



EBCOG President's Newsletter

April 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Well, after three years of planning the 2010 European Congress in Antwerp is almost upon us. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prof Chiara Benedetto, Dr Johan Van Wiemeersch, Prof Jean-Pierre Schaaps and the Local Organising Committee in Belgium for all their hard work. As at the end of March, in addition to the number of Speakers and Chairs, we had almost 500 paid registrations from 58 countries. This figure does not include industry registrations, and most of these 500 registrations are not connected to an abstract. By the end of March 435 abstracts had been submitted and so we are hoping that the Congress will be an even bigger success than in previous years - I look forward to seeing you all in Antwerp.

The Congress centre is booked in Tallinn 2012 for 9th - 12th May 2012, so please don't forget to put those dates in your diaries! We have bids for the 2014 Congress from Glasgow and Istanbul and Council will vote on which venue it is to be in Antwerp. Best wishes to both cities.

One of the major factors in the success of any Congress, and indeed all of EBCOG's activities, is publicity and information exchange. National societies are the heart of EBCOG and we are keen to ensure that there is a regular and stimulating flow of information between EBCOG and our member societies. Please keep up to date with us on our web site and in contact via your national societies. EBCOG is the voice of European obstetrics and gynaecology and we would like to make sure that we represent you all.

One of the really crucial tools for communication is the web site, which is now in the process of being re-vamped. The design of the site and the way in which it was set up meant that the possibilities for EBCOG to change the design and functionality of the site were limited, because the host server is 'protected'. Because of these limitations and the high costs involved, we requested tenders from other firms to re-design and host the site. These tenders were discussed at the recent Executive meeting and, given the urgency of the need to improve the site, the Executive took the decision that the ENTOG Webmaster and his colleague should work closely with the EBCOG Webmaster, Dr Werner, to completely re-design the site and make it more topical, user-friendly and interactive. I am sure that the new site will be a real asset in helping EBCOG and the national societies to interface more regularly and closely.

Specialist and subspecialist visiting and accreditation process continues to go from strength to strength and the EBCOG Visiting and Accreditation Coordinator, Prof Juriy Wladimiroff, has written several times to national societies about the issue of requests for accreditation

from countries which already have national accreditation systems. A number of countries have replied; many more have not. This has held up quite a significant number of both specialist and subspecialist visits and we would urge national societies which have not yet responded to do so. My thanks to Jurij for the enormous amount of time and effort he puts into coordinating so many visits.

EBCOG continues to be close to its sister subspecialist societies and I very much value all their contributions and inputs. I am very happy that EBCOG and the subspecialist societies are receiving an increasing amount of requests for subspecialist visits. All of the societies are running sessions at the Congress and we are always invited to participate in their meetings and Congresses.

The President of the Section and I recently attended the UEMS meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries-General of the Sections and Boards. During the meeting the question of the mandate periods for UEMS Officers was discussed as, currently, it is possible to hold office in UEMS for 12 years, and longer as Secretary-General. UEMS is also considering introducing the post of President-Elect. The Executive agreed that EBCOG should advocate that UEMS introduces the position of President-Elect and also that of Past-President. In addition, we discussed whether, after my current term of Office comes to an end in 2011, EBCOG should consider introducing a system whereby the Office of Vice-President is abolished and a system of President-Elect, President and Past-President introduced, with two year mandate periods for all Officers. This generated a lively and positive debate in Brussels and I hope to have more news for you about what may happen following the discussion in Council in May.

Speaking of positions and mandates brings me to the fact that, as Prof Jacques Lansac's term of Office as an Executive member of EBCOG has now come to an end, there will be an election for the post of Executive member at our next Council meeting. We have received nominations for this position from, in alphabetical order, Finland, Poland, Russia and Turkey. My best wishes to all the candidates!

As you know, EBCOG's objective is to improve the health of women and their babies by promoting the highest possible standards of care in all European countries. We do this by advocating for O&G issues to be advanced in EU political institutions and by providing information to our member societies about current and upcoming EU legislation relevant to O&G. This being the case, we are keen to expand and develop our contacts in and links with the European institutions. The Vice-President has therefore been in contact with a Belgian Senator, Senator Marleen Temmerman, and she has agreed to meet with representatives of EBCOG and to invite other EU representatives to the meeting.

Senator Temmerman recently informed the Vice-President that there will be a unique meeting of the "commission women affaires" of the European Parliament on May 3rd and 4th 2010. She told the Vice-President that she would like EBCOG to participate in this exceptional meeting and has asked the Belgian MEPs if this will be possible. We hope to have more, hopefully good, news within the next week.

Financially, EBCOG continues to remain strong and healthy thanks to the good offices of EBCOG's Treasurer, so on behalf of EBCOG I would like to thank him for all his efforts.

Under the Chairmanship of Prof Klaus Vetter, the SCTA is currently focusing on challenges in training, elements of effective training, model approaches and the future of training the trainers (TTT) in EBCOG. Given the coming into force of the European Working Time Directive, this Working Group will also be re-examining EBCOG's Specialist Training Programme and Log Book. Other current concerns are gender and recruitment, patient

safety and risk management systems, the feminisation of the profession, quality management, societal changes and e-learning. It is fair to say that the SCTA has a very broad remit, but its activities reflect EBCOG's core aims. My thanks to Klaus, and to all of the members, who work so efficiently on such a wide range of diverse topics.

EBCOG and ENTOG continue to cooperate closely, and EBCOG gave ENTOG some additional financial support so that ENTOG could attend the meeting of the ACOG trainees in January. I was also delighted to be able to attend what was a very interesting and useful meeting which strengthened the links not only between ENTOG and ACOG but between EBCOG and ACOG.

In 2011, ENTOG has asked EBCOG to hold its spring meeting in London at the same time as the ENTOG Exchange Programme and Meeting. ENTOG has provisionally booked the RCOG for Saturday 7th May. The topic of the ENTOG 2011 meeting is "Simulation and interdisciplinary aspects of our training."

EBCOG has some concerns about the matter of regional representation within FIGO. The issue for us is that the number of countries in each of FIGO's five regions varies enormously. Europe contains 41 of FIGO's members, it is in fact the largest region, followed by Asia-Oceania and Africa, which both have approximately 30 member societies, and then by Latin America, which has around 20 member societies, whereas in the case of the North American region, this one region is comprised of three countries (Canada, Mexico and the USA).

In addition, FIGO has proposed that its Executive Board be reconstituted to include two representatives from each region, and EBCOG suspects that this will only serve to further perpetuate the regional imbalance.

I have written to the President of FIGO about this matter and he has kindly replied to say that he understood EBCOG's concerns but that this is a complex issue which is not simply related to the number of societies in a given region. He explained that he had put this issue onto the agenda of the FIGO Officer's meeting.

EBCOG recognises that any suggestions from EBCOG to FIGO should be in the form of a practical suggestion which takes the entire world into consideration. We will continue to discuss this issue to jointly try and find an appropriate solution, but EBCOG remains committed to giving full support to FIGO in this as in other matters

This newsletter is, by definition, only a snapshot of EBCOG's activities and concerns at the moment. As I mentioned before, one of our principal concerns is to keep in close contact with our member societies and you, their members, and so I would ask you to please keep us up to date with your views and concerns via your national society (ies) so that we can all continue to work together to ensure the highest standards of training, and therefore care, for the women and their babies in Europe.

Professor Peter Hornnes
President of EBCOG

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