



Minutes for the 7th General Assembly in Oulu, Sunday 6th June 1999

Minutes of 7th GENERAL ASSEMBLY of EFAS

AGENDA

Venue: Hotel Vaakuna: Room Ainola

Date and time: Sunday 6th June 1300 - 1700

Attendance:

Austria: Kunigunde Welzl-Muller (V)

Belgium: Paul Govaerts (V), Geert de Ceulaer (NV)

Denmark: Bo Walter (V), Anne Marie Jensen (NV)

Finland: Martti Sorri (V), Reijo Johansson (NV)

France: Rene Dauman (V)

Germany: Thomas Lenarz (V), Jeurgen Kiessling (NV), Birger Kollmeier (NV)

Greece: George Gavalos (V), John Vathilakis (NV), Elpida Oassu (NV)

Hungary: Joseph Pytel (V)

Israel: Moe Bergman (V), Lilly Tel (NV)

Lithuania: Ingrida Uloziene (V) Irute Randakeviciene (NV)

Netherlands: Hans Verschuure (V), Theo Kapteyn (NV)

Norway: Einar Laukli (V)

Poland: Wieslaw Sulkowski (V), Bozene Woznica (NV), Elizbieta Reron (NV)

Russia: George Tavartkiladze (V)

Slovenia: Jagoda Vatovec (V) Majda Spindler (NV)

Spain: Jose Barajas (V), Enrique Salesa (NV)

Sweden: Stig Arlinger (V)

Switzerland: Thomas Spillman (V)

Turkey: Mehmet Aksit (V)

United Kingdom: Jonathan Hazell (V), John Stevens (NV), Adrian Davis (NV)

Apologies

De Laat, Fisiloglu, Grisanti, Pascu, Prihodova, Pruszewicz, Uus,

1. Welcome from Chairman.

Dauman welcomed the assembled company to the general assembly

2. Minutes of General Assembly 6 (Milan)

The minutes, which have been on the website, were accepted without amendment, and there were no other matters arising from them not on the agenda.

3. Application to join from Croatian Audiology Society

It was announced that a Croatian Society of Audiology and Phoniatrics was founded 10 months ago. The members of the Society are mainly physicians. Borut Marn, MD, PhD from the Children's Hospital in Zagreb, applied to join EFAS. That application was accepted unanimously.

4. Activities of working group

A presentation was made by Kiessling, convenor of the fourth working group formed in Prague – on Education in Audiology. The formation of this working group followed the Bergman proposal in Prague the details of which are in the minutes of that general assembly. The members were Collet, Kiessling, Laukli, Walter, Welzl-Muller and van Zanten.

Some of the data was presented from this working group which identified a very wide variation in professionals and working practices throughout different countries. Kiessling felt that further data collection would be unhelpful, and that what was needed was the development of a curriculum for Audiology. The question raised was whether this was favourable or feasible, and whether this definition should be for a specialist or a generalist.

Bergman made a new proposal, (initially to an extended council meeting held the previous morning), consisting of the following points

- 1) to define the meaning of audiologist, what does an audiologist do, disregarding the country he/she does it in.
- 2) what skills do audiologists need to practice Audiology? Disregard what has happened in the past, and think creatively. EFAS is the voice of Audiology in Europe, and we should define what Audiology means.
- 3) the statement should be a consensus opinion, agreed by a wide spectrum of professionals and non-professionals.

A lengthy discussion followed.

Arlinger underlined the importance for having generalist's and specialist in Audiology, and being able to define the meaning of generalists. The definition should complement not contradict. Verschuure gave a short account of the WHO meeting in Bensheim. The topic for their fourth programme concerned what Europe had to offer the developing world for the training of personnel in Audiology. Despite our efforts, EFAS does not have a model. Govaerts stressed that these ideas could not be imposed on all European countries, particularly those where there was a long tradition of established audiological practice. He supported Bergman in defining Audiology, with reference to hearing aid fitting, clinical Audiology, audiological rehabilitation and audiological research. It was important to develop an EFAS standard. Dauman suggested organising a working party with 50 or so representatives that would form a consensus statement of the skills required to perform Audiology. Gavalos stressed the difficulties between medical and non-medical groups both trying to do Audiology, both were trying to do their best, but the result was a division between the 'treaters' and the 'digitisers'. Verschuure and Arlinger supported Bergman's new proposal and pointing out that it was not possible to compare Europe with either America or Australia. Bergman stressed that there were certain basic things we can agree upon; diagnosis -linked with medicine and optimisation of communication through hearing rehabilitation. He stressed that trying to change a curriculum which was already in place, was like trying to move a cemetery. Lenarz said that relationships with other specialists would be difficult without a clear definition of Audiology, and supported Bergman's proposal for properly defining Audiology. Hazell said that any consensus statement must represent different areas of Europe, the different professions and also hearing impaired groups.

