



## Meeting of the EBSA Executive Committee, Stockholm, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Aula Magna meeting room, Stockholm University and Kemisamfundet, Storgatan 19

**Present:** Elena Pohl (President); Jesus Perez-Gil (Past President); Maria Sunnerhagen (Vice President); John Seddon (Secretary); Tony Wilkinson (Treasurer); Rob Gilbert (EBJ); Dejan Žikić; Nuno Santos; Ilpo Vattulainen (EBSA Newsgroup); Primoz Zihler; Helmut Grubmüller (co-opted: future congresses); László Mátyus (co-opted: EBSA Webmaster); Pierre-Emmanuel Milhiet (co-opted: EBSA Workshops Coordinator); Anthony Watts (Co-opted: International Societies).

**Present via Zoom:** Arwen Pearson

**Apologies:** Sarah Köster; Jacqueline Cherfils (Co-opted: Bursaries)

**Guests:** Åsa Eklund (MKON Conference Manager); Lena Mäler (Stockholm University); Jerker Wildergren (Royal Institute of Technology).

## Approved Minutes

### 1. Welcome and Apologies (EP)

Elena Pohl welcomed the Committee and reported that Apologies were received from Sarah Köster and Jacqueline Cherfils.

### 2. Minutes of the EC Zoom meeting on 22 Jan 2022 (JMS)

There was brief discussion of a number of issues covered in the Minutes. Tony Wilkinson reported that the Avanti Award should cover the Travel of the winner within the sum given, and an additional travel claim should not be submitted by the Award winner.

Elena was asked to provide Final Accounts of the 2021 Vienna Congress.

**Action:** Elena

In terms of an EDI policy for EBSA, Arwen has drafted this, and it will be discussed at our January 2023 EC meeting.

In terms of Student Bursaries (Travel Awards), Jacqueline will present a suggested plan how to operate them at the January 2023 EC meeting.

It was noted that the Trustees did not meet in January 2022. There was also a brief discussion whether it would make sense to move the EBSA bank accounts from the UK to another European country. Tony Watts advised that this would be complicated, and recommended keeping the accounts in the UK, where EBSA is registered as a Charity.

The Minutes were Approved and can now be put on the EBSA website.

**Action:** John and Laszlo

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### 3. Treasurer's report (TW)

Tony Wilkinson informed the EC that the current balance is healthy, at €212,984. He recently received the first payment of €80K under the new contract from Springer-Nature, which includes a €5K signing-on fee, and €20K for the first yearly Editorial Expenses (€17,900 has been claimed for these for the last two years).

EBSA paid €33K in Bursaries to the 2021 Vienna congress, which is larger than the normal amount of €25K. EBSA will give €25K to the Stockholm 2023 Congress to cover 60 Bursaries (approx. €400 each). Maria confirmed that this will be sufficient to cover their Registration Fee and accommodation.

Tony Watts pointed out that IUPAB currently pays 5 nights' accommodation plus travel for 17 Counsellors to attend the IUPAB Congress, but that this will change in 2027.

The 2021 Avanti Award winner claimed €853 in Travel Expenses on top of their US\$3,000 award. Tony suggested that it should be made clear in future that prizewinners are expected to cover their travel costs from their award.

There was some discussion about the £1,440 paid to Sam Rogoff and Co for the annual Accounts. Arwen pointed out that auditing EU grant accounts in Germany typically costs €3,600, so the amount is not excessive.

Tony reviewed the Subscription status of the EBSA National Societies. He also reminded the EC that we previously agreed to allow discretionary spending of up to €13K per annum (€26K per two-year cycle), to cover Travel Bursaries, Meetings support, and EBSA Schools. In Jacqueline's absence, further discussion was deferred until the January 2023 EBSA EC meeting.

