

Minutes Board Meeting FESTMIH – 4th March 2005

Natural History Museum, Vienna, Austria

Present: **Pierre Ambroise-Thomas** (Grenoble, member), **Martin Boeree** (Nijmegen, president), **Esther Jurgens** (NVTG)¹, **Marcel Hommel** (Liverpool, vice-president), **Dominique Le Ray** (Antwerp, treasurer), **Pascal Magnussen** (Charlottenlund, secretary), **Walther Wernsdorfer** (Wien, ÖGTP)

Agenda

1. Opening. Welcoming the hosts of the meeting: Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Tropenmedizin und Parasitologie; welcoming Dr. Bisoffi of the Società Italiana di Medicina Tropicale
2. Minutes Board meeting Nijmegen, 5th June 2004
3. Reports from President, Secretary and Treasurer
4. Constitutional matters
5. Update on Marseille 2005, IVth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health
6. Update on Amsterdam 2007, Vth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health
7. Update on Verona 2009, VIth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health
8. Update TropEd, TropMed Europe
9. Follow up: extending activities (attachment)
10. Link FESTMIH - International Federation
11. Editorial TM&IH
12. Miscellaneous
13. Closure

1. Opening

The President opened the meeting and thanked Dr Wernsdorfer of the Austrian Society for Tropical Medicine and Parasitology for the invitation to host the meeting. Unfortunately due to weather conditions Dr. Bisoffi and Loutan were not able to travel to Vienna. Dr. Korte had to excuse himself because of traveling abroad.

Prof Dr Walter Wernsdorfer gave a brief introduction on the history of the Austrian Society, which goes back some 40 years. The society encompasses members with background in tropical medicine, parasitology, veterinary medicine and travel medicine. They provide training and technical assistance. Dr Wernsdorfer also introduced Dr Sattman, one of the directors of the Natural History Museum who later in the afternoon invited the Board for a tour around the Museum.

2. Minutes board meeting 5th of June 2004

Minutes were approved, with the following comments:

- actionpoint on (p.2) related to membership fees was followed up by DLR
- actionpoint (p.2) related to the transfer of the archives: not done yet (**new actionpoint: DLR + PAT to send all documents to PM (by electronic mail)**)
- actionpoint (p.5) related to the Marseille Congress: see agenda point 5

3. Reports from President, Secretary and Treasurer

From the president

Martin Boeree stressed the importance to discuss the Marseille and the Amsterdam Congresses (both on the agenda). Also the task ahead in deciding on new activities of the Federation. The website was added to the agenda as a point for discussion.

¹ Ms. Esther Jurgens (advisor to the Board of the Dutch Society for Tropical Medicine and International Health was invited for input on the discussion on possibilities of extending FESTMIH activities (also responsible for minutes)

From the secretary

The newly appointed secretary, Pascal Magnussen is currently organizing his tasks and started updating the database. It is important that from now on all documents will be made available in e-version. The less paper the better. If necessary PM can hire secretarial support to assist with updating the database. This list needs to be available in April, in order to send out invitations for the Council meeting in September (Marseille). In this letter Member societies will also be asked to identify designated delegates, Directors for the Board (1 vacancy) and election of President, Secretary and Treasurer. **Actionpoints:**

- **PAT and DLR to send archives to PM (preferable electronic versions)**
- **MH to send most recent membership list to PM**
- **MB: to send out the letters of invitation to member societies and guide the process**

The president invites Dr Wernsdorfer to propose a member from the Austrian Society to take seat in the Board.

From the treasurer

- See appendix 1 (accountancy report 2004). Balance of +25,805 euros. Main expenses were travel costs. Outstanding fees (period 2003-2004) from Austria, Great-Britain (partly), Italy, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland. Only Belgium paid their contribution for 2005 so far.
- Discussed was the '1euro-rule': each member society pays 1 euro for each member as a fee to FESTMIH. This was decided at the onset of the Federation in Hamburg. Board concluded that maybe in the future the fees can be increased, however it recommended to establish a strict recollection procedure first, and motivate members to pay in time. **Actionpoints:**
 - **MH to remind Royal Society of the outstanding fees**
 - **MB/DLR to send out invoices for 2005 contribution to members (along with the letter of invitation for the Council meeting)**
- The treasurer underlined the importance to fill in the bank codes (IBAN, BIC, SWIFT) in order to receive claims timely. Internet banking is not yet possible, maybe in the future. Board decides that all travel expenses are being reimbursed. Because board members do not receive daily subsistence allowances, the meeting decided that meal(s) on the day of arrival (and if needed departure) are included in these expenses. Board also concludes, that despite the fact that the reimbursement process can take a long time, the procedure (signatures) will not be adjusted. This because of the strict accounting regulations. MB mentioned the possibility to sign electronically. This will be sorted out. **Action point: MB to send a copy of PP to DLR**
- Accounts 2003 / 2004. DLR prepared accountancy report 2004. At the upcoming General Meeting, auditors (members of the Council, but not part of the board of Directors) have to verify the accounts. Their report is to be presented at the upcoming Council Meeting. In order to streamline this process, it is wise to identify 2 auditors at forehand who review financial reports and present their finding at the Council Meeting, suggested were Austria and Italy. **Action point: MB to identify potential auditors and request them to review accounts (before September)**

