

**Minutes of the
Meeting of the IEA-EEF Board
Porto, 11 september 2004**

Version 1 – To be approved

<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/iea/>

http://www.dundee.ac.uk/iea/euro_Contents.htm

Attendants: Miquel Porta (Chairman, IEA EEF), Nereo Segnan (Italy), Finn Rasmussen (Sweden), Robert West (United Kingdom), Liljana Lazarevska (Macedonia), Magdalena Bielska –Lasota (Poland), Hans Werner Hense (Germany), Annette Leclerc (France), Gerhard Zielhuis (The Netherlands), Christoph Junker (Switzerland), Henrique Barros (Portugal), Jaume Marrugat (IEA EEF Secretary, and Spain representative), Rodolfo Saracci (IEA), Katarzyna Szamotulska (Poland), Yolanda Ferrer (IEA-EEF-secretariat), Chitr Sitthi-amorn (IEA).

IEA-EEF European Congress of Epidemiology 2006 organizers: Geert Van der Heijden and Diedrick E. Grobbee.

Apologize for absence: Jorn Olsen (IEA), Charles Florey (IEA).

No notice from Jukka Salonen (Finland), Jens Peter Bonde (Denmark),

AGENDA

0. Welcome and introduction. Approval of the agenda.

1. Approval of minutes from the Toledo meeting of the IEA EEF Board (4 October 2003). Sent by e-mail on 11 November 2003. Available at http://www.dundee.ac.uk/iea/euro_Contents.htm

2. Information on and evaluation of the European Congress of Epidemiology (Porto, 2004). Aspects to improve after the Porto Congress. Review and approval of main guidelines on scientific contents and of scientific procedures (external reviewers, proposal of sessions, other), Scientific Committee, other issues.

3. Information of and discussion on the European Congress of Epidemiology 2006, Utrecht, The Netherlands. Decision on the composition of the Scientific Committee.

4. Information of and discussion on the World Congress of Epidemiology 2005, Bangkok, Thailand.

5. Information on the forthcoming IEA Council meeting in Bangkok (26-28 September 2004). Members of the IEA Council present in Porto are cordially invited to attend this meeting of the IEA EEF Board.

6. Informations from National Societies: specific informations on societies' activities, proposals, suggestions.

7. The IEA EEF Newsletter. Review of recent issues. Fall 2004 issue. Feature of a regular "News from the IEA" section in national newsletters. EEF regular news in the International Journal of Epidemiology.

8. Funding of epidemiological research in the EU: an update. Relationships with WHO-Europe and other European scientific organisations.

9. Activities of the IEA EEF for Fall 2004 - Spring 2005.

10. Current financial situation of the IEA EEF.

11. Other matters, comments, suggestions.

- 0- **M Porta welcomes the attendees.** Upon The Netherlands' representative a new subject is added to the agenda on a new proposal for a European Master in Epidemiology that has been announced recently. The minutes of the last meeting are reviewed to identify topics pending of execution: Annette Leclerc informs that Good Epidemiology Practice (GEP) is in a final document in French to be presented at Association of French-Speaking Epidemiologists (ADELF) meeting (<http://adelf.isped.u-bordeaux2.fr/>). It is longer than the English document and contains specific recommendations related to French legislation. Probably there are 4-6 national documents in Europe at this time: all refer to the original IEA-EEF GEP. Christopher Junker and Annette Leclerc will check periodically for possible necessity of updating the latter. The newsletter will keep informed EEF members on these updates should they occur. Gerhard Zielhuis reminds the Board of the possibility of converting IEA-EEF into a Non Governmental Organization; the CIOMS guidelines for ethics in Epidemiology research and the lobbying-in-Brussels topics are still open.
- 1- **The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Board in Toledo 2003** are approved, pending some minor comments from Rodolfo Saracci and Gerhard Zielhuis (to be sent soon to Jaume Marrugat by email).
- 2- **Evaluation of the Porto meeting** (www.euroepi2004.org): Henrique Barros reports that the costs of the meeting have been high and funding scarce: Regular fees do not cover the expenses. Part of the high cost comes from the many requests for coming to the conference at the organization's expense (82 persons were invited, including many young colleagues) and pre-meeting courses, which could be skipped in the Utrecht meeting 2006. A more formal connection with National Societies is recommended to prevent unwarranted proposals of invitation. New sources of funds are necessary. Henrique Barros will pass on to the Utrecht meeting organizers all this practical information. The Macedonia representative, Liljana Lazarevska, suggests offering participants the possibility of 1-day 2-day or full congress registration. Also suggests separating accommodation from registration. She also had the impression that a better balance in oral and poster presentations could be reached in future meetings. A preliminary report on congress attendance by countries is handed over. Robert West mentions the fact that thematic sessions need much attention in the evaluation process since each abstract is presented in a longer format than regular abstracts. The proportion of rejected abstracts was approximately 20%. Only one proposal of thematic session was rejected. The current rules for thematic sessions need to be slightly reviewed; in particular, the rule that all proposals need to be strictly peer reviewed must be emphasised. However, the thematic sessions are perceived as very useful, among other well-known reasons because the level of methodological discussion can be taken in depth, in a completely different way than in meetings of specialized clinical societies. Finn Rasmussen indicates that organisers should be able to include invited sessions if they feel it necessary. The Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health was chosen for abstract publication because the International Journal of Epidemiology has the policy not to publish supplements. They provided 600 copies to the meeting and the regular edition for

subscribers. Henrique is warmly congratulated on the accomplishments of a highly successful congress.

