

FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN SOCIETIES FOR TROPICAL MEDICINE AND INTERNATIONAL HEALTH



Minutes Meeting of the Board FESTMIH January 16, 2009 - Barcelona, Spain

(unofficial draft pending approval at next FESTMIH Board Meeting)

Present

Pierre Ambroise-Thomas (PAT) (France), Zeno Bisoffi (ZB) (Italy, President), Martin Boeree (MB) (Netherlands, Vice-President), Manuel Corachan (MC) (Spain), Josep Maria Jansa (JMJ) (Spain), Thomas Junghanss (TJ) (Germany, Secretary), Esther Jurgens (EJ) (Netherlands), Gunnar Kvåle (GK) (Norway, Observer), Gerri McHugh (GMH) (UK), Silvana Rigobon (SR) (Italy, minutes), Alicia Soto (AS) (Spain), Patrick Van Der Stuyft (PvdS) (Belgium, Treasurer)

Agenda

1. Opening. Welcoming. Address by the Secretary of the Sociedad Española de Medicina Tropical y Salud Internacional (SEMTSI), Alicia Soto
2. Approval of minutes from Board Meeting in Verona 29th of May 2008
3. Report of the President
4. Report of the Secretary
5. Financial Report by the Treasurer
6. Update on Verona 2009, VIth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health
7. Update on Barcelona 2011, VIIth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health
8. FESTMIH new website: presentation by Silvana Rigobon, discussion, proposals
9. Teaching programmes in tropical medicine and international health within Europe
10. Briefing on a recent meeting at ECDC Stockholm
11. FESTMIH and the National Societies: presentation by Pierre Ambroise-Thomas and Thomas Junghanss of main points for next letter to Presidents (as mentioned by previous letter in September), in preparation of meeting in Verona between the FESTMIH Board and the Societies. Discussion, preparation of first draft of letter to be sent in February and of a possible Editorial in TMIH
12. Any other business

1. Opening

Josep Maria Jansa welcomed the participants and introduced Alicia Soto, Secretary of the Sociedad Española de Medicina Tropical y Salud Internacional (SEMTSI). Alicia Soto presented the Society, and provided background on the Society, their structure, activities and membership profile. The Society incorporates International Travel and Tropical Medicine and publishes two Journals (one in Spanish). After the presentation there was room for comments and questions.

A discussion followed on:

- The fact that SEMTSI has a relative 'young' membership profile, an interesting given compared to the age structure of many sister organizations.
- The Society is growing, and currently has some 400 members. Part of their members work in humanitarian / development aid. In part this may be a result of the current political climate and government which is supportive to these issues.

- The Society attracts members from different professional areas and appears not to be in competition with other professional Societies such as parasitology, infectious diseases, microbiology. SEMTSI organizes joint meetings with for example the Infectious Disease Society. SEMTSI incorporates many members outside of the "classical" medical profession such as chemists, antropologists, radiology technicians, etc...

It was concluded that it is encouraging to have a national society which shows a growth in size. FESTMIH (member societies) can learn from this especially when it comes to attracting young people and from different professional background. FESTMIH should become more visible in Europe, should invest in our European links, and not be dependent on the political situation.

2. Minutes

Minutes of the board meeting in Verona 29th May 2008 were approved without amendments.

3. Report of the President

Zeno Bisoffi gave a ppt presentation on the state of the art of the Congress and other FESTMIH matters:

