



ERO-Plenary Session 5 September 2026, Prague, Czech Republic

Saturday, 05.09.2026 - 08:30 – 12:00 h

MINUTES

A Welcome

A.1 Welcome of participants and guests

Edoardo Cavallé welcomed all delegates, alternates, guests and his board members and opened the plenary session.

B Standard agenda of the Plenary Session

B.1 Roll call

Establishment of the quorum

Doris Seiz informed the maximum possible number of delegates, which is 78.

61 delegates with voting rights are present, and the quorum has been reached.

Felix Schmidt and Marion Dordain are elected to be the tellers today.

B.2 Approval of the agenda

The agenda is unanimously approved.

B.3 Approval of the minutes of the Plenary Session 2026 / Sofia

The word is not required in this matter, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

B.4 Report of the President and the Board

President's and President Elect's Report

The President, Edoardo Cavallé, and the President Elect, Paula Perlea, reported on the main activities and developments within ERO since the previous Plenary Session.

Financial governance and transparency

The President reported on the current financial situation and the completion of the arrangements concerning the relevant bank documentation. A task team on financial matters will be proposed, with the objective of preparing a final Financial Manual covering the management and control of investments.

The importance of the Working Groups was emphasized. A form for applications for financial support is already available, and an additional form will be developed for projects in general, in order to provide an overview of planned activities.

ERO-EDSA Award and engagement with young dental professionals

The ERO-EDSA Award was highlighted as an important activity supporting engagement with students and young dental professionals. The 2026 competition covered the two topics of tobacco cessation and dental care for elderly people. A total of 35 essays were submitted

and reviewed by four reviewers, and four winners were selected. Both third-place winners will receive the full amount of the third prize. The winners and their respective essay topics were presented.

The relationship between ERO and EDSA extends beyond the award initiative. ERO was represented at the EDSA Plenary Session in Budapest by Paula Perlea, where ERO's history and activities were presented and the award winners introduced. An EDSA-related webinar is also planned.

Communication and social media

Paula Perlea reported on activities carried out since the previous meetings, many of which had also been communicated through the ERO website news. She emphasized that information and contributions from the National Dental Associations are indispensable for ERO's communication activities.

A major focus has been the further development of ERO's social media presence. Since the Sofia Plenary Session, 36 social media posts have been published. The President thanked Paula Perlea and Ariel Slutsky for their work.

A more structured and semi-automated system for collecting information and content from National Dental Associations is being developed. Paula Perlea encouraged all NDAs to nominate a contact person for this purpose. At present, only a limited number of contacts have been established, and further contributions from the NDAs would be greatly appreciated.

Working Groups and meetings

The importance of the Working Groups was re-iterated. Working Groups will be expected to provide concise reports during the Plenary Session, and their active participation in ERO activities will continue to be encouraged.

The President also addressed the challenge of scheduling meetings alongside other events, like WDC. As ERO is a guest here, it can be difficult to find suitable time slots. The aim is to identify solutions that cause the least disruption while allowing ERO members to participate effectively.

Technology and accessibility

The use of artificial intelligence for simultaneous translation during Plenary Sessions was discussed. ERO intends to test such a solution in the spring, with the aim of improving accessibility and communication among delegates.

Constitutional developments

The President referred to a visit in the FDI headquarters in Geneva and reported that some amendments to the ERO Constitution are being considered. A draft will be circulated to the delegates as soon as it is ready.

Cooperation with ARO

The cooperation with ARO was also addressed. An online meeting had taken place, and it was agreed that the discussions would continue.

Outlook

In concluding the report, the President and President Elect highlighted the importance of strengthening financial governance, supporting the Working Groups, maintaining and further developing cooperation with EDSA and the dental student community, improving communication with the National Dental Associations, and continuing work on constitutional and organizational developments within ERO.

Ariel Slutsky informed the delegates about the further development of ERO's social media activities. The ERO Social Media Task Team is implementing a more structured and semi-automated system for collecting, reviewing and publishing content from ERO member National Dental Associations.

