



UEMS Section of Neurology – European Board of Neurology

06. November 2021 - Zoom video conference

TIME AND DATE Saturday, 06 November 2021, 09:00 -10:40

VENUE ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

MINUTES

1. WELCOME BY THE PRESIDENT

Bureau

Patrick Cras, President (BE)
Martin Rakusa, Vice President (SLO)
Lacramioara Perju-Dumbrava, Treasurer (RO)
David Garcia Azorin Secretary (ES)

Full members

Magnus Andersson (SE)
Eduard Auff (AT)
Ida Bakke (NO)
Michal Bar (CZ)
Christian Bsteh (AT)
Marianne de Visser (NL)
Gilles Edan (F)
Carlo Ferrarese (IT)
Sten Fredrikson (SE)
Alain Jager (FR)
Anita Kamondi (HU)
Georgios Kaponides (CY)
Jan Kuks (NL)
Deborah McIntyre (LU)
Jana Midelfort Hoff (NO)
Gereon Nelles (DE)
Brian Sweeney (IR)

Apologized

Johanna Palmio (FI)
Kristina Ryliskiene (LT)
Stephan Zierz (DE)



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Associate members

George Chakhava (GE)
Mustapha El Alaoui-Faris (MA)
Alla Guekht (RU)
Jera Kruja (AL)
Serefnur Öztürk (TR)

Absent without excuse

Josanne Aquilina (MT)
Dominique Boucquey (BE)
Tim Counihan (IR)
Georgios Hadjigeorgiou (GR)
Pall Ingvarsson (IS)
Matthiew Jones (UK)
Hans Jung (CH)
Ruta Kaladyte Lokominiene (LT)
Anne-Mari Kantanen (FI)
Mette Lindelof (DK)
Charlotte Lützhof Rath (DK)
Philippe Lyrer (CH)
René Metz (LU)
Evija Miglane (LV)
Pille Taba (EE)
Norbert Vella (MA)

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 19.06.2021

- Feedback from MdV and MR on the UEMS meeting. It would probably be wise to share the ETRN with Neurology, Pediatrics, Radiology, Neurosurgery, Psychiatry and Anesthesiology; this will be discussed later on in this meeting.
- CESMA report on exam challenges during COVID - JBMK will enlighten us on the online exam process.
- Treasurer's report shows that our section is financially sound.
- Is there any feedback from EBN members who are still willing to take the exam - GL: yes, almost all members have responded positively (for the oral exam online, not for the onsite exam).
- PC has tried to include the ETRN in the Flemish Board Certification Criteria, but there are no new Flemish Board Certification Criteria yet. The Belgian Board Certification Criteria are national, they are published in Dutch and French and will be the same for the whole country.



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- EACCME - will be discussed later in this session.
- We are planning an autumn meeting in 2022 in Tbilisi.
- No further comments.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT AND MEMBERSHIP SITUATION

Lacramioara Perju-Dumbrava (LPD) shows income and expenditure for the period 01.01.2021 to 30.09.2021 and membership fees for 2021 of EUR 12.620,-

Income EUR 80.710,- from contributions, examination fees, and EACCME review fees. GL: EACCME is for the first quarter in 2019.

Total expenditure EUR 52.233,- consisting of administrative services, CESMA contributions, examination costs, and other costs.

The budget for 2022 depends on whether the exam is online (with a plus of approximately EUR 21.655,- or on-site (with plus of EUR 14.980,-). It is positive in both cases.

An online exam for 100 candidates (including rooms) is cheaper than an on-site exam by around EUR 16.395,-

Iceland and Bulgaria have not paid their fees, and Poland has been taken out as they never replied to GL correspondence. We also do not have contacts with Slovakia.

All in all, our financial situation is sound. The report was adopted.

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

Examination from last May and last June. Orals were at the end of May and Written were at the middle of June. GE and JK had two additional orals for candidates who weren't able to connect during the original sessions. Written exam with 100 questions in 3 shifts, orals were as before with 2 submissions. 200 participants in total, 106 from Europe. Belgium was the top country for participation, followed by Italy. There were more candidates than in the previous years, partly because there were no exams in 2020, and partly because of the online possibility

Results of the exams: only 14 candidates failed, 10 had a fair result, 101 moderate, 45 good, and 8 excellent. Out of the fair and moderate candidates, a total of 8 were able to compensate their scores. The Champions were from Belgium and Portugal with 94 out of the maximal obtainable 100 points.



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Only 7% failed. Is this too little? PC: candidates have a very broad knowledge at this stage of their career so it might be realistic.

Finances: Very positive balance. Our exams are not very expensive compared to other boards. On the other hand, EUR 600 is quite a lot for some candidates. That's why we have fees for low-income countries. We decided to keep the fees as they are because we want to be on the safe side to have a positive balance next year.

