dubai, 2 in Kazakhstan and 1 in St Petersburg. These events had been arranged jointly by Andras Buki and Nejat Akalan.
- 6 sections had been set up; functional, neuro-oncology, radiosurgery, spine, trauma and vascular some of which had been very active and others rather dormant. The spine section under Bernhard Meyer had been particularly active. The vascular section under Peter Vajkoczy had organised three joint meetings with ESMINT with the number of participants rising to about 80 this year. The functional section under Massimo Scerrati had organised an excellent symposium in Verona in conjunction with ISIN with over 200 participants.
- Several fellowships and observerships had been arranged
- The EANS Academy, an e-learning library incorporating a comprehensive range of educational materials had been set up with the assistance of Jannick Brennum.
- JRAAC – two new departments had applied for accreditation with 14 departments applying for re-accreditation.
- We now have 39 national societies and 2 affiliate societies
- We are currently heading towards 1500 individual members. Once this figure is reached, the number of IM delegates to the General Assembly will increase to 40. This has raised the question of balance within

the EANS between individual and national society members. Ronald Bartels has written an article on this topic, which will be published alongside a response from the EANS Board, in the next issue of the Acta journal.

- We have a new PCO (AIM), which has been responsible for the congress arrangements in Madrid.
- We have solved the constitutional problems in accordance with the Belgium laws.

VAT issues – Susie Hide (SH) explained that we have retained a new consultant to assist us in complying with VAT regulations in the various countries in which we run events. Whilst we are obliged to register for VAT in respect of our event organisation activities, our not for profit status means that our core activities do not attract VAT and that we have not hitherto been obliged to register for VAT in our home country of Belgium.

Financial Report

Andras Buki (AB) went through a copy of the financial report (a copy of which is attached).

AB explained that a different format had been used for the accounts this year. Rather than using a “snapshot” of the financial position on a single day, which is invariably misleading, given that it takes no account of monies owed or waiting to be received, the figures in the report showed the actual balance less outgoing monies owed by the EANS to third parties, plus incoming monies owed to the EANS.

AB clarified the following points:

- Most events had made a good profit. The small deficit shown by events like the Hands On courses in Lyon was felt to be acceptable and within the budget.
- He felt that it would be important for the new Board to discuss new fundraising initiatives
- The office expenses remained the same in real terms. The slight increase over the previous 12 months was due to the exceptionally strong position of Sterling against the Euro; the forecast increase was as a result of Amy Pinchbeck-Smith’s maternity leave provision.
- The national society subscription figure was higher than expected as a few national societies had inadvertently made two years’ payments in 2015.
- It was hoped that revenue from EANS2015 would be higher than initially budgeted given the high number of participants
- The projected income for the individual membership subscriptions had included a 10% uplift which was deemed feasible with the planned new mechanisms to help people pay their fees

Karl Schaller (KS) said he felt that some of the national society member numbers given still seemed quite low. VB said he felt the numbers were slowly increasing and he felt that most national society numbers were now relatively accurate. Andre Grotenhuis (AG) said he felt that we needed to trust our society members; however in Rome it had been interesting to note that the bid from Beijing as a venue for the 2021 WFNS congress venue had mentioned that they had 20,000 national society surgeons whereas they had been paying the subscription fee for only 2,000! AB urged national society representatives to encourage their societies to be honest when submitting their membership numbers.

Ciaran Bolger (CB) said he felt the legal/accountancy fees were exceptionally high. SH explained that the overall turnover figures for the association included only the profit margin on internally arranged/financed events, rather than aggregate event turnover. For example, income from the training course in Lisbon was c. €300,000 and outgoings c. €275,000 but only the profit of c.€25,000 was incorporated within the turnover shown within the financial report. CB thought that accountancy fees should be included as a separate expense in respect of each event.

SH agreed to send CB a breakdown of the legal and accountancy fees split as follows:

- VAT consultancy fees (we hope that these costs will reduce as the result of a recent tender exercise)
- legal costs (which are higher than usual at present due to all the changes required to the constitution)
- day to day account charges.

Changes to the constitution

A copy of the revised constitution had been given to everyone present in advance of the meeting with a copy also available on the EANS website.

AG explained that all the changes had actually been agreed in Tel Aviv but it had taken two years to produce the wording in the specific format required by Belgium law.

AG explained there had been two ‘material’ changes to the new constitution:

- In future a quorum would be required in respect of specific issues – i.e. a certain percentage of delegates would need to be present in order to make certain decisions.
- Currently proxy votes are not permitted, but going forward all effective members will be able to represent another effective member.

Andreas Demetriades (AD) asked about the balance of individual member vs national society delegates. When the number of individual members reaches 1500, the number of IM delegates will rise to 40; however as SH explained, this is the maximum number of delegates that will ever be accorded to the Individual Members, no matter how high their numbers might grow. The number had been set deliberately in order that Individual Members could never outweigh the votes of the national societies, who will effectively have twice as many potential votes as the IMs.

Everyone present unanimously voted to accept the new constitution. It was agreed that Titeca Accountancy and its employees should be given authority to present the amended Articles of Association to the notary (Y Tytgat) on behalf of the AGM for ratification.

A copy of the minutes of the EANS Council meeting held later during the congress will be circulated shortly and will be available on the EANS website.

Election of new officers

Candidates Standing Unopposed

Candidates for the following positions, all of whom were standing unopposed, were presented to the meeting. Those who were present introduced themselves and made a short statement as to their suitability and plans for the position for which they were standing:

President-Elect	Jesus Lafuente (present)
Treasurer	Jannick Brennum (apologies for absence received)
Secretary	Peter Hutchinson (present)
Board member – Audit and Governance	Necmettin Pamir (present)
Ethico-legal Committee Chair	Marike Broekman (apologies for absence received)
International Relations Committee Chair	Juan Lourido (present)

Post-graduate Committee Chair Nabeel Alshafai (present)

Research Committee Chair Radoslaw Rola (apologies for absence received)

All the above candidates were elected unanimously.