NDAs are encouraged to nominate a Content Contact Person and to actively support the initiative by providing relevant content from the respective National Dental Associations such as relevant information on events, scientific activities, national initiatives, achievements, news and people. Content is submitted to the ERO Social Media Task Team,

which reviews and selects the material for inclusion in the editorial calendar. Final approval is given by the ERO President before publication. Where appropriate, selected content may also be shared on the ERO website.

During the discussion, it was clarified that the purpose of the initiative is to share information that may be of interest to other National Dental Associations (NDAs), rather than to reproduce all information published by individual NDAs. Ariel Slutksy explained that content should therefore be submitted when it is considered relevant beyond the respective NDA.

Edoardo Cavallé highlighted the importance of informing ERO about relevant events in advance, as this enables ERO to communicate them on its website and to the wider ERO membership. He encouraged all NDAs to share information about upcoming events, noting that even a brief announcement can be useful.

EDSA

Jimmy Le, President of EDSA, together with two colleagues, addressed the Plenary. He expressed his appreciation for the close cooperation with ERO, which extends beyond the ERO–EDSA Award and includes, among other activities, EDSA’s participation in the ERO Plenary Sessions. He noted that the leadership of EDSA changes annually but reaffirmed that the cooperation between EDSA and ERO is well established and will continue.

Edoardo Cavallé informed the Plenary that a webinar on management is planned in cooperation with EDSA. The date has not yet been fixed. He pointed out that this is an important topic for students and young dental professionals, as these skills are not necessarily covered during university education but are relevant for their future professional activities.

Paula Perlea then presented the 1st prize of the ERO-EDSA Award to the winner present on the stage.

B.5 Finances

Oleg Gladkov presented a brief overview of the ERO budget and accounts, including the main expenditures and income. He explained that expenditure is higher during the first half of the year, which is considered normal. Income was reported to be slightly higher than budgeted, and the current balance was presented.

The treasurer reported also on the meeting with FDI held in July concerning ERO’s financial situation and the management of investments. He explained that careful planning is required in this area and that FDI had offered its support and expertise. Given the more limited financial resources available to ERO, it was considered important to establish an appropriate framework for the management of ERO funds.

It was therefore proposed to establish a **Finance Task Team**, which would prepare a Financial Manual and make proposals concerning the management and use of ERO funds. The Task Team would be chaired by the Treasurer, with the President participating as an observer and three members elected from among the Plenary delegates (Doniphan Hammer, Miguel Pavao and Bedros Yavru-Sakuk agreed to collaborate). The work would include online meetings, and the Task Team would present its proposals to the next Plenary Session for consideration and decision.

Edoardo Cavallé emphasized that the Task Team would not take financial decisions itself but would prepare the Financial Manual and submit proposals for consideration by the Plenary.

The proposed approach to establishing the Financial Task Team and preparing a Financial Manual was approved by a majority of the delegates.

B.6 Working groups

Doris Seiz reminded the delegates to inform the secretariat if there are changes in the WG/NDA in order to keep website and lists updated.

6.1 Ageing Population

Jean-Philippe Haesler reported on the activities of the Working Group on Ageing Population. He noted that only two members had participated in the most recent Working Group meeting. He expressed his appreciation for Michael Diercks' contribution to the Working Group and noted that his departure would be greatly missed.

The Working Group is still awaiting a response from the Board regarding the possibility of adding two further languages to the toothbrushing app.

Jean-Philippe presented a new poster developed by the Working Group. Some further amendments are still required, and the poster had only been received shortly before the meeting. The following steps were agreed:

- finalisation of the corrections by the Working Group;
- implementation of the corrections by the graphic designer;
- approval by the Working Group;
- final approval by the Board; and
- dissemination of the poster via the website *Seniortoothbrushing.com*.

The ultimate objective is for the poster to be displayed in nursing homes and residents' rooms, thereby reaching the target group directly. Jean-Philippe Haesler also expressed the hope that additional members would join the Working Group.

Edoardo Cavallé thanked Jean-Philippe Haesler for his work and encouraged the delegates to view the toothbrushing video available on the ERO website, emphasizing its importance.

