



## UEMS Section of Neurology – European Board of Neurology

**12. November 2022**

TIME AND DATE                      Saturday, 12 November 2022, 09:30 -12:30

VENUE                                      DME Room 5FL 1 – hybrid meeting  
Rue de l'Industrie 24, BE – 1040 Brussels

### MINUTES

#### 1. WELCOME BY THE PRESIDENT

##### **Bureau onsite**

Patrick Cras, President (BE)  
Martin Rakusa, Vice President (SLO)  
David Garcia Azorin, Secretary (SP)

##### **Bureau online**

Lacramioara Perju-Dumbrava, Treasurer (RO)

##### **Full members**

Eduard Auff (A)  
Michal Bar (CZ)  
Tim Counihan (IR)  
Marianne de Visser (NL)  
Carlo Ferrarese (IT)  
Sten Fredrikson (SE)  
Alain Jager (FR)  
Mathiew Jones (UK)  
Ruta Kaladyte Lokominiene (LT)  
Inga Kalju (EE)  
Anita Kamondi (HU)  
Georgios Kaponides (CY)  
Jan Kuks, (NL)  
Charlotte Lützhof Rath (DK)  
Jana Midelfart-Hoff  
Gereon Nelles (DE)  
Brian Sweeney (IR)

##### **Associate members**

George Chakhava (GE)  
Jera Kruja (AL)  
Serefnur Özturk (TR)

##### **Apologized**

Magnus Andersson (SE)  
Deborah McIntyre (LU)  
Ida Bakke (NO)  
Johanna Palmio (FI)  
Kristina Ryliskiene (LT)  
Pille Taba (EE)  
Stephan Zierz (DE)

##### **Absent**



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Josanne Aquilina (MT)  
Dominique Boucquey (BE)  
Christian Bsteh (AT)  
Gilles Edan (FR)  
Urs Fischer (CH)  
Simon Jung (CH)  
Anne-Mari Kantanen (FI)  
Mette Lindelof (DK)  
Georgios Hadjigeorgiou (GR)  
Pall Ingvarsson (IS)  
Petr Marusic (CZ)  
Evija Miglane (LV)  
Norbert Vella (MA)

The President welcomes all members and apologizes for the start-up difficulties with the Zoom system, which should have been prepared more carefully by the UEMS. Two delegates from Ukraine joined our meeting and are especially welcomed, although they could not be present for various reasons.

### 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 25.06.2022

There was a couple of comments to the original report from our previous meeting on 25.06.22 which have led to a corrected version of 10.07.2022. The decisions taken are reconsidered now.

- A meeting about entrustable professional activities with prof. ten Cate from Utrecht (NL) has not been organized until now.
- We did not yet get any exam questions from our board members after the last meeting.
- The other decisions will be dealt with later on during this meeting.

### 3. TREASURER'S REPORT, MEMBERSHIP, NEW BOND FOR UEMS BODIES, REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL COSTS

Gabrielle Lohner (GL) shows the income and expenditure in the period from 01.01.2022 to 30.09.2022.

The income consists of € 9.430 (membership fees), € 10.400 (EACCME accreditation fees, see 7) and € 57.970 (examination fees), together € 77.800. Three countries have not yet paid their annual dues: Bulgaria, Iceland and Portugal. We have no contact yet with Poland and Slovakia and have removed them from the file.

Total expenditure was € 93.549, made up of administrative services, exam costs, finance and other costs.

The treasurer's report shows that our section is financially sound. Overall, there is a plus of € 13.955 in the 2023 budget.

According to the UEMS statutes, the Neurology Section is not allowed to manage its money in its own bank account and the UEMS manages our funds in Brussels according to Belgian law. To finance its new institute, the UEMS has taken loans from all sections into an internal fund. In total, our section's loan amounts to € 76.059. There is € 155.000 in our own UEMS account, so we have a total of about € 230.000.

Of the € 76.059, € 22.371 was retained this year and falls under a 'domus medica europeana 6 year bond' (DME6YB). This bond matures in August 2028 and yields 0.5% per year, i.e. 3% after 3 years. We cannot dispose of the other € 53.688 for an indefinite period.

