



## **ERO-Plenary Session 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2021**

**10.00 h - 15.00 h**

### ***Minutes***

(Reports and presentations are on the ERO Website [ERO Plenary Session Spring 2021 - Online - European Regional Organisation of the Fédération Dentaire Internationale \(erodental.org\)](https://www.ero-dental.org/))

#### **A Welcome**

##### **A.1 ERO-President**

A warm welcome to all participants, also on behalf of the Executive Board, who are connected from home, is extended by the ERO President at the opening of this 1st Online General Assembly. In 2020, the meeting in Kazakhstan had to be cancelled completely and this year's meeting planned for Bucharest is now also taking place as an online event. He thanks Paula Perlea for the uncomplicated rescheduling and apologizes again to the Kazakhs for the cancellation.

This online meeting is a technical adventure not to be underestimated and he hopes for a successful outcome.

##### **A.2 Welcome of guests**

Michael Frank welcomes the FDI President Gerhard Seeberger, Anna Lella, his predecessor in office, former FDI President Michèle Aerden. Apologies from Patrick Hescot and Philippe Rusca (both predecessors in office) who were unfortunately unable to attend.

FDI President, Gerhard Seeberger, greets the participants at this meeting. It was a difficult time for everyone, but still we were able to bring a lot of things to fruition. He reports on the UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage on 23 September 2019, where oral health was finally discussed. It is important that we remain involved in this. The FDI also includes this in a statement; and "Vision 2030" has certainly also contributed to the fact that more attention is being paid to oral health.

The dangers of COVID-19 for the profession were recognized early on in 2020 and a COVID-19 task force was set up. The response was very quick. 2 webinars were held on the topic - these are available on the FDI website. The aerosol webinar was a great success. From various surveys it could be concluded that the infection rate in dental practices is almost zero.

These are the next steps:

Based on the data and information provided by members in the surveys, the FDI is working on a series of reports that will summarize the impact of COVID-19 in three main areas and provide guidance for future actions and preparations. The topics are:

- Practitioner infection rates, PPE/AGP recommendations
- Practice guidance and recommendations
- Financial impact on practices

COVID-19 will be the main topic of the World Oral Health Forum in 2021. It will be held in the form of two online sessions, one focusing on the impact of COVID-19 to date and the response to it, and the other on the future impact and preparedness for it.

Further webinars will be held in the coming months to share information on key topics related to COVID-19.

Gerhard Seeberger thanks the members for their support during this year.

### **A.3 Short greeting from EDSA President**

James Coughlan thanks for the invitation. The main purpose of EDSA is to bring together dental students from the different countries in the European region, which has been a bit complicated lately. The clinical training has been quite difficult, too. They have sought contacts with the EU to obtain improvements in dental education and have contacted UNESCO. EDSA informs about their activities on their website (<https://www.edsaweb.org>). James Coughlan calls on the national associations of the FDI and ERO to involve young dentists in their discussions.

## **B Standard agenda of the business meeting**

### **B.1 Establishment of the quorum**

Taner Yücel announces that 46 of 59 registered delegates and 18 of 33 substitute delegates are present and that the meeting is quorate.

### **B.2 Approval of the agenda**

The agenda is adopted in its present form with 44 votes in favor and 1 abstention.

### **B.3 Results from the written voting 2020**

2020, only a written ballot could be conducted. The results of the written voting were sent out on 7.10.2020 and can be found on the website (see minutes).

### **B.4 Report of the Board**

Michael Frank does not present a long report and asks for understanding. Corona not only changed life, but also the work in ERO. Meetings have taken place regularly, but only virtually.

- Working groups: A new working group (Digitalisation-E-Health-Artificial Intelligence) has been created during this time. He thanks the working groups for their work even under these difficult conditions. Before the plenary session, a meeting of the chairs with the board members should now take place whenever possible.
- COVID-19 - ERO used the CED questionnaire and jointly analyzed the situation in Europe; on the part of ERO mainly in the non-CED countries. Unfortunately, there was not much feedback. However, it was noted that the hygiene concepts seem to have worked well. Almost no infections were found in dental practices. Dental care for the population was always ensured during the pandemic. A WHO announcement that all non-essential treatments in dental practices were to be postponed did not please and was considered absolutely counterproductive by the dental profession. The ERO and FDI reacted very quickly and communicated their dismay at this statement. Vaccination was also an important issue. It was not a question of dentists necessarily wanting to vaccinate, but to make it clear that with the comprehensive training that a dentist enjoys, we are qualified to do so and are entitled to the competence to do so.
- CED - enhanced cooperation and joint projects were envisaged. For example, the AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance) Workforce; a very good and important project.
- World health day - the press release underlines the importance of oral health and accordingly the importance for the general health of the human being.
- Further development of FDI Vision 2030 - We participated as far as ERO was called to do so.

- EDSA - The Memorandum of Understanding was updated. We hope to be able to continue with this.
- EU Study on the Dental Profession - We did not give an official opinion, but decided to follow the statement of the CED. The result will then be taken to the countries outside the EU.