6.2 Liberal Dental Practice in Europe

Thomas Wolf highlighted the meeting held in Hamburg together with the Working Group on "Relations between Universities and Dental Practitioners", thanking Konstantin von Laffert, his team and the Hamburg Dental Chamber for the excellent organization and hospitality. The work since the previous session focused on three main areas: the working conditions of young dentists, dental advertising, and developments associated with investor-owned dental clinics. Particular attention was given to the future of dental advertising. As communication increasingly moves into the digital sphere, patients are using search engines and social media to find dentists. Dental advertising should therefore provide information and build trust, while maintaining professionalism and avoiding aggressive marketing.

Thomas Wolf also pointed to significant differences between European countries and their regulatory structures. Individually owned dental practices are often subject to different requirements than investor-owned dental organizations. He stressed that the same fundamental principles should apply regardless of ownership or the size of the healthcare structure. Patients should be able to understand who is responsible for their dental care, and the primary objective of dental care should remain patients' oral health rather than economic returns.

Another key area of work is the development of Europe-wide surveys to establish a reliable evidence base. The questionnaire addressing patients' perspectives on dental advertising is currently in the final validation phase, while a questionnaire for national dental associations has also been developed and validated. Following completion of the validation process, both questionnaires will be implemented using Redcap and distributed internationally. Thomas Wolf encouraged all national associations to participate, emphasizing that European recommendations require broad representation across Europe. In conclusion, Thomas Wolf stressed that ERO's role is not only to monitor development but also to help shape them. The organization should work to preserve professional independence, fair competition, transparency and patient-centered care in a changing environment. He noted that innovation requires responsibility, competition requires fairness, and European dentistry requires diversity alongside shared ethical principles.

Thomas Wolf concluded by thanking the members of the working groups for their commitment and Monika Lang for her support.

6.3 Relations between dental practitioners and universities

Mare Saag thanks everybody who contributed to the fruitful meeting in Hamburg. The group also met in Prague. 12 out of 14 members were present.

She reported on the WG's ongoing work to assess and strengthen collaboration between dental faculties, National Dental Associations (NDAs) and dental practitioners. The main objectives are to identify areas where collaboration and partnerships are working well, as well as areas where improvements could be made, and to formulate specific recommendations for action.

The first part of the project focused on the NDA perspective. Responses were received from 41 countries. The data is being analyzed and presented by statistician Kori D. Johnson in Hamburg. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, with a particular focus on continuing education and perceived levels of collaboration, as well as comparisons between countries, highlighting variations in the reported levels of collaboration.

The second part of the project assesses the extent, quality and potential opportunities for collaboration between dental faculties and National Dental Associations from the universities' perspective. To date, 70 responses from dental schools in 31 countries within the European Region of FDI have been received. Mare Saag also presented an overview of the countries that have responded and those from which responses are still outstanding. The following next steps were outlined:

1. Continuation of data collection during 2026
2. Data processing and analysis
3. Presentation of the final results at the 2027 Plenary Session in Dubrovnik
4. Formulation of specific recommendations for action and publication of the results in 2027/2028.

6.4 Integration

Ilshat Yuldashev presented the activities of the Working Group on Integration, which addressed several issues relevant to dental care in the ERO region, including sterilisation of dental instruments, prevention programmes and the financing of healthcare and dental care.

Regarding the sterilisation of dental instruments, a comparative review was presented covering several ERO-FDI member countries. It was reported that all countries have governmental regulations and sanitary requirements concerning the sterilisation of medical instruments. In some countries, specific regulations exist for dental instruments. The Working Group considered dedicated guidance for dental practices desirable.

The Working Group also highlighted the importance of prevention programmes and oral health education, particularly for children. National prevention programmes have been developed in Bulgaria, Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

A further part of the presentation addressed healthcare and dental care financing in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Different financing models were described, including state funding, compulsory health insurance, voluntary insurance and direct patient payments. Dental care is characterized by a significant private-sector component and a high proportion of out-of-pocket expenditure. Basic public programmes generally cover a limited range of services, while more extensive treatments are predominantly provided on a private basis.