In addition, the UEMS has charged administrative fees of €12.859 for 2019 and 2020. It is not certain what will happen in this context in 2021 and 2022.



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Therefore, our Section, like other Sections, makes a significant contribution to the budget of the central UEMS, and there is some uncertainty about what will be returned to us.

If the Section needs the funds for a major project for which there are not enough funds in the UEMS Section account, the Section can approach the UEMS Treasurer to seek repayment of the loan before 2028.

Nevertheless, we now have € 155.000 at our own disposal, which is too much for a non-profit organisation under Belgian law. Therefore, we have to look for ways to spend this money and we summarised the following possible goals in our last meeting:

- Repayment of the EAN (which makes a significant contribution to the exam).
- Reduction of membership fees
- Reduction of examination fees
- Improving examination facilities (e.g. reintroducing the onsite oral examination, see 4)
- Paying for travel
- Costs for writing examination questions
- Training of trainers
- Training of examiners
- Promotion of accreditation

It was decided to send out a survey amongst the members of our section to enhance further discussion in the next meeting.

#### 4. EXAMINATION: REPORT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION AND OUTLOOK TO THE NEXT SESSION

A detailed report on the 2022 exam was sent to all delegates before this meeting. JK asked if there were any comments on this document. As there were no reactions, he decided to proceed with the 2023 exam, assuming that everyone agrees with the report.

The examination committee as a sub-committee of the joint EAN-EBN Training Committee (JEB) consisted of Gilles Edan, Tim Counihan, Deborah McIntyre from EBN and Benedikt Schoser, Pablo Irimia, Manuel Alegre, Francesco di Lorenzo from EAN with Jan Kuks and Gabrielle Lohner as main coordinators. Benedikt Schoser and Gilles Edan have resigned. The latter will now be replaced by David Garcia, who will succeed Jan Kuks as Head of Examination in due course, although Jan Kuks will remain available to provide assistance if requested. Benedikt Schoser will be replaced by the EAN and this will be on the agenda of the next JEB (online) meeting on 24 November.

The balance of exam costs for the consecutive last 8 years will be presented and it is clear that we are in surplus from 2019. The exact amounts can only be determined by estimating the administrative costs of the Vienna Medical Academy (VMA, Gabrielle's institution) mixed with other costs for other business of our Board, but it is a real estimate that we are in the plus of about € 6.000 in 2022. However, it should be taken into account that the EAN paid more than € 13.000 for providing rooms for the live oral exams in Vienna, support for the online oral exams and scanning of plagiarised material, so the final result for the EBN remains negative. In order to overcome this negative result, it was decided in the Examination Committee:

1. not to organise a live oral examination in 2023 as in 2022; only 24 candidates (out of 141) decided to participate in this examination and the cost is estimated at 5K (i.e. about 200 euros per candidate). Furthermore, it was extremely difficult to find examiners for the live exam and it took considerable effort (on the part of the VMA) to organise this.



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2. to align the fees for European candidates (previously € 600) and non-European candidates (previously €350 for candidates from low-income countries) to € 600 for all candidates, as non-European candidates have a higher administrative burden than the rest and some (or many?) of them did not properly declare the country in which they work. Besides, € 600 for an exam, as we have had for several years now, is still a bargain compared to many other European and American exams.

3. Give our Portuguese provider (iCognitus) a more important role in organising our exam. They have handled our online written exams perfectly and cheaply at € 2.200, (the previous Swedish provider charged € 7.000 for this) and are able to check submissions for the oral exams (which now cost € 5.800 via the EAN) for plagiarism at a low cost of € 2.200. In addition, they will be able to organise the oral exam online for a lower cost, and another big advantage is that they will be able to collect the examiners' scores online (which is now done "manually" by JK afterwards). At the end, they will be able to calculate the final exam results using an algorithm provided by the exam board, which is now done by JK's own computer program. Although JK tries to be as transparent as possible, this is not an ideal situation.

However, David Garcia pointed out that one advantage of online exams is that candidates appreciate online exams as they do not have to incur travel and accommodation expenses and do not have to spend a whole day at the exam venue until they can take their actual exams.

JK proposes to discuss this issue at our next meeting after we have re-presented the advantages and disadvantages of live and online exams.

