

Minutes Board Meeting FESTMIH – 5th June 2004

ULC Dekkerswald, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Present: Prof Pierre Ambroise-Thomas, Dr Martin Boeree, Ms. Esther Jurgens¹, Prof Marcel Hommel, Dr Gerd-Dieter Burchard², Dr Ton Polderman³, Prof Dominique Le Ray, Prof Pascal Magnussen

Agenda

1. Reports from President, Secretary and Treasurer
2. Election of President, Secretary and Treasurer
3. Update on the Marseille Congress in 2005
4. Update on the Congress in 2007
5. New member Societies
6. Update from TropMedEurope
7. The role of TM/IH in relation to FESTMIH
8. Brainstorm about the possibilities of extending FESTMIH activities

1. Reports from the President, Secretary and Treasurer

Report from the President

- M.Hommel sent out a letter to the 15 member societies (handed out at the meeting).
- The existing database is incomplete, there is a high turnover within Societies. Changes are not being reported to FESTMIH. Board concludes that it is important that FESTMIH establishes itself more profoundly among the members and demonstrates its added value and function. Means to do this is with the website, offering members societies opportunity to profile themselves (links to national societies, agenda national events etc). The website is managed by the Centre for Learning Innovation and Communication in Liverpool (www.festmih.net).
- Discussion focussed on the function of FESTMIH for its members. G-D. Burchard: the German society is interested in (European) guidelines/standards, eg on treatment. See agenda point 8 (afternoon discussion).
- Membership fees were waived for the past three years. It is not justifiable to collect outstanding fees over 2002. It is agreed to collect fees for 2003 and 2004.
(D. LeRay will send letter and invoices to member Societies)

Report from the Secretary

- P. Ambroise-Thomas: First Announcements of the Marseille Congress were distributed, also among the member Societies. It seems that not all Societies received them (Germany). Important to notify all delegates in time before the FESTMIH General Meeting, at which new Board members will be installed.
- Ms. M.Hamon (who provided secretarial support) has resigned, she has not been replaced. There are funds for professional support.

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

² Mr. G-D. Burchard represented Prof Rolf Korte

³ Dr Ton Polderman attended the meeting in the afternoon for the discussion on the role of TM&IH in relation to FESTMIH

Report from the Treasury

- See appendix 1.
- Current balance is 25,423.60 euros (as of June). Main costs are travel costs, phone/mail, development of website (in 2003) and the expenses paid to the Leopold Institute and salary of Ms. Hamon (419 euro).
- M.Hommel: page 1 (accountancy report 2002) where it says *Income 2002 = 5,1297.87 from saving account*, the addition from saving account is not correct. The income from saving account is mentioned one line below, which adds up to 482.44 euros.
- The Board concludes that with the prospect of the collection of outstanding fees (2003 and 2004) FESTMIH is in sound shape.

2. Election of President, Secretary, Treasurer

- According to the Constitution, members of the Board are elected by the General Meeting for a two year period. Re-election is permitted, the mandate starts with the election. Any changes to this principle must be agreed by member societies.
- The Constitution does not have provision for changes of the offices within the Board. This is an internal Board issue.
- All current members declare their intention to remain on the Board of Directors. The current President (Marcel Hommel) and the Secretary (Pierre Ambroise-Thomas) indicate their wish to resign from the current position. The Treasurer is intended to resign at the next General Meeting, in Marseille in 2005.
- The Board agrees on the installation of (effective as of 5th of June 2004):
 - o Martin Boeree (Vice-President) as the new President of the Federation
 - o Marcel Hommel (President) as Vice-President of FESTMIH
 - o Pascal Magnussen as Secretary of FESTMIH
 - o Dominique Le Ray continues as Treasurer of FESTMIH

Congratulations!

