

Minutes Meeting of the Board FESTMIH
May 29, 2008 - Verona, Italy

Present

Pierre Ambroise-Thomas (PAT) (France), Zeno Bisoffi (ZB) (Italy, President), Josep Maria Jansa (JMJ) (Spain), Thomas Junghanss (TJ) (Germany, Secretary), Patrick Van Der Stuyft (PvdS) (Belgium, Treasurer), Christopher Whitty (CW) (UK), Gunnar Kvåle (GK) (Norway, Observer), Silvana Rigobon (SR) (Italy) (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Martin Boeree (MB) (Netherlands, Vice-President)

Invited

Giancarlo Majori (GM) (Italy, SIMET President), Stéphane Talboom (ST) (France, K.I.T.)

Agenda:

1. Opening. Welcoming. Address by the President of the Società Italiana di Medicina Tropicale (SIMET) Prof. Giancarlo Majori
2. Approval of minutes from Board Meeting in Copenhagen 16th of March 2007
3. Report of the President (past and current)
4. Report of the Secretary (past and current)
5. Update on Verona 2009, VIth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health
6. Update on Barcelona 2011, VIIth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health
7. TM&IH as the official journal of FESTMIH: decisions, implications, possible discounted rates for members of National Societies
8. Update from last Assembly meeting, Verona, 7th December 2007: actions to be taken
9. Update from TropNetEurope & TropEdEurope
10. FESTMIH website: proposal of management by KIT; basic structure; assigning tasks
11. Any other business

1. Opening.

Prof. Giancarlo Majori welcomed the participants and congratulated Zeno Bisoffi.

2. Minutes

Minutes of the board meeting in Copenhagen 16th of March 2007 were approved.

3. Report of the President (ZB)

Mount Everest was conquered on 29th May 1953: a good omen for FESTMIH to meet on the 55th anniversary.

KIT Agency (Stéphane Talboom), the PCO for Verona 2009, based in Berlin, has been appointed to manage both FESTMIH website and the 2009 Congress website.

Thomas Junghanss is the new Secretary of FESTMIH.

Silvana Rigobon has been appointed as part time executive secretary for both FESTMIH and related congress activities. Her appointment will start on July 15th, 2008. Her contract will be covered by the FESTMIH and by Verona 2009 budget, in equal share.

ZB suggests to draft an ethical code for FESTMIH, studying examples of ethical codes from other associations, for relations with industry, with specific reference to congress organization. Evrybody agrees. A draft will be circulated for comments as soon as available.

4. Report of the Secretary

Thomas Junghanss has taken over very nicely with the archives. All the documents are in order. There were a few email exchanges between TJ and Pascal Magnussen, the former Secretary.

The list of addresses is still a problem, as in the past. Silvana Rigobon to be involved to work on it.

For the Verona Congress, it would be important to involve national societies as much as possible, including the organization of specific workshops.

The Congress could be a great opportunity to fight the lack of motivation which is unfortunately common to many Societies. The Federation has strong and weak points. Many members of National Societies do not even know what the Federation does: the meeting between the Federation and National Societies in Verona will be one of the most important events of the Congress (PAT) and it should be prepared very carefully, trying to be as attractive as possible (PAT and TJ will be in charge of it).

PvdS briefly reports on the financial situation. On 1st December 2007 the active balance was € 28.249,22.

So far, 8 National Societies have paid their association fee for 2007, 5 have not paid it yet; 4 National Societies have not paid neither for 2007 nor for 2006 (Sweden, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Portugal): do they still consider themselves members?

We have to fix a deadline to pay membership fees. (PAT)

SR to contact each society to update changes in charges (President, Secretary, representative to FESTMIH).

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

Verona Administration has agreed to give either Palazzo della Gran Guardia or Palazzo della Ragione for the Conference, at a minimal fee. (ZB). The main auditorium of Gran Guardia will be available in any case.

The registration fee is not yet available on the web. A discount (of about 50 €) could be offered to members of National Societies (ZB). Participants should provide proof of registration released by their own National Society.

This proposal is briefly discussed. It could be complex to manage. TJ suggests to ask the Presidents of National Societies to provide member lists to the FESTMIH (check if it is a legal procedure. (TJ) CW suggests asking for a hard copy of the lists of members (it should be legally allowed, while sending

electronic lists is not so in UK at least). We could then ask the President of each National Society to send us the hard copy of the list of members (to offer them discounted rates). Name and city are the minimum requirements to participate in the scheme. (TJ) Lists should only include members having regularly paid their membership fees for 2008. CW also proposes that the discount should be applied only to those who register online, and not on site (easier to manage, if based on previously received member lists). Current full rates are the following. Standard registration: € 450; early registration € 400; late registration € 500. Fees for members (standard, early, late) should be lower. (JMJ) For a transparent "discount" strategy, a comparison should be made with the fee of similar congresses, and the discounted fee of Verona Congress should result less expensive. The Congress of the American Society is a comparable one. True "discount" only if it is so in comparison with some standard, equally attractive product. (TJ)

If possible, savings from full rates could allow the Federation to sponsor participants from low income countries. (CW)

But the FESTMIH also needs some earning from the congresses to be able to afford a permanent secretariat. (GK). Unfortunately, only the first two congresses so far have produced some earning (Hamburg and Liverpool).