Finally, there was the issue of closed and open questions in the written exams. JK re-emphasised how important he thinks this system is. Open questions allow candidates to look into reference sources as they do (or should do) in clinical practice, there is no need to suggest to candidates how to prepare (as these questions ask for skills as they need them in daily practice). For the closed book exam, JK believes that candidates should know exactly how to avoid being faced with exotic questions that they did not expect (and do not think are relevant). So far, we have offered EFNS and EAN guidelines for this purpose, and as many of them were considered outdated, it was decided in 2021 to use only guidelines produced after 2015. Nevertheless, some EBN members felt that these guidelines were not suitable as study material for the written examinations. Therefore, JK asked for other sources for preparation. The suggestion to use the American journal Continuum has the disadvantage that it is "non-European" and will not be available to most candidates. JK selected about 100 recent papers on the various topics from the ETRN and offered them to the members of the examination board to assess their suitability and feasibility. He is now waiting for their responses and will then derive questions from these papers to be discussed at the January meeting of the Examination Committee.

**The next examinations will be held on 3 May (written) and 12-13 May (oral) 2023.**

### 5. ETRN EUROPEAN TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Now we have a nice actual edition of the ETRN we should use them in practice. Beside using them for constructing the exam they are useful for the accreditation process of European neurological institutions. There is a procedure made available by the UEMS for such an accreditation procedure and we should now develop this process for neurology.

It was asked by the audience how institutions would benefit by an accreditation. The main benefit would be that institutions get the opportunity to test their facilities and teaching methods against the European level. Furthermore a positive accreditation could make the institution more attractive for the EAN to send them exchange students. However, it seems that for now the EAN is not inclined to take the accreditation as a requirement for fellowships. This should be discussed further in the next JEB-meeting in November.



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It was advised from the audience that we should get into contact with other boards (e.g. Urology, Gynecology, Neuropathology, Anesthesiology) to hear their experiences with accreditation procedures.

### 6. EACCME/ACCREDITATION OF E- LEARNING EVENTS

Patrick Cras is doing 2-3 accreditations for live events a week and seldomly meets problems. The number of electronic learning events is lower. These are more time-consuming and handled by David Garcia. He is getting a couple of requests every 4 weeks.

### 7. WEBSITE

Our section's website has been adapted to the UEMS website and the menu has been reduced in terms of colour, font and font colours. The headings are now in red

The UEMS and EAN logos have been removed from the home page.

There is a new "Partner Organisations" page under "About" with logos and links to UEMS, EAN, CESMA and EACCME. Photos of the Board members have been uploaded.

We have taken the National Delegates out of the members' area so that they can be seen by any visitor.

However, email addresses and phone numbers cannot be added due to GDPR rules.

We have updated the praise and thanks hymn and added all the names of the examiners for acknowledgment.

The exams page, which has always been the largest part of the general website, has been adapted for 2023.

All present stated that they were happy with these changes.

### 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mandates as they are now:

Patrick Cras (chair) until 2025. We will discuss his succession in the next meeting.

Martin Rakusa (vice chair) until 2025, renewable for 4 years

Lacramioara Perju-Dumbrava (treasurer) until 2025, renewable for 4 years

David Garcia Azorin (secretary) until 2025, renewable for 4 years.

The current online meeting was fraught with so many problems that we are trying to hold future meetings live again and avoid hybrid meetings.

Originally we had planned to hold the current meeting in Georgia, but due to the world situation we thought it better to hold this meeting in Brussels. George Chakhava stressed that we are also welcome in the future.

### 9. SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

- There is support to hold live exams, so we should consider the possibility in future (from 2024 on)
- There will be a survey amongst the delegates to hear about proposals for using our budget.



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This could be a meeting with examination committee members and interested delegates for question writing.

- Other “train the trainer” sessions could also be organized to improve quality of oral examination.
- We will try to get our budget more balanced by spending our money to further projects as proposed in the survey as mentioned.
- Work about accreditation of centres will be started but before we will contact other sections to ask about their experiences.

10. NEXT MEETINGS	12:25 – 12:30 HRS
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The next meeting will take place at the first day of the EAN congress, on July 1. probably at 09:30.