Contested Positions

KS said he felt it inappropriate that some candidates for these senior positions had not chosen to attend, a feeling which was echoed by many in the room. Daniel Walsh (DW) asked whether a minimum number of votes were required for a candidate to be elected. After some discussion of the issue, and reference to the new constitution, it was determined that there was in fact no need for a quorum but that a simple majority would suffice.

A number of options were considered, including the introduction of a third option for each position, “show of no confidence”. SH said she felt it inappropriate effectively to exclude any nominations at this stage, given that it had not been made explicitly clear to candidates that they should attend. Bernhard Meyer (BM) said that he, as a candidate for Section Chair, had not been explicitly advised to attend, and that he therefore felt that those who were not present should be penalised officially, though he expressed misgivings about the likely commitment of those who were absent. CB pointed out that some of the candidates for ‘unopposed’ positions had been voted through despite being absent and that we should therefore continue to be consistent.

VB asked for a vote on whether absent candidates should continue to be included on the ballot paper: the majority voted in favour with 7 people against and 1 abstention.

Nominees for the positions with more than one candidate were invited to introduce themselves and to say a few words as to their suitability and plans for the post. SH then read out personal statements for those candidates who were not present (a few nominees had not produced a statement or attended the meeting).

Board member - Scientific Pablo Cappabianca (present)
Rafid Al-Mahfoudh (statement read out)

Board member – CME and Guidelines Ali Savas (statement read out)
Rafid Al-Mahfoudh (statement read out)

Functional Section Chair Jamil Rzaev (apologies received and statement read out)
Massimo Scerrati (apologies received as still recovering from car crash – statement read out)
Jibril Osman Farah (not present and no statement received)

Neuro-oncology Section Chair Grigory Kobayakov (not present and no statement received)
Colin Watts (apologies received and statement read out)

Radiosurgery Section Chair Andrey Golanov (not present and no statement received)
Bodo Lippitz (present)

Spine Section Chair Bernhard Meyer (present)
Nikolay Konovalov (present – he said he would like to stand down and let Bernhard Meyer continue as Chair so no vote took place for this position)

Trauma Section Chair Igor Yakovenko (present)
Andrew Maas (statement read out)
Stefano Signoretti (statement read out)

Vascular Section Chair	Peter Vajkoczy (statement read out) Shalva Eliava (statement read out)
TC Chairman Elect	Torstein Meling (present) Yuri Kuszel (not present and no statement received)
Young Neurosurgeons' Committee Chair	Hakan Emmez (statement read out) Ricky Rasschaert (present) Florian Ringel (present)

It was advised that the term of office for these positions was as follows:

Section Chairs: 4 years

Committee Chairs (including Training Committee): 2 years.

VB asked Andras Buki, Jesus Lafuente and Miroslav Vukic to count the votes. A list of new officers is attached to these minutes.

It was noted that one of the first tasks of the new Board was to proceed with setting up a Paediatric section.

Applications for Membership/Suspensions due to non-payment

There were no new applications for membership.

SH advised that the Slovenian National Society had failed to pay their subscription fees for over four years and that she felt that there was therefore no option but to suspend them. Franco Servadei (FS) said the WFNS had had a similar problem with the Slovenian National Society and that he would give Susie a contact for the Slovenian National society who had been able to solve the payment issue for the WFNS. However, in the meantime everyone present (with one abstention) was in favour of suspending the Slovenian National Society on the understanding that they would be re-instated if they paid all their dues by the end of 2015.

Relationship with WFNS

Everyone present had previously received a copy of the statement provided by the Board on our relationship with the WFNS (a further copy of which is attached)

Franco Servadei, the new WFNS President elect, thanked everyone for their support with his candidacy and promised to represent both the EANS and neurosurgeons around the world. He promised that the connections with the WFNS would improve and that a fully transparent culture would be introduced. From February 2020, all officers will be elected by democratic vote of national and continental societies, all of whom will have the right to nominate. The terms of office will also be reduced from 4 years to 2 years, and there will be a formal rotation arrangement for congress venues. VB expressed his optimism that these changes would signal a marked improvement in the relationship between the EANS and the WFNS, and in the overall standing of the latter.

Any Other Business

AG commented national societies should take advantage of their newly introduced right to propose candidates for WFNS office. Only a handful of national societies had proposed candidates for the recent EANS elections and he asked the national society representatives to promote this within their own societies, in the hope of seeing more proposals for the next term of EANS officers.

SH said she had asked the Section Chairs and Committee Heads to produce reports prior to the EANS Council meeting. These would be circulated with the EANS Council minutes shortly with a request for national society representatives to circulate them amongst their own national society members.

VB thanked everyone for their help over his four years of presidency and said that he looked forward to seeing people at social events in the future.

Date of next meeting: Meeting to be held during EANS2016 in Athens in September 2016.

After the meeting closed, VB, AG and SH agreed that more formal guidelines were needed with regard to the election process. SH advised that the constitution required six months notice of any elections to be given to the individual members and national society representatives, and confirmed that this requirement had been met.

However, it was agreed to start the process earlier in future, and to advise IMs and member societies before the end of the year that elections for the venue for the EANS 2019 congress will take place at the (Annual) General Meeting in Athens during EANS2016. After the Athens meeting notice will then be given about the elections that will take place at EANS2017 in Venice. Notices will therefore be given at 12, 9 and 6 monthly intervals with monthly reminders to be issued during the six months immediately preceding the General Meeting.