Same (substantial) discounted fee could be applied if affordable to low resource countries, student and residents (ZB), and also to members (volunteers) of European NGO that should be specifically asked to register with the Federation to this purpose and provide their member list. (CW)

WHO offices and Cooperation offices should be contacted, before the end of the year.

A fixed amount of the registration fee should go to FESTMIH, if allowed by the contract with the PCO (ZB to check this). In case of a positive final balance the benefits will go in equal part to the PCO and to the client: the latter part should be shared between the Federation, the Italian Society, and the Centre for Tropical Diseases (S Cuore Hospital), which will be the only one accountable for any loss.

This congress is more demanding than previous ones. It justifies the request of benefits. (TJ)

Some money should be set aside as a form of insurance, to cover possible losses (a safety net). (CW)

As for the scientific contents, these are in the agenda of the committee meetings on May 30th.

As for workshops organized by National Societies: the Finnish and the Swiss Society have both proposed to organize one each, but so far they have not provided any further detail. (ZB)

The Royal Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (UK) has decided to postpone to early 2010 its annual Meeting, generally held in September, to avoid overlapping with Verona Congress. In Verona they could also organize a workshop. (CW)

ZB welcomes this idea and is grateful to the RSTMH for its generous decision to postpone the meeting. He also suggests that National Societies could organize their annual meeting within the Verona Congress. He will make this offer to the Presidents and will send a written proposal to each President to encourage societies to organize workshops.

For workshops organized by National Societies, the congress can offer only the daily registration fee to the speakers and the moderators, if they come specifically for that day. The workshops will be part of the scientific programme, as parallel sessions (ZB). Each national society should be fully responsible both for the scientific and economic aspects of their seminar, and share some part of responsibilities in the organization. (GK)

For the general programme, the FESTMIH can take in charge fully speakers for plenary sessions, and keynote speakers for parallel sessions if they come from low income countries. The other keynote speakers will only be offered a free registration (ZB). Speakers who are entitled to be fully taken in charge, but who accept to find another funding source for their costs, will be informed that they will so contribute to invite speakers from low resource countries, and will received a report on this after the congress.

Further discussion follows on the subject if the Mediterranean Conference. The congress will deal not only with tropical medicine, but also with Travel Medicine and Migration Medicine. (PAT). GK is worried about having "Migration and Travel health" in the main heading: some National Societies would say this is not our congress. It would become a political issue. (GK)

It is too late to discuss it now, we have already advertised it in Amsterdam (see preliminary announcement circulated there) and presented at the last Board meeting in Copenhagen with no objection. (ZB) It is up to us to keep Travel Medicine topics as limited as possible, and give more emphasis to migration medicine than travel medicine. The Med Conference will be a separate event, though overlapping with the main congress for 1 _ - 2 days. It will be possible to register separately with a limited fee: the participants would have the freedom to participate at other sessions also. (ZB)

Travel medicine is not a major component of FESTMIH. It should be clear when we advertise it. (TJ)

Verona Congress could be an opportunity to talk about more issues. More attractive for sponsors if we talk about travel medicine, too. (PAT)

It is more a question of how to focus it and how to present it. (TJ)

There could be one or two plenary sessions on Travel Medicine. (PAT)

There are other conferences on Migration and Health: It would be interesting to be in touch with the organizers: the 1st one in 2004 in Rotterdam; second one in Malmo last week. JMJ can give the contact. (JMJ)

PvdS: What is the objective of contacting them?

6. **Update on Barcelona 2011 (JMJ)**

JMJ trying to organize the local committee; group of Pedro Alonso in Barcelona deciding whether to be in charge of the organization.

The Spanish Society has agreed to delegate to JMJ (who is the past President of the Society) the organization of the congress, possibly asking somebody else to be the President. A final decision is expected in June.

There is still time to choose the Congress venue (for around 1.200 members). But normally, there are never more than 600 participants per session (ZB, PAT). If so, several alternatives may be available in Barcelona.

The same company (KIT) has organised the last congresses, with the exception of Marseille, but this is by no mean mandatory. An advantage is that KIT have all the mailing lists of past events and a huge amount of contacts in this field (ZB).

For Barcelona Congress, suggested dates are in the week 12 to 18 September 2011 (JMJ).

