

ERO NEWS

ERO Plenary Session – 5 September 2026 - Prague



ERO Prague Plenary Session



EUROPEAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION
OF THE FEDERATION DENTAIRE INTERNATIONALE **FDI**

SEPTEMBER 2026

The Prague Plenary Session brought the European Regional Organisation of the FDI World Dental Federation together at a particularly important moment for European dentistry. Held at the O2 Universum during the FDI World Dental Congress, the session provided a platform for reviewing ongoing ERO priorities, Working Group activity and the organisation's increasingly structured cooperation with FDI, the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE), the European Dental Students' Association (EDSA) and the Council of European Dentists (CED).



The Prague meeting followed the Spring Plenary Session in Sofia and the Working Group meetings in Hamburg in June 2026. It also came after a period of expanded external engagement in which the ERO Board, President Dr. Edoardo Cavalle and President-Elect Prof. Dr. Paula Perlea

strengthened dialogue with European academic and professional partners.



ERO works under the vision and mission of FDI, developing reports intended to influence the wider work of the World Dental Federation and to support member organisations in improving oral and general health. The Plenary Session is ERO's supreme authority and provides the forum in which National Dental Associations bring forward the diversity of European professional experience. The meeting in Prague during the FDI World Dental Congress had both symbolic and practical value. It located European professional priorities directly within the global dental community and facilitated interaction with FDI leadership, National Dental Associations and representatives from other regions.

The European agenda is increasingly aligned with themes that are also central to FDI: prevention, the oral-systemic health relationship, healthy ageing, workforce sustainability, professional ethics, digital transformation and artificial intelligence.

The ERO Board's work before Prague reflected this positioning. The organisation's August communication noted that the Board was advancing key priorities ahead of the Plenary. The wider 2026 programme also demonstrated





stronger cross-organisational relations, including the first strategic ERO-FDI and African Regional Organisation dialogue in June, and continued engagement with European partners.

The period between Sofia and Prague was marked by a deliberate effort to reinforce institutional cooperation. President Edoardo Cavallé and the ERO Board continued to develop the organisation's external visibility, while President-Elect Prof. Dr. Paula Perlea was actively involved in relations with ADEE and EDSA.

ERO's Working Groups remain the organisation's principal technical mechanism for examining issues of importance to the profession. Each Working Group reports to the Board and the Plenary Session, gathering evidence, comparing national experience and developing reports, recommendations or draft policy positions. The June 2026 Working Group meetings in Hamburg provided an important preparatory stage for the second half of the year.



Chaired by Dr. Jean-Philippe Haesler, the Ageing Population Working Group addresses Europe's ageing population and the resulting clinical and organisational demands. Older patients retain their natural teeth for longer, often while living with multimorbidity, polypharmacy, frailty or dependency. ERO's work in this area has included practical initiatives such as the Senior Toothbrushing project and supports a broader approach in which oral health is integrated into healthy-ageing strategies, residential care and multidisciplinary prevention.

Chaired by Dr. Marion Dordain, the Oral Health & General Health Working Group complements this work by advancing recognition that dentistry is an integral component of healthcare. Periodontal disease, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, respiratory conditions, cancer prevention and other systemic links increasingly require closer cooperation between dentists and other healthcare professionals. This is consistent with the broader FDI approach to whole-person health and supports ERO's ambition to position oral health more visibly within European health policy.



The Liberal Dental Practice Working Group, chaired by Prof. Dr. Thomas Wolf, examines structural changes affecting professional independence and the organisation of dental care. Corporate ownership, practice consolidation, reimbursement pressures and expanding administrative obligations are altering the traditional practice model in many countries.



Dental chains are now present in most European countries and ownership by non-dentists raises questions about the reach of professional rules, clinical autonomy and accountability. The issue remains important because preserving the dentist's professional responsibility and the patient's trust must accompany any evolution in ownership structures.