### 4. EBJ (RG)

Rob summarised the situation with the journal. There have been 54 papers submitted up to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2022; more submissions are needed. Special Issues are very useful, and three have been agreed: N4M-20, RBC 2022, and one based on an AUC Workshop and Symposium. A weakness of the journal is that the Impact Factor is rather low (1.733 in 2020). It would be useful to have a number of EBSA Committee members to act as editors. In terms of the new contract with Springer-Nature, Rob stated that EBSA got a good deal (€55K per year, plus an incentive bonus). He pointed out that the current goodwill may not necessarily continue.

Tony Watts suggested that the four Congress Satellites should be encouraged to publish Special Issues in EBJ- several had been published in the past. He pointed out that a joint BBS / SFB meeting on ion channels in Rennes was published as a Special Issue in EBJ, giving some of the highest cited papers of the journal.

**Action:** Rob to contact the Satellite organisers to suggest this.

Rob stated that EBJ occasionally publishes meeting reports. These don't count as articles, but if they are then cited elsewhere, then they do. Tony Watts stated that an Editorial that includes citations (~20), can count as a citable article and contribute to the IF.

Nuno suggested writing to each Invited Speaker from the EBSA 2023 Congress, inviting them to submit an article to EBJ. Rob responded that he was reluctant to do this for fear of receiving aggressive responses. Nuno asked whether PDRAs giving nice talks could be invited to contribute. Elena was not sure about this; she suggested approaching National Societies to publish papers in a particular area of strength for that country. Jesus suggested Special Issues based on specific countries, for example, Biophysics in Spain which he was willing to coordinate.

Tony Watts suggested it could be interesting to commission an Overview Article, or an Opinion Piece, and the threat posed to crystallography, NMR and cryo-EM by Computational Chemistry and AI. Tony Watts pointed out that students need to publish papers from their PhD thesis, but these can be of variable quality.

Nuno stressed that the journal IF quartile is key. Elena agreed, stating that students need at least two first authors papers in first quartiles journals. Arwen stated that FEBS is in a similar bind to EBJ, and are pushing to promote their journals. She suggested we should follow a similar approach. She thinks a key thing is to publicise that publishing in EBJ helps the community.

Elena asked what percentage of articles in EBJ are reviews. Rob replied that it is 2 – 3 per year, but Special Issues typically contain 50% of reviews. Maria stated that publishing Methods papers is a good idea.

Maria stated that from her perspective, knowing who is on the Editorial Board is important. Elena asked whether the term of office can be restricted. Rob suggested that refreshing the Editorial Board is a good idea, and he will write to some members, taking them off. Maria proposed that it would be wise to bring new members on board first.

**Action for all:** suggest possible new members for the EBJ Editorial Board.

**Action for Jesus:** Contact Rob to plan and edit a "Biophysics in Spain" SI of EBJ.

## 5. **Encyclopedia of Biophysics, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (AW)**

Tony gave an update on the status of the Encyclopedia. There have been 280,000 downloads from the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition is under preparation and is two-thirds complete. There will not be a printed version. The Encyclopaedia has now been included in the MRW (Major Reference Works) portfolio of Springer-Nature, containing >600 peer-reviewed reference works. EBSA received an initial sign-on fee of €7,500 in 2017 from Springer-Nature, and will receive a further €7,500 when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition is released – this needs a 66% revision of titles or inclusion of new entries. Tony is trying to negotiate an additional fee for EBSA. Gordon Roberts has resigned as Co-Editor; Tony would welcome help with completing the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, or even a replacement for Gordon as Co-Editor to cover areas where Tony is less experienced. Elena asked whether the entries can be updated, and Tony confirmed that this is the case.

## 6. **EBSA Website (LM) and Newsgroup (IV)**

Ilpo reported that the hosting of the Newsgroup will be moved from Helsinki to Hamburg, as Arwen is taking over from him.

Laszlo reported that there have been problems implementing changes to the EBSA website since he lost the technical support. He plans to implement the previously-requested changes in July this year. It was noted that the map needs modifying to incorporate Greece. Maria suggested that anything that is no longer relevant should be removed. Tony Watts suggested that Laszlo implement the requested changes / additions, and then send it round the EC for comment.