- Code of Conduct for the Congress: a draft was presented to the participants. MB, EJ and GMH volunteered to assist this matter.
- TropEdEurope: ZB corresponded with Carsten Mantel, to discuss synergies under the umbrella of the Federation. TropEd Europe now is called tropEd. Their main focus is education and training courses. There is a constant increase of new Masters outside Europe, which the organisation has to take into account. Their next meeting is scheduled for next week which JMJ will attend and report on. We can consider more specific collaboration. PvdS mentions that tropEd could encourage students to attend Verona conference.
- TropNetEurope has proposed to have their next meeting at the Verona Congress. Discussion centered on whether or not to strengthen links between TropNetEurope and FESTMIH. MC was an inspirer of TropNetEurope.
- Tropical Medicine and International Health, the Journal (TM&IH): ZB mentions some advances, including the official offer from Blackwell. They will participate during the Congress, including the Round Table on publishing for young researchers. ZB refers to the letter from Verity Emmans (from Wiley-Blackwell). Also he mentions that SIMET is considering stopping with their journal and possibly offering TM&IH subscription to their members. A brief discussion was held on the responsibility of each society to collect subscriptions costs. Furthermore, we can start with the online subscriptions for member societies. SR will follow up on this issue, depending on the interest of the national societies. ZB stresses the importance of having a common European journal. Also we should increase the PR on TM&IH as the official journal of the FESTMIH. Susanne Groener (Managing Editor, TM&IH) has responded to ZB on the proceedings regarding the new website, on which the link FESTMIH and TM&IH is mentioned. EJ asked whether we will prepare an editorial for the journal on the Verona Congress. In the past MB and EJ prepared two editorials: one on FESTMIH and one on the Congress. It was decided to prepare an editorial on the Congress.
- Other journals: GMH announces that RSTMH is about to launch a new journal (International Health), apart from the one that is already published by them. Blackwell may appear a competitor, and the new journal will have to find its way to the reader. ZB informs about the possibility for FESTMIH's members to subscribe to the journal, and for preferential rates. Other Societies also have journals (such as MT, the journal of the Netherlands Society). These could be linked to the new FESTMIH website.
- Other issues: TJ mentions the role FESTMIH could play in lobby in Europe, the European Commission etc. ZB responds referring to the letter which will be sent to FESTMIH member societies. GMH offers her assistance with sponsoring; she used to work in farmaceutical marketing.

DECISIONS:

- **GMH, EJ and MB to revise draft code of conduct**
- **ZB to propose TropNetEurope to organize a joint meeting on surveillance, at Verona Congress**
- **ZB and SR to write a letter to societies detailing TM&IH offer**
- **ZB to draft an editorial for TM&IH presenting the Congress**

4. Report of the Secretary

TJ refers to agenda point 11 (afternoon) for discussion on main points of interest (ambition, future FESTMIH). Other issues are already covered by ZB. MB comments how important the secretarial support is. The results are already tangible, for which SR is complimented.

5. Financial Report by the Treasurer

PvdS provides background to the financial overview. Issues discussed:

- Membership fee: Portugal, Slovak Republic, Sweden have paid up to year 2005. It is unclear why there is no response. MB will send SR contacts for Slovak Republic; contact name for Portugal: Francisco Antunes (organizer of Lisbon Congress).
- Membership fee: briefly it was discussed whether it is opportune to raise the fees. ZB argues that we can fee once we have shown advantages. MB comments that we have shown what the FESTMIH is capable of (European Congresses, website). If you offer your services too low, you devalue it. GMH comments that there is a danger in keeping fees too low. ZB concludes that at the Verona Congress we can propose to increase the fee (up to € 5.00). PvdS adds that in order to ensure sustainability of the professional secretariat – which already has proven to be useful – it is necessary to increase fees since we do not raise funds from our Congresses.
- Legal issues: PvdS informs that because of stricter rules in Belgium, the accountancy report has to be approved by the General Assembly in January. Because the GA does not assemble, an interim solution is found in having an email approval system. Members who have objections can send them to SR. Also the budget 2009 has to be approved. TJ suggested to ask delegates to transfer to the Board the right to approve the budget every second year, the financial report. All will be endorsed every second year. So we still respect the constitution. ZB suggested that TJ and PvdS prepare a proposal to handle these issues. ZB concludes with the approval of the financial report of 2008 and the budget for 2009.

DECISIONS:

- **MB to send SR contacts for Slovak Republic and Portugal**
- **SR to send letter written by PvdS and TJ asking for approval of 2008 budget, by mail. SR will update list of approval received**

6. Update on Verona 2009, VIth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health

Issues discussed:

- Discounts for members of national societies: ZB mentions that this is desirable, however an administrative difficulty. It is not legal to share membership lists with third parties. It is decided to work with 'self declaration' of membership.
- Workshops by national societies: all members are invited to organize workshops during the Congress. GMH announces the possibility of the RSTMH to participate. ZB welcomes this, and other initiatives of the societies who already presented a proposal to join the congress with a workshop: it means growing interest. GK informs about the approval for the workshops and invited speakers. It was explained that the national societies are in charge of the events they organize and that any financial costs involved are to be supported by the organizing Society, however speakers are waived the registration fee (at least for the day of the presentation, but if possible to the whole congress). MB mentions that in Amsterdam speakers were granted free registration for the whole Congress.
- Financial situation: ZB mentions that the programme is well advanced and details the procedure for covering of costs of invited speakers: speakers from high income countries (but for plenary sessions) will be asked to cover their own travel/hotel expenses, registration fees waived for all. ZB proposes that the Board formally approve this policy, that is: plenary speakers, as well as low income countries speakers, fully reimbursed; parallel (invited) speakers only exempted from registration fee. The Board approves. Financially the Congress looks less gloomy than anticipated, with a nice level of local sponsorships so far. PCO/KIT accepted to take all the financial risks, this means smaller share of benefits for us. Our share to go to the Federation and to SIMET. MB mentions that Amsterdam Congress received € 135.000 sponsoring; a small loss of € 4.000 was covered by PCO/KIT.
- 2nd Announcement: is to be finalized in the week after the Board meeting. It will be the only (updated) printed version of the programme until the final version at the Congress. ZB will ask National societies to distribute printed versions of the programme. All confirmed the importance of having as many confirmed speakers as possible in the printed version, and keep the website up-to-date.
- Other issues: TJ stressed the need to PR the Congress as a joint venture with National Societies which also needs to be visible in the programme. It is important that people perceive this conference as belonging to the European Federation, to National Societies. GMH informed about logistical issues concerning stand, the space in the programme to launch the journal and the costs for hospitality events. ZB: if it is a sister society, the cost of the stand should be a voluntarily contribution, but this needs to be checked with the PCO/KIT.

7. Update on Barcelona 2011, VIIth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health

JMJ presents Manuel Corachan as the Congress President, Antonio Muro (President SEMTSI) will be 2nd President, Nuria Casamitjana (CRESIB) will be Vice-President (Executive) and MJM 2nd Vice-President. The proposed date is 17-21 October 2011, Congress location is a congress center near Hotel Juan Carlos.

Issues discussed:

- The organizing Committee will be local, for the Scientific Committee there will be a search for other big names to be included besides members of the FESTMIH Board/current committee.
- The sponsoring situation is anticipated to be difficult, considering the current global economic crisis. PCO/KIT has not answered enquiry about sponsors and past financial data. ZB mentions that their main sponsor is a not-for-profit Foundation, which may be an option for the Barcelona Congress as well. It is advised not to rely merely on commercial sponsors. Moreover, there is a need to keep very strict financial rules for invited speakers (as for Verona Congress). If in case the Congress is sufficiently funded and may decide on waiving the costs for all speakers, this may create a precedent for future Congresses. The Board approves that the current FESTMIH policy for invited speakers should be maintained for current and future European Congresses TMIH.
- Poster/abstracts: MC inquires whether there is a prize policy for best posters/abstracts. ZB: outstanding abstracts will be upgraded to keynote presentations, and registration fees possibly waived. Best posters will equally be awarded prizes. PvdS suggests that a restricted number of outstanding posters should be selected for plenary presentation, while keynote presentation should be reserved to more general overviews/state of the art (so he does not agree with upgrading best abstracts to keynote presentations). EJ mentions that in Amsterdam there was a Young Scientist Award to attract young researchers. MB mentions the positive experience in Amsterdam with having formal poster walk/poster discussions with a moderator, and in addition a special plenary session for 3 or 4 poster winners.
- Migration Conference: MC proposes the idea to organize a second edition of the Med Conference. Barcelona will host the *Unión por el Mediterraneo*, at Palacio Real which is an interesting fact in terms of potential sponsoring from the local authorities. PAT and ZB endorse this idea. PAT proposes 'Water and Health' (access and quality) as a possible theme.
- Lunch, dinner: in Verona the registration does not cover dinner, only the coffee breaks. ZB is looking into opportunities to offer a lunch bag (sandwich bag like the Korea Congress), this is a topic for discussion with PCO/KIT.
- Risk sharing: MC asks about the financial risk involved and risk-sharing proposal. MB mentions that the Amsterdam Congress had a special insurance (covering loss) from the Ministry of Tourism, Insurance. PvdS and ZB add that if the same procedure is followed as previous Congresses there is no need to have an additional insurance because of the agreement with PCO/KIT. Briefly, if you accept to share the risk with the PCO/KIT you get 1/2 of the benefits. If you don't, the PCO assumes the risks but you get only 1/3 of the possible benefits (2/3 go to PCO). PvdS adds that in case Verona turns out very successful, then you can negotiate better conditions with PCO/KIT.
- Joint presidency Congress/FESTMIH: ZB mentions that it would be nice to keep the tradition that the President of the conference is also the President of FESTMIH, therefore MC should be nominated from the first assembly after the Congress. MB comments that it is quite a hard task to be President of both. PAT: in any case, it should be a President from the Spanish Society. MJM proposes a sharing of responsibilities in case of overload for MC.