Chaired by Prof. Dr. Mare Saag, the Working Group Relation between Dental Practitioners and Universities addresses one of the most important bridges in European dentistry: the relationship between academic education and day-to-day professional practice. Its work is increasingly relevant as ERO strengthens cooperation with ADEE. The practical needs identified by National Dental Associations can inform educational frameworks, while universities can contribute evidence, educational innovation and new competency models to the profession. The growing ERO-ADEE relationship gives this Working Group a natural platform for future joint action. The Graduating European Dentist framework, postgraduate transition, continuing professional development and the responsible introduction of digital technologies are areas in which coordinated input from ERO and ADEE can create measurable European added value.



Chaired by Prof. Dr. Marzena Dominiak, the Continuing Medical Education in Dentistry Working Group addresses the demands of rapid scientific and technological change. Lifelong learning must now cover not only new materials and clinical techniques, but also digital workflows, artificial intelligence, data protection, ethics, communication and oral-systemic health. ERO's work can help National Dental Associations compare systems and identify principles that support high professional standards without unnecessary administrative burden.

Chaired by Dr. Kristjan Gutman, the Dental Team Working Group continues to examine the profiles, education and responsibilities of dental auxiliaries across Europe. ERO's historical work in this field has included statements and resolutions on dental assistants, hygienists, preventive assistants and dental technicians. The longer-term “dental practice 2030” perspective broadens the discussion to practice management, new technologies, recruitment, quality systems and changing professional roles.



Chaired by Prof. Dr. Roman Smucler, the Digitalisation in Dentistry – E-Health – Artificial Intelligence Working Group addresses one of the fastest-moving areas on the ERO agenda. Artificial intelligence and digital dentistry create opportunities for diagnosis, workflow efficiency and patient communication, but they also raise questions concerning professional liability, transparency, data governance, bias, cybersecurity and the preservation of clinical judgement.



This topic is also a strong point of connection with younger professionals. EDSA representatives have participated in ERO discussions on digitalisation and artificial intelligence, providing a perspective from students who will enter professional practice in an environment where AI-supported systems are likely to be routine. Their involvement illustrates the value of bringing future users of these technologies into policy discussions at an early stage.

Chaired by Prof. Dr. Ilshat Yuldashev, the Integration Working Group supports cohesion across a region that includes very different healthcare systems, economic contexts and professional structures. Its role is essential to ensuring that ERO remains genuinely European, including EU and non-EU member organisations and countries at different stages of health-system and professional development. The Prague Plenary should be understood as part of a broader evolution in ERO's role.



The organisation continues to perform its traditional function as the forum of European National Dental Associations, but its 2026 activity increasingly shows a second dimension: acting as a connector among professional organisations, academia, students, regulators and the global FDI family.

This evolution is important because Europe's dental challenges are interconnected. Demographic change cannot be separated from workforce planning and oral-systemic health. Artificial intelligence cannot be addressed only as a technical issue because it also affects education, ethics, regulation and liability. Corporate practice structures cannot be considered separately from professional autonomy and patient protection. Effective ERO policy therefore depends increasingly on cooperation across institutional boundaries.

Future ERO initiatives includes:

- Convert cooperation into deliverables. Joint initiatives with ADEE, CED, EDSA and FDI should produce visible outputs: policy papers, surveys, educational modules, guidance, awards and shared communication.
- Strengthen the Working Group pipeline. Working Group findings should move efficiently from technical analysis to Plenary discussion, policy adoption, communication to NDAs and, where appropriate, contribution to FDI policy.
- Engage the next generation. EDSA and younger dentists can add value in digital transformation, sustainability, education and workforce discussions while developing future leaders for organised dentistry.
- Communicate ERO's impact. The website and social-media channels should make Working Group outputs and European partnerships easier to understand for dentists who are not directly involved in ERO governance.

Looking ahead, the challenge will be to maintain momentum and measure results. Cooperation should be judged by what it delivers for National Dental Associations, practitioners, students and ultimately patients. If ERO continues to combine strong Working Group expertise with active partnerships and effective communication, it can consolidate its role as the principal European regional platform within the FDI World Dental Federation.

**We are looking forward
to seeing you on 2027
Dubrovnic spring
Plenary Session!**

On behalf of the ERO BOARD,
Prof. Dr. Paula Perlea



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