**Action all:** send any website changes, or documents to be uploaded, to Laszlo.

## 7. **Requests for EBSA support and reports (PEM)**

Pierre-Emmanuel reported that there were no new requests for funding. He reminded the EC that the total sum agreed to cover both Travel Bursaries and Meetings Support was approx. €13K per year, or €26K over a two-year cycle. This equates to EBSA supporting up to four conferences per year, assuming support of €1,600 per conference. Pierre-Emmanuel suggested that less-advantaged regions should be prioritised for support, but that it is difficult to decide on the best criteria for selection. He wondered

whether bids should be endorsed or even selected by their National Societies. This can be discussed further in January 2023.

Helmut confirmed that the Erice meeting will be going ahead this autumn, and the EC confirmed that the previously agreed funding will be carried over.

Nuno asked what our rule is for the year of the EBSA Congress, and Tony Wilkinson confirmed that only Satellites will be supported in those years.

## 8. Student Bursaries (JC)

In Jacqueline's absence, the discussion of the criteria to be used in assessing Travel Awards, and the amount available to give out was postponed until the January 2023 meeting of the EC.

Tony Watts suggested that we should construct a list of people we have supported in a spreadsheet, which should be updated as needed and put on the website with reports/photos.

## 9. Future EBSA Schools / Biophysics Courses (EP)

The anticipated Spanish Membranes School in Bilbao has not happened due to Covid, and Felix Goni has now retired. Jesus would still like to explore the possibility of organizing a Membranes School in Bilbao, perhaps via Alicia Alonso. Tony Watts wondered whether 2024 might be a good time, although he pointed out that IUPAB funding will not be available, due to it being the year of the IUPAB Congress in Kyoto. It might be possible to link it to the 2024 Iberian Joint Meeting, although that meeting is expected to be in Portugal, not Spain that year.

**Action:** Jesus to explore possibilities.

The Croatian Biophysics School, organized by Tom Vuletic, is also not happening, and it is unclear when or if it will go ahead again. Helmut asked whether it could be revived. Tony Watts replied that yes, perhaps, but we may need to look elsewhere for someone else to take it on.

## 10. EBSA 2023 Congress in Stockholm (MS)

Maria introduced the Conference Manager Åsa Eklund (MKON), as well as two of the Congress Co-Chairs: Lena Mäler (Stockholm University) and Jerker Wildergren (Royal Institute of Technology). Erik Lindahl is a further Co-Chair. Maria gave a presentation on the current state of planning for the Congress. She confirmed that the dates will be Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Onsite registration will be from 12.00 – 16.00 on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July. The Congress will close at 16.30 on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August. The Plenaries will be held in the Aula Magna of Stockholm University. There will be 5 Plenaries, 14 Keynotes and 56 (2 x 28) Invited speakers. The Protein Society will sponsor one Plenary and 8 Invited Speakers; IUPAB and LINX will also sponsor lectures. The International Chairs will be selected by the Local Chairs. There will be 26 Sessions. There will be less emphasis on membranes, although there will be a session on Membrane Structure, Function and Dynamics Chaired by Gunnar von Heijne and Tony Watts. 80 proposed Speakers are currently being ranked as Keynotes and Invited Lectures. Lewis Kay (Toronto), David Julias (UCSD) and Karen Fleming (John Hopkins) have accepted invitations as Plenary Speakers.

In terms of catering, lunch boxes will be provided. The organizers have applied to hold a Buffet Reception at the Stadshuset (where the Nobel Prize Banquet takes place), and a decision should be made by this September.

It was confirmed that Satellite proposals should be organized by the Congress organizers and can take place just before or just after the main Congress. There are currently four Satellites planned:

- Single molecule biophysics;
- Bioenergetics (Germany / Slovenia);
- LINXS;
- NMR.

It was confirmed by Tony Watts that this is a good number, but if more come in that will be fine. COST networks may wish to organize sessions. Satellites charge a Fee and handle their own registrations and are outside the main Congress. Tony Watts stated that they can often be held in an organizer's lab, or in spare space within the Congress venue. Maria stated that she hoped that people attending the Satellites will also attend the main Congress. Ilpo is planning a Satellite with Erik Lindahl, and asked about the costs. Lena stated that she could provide them with rooms for free, including a 100 seat lecture theatre.