The American Society annual meeting is in November/December: most people wanting to present their research will have to choose one of the two congresses. Take into account the competition. (CW)

ISTM (Travel Medicine) Congress is held in May, every 2 years. There was overlapping with Amsterdam congress last year. The next IFTM Congress (International Congress of Tropical Medicine and Malaria), after Korea this year, will be in Rio, maybe in September 2011. (PAT) PAT, President elect of IFTM, will follow on this. Finally, consider Geneva Health Forum (yearly or bi-annually, in May).

7. TM&IH as the official journal of FESTMIH

Obtained official agreement: TM&IH is now the official journal of FESTMIH. ZB acknowledges PvdS, TJ, Susanne Groener, Martin Boeree and all who made possible this important achievement. Discounted rates will be possible for members of national societies, details will be provided by Susanne after meeting with the publisher (July?). TMIH will publish the Congress abstract book at a discounted rate. There will be an important participation of TMIH at the Congress.

8. Update from last Assembly meeting, Verona, 7th December 2007: actions to be taken

This point was not dealt with separately, as mostly covered by the discussion on the other points.

9. Update from TropNetEurope & TropEdEurope

TropEdEurope: agreement to collaborate, but recent change of coordinator. TROPED available to organize a workshop on training and education in international health in the congress. Could also help us to update info on web site (i.e. in advertising training and job opportunities)

TropNetEurope. No answer so far. They are covering mainly Travel Medicine. Perspective of formal collaboration with ECDC (European CDC based in Stockholm). Another European spontaneous initiative is The European Course on Tropical Epidemiology (ECTE), that has been active for 25 years. PvdS is one of the founding members.

Could the Federation be an umbrella for these networks? Many of us are already involved in some of these, possibly there could be more formal links. (ZB).

Better to do properly one thing than two partially. Better to concentrate our attention on Verona Congress. (CW)

10. FESTMIH website: proposal of management by KIT; basic structure; assigning tasks

The website of the American Society is updated regularly on job offers, events, etc. Our web site could follow the same line. (ZB)

There should be links to info, sources etc. Practical links, useful for the community: i.e. find the most recent info on courses etc. Europe is full of activities, but very fragmented. Not a disadvantage, compared to more monolithic approaches. Europe has got more to offer in TMIH, an enormously interesting tradition, but we are not able to convey this message. The conference is the ideal platform to do it. A large plenary could be organized, on this subject. The National Societies could discuss the topic "European Tropical Medicine and International Health." (TJ)

It could be very fruitful. (PAT)

Offer platform in significant plenaries, with Directors of most powerful National Societies in Europe. (TJ)

Maybe we should also invite people from Travel Medicine and Migration Medicine. (PAT)

The problem is there is only the International Society of Travel Medicine. There is not a European Society, nor a Federation. Better to focus on European Societies and Federations, for a more stable situation. Not sure if this is the right moment to invite them, yet. (ZB)

Stéphane Talboom (KIT Agency, Berlin) presented the project for the update of the current FESTMIH website (the current one is www.festmih.net ; in www.festmih.org you can see how its structure might look in the future; in particular www.festmih.org/verona2009). One of the possibilities is to have an automatically updated news section (RSS: searches on line news on relevant subjects). This is a tricky matter: nobody checks the news. (TJ) We could put a disclaimer ("FESTMIH does not endorse the content of the news"). (ST) Or find collaborators to update news on relevant issues (i.e. malaria) regularly, once a month. Find some volunteers, but in a very organized way. (ZB)

It is necessary to check the quality of the news, and to know who is behind it. (TJ)

Make sure there are links to National Societies, the Journal, the relevant magazines. And ask them if they can link us. (ZB)

We should find out who is responsible for what. (ST)

Very good to have links with National Societies. Also, ask them to send the programs of their events, to be published in our website. (PAT)

We could also publish abstract from the Journal, which already prepares a summary of each issue. (PvdS)

It is sufficient to contact the managing Editor Susanne and ask for that. ST agrees to do that.

We could have a reciprocal link with the American Society. The main objective of the FESTMIH website is to be a window for the Congress and the Federation. There is no need for forum and blog, both would be too difficult to manage at least in this phase. (CW)

Necessary to have links to National Societies: SR to contact them to update information. (ZB)

It is important to have a link to APT – Azienda Promozione Turismo – to show that Verona is definitely worth visiting. There should also be a note for sponsors, since people might find us by accident. (CW)

Sponsor handbook is already being prepared and will be available soon (ST, ZB)

The website should also have some pictures from Africa, Asia, some tropical scenes, even in the front page (see American Society website, www.astmh.org).

TropEdEurope could help us to advertise jobs etc. (ZB)

The more "hidden" key words we have (for search engines), the better: malaria, parasites, Africa... (CW)

Summarizing, there are some points on which the website has to concentrate: Verona Conference; links to National Societies; calendar of other relevant meetings; abstracts of Journal; exchange links with American Society; change the photo of Verona (PAT!). Links with official news sources.

Some space could be made available to National Societies. (ST)

11. Any other business

None.