Ilshat Yuldashev emphasized the continued importance of prevention programmes and, in relation to dental care financing, the potential role of public-private partnerships in improving access to dental services. Ilshat Yuldashev further referred to the role of family doctors and family nurses and to prevention within insurance programmes.

During the discussion, Doniphan Hammer reported that ADF is finalising another study, which is expected to be presented at the ADF Congress. He offered to make a related guide available. Ilshat Yuldashev welcomed the offer and emphasized the need for further support and additional documentation concerning the relevant legislation. Azamat Baigulakov suggested that the development of a common framework covering both undergraduate and postgraduate education could also be considered. Ilshat Yuldashev acknowledged the suggestion but noted that the scope of the Working Group's work should perhaps not be extended too broadly. Edoardo Cavallé noted that the objective was not to develop practical approaches that could be useful to the ERO region. He described this as a first step towards better mutual understanding and cooperation. He also referred to artificial intelligence as a possible method of facilitating communication. He thanked the members of the Working Group for their work and encouraged them to involve and motivate their colleagues to participate actively.

6.5 Continuing medical education in Dentistry

Marzena Dominiak presented its ongoing work on continuing education in dentistry. She has taken over the chair from Hande SarSancakly and is currently considering a proposal for a Global Dental Education Framework. Reference was also made to the paper *"Continuing Dental Education Preferences and Learning Needs among Dental Students"*. The importance of communication and the exchange of information between members was emphasized. Information about relevant events should be shared through social media, as this helps to increase awareness and facilitate communication between the different sources and members. Endodontics was mentioned as a topic attracting particularly strong interest in Türkiye, which may also be relevant when planning future conferences. The Working Group discussed its name and whether the term "medical education in dentistry" should be retained or whether a more specific reference to dental education would be appropriate.

The possibility of developing a common platform for continuing education in the future was also discussed. Accreditation was identified as an important issue, as accreditation systems and requirements differ considerably between countries. This topic will therefore also be addressed in the questionnaire.

The Working Group will continue to explore future models and opportunities for continuing education in dentistry.

6.6 Dental Team

Kristjan Gutmann presented the first results of the Working Group's survey on bureaucracy and documentation in the dental team. The survey aims to assess the administrative burden, the time spent on paperwork and documentation requirements, and their possible impact on dental professionals.

Responses have so far been received from 14 member associations, representing 14 countries, while further responses are still awaited. The results indicate that administrative burden is perceived as a significant issue. In particular, documentation and reporting require considerable time: 14 of 16 respondents estimated that patient documentation takes at least 30 minutes per day, while 9 of 16 reported at least 30 minutes per day for non-clinical documentation.

The survey also identified low-value and duplicated reporting as common problems. At the same time, respondents recognized that certain administrative requirements may have a protective function by helping to prevent illegal practice. The results further indicated a possible association between bureaucracy and a lower willingness among younger dentists to establish their own practice. More responses are needed to further substantiate these findings.

The questionnaire will therefore be circulated again to obtain additional information. Based on the completed survey, the Working Group aims to develop practical recommendations

for reducing unnecessary administrative burden, with a view to presenting further conclusions and proposals at the 2027 Plenary Session in Dubrovnik. The presentation identified five areas for consideration: single data entry, replacing paper with trusted digital processes, risk-based inspection frequencies, proportionate reporting requirements, and the removal of reporting that provides no clear benefit.

Kristjan Gutmann explained that the survey currently uses relatively broad questions, as the Working Group's first objective is to obtain a broader overall picture of the administrative burden. He expressed hope that the findings would allow the Working Group to examine the issues in greater detail at a subsequent stage.

In response to a question about whether the results would be made available, it was confirmed that the results would be published on **the ERO website**.

6.7 Digitalization in dentistry – E-Health – Artificial Intelligence

Roman Smucler presented its report on digitalization, e-health and artificial intelligence (AI) in dentistry, focusing on practical education, updated guidance and policy development. The Group noted that the concept of an ERO programme on AI education, implementation and shared teaching resources has been discussed since the previous meetings. Two active contributors have so far provided concrete content, including practical applications of AI in dental practice, clinical literacy, dental practice management and dentomaxillofacial radiology.