Tony asked whether there is going to be a 2/3 day Young Person's Workshop before the Congress. This has previously worked well, with 30-40 participants and offering networking opportunities; it gives a good profile to EBSA, and is cheap. Helmut asked whether Tony would be willing to organize it again. Tony stated that he would be happy to be involved and advise the Swedish Congress team in organizing it, if they decide to do one. Maria asked whether the Workshop would be paid by EBSA: Tony Watts confirmed that they are partially covered, and that they can also apply to IUPAB for some support (typically in the range €4K - €6K). Tony Wilkinson stated that normally they charge a Fee for attending.

Tony Watts stated that we spend €25K on 60 Bursaries, and asked whether we want to continue this. The EC agreed that we should do so.

The Budget was estimated as follows:

Participants	1,000	800	500
Costs	€431K	€370K	€278K
Surplus	€120k	€96K	€58K

The extra cost if the Congress has to be switched to Hybrid because of a rise in Covid would be €25K.

The planned Registration Fees are €300 (Student) and €525 (Full). Helmut suggested that there should be an Early Bird discount. Tony Watts proposed that the Fee for Industry should be €100 higher, and Maria agreed with this.

Helmut asked whether there should be the option for virtual attendance. Maria responded that there are a number of ways of organizing a hybrid congress, although it is not trivial. There can be an issue with a lack of confidentiality of unpublished data, although there should not be any problems with the Plenaries. Helmut responded that in any event we should have a coherent policy on hybrid versus non-hybrid.

Maria confirmed that there will be free registration for all Invited Speakers, and also a reduction for Session Chairs. She estimates €50K (20 x €2.5K) will be raised from Exhibitors, and €10K from sponsors. There will be a total of €50K funding from EBSA (€25K direct, plus €25K for Bursaries). Jesus stressed that it is urgent to contact companies for sponsorship soon, since budgets for some companies are being set already for 2023. Elena asked whether companies may be allowed to have their own sessions, and this will be considered.

Maria informed the EC that the Congress homepage will be released in a few days, as soon as the Plenaries have been confirmed.

Elena asked who will choose the talks. Maria confirmed that both the Invited Lectures and the talks selected from the submitted Abstracts will be chosen by the Session Co-Chairs. Elena reminded Maria that it is important to avoid having the same speakers proposed for more than one Session.

Laszlo informed the EC that the link to EBSA Congress Abstracts on EBJ is no longer working.

**Action:** Rob to check with Springer-Nature.

## **Bursary and Award Panels for 2023**

The following Panel members were agreed:

**EBSA Bursary Panel:** Jacqueline (Chair), Arwen, Primoz, and John

**EBSA/Avanti Award:** Laszlo (Chair), Elena, Jesus, and Rob

**EBSA Young Investigator Award:** Ilpo (Chair), Sarah, Nuno, and Dejan

The deadline is 31 Dec 2022 for nominations for these two awards.

## **11. IUPAB/ISC report (AW)**

Tony Watts reminded the EC that ISC (International Science Council) is the overarching body of the scientific Unions including IUPAB, and that EBSA is a 3-vote member of IUPAB.

Following the sad death of the IUPAB Secretary-General, Juan Carmelo Fernandez, Jesus confirmed that there will be a memorial Service at the next Iberian BPS meeting, as well as a named prize in the Latin American context. A notice about his death should be put up on the EBSA website.

Rob stated that EBJ would also be happy to publish a Memorial Issue for Juan Carmelo and Jesus said this could be linked to a Spanish Biophysics SI, which he is willing to coordinate (see above).

**Action:** Jesus and Rob.

The new Secretary-General of IUPAB is Ron Clarke, Sydney.