- 3- **Upcoming IEA EEF European Congress of Epidemiology in UTRECH** (28 Jun-1 July 2006) (www.euroepi2006.org). Its motto will be "*Epidemiology in Health Care Practice*". D.E. Grobbee mentions that they have experience in moderated sessions. In Porto the Scientific Committee included 5 people and it is approved that a similar small number will be used in Utrecht; that of Utrecht could include Hans Werner Hense, Nereo Segnan, someone from the Eastern countries and Henrique Barros, to transmit the experience (web structure, external reviewers list with appropriate comments on accuracy and diligence for each, etc.). D.E. Grobbee mentions that in Holland there are non-human sciences epidemiologists (e.g. veterinarian); this may make it necessary to adapt the sessions to make the program attractive to them. The number of the meeting will not be stated in the title anymore in future congresses. Abstracts need to be posted at the Web site but publishing them in a Journal is also desirable, in accordance with current guidelines of the IEA EEF. A sponsor for the abstracts journal supplement should be sought. A possibility is to get it published in a National Journal. The opening session will take place in the afternoon with authorities. Katarzyna Szamotulska suggests that special care is taken as not to overlap similar topics in oral sessions.
- 4- **Upcoming World Congress of Epidemiology in Bangkok** (August 2005). Chitr Sitthi-Amorn, president of the IEA, outlines the general ideas of the meeting (50th anniversary of IEA, volunteerism, others). Already posted in the web site, which is already active (<http://wce2005.org/>), are the rules for thematic sessions. Hans-Werner Hense and Henrique Barros suggest improving the wording in the web site since it seems to call only for contributions on the central topic of the meeting. Other suggestions from the IEA EEF for the Congress were already presented by M Porta at the last meeting of the IEA Council in Toledo.
- 5- **The agenda of the meeting of IEA Council in Bangkok** (Sept. 2004). One issue is to increase the amount for bursaries to Europe. A book on the history of Epidemiology (Oxford University Press) is being edited by Prof. W Holland and J Olsen and is still being written. Any suggestion from IEA-EEF national societies delegates should be sent to Miquel Porta for him to transmit to IEA Officers meeting. Nereo Segnan proposes to include war as a topic for forthcoming meetings.
- 6- **From National Societies**. In **Italy** they will be giving credits (Nereo Segnan will send information to the Newsletter). In **Macedonia**, the Society of Preventive Medicine has evolved to the Epidemiology Society with Epidemiologists; they have 3 meetings per year. In 2002 they had a Congress on Preventive Medicine on biological war with 400 participants. The representative invites the Board and IEA-EEF members to attend their next international meeting in 2006 (to be posted in the Newsletter). **Poland** restored their Polish Epidemiology Association in 2003 and based their by-laws on the IEA's. Currently they are recruiting members to legally register the association. Their first meeting will be in November 2004 together with the Polish Medical Association. She will send information about the event after the constitution of the association. In **Sweden** there have been important changes in the Society with discipline reclassification in different societies. **Switzerland** counts on very few epidemiologists (80). They have published their own GEP. On the contrary

Netherlands is plenty of epidemiologists. **Germany:** budgetary constraints take the German Society of Epidemiology to join other disciplines in a single society. Hans Werner Hense is now the president of the German Society. Very active as stems from the high number of participants in the Porto meeting. **Portugal** needs recognition from their administration. **United Kingdom:** mixed feelings since public health seems to predominate over epidemiology, gene-banking projects have taken much resources from other disciplines, data protection cripples the possibilities of epidemiology research. **France:** there is a report that will be published in the newsletter. Next ADELFF meeting to be held in Bordeaux together with the Occupational Epidemiology Society. **Spain:** the next meeting of the Spanish Society of Epidemiology will be held in Cáceres next October (<http://www.seexxi.com/>). Spanish Society of Epidemiology also attempts to gain access to administrative data for epidemiological research. Its president calls the presidents of the rest of European National Societies to send a letter to the prime minister of Spain describing the necessity for epidemiologic research to providing access to confidential data. A draft to be adapted / modified according to the particularities of the countries regulations will be circulated to each National Society representative. It is intended that appropriate regulations be developed in Spain. According to Robert West's information, **Ireland** seems not to be ready to join the EEF since it keeps a low profile of activity. Finland has not been showing up lately. Hans-Werner Hense suggests updating the national contacts (Secretariat).