8. FESTMIH new website: presentation by Silvana Rigobon, discussion, proposals

SR presented the new FESTMIH website. Comments included:

- What is the content of the news page on the site? Which items will be placed on the news page and who will keep this up to date? Who decides on the content of this page? It was suggested that this should be filled by news from the member societies; also vacancies could be placed on the site. Overall, all member societies should feel ownership of the site and be responsible for the content.

All societies should ensure proper linking to the site, inform about conferences and so on. Member Societies are invited to offer the electronic version of their national journals. EJ comments on the new journal of the Netherlands Society (in English) which is available for linking to the FESTMIH site.

DECISIONS:

All societies should ensure proper linking to the site, inform about conferences and so on. Member Societies are invited to offer the electronic version of their national journals.

9. Teaching programmes in tropical medicine and international health within Europe

MB and EJ informed about the proposal of the Netherlands Society for Tropical Medicine and International Health (NVTG) to host a workshop on education in TM&IH at the Verona Congress. The idea is to present the current training model in the Netherlands: the 2 years programme as a preparation for a certificate on tropical medicine. The NVTG is in the process of having this training institutionalised (accredited and formally certified) by the Government. During the workshop the NVTG intends to 'mirror' this model to other training in Europe, and define the ideal training profile of postgraduate training in TMIH, addressing gaps and opportunities. Therefore, other societies are invited to present the state of the art in their country. TJ suggests incorporation of undergraduate training as well. JMJ suggests to invite tropEd for a presentation on training, standards etc. MB and EJ announce that member organisations will receive an invitation to collaborate in the workshop.

DECISIONS:

MB and EJ to contact tropEd proposing collaboration in the workshop on Teaching Programmes.

10. Briefing on a recent meeting at ECDC Stockholm

MB informed the meeting of ECDC, and the Lernet Society. The first day was on research, mostly in the European context. MB presented FESTMIH at the meeting. The second day was spent on guidelines, specifically on Europe. Overall the focus was very much on Europe. ZB announces a session at the Verona Congress on Alert and Preparedness; ECDC has not indicated yet whether they are interested in participating. TJ mentions that it is worth having them on board. FESTMIH has to work on national, European and International interests. National societies expect us to lobby for them on the national side. MB will circulate the minutes of the meeting, as soon as he receives them.

DECISION:

MB will circulate the minutes of the meeting, as soon as he receives them.

11. FESTMIH and the National Societies: presentation by Pierre Ambroise-Thomas and Thomas Junghanss of main points for next letter to Presidents (as mentioned by previous letter in September), in preparation of meeting in Verona between the FESTMIH Board and the Societies. Discussion, preparation of first draft of letter to be sent in February and of a possible Editorial in TMIH.