Online exams are much cheaper than on-site exams. On the other hand, we would like to see our candidates and have them at the congress as well, so there will be a hybrid exam next year.

Gilles Edan will write a report, which will be published on the website in December.

A standard operating procedure (SOP) was written by JK and GL. Tasks have been distributed amongst the members of the examination committee. The current members of this committee are: Benedikt Schoser (Munich), member of EAN; he takes the responsibility for the Orals. There is a vacancy for an EBN member to help him. The committee is aiming at a young person, and preferably a woman.

MdV: it is not preferable but mandatory to find a woman to fill it. Jana Midelfort Hoff (JMH) thinks that gender balance is important because it improves the quality of the work and she supports MdV's view. Diversity should be important in all parts of the organisation. She feels Norway can provide a female member. JK will contact JMH within the next week and thanks her for offering her services.

Francesco di Lorenzo is from EAN and works in the quality committee (EAN-EQTF); he will do public relations and quality assurance together with GE from our board.

Pablo Irimia Sieira and Manuel Alegre Esteban from Spain look after the written examination.

Tim Counihan (TC), from our board, joined the committee recently. He will be needed for both the Orals and the Written, because of his educational expertise and because he is a native speaker.

PC: Collaboration with EAN is fruitful because of educational expertise but also for questions but the concern is whether there is sufficient representation of UEMS-EBN in the organisation of the exam? JK: once we have the new member from our board, we have a fair equilibrium.

PC: Does EAN contribute sufficiently to the questions? Is our thesaurus enlarging? JK: No, not for now. JK has written many of the existing questions himself, which is not ideal. Currently there are about 350 questions. We can't release the questions after the exam for giving candidates feed-back.

For now we are aiming for 50% old and 50% new questions. We need old questions in order to make a comparison to previous years. We've sent a message to the various



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committees of the EAN, but until now we only got 23 questions and these have to be re-worded. JK invited all members to submit questions from their expertise. So far, we've only received questions from PC, MdV and SF.

MdV: 2 years ago a task force at EAN was established on gender and diversity. Is attention paid to questions with regards to diversity? JK thinks so but feels a check on this would not be bad. He would be happy to give one or two members of this committee access to the question database to have a look. MdV: We could ask the task force to come up with a few questions as well. MR is member of this committee and he will undertake action.

JK: For next year, as always, letters have been written to the presidents of the national societies in order to promote the exam. This letter was signed by the presidents of the EAN and EBN, the chair of the examination committee and the co-chair of the joint educational board. A copy has been sent to all of the delegates.

For next year:

- The balance for next year is not certain, because we do not know how many candidates we have. If we have a positive balance again and again, we will have to reconsider the examination fees. On the other hand, we need extra money for new developments in the exam. We expect a positive balance of more than EUR 33.000.
- With the help of Tim Counihan, we will improve the language aspects of the exam.
- There will be new techniques to combat fraud. It looks like there was not too much cheating this year, but still cheating prevention will be improved.
- Our instructions for candidates will be improved (the failed candidates were mainly from outside Europe, probably they need a bit more help in answering multiple choice questions): Documents and videos are being developed.
- Next year, the exams will again be held online, but candidates will also have the opportunity to take an oral exam on site.
- Finally, the question database will also be expanded.

DGA: Most examiners will attend the conference. Hybrid exams are a good idea, but he would push oral exams in Vienna. If most candidates attend the congress, it would be a good opportunity to do the exam. JK agrees, but in previous years many candidates would come to the conference site solely for the exam and then leave. It is likely that many will take the opportunity to stay at home

SF: Logistically, how will Gabrielle know how many people want to do it onsite versus online? GL: The candidates have to decide when they apply. So far, very few want to go to the congress. 25 applications so far, and only 3 want to go to the congress. JK: 25 is a huge number; normally this is the number of applications we got in January, not November.

PC: How confident are we that there wasn't too much fraud? JK: of course you never can be sure and never completely prevent it, but for now we check the room, earplugs are not



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allowed, there is a bilateral camera check. Some flaws were identified this year which will be addressed for next year. Ideas from all members on how to prevent fraud are invited. GL will send the list of measures from last year to all delegates for comments and input.

DGA: This is not directly fraud, but they had some candidates that used the same topic for all questions. This prevents the possibility to see how much they know. We should ask candidates to not have overlapping topics. JK: Orals are not a demonstration of knowledge, but to assess other competencies, but there is nothing wrong with introducing DGA's suggestion into the new rules.

5. EUROPEAN TRAINING REQUIREMENTS (ETRN)

The ETRN have been sent around. There has been a lot of discussion within UEMS on these ETRNs with important differences of opinion between different societies and the sections of UEMS. ETRNs have been written as an update on 2016 ETRNs and reviewed by EAN, who have provided insight and educational expertise. JK has sent further comments to PC before the meeting.