A six-month educational pilot was proposed, consisting of a closed Teaching Exchange for invited association leaders, educators and contributors, followed by an open practical webinar for dentists and dental teams. The programme would address practical AI applications, clinical literacy, safeguards and country-specific experiences. The proposed pilot would operate under ERO Board oversight and without company funding or product endorsement.

The Working Group also highlighted the need to update ERO's existing AI guidance, taking into account developments in AI technology, the current regulatory framework and data protection requirements. Particular attention should be given to data governance, including the use of cloud-based and local systems, privacy safeguards and professional responsibility. A practice checklist and standard vendor questionnaire are proposed as part of the revised guidance.

In the field of dental education, the Working Group proposed addressing practical questions concerning acceptable uses of AI, disclosure and citation, verification of sources and authorship, assessment methods and the use of AI in grading or examination. Roman Smucler pointed out the need to define these questions first and subsequently seek consensus among the member organizations.

The Board has expressed broad support for an educational initiative, while formal approval, the budget and the delivery mandate remain pending. Preparatory work may continue without prejudging the final decision. In parallel, the Working Group plans to begin updating the guidance and developing a policy matrix on AI in dental education and assessment. The revised guidance and proposed education policy positions are intended to be presented for consideration at the 2027 Plenary in Dubrovnik.

6.8 Oral Health & General Health

Marion Dordain introduced herself as the new chair and thanked Mick Armstrong for his contribution. She expressed her commitment to continuing and further developing the work of the Group.

The Working Group has begun exploring several topics related to oral and general health, including the relationship between pregnancy and oral health. Further topics will be identified and explored in greater detail during the forthcoming Working Group meetings. The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for 17 November, when the selected topics will be discussed in greater depth.

No questions were raised following the presentation.

6.9 Approval of the reports of Working groups

All Working Group reports were approved unanimously.

The delegates were encouraged to attend the Working Group meetings whenever possible and to actively participate in their work.

Edoardo Cavallé referred to the possibility of organizing hybrid meetings in the future. He noted that this could provide an opportunity to dedicate a separate day to ERO activities, avoiding conflicts between Working Group meetings and other meetings. He presented the different scenarios proposed by FDI and encouraged delegates to carefully consider the implications before making a decision.

B.7 Member countries/Platform for discussion

Hans de Vries thanked ERO for the excellent meeting in Prague and raised the issue of harmonizing undergraduate and postgraduate dental education in Europe.

He referred to a recent article published by the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE) in the *European Journal of Dental Education* on the capabilities of a graduating European dentist and the further harmonization of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. He expressed strong support for strengthening cooperation between ERO and ADEE, as also suggested by Paula Perlea.

In this context, he raised the question of what should constitute the minimum set of skills required of a dentist. He noted that in the Netherlands, approximately 25% of dentists are currently educated abroad, both within and outside the European Economic Area (EEA), and that this proportion is expected to increase significantly in the coming years.

He invited discussions on the obstacles to harmonizing undergraduate and postgraduate dental education at European level and on the opportunities that a future revision of the EU Professional Qualifications Directive might offer to further establish continuing professional education requirements.

Hans de Vries concluded by expressing his appreciation for ERO's support in promoting greater harmonization of the quality of dental education across Europe, which he considered beneficial for all ERO member countries, both now and increasingly in the future.

No comments on this special topic.

Discussion on Nicotine Pouches

The use of nicotine pouches and other alternative nicotine products was discussed. Doris Seiz expressed serious concerns about nicotine pouches and questioned the claim that they carry a lower risk of addiction.

Hans de Vries noted that this position would likely be supported by the Swedish perspective and regretted that no representative from Sweden was present to contribute to the discussion.

Ellemieke Hin reported that 60% of young people between the ages of 12 and 16 consume “Snus” or similar nicotine products. She noted that these products are marketed as a healthy alternative to tobacco. She also referred to the serious problems associated with their use and highlighted that support and information are available for those seeking assistance.

Doris Seiz expressed concerns about the involvement and sponsorship of the tobacco industry in this area.