Actionpoint: database and archives to be handed over to P.Magnussen

3. Marseille 2005 Congress

- P. Ambroise-Thomas (President of the Organizing Committee): mentions the representation of FESTMIH in both the organizational and scientific committees of the Congress. On the organizational side: at the Congress also the centennial of the Pharo School of Tropical Medicine will be celebrated.
- Regarding financial issues: there is a risk factor involved. Albine Conseil (co-organizers) and the French Society for Tropical Medicine agreed on equal share (50/50) of profits, as well as risks. In case of profits 15% (of the 50% that will go the French society) will be donated to FESTMIH. The Board agrees with this agreement. **(M.Hommel to write a formal letter to the members to confirm this agreement)**
- M.Hommel (President of the Scientific Committee): the scientific programme has been put together. The programme enables 6 plenary sessions (24 plenary speakers), with a maximum of 68 symposia (as the Marseille site is limited to a maximum of 7 parallel sessions). Expecting to attract 1600 delegates. Aiming to reach a geographical balance (in terms of chairs, speakers etc).
- P. Ambroise-Thomas emphasizes that suggestions for plenary sessions are welcome.
- M. Boeree: important that each Board member consults the own organization. Participation in the Congress is an opportunity a society to profile itself. Furthermore, a session on the role of FESTMIH could be organized with the specific aim to collect views and ideas on the relationship between the members

and the Federation, and how this could be enhanced (see also point 8 of the agenda).

- The Board concluded that the Congress is not the place to discuss the linkages between FESTMIH and the International Federation. It was felt that it is more important to concentrate on the European Federation, in stead of opting for more (international) expansion or to assist regional groups (like the African) with organising themselves.
- Other ideas were mentioned such as to host a session on education; to discuss the different educational systems throughout Europe. This could be done with participation of educational forums throughout Europe (such as TropMed) and possibly the Dutch Society who is organizing a Congress on the same topic later this year (*Brain Gain: best practices in knowledge transfer and capacity building in International Health*). The idea also converges with the ambition of the Congress to cover the whole range of medicine in the Tropics and include topics beyond 'classical' tropical medicine.

4. Update on the Congress in 2007

- M.Boeree: an organizational Committee has been established. First task of the Committee is to select a co-organizing congressbureau (professional organization for logistics, promotion etc.) The selection process has started. It is important to learn from earlier experiences (Lisbon congress). The most obvious place for the event is Amsterdam (possibly the Royal Dutch Tropical Institute). The Congress coincides with the 100th anniversary of the NVTG, and does not interfere with the World Congress on Tropical Medicine, this is planned for 2008 in Korea.
- On the collaboration with the Belgium Society for Tropical Medicine: there is interest to be involved, however not as a co-organizer. In 2006 the Institute of Tropical Medicine (the Leopold Institute) is also celebrating their 100th anniversary. This happening will be celebrated, though not with a formal Congress, but with an academic celebration.
- The Committee has thought of having the Dutch Society for Travel Medicine as a co-organizer. This could be profitable in terms of attracting sponsors. M.Hommel warns for the (possible) danger of having travel medicine overshadowing the tropical medicine aspects.

5. New member Societies

M. Hommel will be investigating possible new member organizations, for example sister organizations in the new member States of the European Community, like Poland and the Baltic States. There have been some initial contacts with Poland. Some travel is considered necessary. The Board of Directors agree that M.Hommel, in his new function as vice-president, will concentrate on this task.

6. Update TropMed Europe

- M.Hommel participated in the (2003) Annual Meeting of TropMed Europe (2003). Discussion focussed on the relationship between FESTMIH and TropMed. It is important to establish more profoundly FESTMIH's role and involvement. Both bodies have different missions and are organized differently.
- TropMed seems to function as a forum for informal consultations and discussions on management issues. TropMed could well function as an advisory body to governments, European Commission and others, or work on specific tasks, yet these functions have not been challenged so far.
- FESTMIH would be interested in enhancing the link with TropMed Europe, for example in working together on specific tasks for example the elaboration of

European Guidelines. In is eventually an option, however for the moment FESTMIH's involvement is limited to participation in the Annual Meetings. The meeting agrees that FESTMIH should remain their presence in TropMedEurope.

7. Relation TM&IH and FESTMIH

In the first part of the afternoon session, dr. Ton Polderman, one of the editors of TM&IH elaborated on the link between TM&IH and FESTMIH. Main discussion points:

- T. Polderman presented a brief historical overview. In the mid-nineties TM&IH became the joint initiative of a number of institutes of Tropical Medicine throughout Europe and the Society TGM, published by Blackwell. The challenge in those days was to increase scale as well as creating an European journal, without losing national identities. The need for a strong European forum was felt and the journal was seen as a tool to establish a stronger collaboration between European societies. From the beginning there has been a link with FESTMIH, but the journal was never set up as the journal of the European Federation.
- The discussion expanded on the association of TM&IH with the Marseille Congress in 2005. The organizers are identifying a publisher for the proceedings (abstracts, keynotes), under the auspices of the Congress. With regards to the abstracts, the Committee agreed that it is not worth the trouble to put much time and effort in editing, since the impact factor of abstracts is very low. Main objective is only to publish abstracts as a printer. Based on criteria of quality assurance and prize a printer will be selected. If interested Blackwell Publishing can sign up for this selection process for printing only. However, it is felt that it might be more interesting for TM&IH to dedicate a special edition to the Congress, in which some issues/topics are highlighted. In collaboration with the Scientific Committee this can be worked out. TM&IH will submit a proposal on this matter.
- Third point of discussion was the relationship between FESTMIH and TM&IH. Board concluded that there is a desire to establish a more structural collaboration. Ways to do this are regular publications of articles such as an editorial etc. from FESTMIH in the Journal. The Board thanked T.Polderman for his presence and concludes with the intention to prepare input for TM&IH on a regular basis.

8. Possible extension of FESTMIH's activities

The latter part of the afternoon was dedicated to possible expansion of FESTMIH's activities. FESTMIH's mission translates into three main areas:

- Promote harmonization of health strategies and recommendations related to developing countries, through networking activities;
 - Organize conferences on tropical medicine and international health (on a regular basis within Europe);
 - Foster the formation of new (scientific) societies dealing with health sciences and to encourage European harmonisation of training in Tropical Medicine.
- In summary the Board concluded that before venturing into new activities, it is important to confirm the current role as a Federation for European Societies for Tropical Medicine and International Health. First of all it is important to state what has been accomplished over the years, such as the European Congresses and its function as a Platform. The website was mentioned as an important instrument to enhance dialogue as well as a tool for member organizations to profile themselves. The potential use of the website could be expanded, also as

an instrument for the member societies. However the amount of work that is required to maintain (and up-date) a website should not be underestimated.

- FESTMIH plays an important role in the creation of an European platform. This role also can be re-emphasized to member societies: in many cases societies are unaware of plans and activities of the Federation. Furthermore, it is important to keep track of what is happening throughout Europe in terms of events, activities and discussions in the area of tropical medicine and international health.
- M.Boeree mentioned that it is a function of the Federation to respond to specific requests from member Societies. For example, the Dutch Society is interested in an overview of all training in tropical medicine in Europe. The German Society expressed interest in the formulation of European Guidelines. In taking action upon these, and possible other requests, FESTMIH does not only reaffirm its mission, but at the same time justifies collection of (outstanding) membership fees.
- The Board agree that in Marseille further discussion can be held on these possible new activities. Members will be given the opportunity to express their expectations. Meeting agreed that a session in Marseille will be organized to find out exactly what member societies expect from FESTMIH, and whether this is the time to expand activities.

(Actionpoint: organize meeting at the Marseille Congress on -possible-expansion of FESTMIH's activities)

- M.Boeree states that in the current structure it is not possible to take up more activities because of lacking human resources. The Dutch Society was in the same position. In order to implement a recently prepared policy paper on the role of the NVTG, professional assistance was hired. The employment of a part-time professional has proven its added value, especially with regards to translating and implementing strategic lines of the policy paper into concrete activities, generate funds etc. FESTMIH could follow this example. Board agrees that for specific activities, M.Boeree as President of the Board can hire professional assistance.

Other (possible) future activities:

- Prepare overview of training possibilities for Technical Assistance in Tropical Medicine throughout Europe (in collaboration with TropMed Europe/TropEd Europe);
- Stimulate discussions on development aid (national and European standpoints) and promote formulation of recommendations on this issue;
- Prepare overview of health care in low income countries, and scientific development in low income countries in general;
- Establish European Guidelines;
- Promote the work of FESTMIH (as an European Network and Platform);
- Enhance FESTMIH's credibility, and (re)define its role as a stimulator of a European debate on International Health (eg. through the organization of meetings with politicians and policy makers, and the use of the website as a discussion forum);
- Organize meetings in between the bi-annual conferences.

Miscellaneous

Next board meeting in the spring of 2005, possible dates: 12, 19 en 26 March.
Location to be determined: Poland, Geneva.

D.LeRay: Italian Society of Parasitology is interested in hosting the conference in 2007. This is not possible, since this will be in Amsterdam. The next possibility for Italy would be in 2009 and in 2011, the Czech Republic.