Issues discussed:

- Elements of the letter to the Presidents: PAT: we need to create connections with Presidents of societies, first through the letter informing them about current FESTMIH activities and the reduced rate for TM&IH and asking them for suggestions. PAT and TJ will draft a letter.
- Verona meeting with Presidents: after discussing different ideas (dinner, working meeting) it was decided to have a dinner+meeting with the Presidents.
- Link national societies and the FESTMIH: this issues was discussed and deemed important. It appears that the member societies do not feel (or take) ownership. PAT suggested widen our links, and to consider our relationship with Travel Medicine, NGOs. Especially people in the field, the NGOs have the potential to be good partners. Maybe good idea to open membership to countries of the South (Mediterranean Conference).
- New structures: PvdS mentions that the Belgian society ceased to function as it did in the past and is now incorporated in the platform: Be-Cause Health, an active group consisting of NGO and development organization, not merely academics. Membership is open for groups and individuals and there is no membership fee. This has implications for the FESTMIH in terms of finances and membership.
- Core business/future of FESTMIH: TJ opens the discussion with commenting on the wideness of the concept of tropical medicine: it is not specific, some see it almost in colonial terms, others as medicine in the tropics, and others include international health. MB comments that addressing our 'core business' has been a recurrent theme; and he adds that we have accomplished quite a bit over the years (tradition of European Congresses, the official journal, website). GMH adds that the FESTMIH is an excellent platform to strengthen ourselves, to share resources, expertise and network. PAT stresses that we need to involve more societies, otherwise we will disappear. AS refers to the situation in Spain where there is a favourable climate for TMIH: in 2000 the Government founded a network on 'tropical diseases and international health' which receives € 1 million per year. The funds are mainly used to promote collaboration in projects (research, teaching programmes). Majority of the people belonging to the network also are members of SEMTSI. The discussion went back to the issue of individuals becoming a member of FESTMIH. GK: in the future there may be room for

individual membership, European Association and not a Federation. JMJ mentions that we need not to forget the strategic role of the FESTMIH, which is not service to the individual but to the national societies. This should be reflected in the strategy of FESTMIH: what do we want to achieve on the medium and long term, besides the organisation of European Congresses. MB reiterated earlier discussions on the future of FESTMIH for which EJ prepared a discussion/briefing paper. This paper was presented in Marseille, and further discussed briefly in Verona (2007). It was concluded that the discussion on this issue is to be continued with the Presidents, based on earlier discussions and the anticipated reply from the Presidents on the letter they will receive this spring. ZB proposes to send the letter around 15/20 February. EJ will send SR information from earlier discussions and input for the questionnaire. Deadline for responses set for May 31.

DECISIONS:

- **PAT and TJ/ZB to draft a letter to Presidents for Verona meeting.**
- **EJ to send SR information from earlier discussions and input for the questionnaire.**
- **ZB, SR and EJ to draft an abridged version of December Questionnaire as an annexe to letter to Presidents.**

12. Any other business

- IFTM: PAT: President of International Federation of Tropical Medicine (IFTM). He proposes that ZB should represent the FESTMIH at the Board. There is no objection.
- 8th ECTMIH, following Barcelona will be in 2013, which country will be the host? PAT suggests having an open application. JMJ suggests having 2 or 3 different candidates in advance. MB mentions that Austria was interested. GK: Norway is too small, would have to be Scandinavian joint-venture. Switzerland is suggested. ZB will contact the Swiss colleagues.
- GA meeting at Verona to be organised during lunch or in the evening. MB refers to the Statutes saying we have to organize elections of new Board Members, every 2 years.
- Abstract handling: SR will ask for abstracts of previous Congresses. Hamburg abstract is on line (TM&IH), or contact Wolf Walden, suggested by PvdS. Liverpool abstract: SR to contact Marcel Hommel (ask GMH). Lisbon abstract: SR to contact Francisco Antunes.

DECISIONS:

- **ZB to contact the Swiss Society asking if they are interested in organizing ECTMIH 2013**
- **SR to ask for abstracts of previous Congresses.**

The meeting closes at 19.00

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS / DECISIONS

1. GMH, EJ and MB to revise draft code of conduct
2. ZB to propose TropNetEurope to organize a joint meeting on surveillance, at Verona Congress
3. ZB and SR to write a letter to societies detailing TM&IH offer
4. ZB to draft an editorial for TM&IH presenting the Congress
5. MB to send SR contacts for Slovak Republic and Portugal
6. SR to send letter written by PvdS and TJ asking for approval of 2008 budget, by mail. SR will update list of approval received
7. All societies should ensure proper linking to the site, inform about conferences and so on. Member Societies are invited to offer the electronic version of their national journals
8. MB and EJ to contact tropEd proposing collaboration in the workshop on Teaching Programmes
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