Simona Dianiskova reports on the cooperation with the CED (see website). The CED/ERO joint venture on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) was very successful. She thanks all members of the group for their commitment. The podcast - link was widely distributed. This year the working group is working on a brochure for practitioners. The message is that antibiotics do not cure dental diseases and points out the importance of preventing infections. A similar leaflet will then be produced for the public.

The ERO president thanks all those involved for their very good work.

## **B.5 Finances**

### **5.1 Settlement of accounts 2020**

Accounts 2020 - Oliver Zeyer explains the individual points. For example, the amount spent on the work of the working groups was less than budgeted. As there was no plenary session, there were no expenses for this. Only the cancellation of hall rentals and translation cost some money. The project for updating the website was postponed and so we remained under budget in terms of expenditure.

On the other hand, the reduction of 50% in membership fees had an impact on the income. The 2020 account closes with a loss of € 6065.32.

### **5.2 Outstanding fees**

3 membership fees are still outstanding. However, the treasurer is confident that these payments will be received soon.

### **5.3 Report of the auditor**

Oliver Zeyer reads the auditor's report. It certifies that the bookkeeping is accurate and that the results are correct. The auditor recommends acceptance of the 2020 accounts. The treasurer thanks Enrico Lai for his work.

With 44 votes in favor and 2 abstentions, the accounts and the auditor's report are accepted and the Board is discharged.

### **5.4 Budget 2021**

The 2021 budget, which foresees a deficit of €73'822.00 (with annual fees still halved), is adopted with 44 votes in favor, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

The Treasurer thanks everyone for their work.

## **B.6 Presentation of the candidates for FDI posts**

Paulo Melo, Michael Sereny, Sophie Dartevelle, Duguay Ilhan, Anna Lella, Susie Sanderson and Victor Chan take the opportunity to present themselves as candidates for the vacant FDI posts.

## **B.7 Working groups**

### **7.1 Aging Population**

Henk Donker decided not to make a presentation and refers to the report on the ERO website.

### **7.2 Liberal Dental Practice in Europe**

The last in-person meeting took place in November 2019. Ernst-Jürgen Otterbach summarizes the most important points of the WG's activities. The main topic was and is the development of practice establishments by outside investors (investment firms or similar). The WG has always pointed out the dangers related to externally managed dental practices, namely overtreatment, expensive prices and poor quality. It seems almost impossible to stop the development. It is an issue that also interests and affects the younger generation and where they must take part in.

Thomas Wolf will later present a study on this topic, which was prepared in cooperation with the University of Bern and the University of Mainz. The issue of self-determination/external determination will continue to be a central point of the WG's activities.

Corona is also leaving its mark on the cost side of the practices. In Germany, a study on the economic impact of Corona is underway and the FDI is also collecting data on this.

And finally, one must not lose sight of health policy developments in the EU - even if the ERO is far beyond the borders of the EU. Under the impression of the pandemic, the topic of health has experienced a great reevaluation. A centralization in Brussels would certainly have an impact on our profession. This is also a reason to further strengthen the cooperation/exchange with the CED.

Thomas Wolf presents the study mentioned by Ernst-Jürgen Otterbach (see website). The work has already been published as a journal article. The main aim of the study was to obtain information on the career planning of young dentists/students. A questionnaire with 18 items was developed in 5 languages. After their evaluation, it can be concluded: the dental profession will be predominantly female in the future and the majority would like to decide to start their own practice in more than 3 years. Dental students have differing opinions on whether they would like to work for a institutions with private capital participation and insurance companies. The new opportunities to practice offer many options; the young dentists have not yet decided or even thought about where to go.

3800 people participated in the survey, 74% female, 26% male.

Thomas Wolf thanks ERO for its support in realizing this study.

### 7.3 Relations between dental practioners and universities

Mare Saag reports that this working group has also been working despite the pandemic and has conducted a survey. The topics: "Collaborative practice in health care? Definition of interprofessional education." It should result in a joint statement with ADEE and the publication of an article. She presents the results of the survey (see also website). We are still in the early stages of interprofessional education, but there are already good examples of cooperation between different medical specialties. The project should be completed this year and then they want to look for a new topic.

### 7.4 Integration

The problems have not decreased but increased, Vladimer Marghvelashvili notes. The integration process is based on 2 factors, education and legislation. The working group agreed on a short survey with 8 questions. This was sent to the new democratic countries. Unfortunately, only a few responded. Based on this experience, these conclusions were drawn (see presentation on the website).

He asks the ERO to support the development of an official document addressed to the health authorities of these new democratic countries. In this way, he hopes to promote and support the integration process.

### 7.5 Quality in dentistry

Roland L'Herron reports on the results of the survey "Recommendations in the ERO countries". Of course, recommendations cannot be binding for all. Hence the question: Simple advice or binding recommendations? Unfortunately, the return of answers to this survey was somewhat small. The results can be found in the presentation on the ERO website. However, it is actually clear that quality issues sense should not be decided by authorities, but by scientific commissions.