Marianne had asked questions on Entrusted Professional Activities (EPAs) on which there was a symposium a while ago, and these have not been introduced in our ETRNs. So, should we rewrite the ETRNs introducing the professional activities, or leave it as it is? Should we send them around to other sections (which will cause a delay of several months)? PC is not inclined to introduce the EPAs because he thinks it's a more top-down approach where you consider the trainee a student, whereas there should be a continuing discussion on what the level of expertise is as a trainee. There is also a form of mistrust, because you can only act in a clinical context if you are allowed by the trainer. JK feels that we should have tried more to use EPAs in our ETRN or that we should make a statement why we didn't so.

MdV and MR attended the UEMS symposium a few months ago where three ETRNs were discussed, but in none of them EPAs were included.

JK: Not many of our delegates know enough about EPA to make a decision on this, so we should probably include this into our agenda. JK could prepare something on this but he admits that he is not very experienced in this field as well.

JK feels furthermore that we may get a problem once we do not present the ETRN to other sections before sending them to the UEMS.

SF: We should probably take a more pragmatic view because ETRNs are not written once and for all, probably they will be rewritten in 4-5 years. So it is better to finalise the version right now so it can serve young doctors. The development of EPA will continue, and perhaps it can be introduced in the next version.



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MR agrees. We have a document now. Introducing EPAs would put us back to the drawing board and take 2 years. Otherwise, we would be giving guidelines to the societies which are 7 years old.

PC agrees, but also shares Jan's comments that if we send it to UEMS as it is, we might get important remarks. The old ETRN is 5 years old and we do have a new text that has been reviewed by EAN and sent around to a number of national societies. PC thinks we shouldn't change too much.

MR: If we get remarks, we can try to incorporate them, or pass on them.

Serefnur Oztürk (SÖ): The training program includes all necessary points, but we can modify it according to latest developments in neurology and recent needs. PC: Are you satisfied with the version as it is right now, or should we modify it? SÖ is satisfied with this version, but we can modify it in the future.

JK has comments on Chapter 8 and other items in relation to the correct levels and also to the linguistics, but if all members do agree, he feels he should surrender to the majority. However, he stresses that looking at the levels of competency (section 8) is not very consequent and the items in the several sections are disordered. He thinks we should go over all those levels again and make it clearer before sending it out.

PC: Heterogeneity is present in a lot of this section. Possibly, we need a third column to explain what these different levels mean for neurologists with several expertises. JK does not agree as he feels definitions are given in the beginning of chapter 8 (level 3 needs some extension) and these should apply on general neurologists irrespective of their super specialty.

David: we reviewed the ETRN within the teaching courses of the subcommittee and we noticed that because the idea is that all the teaching activities that the EAN will implement or has implemented should be classified based on the ETRN. We noticed that the genetics is not very clearly classified because there is the word genetics in epilepsy, but it is not listed in other categories. So there was a suggestion to include it within the general knowledge or somewhere in between the section for neurologists. Because probably it does not make any sense to mention epilepsy in every single specialty.

It was agreed that even though it is not a perfect document and not all delegates do agree, it should be sent to UEMS as it is and await comments.

6. EACCME/ACCREDITATION OF E- LEARNING EVENTS

From the end of September to mid-December, we had an average of 7 accredited congresses or meetings per month, some smaller, some bigger, which is more than in the past. It seems that things are picking up again. Many are hybrid congresses, and some are switching from hybrid to online. This means additional income for our section.



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David has not seen any electronic learning materials lately.

Most of the live event files reviewed by PC are well prepared.

7. SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

We should go ahead with hybrid exams, online and onsite - format will be determined in the near future.

Although her candidature is not formal, Jana is interested in collaborating in the exam committee and will communicate with Jan and make her candidature more formal.

New developments for the exams: Appeal to all committee members to add more questions so that we can expand the database.

The exam committee will work out more detailed instructions for candidates and also develop a video.

The instructions that candidates will receive for the oral and written exams will be sent out and we are asking EBN members for feedback on cheating prevention measures.

We will send the ETR to the UEMS as it is now, even if not all delegates agree with it. We will not send it in advance to the various sections mentioned in our earlier meetings so as not to have further delays. The Examination Committee will be asked to give access to the question database to the members of the EAN Task Force on Gender and Diversity. MR will mediate here.

A separate session on EPA will be organised and we will invite Prof. Olle ten Cate from the NL as a speaker.

Alain Jager (AJ) is preparing for his retirement as an examiner (not from the section). He discussed with GE about a new person and will be replaced by Olivier Vandhuick.

8. NEXT MEETINGS

Next meeting will be in Vienna, probably on 25 June 2022.

END OF THE MEETING

10:40