Christof Ruda reported that the same health warnings as those used on cigarette packaging would be required on these products. He also observed that, in airport duty-free shops, the space allocated to traditional cigarettes appears to be decreasing, while areas dedicated to

alternative nicotine products are becoming larger. He considered this development a serious concern.

Discussion on Dental Tourism

The issue of dental tourism was raised as a growing concern. A representative from the UK reported that dental tourism is becoming an increasingly significant market in the country. He noted that problems can arise when patients return home following treatment abroad and complications or unsatisfactory outcomes need to be addressed locally. He further pointed out that treatments are often carried out within a short period of time, which may contribute to subsequent problems requiring treatment in the patients' home country. Edoardo Cavallé agreed that dental tourism represents a significant concern, particularly when dental treatment is provided outside Europe. He noted that the issue is also relevant in Italy.

Discussion on Analogue Panoramic X-ray Films

Doris Seiz raised the issue of the discontinuation of analogue panoramic X-ray films. She reported that, in Germany, the dental industry had stopped producing and selling analogue orthopantomographic X-ray films without prior notification to the dental profession. She noted that this appeared to be related to the requirements of the Medical Device Regulation and that the situation was causing difficulties for some dental practices, particularly those still using analogue equipment. She asked whether this was also an issue in other countries.

Oliver Zeyer reported that the situation was the same in Switzerland and that it is particularly problematic for older dental practices. He also referred to discussions within the CED and to a possible questionnaire on the subject. It was further noted that Israel was facing a similar situation.

B. 8 FDI matters – report

Candidates for a post in the FDI commissions have the floor.

B. 9 Next meetings

Plenary session 2027 (Spring) - 15.-17. April – Dubrovnik - More information will follow by e-mail.

Plenary session 2027 (Autumn) – in October 2027 – during WDC (21-24.10.) in Mumbai. The exact date will be communicated as soon as possible.

Candidatures for hosting the ERO Plenary Session in Spring are always welcome. Please let the secretariat know.

B.10 Miscellaneous

Discussion on Proxy Voting

Edoardo Cavallé introduced the topic of proxy voting and invited Doniphan Hammer to briefly explain the proposal, noting that the intention was not to open a general discussion at this stage.

Doniphan Hammer reiterated the points previously presented at the FDI Forum. He explained that proxy voting would provide greater flexibility in exceptional circumstances. He noted that proxies would be subject to a time limit and would lapse after three years, thereby providing a defined framework for their use.

Edoardo Cavallé noted that proxy voting could broaden the possibility of exercising voting rights, while acknowledging that there were also concerns regarding the system. In particular, questions were raised as to how the system could ensure that a proxy vote reflects the position of the respective NDA and how the balance between voting rights and physical attendance would be maintained.

Doniphan Hammer clarified that proxy voting would not reduce the number of votes available to the General Assembly. Rather, it could reduce the number of delegates physically present. He explained that the maximum number of voting pads would be three per country and that votes could not be accumulated. As a general rule, a country could hold only one proxy from another country, with exceptions possible in cases of force majeure.

The issue of the quorum was also raised. It was noted that this would depend on whether proxy votes are counted for the purpose of establishing the quorum. This point needs to be clearly defined. Doniphan Hammer indicated that the intention was that the quorum should be based on the persons physically present in the room.

C Close of the meeting

The president thanks all the delegates and his board for the good collaboration and the translators for their precious support and adjourns the meeting.

President: Dr. Edoardo Cavallé (Italy) • President-Elect: Prof. Paula Perlea (Romania) •
Secretary General: Dr. Doris Seiz (Germany) • Councilor: Dr. Oleg Gladkov (Bulgaria) • Councilor: Dr. Ariel Slutsky (Israel)

ERO-Secretariat, Monika Lang, Schlossgutweg 30, CH-3073 Guemligen, Tel. ++41 79 628 63 35
mail: secretariat@erodental.org

Bank account: CREDIT SUISSE AG, 3001 Bern, Switzerland - Account No. 1872503-32, IBAN CH14 0483 5187 2503 3200 0, BIC CRESCHZZ80A
in the name of European Regional Organisation of FDI, 1216 Cointrin, Switzerland

www.erodental.org