4. Constitutional matters

- The Board discussed the contents of Article 38 “.. At least one of Director must be of Belgian Nationality”, and options to change this clause. This can be done through amendment of the Constitution, or to include this change in the by-laws. Changing the Constitution is timely and costly. Besides this the Constitution as it is now conforms with the requirements of the new Belgian law regarding Non-

Profit Organizations. Board decides to follow the suggestion of the lawyer who reviewed the Constitution and will propose changes or the new structure to the Council members. If all member agree this agreement should be recorded in the minutes. **Actionpoint: MB to prepare proposal on this issue to be presented at the Council Meeting in September**

5. Fourth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health (Marseille, 2005)

- Scientific programme: despite the early deadline (February) the scientific committee received 900 abstracts: twice as much as for the Lisbon Congress. In 7 slots some 64 to 70 scientific sessions will be hosted, some plenary sessions are reserved for pharmaceutical industry and young investigators. Furthermore, there are special interest workshops (parallel to the plenary sessions) and poster presentations. Some of the sessions in the folder are being cancelled, either because of lack of interest and presenters etc. New deadline is March, abstracts are still being accepted while the programme is being modified.
- Organisational matters: Co-organisers are working hard and fast. Sometimes too fast. Important to take note of communication.
- Financial matters: quest for sponsors is not completed, especially from EC. The cut-off or break-even point is not being calculated yet. The organisers aiming to attract 1500 delegates, which appears possible (with 900 abstracts). Much responsibility lies on the French counterparts (French Society of Tropical Medicine and the Alpine Conseil) who will vouch for any loss. In case of a budget surplus, the French Society agreed to share their part with FESTMIH and IFTM (12,5% each).
- Lessons for future congresses: try to make a deal with co-organising company or create a non-profit organisation only for the period of the Congress. This will minimize the risk for the organising Society. Minimize involvement of the IFTM in the process.

M.Boeree compliments M.Hommel and P. Ambroise-Thomas with the programme and the accomplishments. The programme is interesting, well balanced in terms of topics and speakers from all parts of the world. It is important to note that ultimately the Congress is one of FESTMIH's main products. It would be good if national societies consider the Congress as an opportunity to profile themselves. Especially for the smaller societies, who are less able to organise large congresses themselves.

6. Fifth European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health (Amsterdam, 2007)

M.Boeree presents the state of the art with regards to the selection of venue and co-organisers. Unfortunately the centennial celebrations of the Royal Society are scheduled around the same period at the Amsterdam Congress. This was decided without consulting the Dutch Society who will therefore look into rescheduling their centennial celebrations, possibly to May/June. The organisers are now negotiating with a German Congress Organization, the same that was hired in Lisbon. They submitted the best quotation (abstract handling, share profit, risk insurance and one flat fee for management assistance). Opted location is the RAI (Congress Centre in Amsterdam). Congress organisation will further look into venues, main problem is to find a theatre for the plenary sessions that can accommodate around 1500 participants. First announcement scheduled for Marseille.

Actionpoint: MB to announce Vth Congress at Marseille Congress and prepare flyer

M.Boeree inquires if M.Hommel is interested and available for the Amsterdam Congress organisation. M.Hommel is hesitant in being involved on a same scale for a mixture of reasons. Having organised several congresses in a row it is time to pass the torch/// Another reason is that by the time of the Amsterdam Congress he will most likely not be a part of the Board anymore. It was suggested to include Dr Bisofi from the Italian Society in the organising committee.