Working with the issue of quality is difficult, both in terms of the surveys (questions too difficult or unclear?) and in terms of the group itself, Roland L'Herron concludes.

### 7.6 Continuing medical education in Dentistry

Hande Sar Sancakli presents the current activities of the working group (see website). Attention has been given to the integration of oral health into general health, one of the important points also of FDI Vision 2030. The working group would be happy to support the ERO national associations in their educational events and offer cooperation in organizing interdisciplinary

educational activities. A survey on preferred educational formats was conducted - when this survey was launched we did not know that a pandemic was imminent where online education would become particularly important. In 2021, a survey will be conducted to put a special focus on students with theoretical and practical training gaps. She thanks everyone for their cooperation.

### 7.7 Dental Team

Doniphan Hammer thanks the members of the WG for the good cooperation. A questionnaire on the impact of COVID-19 on dental practices was sent out. He presents the results (see website). The work in the dental practices has slowed down considerably, if not stopped for a while. In many places, only emergency treatments could be carried out. A shortage of protective materials has also led to an increase in price. Certainly, this situation has contributed to increased concern about storage. A decrease in income, but also in salaries, could be observed. Specific recommendations for dentistry have been missed.

Based on all the reactions and recommendations, a resolution has now been drafted describing the activities of the dental team, hygiene measures for staff and the workplace. See also website.

The resolution is adopted with 37 votes in favour, 3 against and 3 abstentions.

### 7.8 Digitalisation in dentistry – E-Health – Artificial Intelligence

Roman Smucler presents the ideas of the working group (see website). The CED is also working on these issues and is elaborating documents; it makes little sense to do the same. However, creating a platform that is accessible to all members of ERO is certainly a good idea and can serve as a source of inspiration. It shall function as a medium for sharing essential information about current possibilities in diagnostics, therapy proposals (including their presentation) and the therapy itself with the use of digital and robotized dentistry. Financing is not a problem; the budget foresees costs of about 10'000€. A good part of this could be financed by advertising and congresses. He presents the targets which are working with social media and on the web. For the time being, it should be started in one language. The board has to decide on this. However, there will be another - hopefully face-to-face - working group meeting. Most of the work should be completed by autumn 2021.

Michael Frank explains that Roman Smucler's proposal was discussed at this morning's meeting with the working group chairs. The Board will try to find a decision as soon as possible.

### 7.9 Approval of the reports of the Working groups

The agenda stipulates that the reports of the working groups must be approved. The delegates do so with 39 votes in favor and 2 abstentions.

The President thanks all chairs and members for their work and is glad that the working groups work so well despite Corona.

## B.8 Member countries

### Admission/Resignation of new members

Taner Yücel has one bad news and one good news. The Danish Dental Association has decided to terminate its membership in ERO. With regret, the delegates take note of this announcement. On the other hand, the Hungarian Dental Society has applied for membership. The Secretary General puts their admission to the vote. With 35 votes in favor and one abstention, the admission of the RDA is decided. Congratulations and welcome to the ERO family!

### National reports and discussion

The pandemic, education and "corporate dentistry" are the most frequently mentioned concerns of the national associations. Taner Yücel has summarized the statements from the country reports. The corresponding summary can be found on the ERO website.

The Secretary General also refers to the BDA's commitment to combating racism and discrimination at all levels of the in dentistry, in response to the international outcry following the death of George Floyd in May and the resulting "Black Lives Matter" movement. Lastly, he congratulates the Estonian Dental Association, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2020.

Michael Frank thanks for this report. There is a lot of work behind it. Unfortunately, the debate is also cancelled, because it is simply not possible to do it online.

## **B.9 FDI matters**

### **FDI – message from the President**

Gerhard Seeberger is glad that the Hungarian Dental Association is now also a member of the ERO. He praises the good organization of the ERO and thanks for the contributions to Vision 2030. In response to respective questions, the FDI President informs that unfortunately the World Dental Congress in Shanghai has been cancelled. The business meetings will nevertheless take place, but entirely virtually. Of course, this involves more effort. Simultaneous translation and a voting system will be available as usual (see also the presentation on the website). In 2023, the World Congress will then take place in Australia and in 2024 in China.

## **B.10 Next meetings**

Plenary session 2021 (autumn) – Sydney.

As the FDI Congress in Sydney is cancelled, there will not be a second ERO Assembly this year.

Plenary session 2022 (29/30 April) – Bucharest

We hope to be able to hold this in presence. The President thanks Paula Perlea and the Romanian Dental Association for making the postponement so uncomplicated.

The venues for the following years have not yet been decided. Interested national associations are invited to contact us.

## **B. 11 Miscellaneous**

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## **C Close of the meeting**

### **Adjournment**

Michael Frank thanks the technicians who have done an optimal job, the translators for their much-appreciated services under difficult conditions and the secretariat for their support. Finally, of course, he thanks his Board and all participants for their cooperation and closes the meeting.

The president:

Dr. Michael Frank

For the minutes:

Monika Lang

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