IUPAB supported the following recent meetings / workshops:

- Indian Biophysical Society, March 2022;
- Biophysical Society of Japan, June 2022;
- BBS / Eire joint meeting in Galway, June 2022.
- IUPAB Workshop on ion channels, Ottawa.
- EMBO workshop on Neutron scattering, ILL, May 2022

IUPAB is involved with a number of Task Forces, including Capacity and Education, and Big Data.

The future IUPAB Congresses will be 24 – 28 June 2024, Kyoto, and 10 - 14 October 2027, Berlin with EBSA.



## 12. Future EBSA Congresses (EP)

### EBSA 2025 Congress in Rome

It was noted that Mauro Della Serra should be Co-opted onto the EBSA EC in January 2023, as the 2025 EBSA Congress Chair. He will be proposed for election as EBSA Vice-President in 2023 at the EBSA General Assembly.

Following an urgent request to the EBSA Treasurer for €25K plus vat as a deposit to secure the Parco Della Musica venue for the 2025 EBSA Congress in Rome, there was an extensive discussion of the plans for the Congress. Unfortunately, Mauro was not present to address the various concerns raised, as it had been assumed that this discussion would take place at the January 2023 EC meeting in Rome.

Elena stressed that we need to be happy with the Financial Plan; €180K of sponsoring is very optimistic, and the proposed venue is eight times more expensive than the Stockholm venue. Arwen felt that the budget was very ambitious. She would prefer a less spectacular venue at a lower cost. Maria asked whether we could be confident that it will be possible to get more than 800 participants attending in April. Tony pointed out that the proposed dates are good in terms of the Easter vacation (Easter holidays will start on 4<sup>th</sup> April in 2025). Maria noted that the amount allowed for Speakers is only €10K, which is very low compared to the amount of €52K budgeted for the 2023 Stockholm Congress. Nuno stated that it will be very difficult to achieve the level of sponsorship assumed; the amount raised at recent Congresses is more in the region of €70K. Arwen stated that she would not be comfortable approving the budget without an assurance that EBSA will not be liable. Helmut pointed out that it is the Italian Society that is legally responsible, not EBSA.

Elena pointed out that we had already discussed the possibility of holding the Congress at La Sapienza University, and she proposed that we should set up a Zoom meeting with Mauro to discuss the budget and planning of the Congress in more detail.

**Action:** John to set up a Zoom meeting of the EC with Mauro and Alberto Diaspro.

**Action:** EC to send questions for Mauro to John to be collated and sent to Mauro and Alberto in advance of the Zoom meeting.

### EBSA / IUPAB Joint 2027 Congress in Berlin

It is planned to hold the 23<sup>rd</sup> IUPAB / 16<sup>th</sup> EBSA Joint Congress from 10 – 14 October 2027 in Berlin. Klaus Gerwert (Bochum) is the IUPAB Congress Chair, and an EBSA Congress Chair needs to be identified and appointed. Helmut does not want to take this task on again, but is willing to advise, and offered the help of Petra Kellers. He listed a number of Berlin-based biophysicists who have been sounded out as potential candidates. Elena asked whether potential candidates are aware that the EBSA Congress Chair will become President of EBSA from 2027, and Helmut confirmed that they are.

## 13. Any other business

Tony Watts reported that there is a request from the Bulgarian Biochemical Society for Associate Membership of EBSA. It was agreed that they should be encouraged to apply to the EBSA GA in Stockholm.

**Action:** Tony Watts

Tony asked whether we should encourage the Czech Society to rejoin EBSA, and John suggested this might be done via Robert Vacha.

John and Pierre-Emmanuel reported that Jacqueline Cherfils had requested a Letter of Support from the EBSA EC. It was agreed that a draft letter will be circulated around the EC, and then a final version will be sent to Jacqueline by Elena on behalf of the EC.

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- 14. Next EC meeting:** Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2023, Rome, (Host: Mauro Dalla Serra)

The meeting closed at 17.40 CET.

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- 15. Sub-Meeting of EBSA Trustees (AW, TW, RG and JMS)**

Due to a lack of time, this meeting was postponed.

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