7. Sixth European Congress, Verona 2009?

M.Boeree received the request from the Società Italiana di Medicina Tropicale to organise the sixth European Congress in Verona (2009). Unfortunately Dr. Bisoffi could not be present at the meeting to illustrate this request. Board decides to postpone this agenda point to the Board meeting in Marseille, as well as to organise the next board meeting in Verona. P.Ambroise-Thomas suggested to have Board Meetings coincide with General Meetings of National societies in order to strengthen the link between national societies and FESTMIH/Board of Directors. It also offers opportunities to enhance communication. Besides the website and email, it is felt that face-face contact is of equal importance. Vienna was suggested for the Congress in 2011. W.Wernsdorfer will discuss this proposal at the upcoming meeting of the ÖGTP.

8. Update on tropEd, TropMedEurop

TropEd

The TropEd network for higher education in international health was briefly discussed. The Master Programme in International Health was developed with a large grant from the Erasmus Programme and offers a flexible structure, across tropEd member institutions.

TropMedEurop (TME)

During the Annual Colloquium of the Institute of Tropical Medicine (24-26 November), TME also convened. FESTMIH was represented by Louis Niessen, the president of the Dutch Society for Tropical Medicine and International Health. Agenda included discussions on TME as the motor of European networking at the institutional level in relation to EDCTP; conclusions from the Colloquium; external profile and communications. **Actionpoint: MB to request the minutes of this meeting**

M.Hommel recalled the ideas of Prof Gryseels to establish a more closer relation between TropMedEurope and the Federation from the rationale that a working relation between the two could lead to larger clout and bigger impact in the European scheme of international health. The Meeting discussed the implications of a stronger relationship. What is possible, moreover: what is desirable? At the moment Prof Gryseels is setting up a National platform to respond to the EDCTP funds for clinical trials. Credibility in a way could open doors to get access to these funds. Important to stay clear on common goals and who defines them. The Meeting is not clear on the motives for a more closer relation. TropMedEurop is linked to the Federation as an observer. Meeting agreed to invite them to the Council Meeting to elaborate on this issue. **Actionpoint: MB to invite TropMedEurope to the Council Meeting in Marseille**

9. Extending activities

See appendix-2 (March 2005)FESTMIH activities. Summary of the discussion:

- As is rightly posed in the discussion paper: FESTMIH needs to promote itself as an *added value* to the national societies. This principle shall be the starting point for the discussion with the members (at the upcoming Council meeting). National

societies need to be challenged to rethink further role of the Federation, besides the organisation of European Congresses. **Actionpoint: MB, EJ to send letter to the societies on this issue** (adaptation of the discussion paper presented at the Board meeting)

- On the role in education: most national societies are involvement in curriculum development in tropical medicine. Board concludes that it is important to conserve and cherish national accomplishments in this area and that FESTMIH should not interfere with such national processes. However, over the past years there have been movements to establish European curricula and master programmes. The Federation could be instrumental in finding a balance between conserving the national 'flavours' without loosing out on current opportunities for European co-operation in higher education in International Health. To be discussed with the members societies.
- Board already agreed to make use of meetings of national societies for Board meetings. **Actionpoint: PM to find out dates national meetings**
- The website is an excellent podium for interaction between the members; for communication between Board and members (besides the face-to-face and email contacts) but needs to be used more, especially by the member societies. **Actionpoint all: promote the use of the website**
- With regards to new member societies: meeting agreed that the Baltic States and Poland are interesting potential new members. Despite the fact that most of them have no historical links with developing countries, it is more than likely that their interest in international health will increased because of current international activities (such as Polish soldiers in Irak).

10. Link FESTMIH - International Federation

- Newly appointed President of the IFTM sent an email to M.Hommel, P.Ambroise-Thomas and D.LeRay with request for an increase in contribution. Board agreed that the FESTMIH is not in the position nor has an interest in doing this, if the International Federation needs funds they should direct themselves to the national societies. Besides this, national societies who already pay fee to the IFTM will object to FESTMIH's transferring funds (because they already sponsor the International Federation). **Actionpoint: MH and MB?? to respond to this and other issues raised in the email (such as the pressure for a more geographical balanced representation in Marseille)**

11. Editorial TM&IH

Not discussed. It was already established that FESTMIH would submit an editorial for the magazine.

12. Miscellaneous

- Marcel Hommel received a request from Sanofi Pasteur to publish abstracts from past meetings on their website. FESTMIH has no problem with this. Copy rights have been waived, and they also have been published before.
- The Royal Society on Tropical Medicine requested the Federation for assistance with the organisation of their Congress in 2007. Board agreed that the request will be taken into account as soon as they have paid outstanding fees.

13. Closure

After the closure of the meeting, Dr Helmut Sattman (one of the directors of the Natural History Museum) offered the Board a tour through the museum.