Dauman suggested that the work could be done in a workshop lasting two to three days, the discussion group convened by two or three people, and the mission to define a consensus opinion of what Audiology means now in Europe. Dauman's proposal was put to a vote which was carried unanimously. Bergman stated that after the meeting the consensus statement would be disseminated to all members. When decided upon, it would be the voice of EFAS in Europe. The meeting should take place over several days, without other distractions. Each section of the meeting would have a recorder, and each recorder would report to a fuller debate of the whole consensus group. This would form the basis of the consensus statement. Arlinger said it was important to circulate the draft to national societies. Kiessling said that the meeting could take place in Giessen, before or after the conference at Neurenberg.

The convenors of the working party which will be known as European Audiology Training (E.A.T) are to be Kiessling and Sorri. It was subsequently decided that this group would consist of the original working group IV, plus other participants who would be invited by the convenors. Their aims would be to

- 1) form the working group
- 2) organise a symposium (Verschuure offered help in identifying sponsorship)
- 3) produce a consensus statement in draft
- 4) circulate this first to Council and subsequently to the next General Assembly.

5. Election of Officers - Bergman

Voting was conducted by a secret ballot according to the proposals of the nominations committee. The results were as follows;

Vice-chairman: Lenarz 13, Uloziene 6. Lenarz elected

General Secretary: Sorri 15, Pytel 4. Sorri elected

Treasurer: Barajas 11, Tavartkiladze 7. Barajas elected

Auditors (2) de Laat 16, Profant 10, Vatovec 7, Sulkowski 4. de Laat and Profant elected.

Bergman declared that he wished to stand down from the nominations committee. A new committee was voted in, comprising Gaeverts (convenor), Arlinger and Uloziene.

6. Bids for the European Conference 2003 (voting)

Presentations were made by Greece, Hungary, Germany and Belgium. Voting then took place on the venue for the EFAS conference in 2003. The results were as follows;

Greece 10, Hungary 5, Germany 4, Belgium 0.

The conference in 2003 will therefore take place in Crete and will be organised by Gavalos.

Spain, Hungary and Germany expressed a continuing interest in hosting the conference in 2005.

7. Report on NATASHA and CARDAMIA - Verschuure

Verschuure reported that money for this project have been made available for one and a half years. Initially the project was to enable the design and production of tests, methods and materials for audiological tests with cross-border possibilities and the design of a workstation. However money was only available for a consensus report, and not for research. An inventory had been prepared via the EFAS office, and a meeting had taken place the Hague in December 1998. The programme was now nearing the point of writing the functional specifications for tests, methods and materials on

which a consensus opinion should be reached. A further meeting was taking place in Rotterdam the following week, and a report would be distributed to members for the national societies. The project ends in December 1999 with the functional specification and an inventory of the work needed to provide tests in various countries.

A new project has been formulated within the fifth framework which allows for the construction of a workstation with a number of new tests implemented according to the functional specifications. This project has been called Cardemia and will be submitted for funding by Brussels by the 16th June. The participating clinics are from Sweden, Finland, Germany, France, United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

8. Report on Bordeaux meeting - Dauman

It was reported that the arrangements for this meeting were well in hand, and that information was available in the registration pack of the current EFAS conference.

9. EFAS accounts - Hazell, de Laat, Pytel

The EFAS accounts were presented by Hazell, and inspected by the auditors de Laat and Pytel. Both auditors commented on the poor response of some countries in paying their EFAS subscriptions.

10. Activities of other societies in Audiology

- European Academy

There was a discussion about the European Academy of Audiology which has been proposed by an Italian group from Rome. Unfortunately there were no Italian members present at the general assembly so discussion was limited by the chairman. It was generally agreed that there was no need for another European society with the same aims as EFAS. It was commented that the American Academy of Audiology was not a good model with which to compare the proposed European Academy. Some representatives were surprised to find that their names had been attached to the proposed European academy, and would take steps to look into this. It was noted that the president of the Italian Audiology Society was not involved in this new proposal.

- UEMS - Dauman

Dauman reported that UEMS expected EFAS to contribute to its activities. Dauman had been asked to create a subsection of Audiology within UEMS, but pointed out that this could not be done. Audiology was not a subset of ENT. A working group with Professor Mair had been set up. Lenarz said that the UEMS log book required by European ENT doctors already contained a large amount of Audiology, but that there was no indication of the curriculum, or who should teach them. This is a further indication of the need for EFAS to provide a consensus document on Audiology.

11. A European Audiology Journal? Laukli

Laukli said he had been having early thoughts about the possibility of a European Journal. He was retiring from editorship of Scandinavian Audiology and noted that the subscription rates had been slowly declining. He proposed that some of the European journals in Audiology might join together to produce a larger journal which would have a much wider readership, and that it should be supported by EFAS. There was a short discussion, but no decision was taken.

12. Future of EFAS

There was no further discussion under this topic, as was considered it had been fully covered by previous discussion.

The Chairman closed the meeting with a vote thanks.

Jonathan Hazell
General Secretary (retiring)
25.06.99

The next general assembly will take place before the International Society of Audiology Congress in the Netherlands in August next year.