- 7- **IEA EEF Newsletter.** Hans-Werner Hense mentions that it comes up regularly. A point could be whether we need it longer or with new contents (no further comments on this). Next issue is due for Fall-Winter 2004: deadline is December 10th, 2004.
- 8- **Funding for epidemiology research in the European Union.** Rodolfo Saracci informs that the text that was prepared as a press release for the Porto congress will be revised to be distributed to the Societies to make it more suitable for professionals: the EEF secretariat will distribute the final version to the national societies to activate channels with people with influence in Brussels. The Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) is developing some guidelines for ethics in Epidemiology research (similar to the WHO ones): when a final draft is ready it will be posted on the web (<http://www.cioms.ch/>) and open for discussion. IEA is probably the more suitable for discussion. However this text is in the context of a more general document on Medical research ethics. As agreed in the last meeting Gerhard and Jaume Marrugat will find out NGO in Brussels and find a person who may help to lobbying even if there is a cost for it.
- 9- **Confidential data protection in the European Union.** Data protection EU regulations cannot be modified. Gerhard Zelhuis has a contact Directorate General Research Department on Science and Ethics. We shall contact them to get epidemiologists consulted when they develop reports on particular research topics. There are specialists on genetic consent and on biological samples banking who can also be contacted. It is recognized that actions as that undertaken by the Spanish Society of Epidemiology to develop national regulations that permit Spanish epidemiologists to access administrative data containing confidential information is important.

- 10- **Activities of the IEA-EEF.** There will be no IEA EEF congress until 2006. Miquel Porta raises the possibility of organizing a thematic workshop in early 2005. Robert West mentions UKPHA, which has hosted joint activities with other societies; another possibility is to organize a meeting in Bristol. We need a topic: open for suggestions by email before end of November 2004. The Florence Summer course is doing well, but more involvement and promotion from national societies is desirable. A proposal is made by Miquel Porta to create an award (1000€ approximately) to the best Ph.D. Thesis. Miquel Porta, Finn Rasmussen, and Robert West will prepare a first set of rules. A special part/time should be devoted to young investigators during the IEA-EEF congress. Young colleagues from Portugal will promote a group of young IEA members in each country.
- 11- **Financial situation of the EEF** (see annex). Jaume Marrugat presents a summary of the financial situation. The question of whether benefits should be shared by the organizers of the European congress as well as the negative balance was raised. An outcome will be negotiated individually with the organizers of each meeting. Some payments due for the next months (approximately \$5,000) and the surplus from the Toledo meeting are not included in the balance presented.
- 12- **Various and comments.** Gerhard Zielhuis informs the Board that a Master degree in Epidemiology program that does not include the appropriate number of credits has appeared in Germany (www.eu-mse.de). The Board resolves not to approve yet the program if it is ever presented to the IEA-EEF for evaluation. Moreover it probably will not be authorised by European officials. Gerhard Zielhuis will follow the situation as the IEA-EEF representative.

Actions:

- 1) Gerhard Zielhuis and Rodolfo Saracci will send their comments on the minutes from the Toledo meeting to the Secretary (jmarrugat@imim.es).
- 2) R Saracci & J Olsen text on funding epidemiology research in the European Union rewritten for professionals has to be sent to the IEA-EEF secretariat (yferrer@imim.es) and from there redistributed to all National Societies' representatives for appropriate diffusion among members.
- 3) All: may send topics and place suggestions for an IEA-EEF thematic workshop in May 2005 to Miquel Porta.
- 4) The president of the Spanish Society of Epidemiology will send to the representatives of the European National Societies a draft of a letter to be addressed to the Spanish Prime Minister requesting regulations on confidential data.
- 5) Gerhard Zielhuis and Jaume Marrugat will look for the NGO possibilities in the EU.
- 6) Various announcements to be sent to the IEA-EEF newsletter (Macedonia, national society meetings etc...).

- 7) Miquel Porta, Finn Rasmussen, and Robert West will prepare an initial draft with the rules for an annual IEA-EEF award to the best paper or set of papers for IEA-EEF members.
- 8) The Secretariat of the IEA-EEF will update and redistribute the National Societies contact details.
- 9) Gerhard Zielhuis will follow the master degree in Epidemiology program that has appeared in Germany (www.eu-mse.de).

Participation in the Porto European Congress of Epidemiology

<i>Organisation</i>	83	Japan	1
Albania	1	Lebanon	1
Australia	3	Lithuania	3
Austria	1	Macedonia	1
Belgium	3	Mozambique	1
Brazil	64	Netherlands	6
Canada	2	New Zealand	1
Chile	1	Norway	1
Cuba	1	Portugal	54
Czech Rep.	5	Poland	12
Denmark	11	Russia	1
Finland	8	Serbia	2
France	17	Spain	35
Germany	37	Sweden	5
Greece	1	Switzerland	2
Hungary	5	United Kingdom	11
Ireland	5	USA	3
Israel	3		
Italy	28	Total	422