

**ESPCG AGM
Video Conference Call
Wednesday 15th July 2020
18:30 – CET**

Attendees:

Juan Mendive (JM) - President
Pierluigi Fracasso (PLF)
Greg Rubin (GR)
Pali Hungin (PH)
Lars Agreus (LA)
Foteini Anastasiou (FA)
Knut-Arne Wensaas K-AW)
Niek de Witt (NdW)
Jerry Budden (ESPCG Secretariat)

Christos Lionis (CL) (part)
Heidi-Ingrid Maaros (H-IM)

Apologies

Jean Muris (JMs)
Bohumil Seifert (BS)
Jelena Rakic Matic (JRM)

Agenda

1. Welcome and presentations
2. Update on COVID -19 Impact for ESPCG
3. Update on ESPCG Activities in WONCA, Berlin, December 17th to 19th 2020
4. Update on Planned ESPCG Educational Meetings in Romania and Bulgaria and associated UEG Funding
5. UEG Week, Amsterdam 2020 – update
6. Secretary's Report
7. Treasurers Report
8. Update - ESPCG Positions on UEG
9. ESPCG Election of Officers
10. AOB

1. Welcome and presentations

JM began the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking those who could attend. Apologies had been received from Jean Muris, Bohumil Seifert and Jelena Ratic Matic. Everyone was pleased to see LA looking so well.

2. Update on COVID -19 Impact for ESPCG

JM outlined briefly the current state of the pandemic in Barcelona reporting that an area close to the city had seen a recent outbreak of 300 cases and was now in lockdown again. There was a general agreement that this type of situation was likely to continue to occur across Europe and there was a general fear that a second wave could happen.

Countries in Europe were at various stages of dealing with the virus with some countries like Estonia almost clear to local outbreaks in Spain (Catalonia) and UK.

Clearly the pandemic has had a significant effect on the society with the UEG funded event in Romania, WONCA in Berlin and UEG Week in Amsterdam all impacted (see below).

PH pointed out that there is a gastrointestinal element to COVID-19 for those with IBD. On a general level it was agreed that everyone was rushing to online for the delivery of education, symposia and conferences and ESPCG should be part of this. PH proposed a short webinar on the IBD impact which was agreed by all. Secretariat agreed separately to deliver proposals by 24th July on any technology investment required to enable the society to deliver such activities. In addition PH also proposed we should seek industry funding for this – again agreed by all and noted by the Secretariat. LA pointed out he had attended a number of webinars via Zoom and Secretariat agreed to investigate licence fees including Zoom.

PH also proposed we should have some relevant news and short papers on the ESPCG website. JM has agreed to produce something and a separate email from the Secretariat will be circulated shortly after the meeting to request further contributions.

GR made the point that the pandemic was also impacting cancer services, cancer detection there was a significant increase forecast in cancer deaths due to late diagnosis. PLF concurred saying delays in diagnosis were a big issue in Italy as well.

3. Update on ESPCG Activities in WONCA, Berlin, December 17th to 19th 2020

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JM reported there was no new information regarding the WONCA event in Berlin. The WONCA World conference in Abu Dhabi has been postponed until November 2021. At this point ESPCG still have a session to deliver and further updates are expected. (At a later time in the meeting) NdW informed everyone he was part of the organising committee for WONCA Europe 2021 in Amsterdam. Currently the planning includes both on and offline elements though NdW suspects that without any major breakthrough in defeating the virus the whole of WONCA Europe in 2021 could be delivered online.

JM also reported he had recently been part of a discussion between WONCA Europe and representatives of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs). WONCA were hoping to get greater contributions from the SIGs for activities and publications like their journal and more news is expected to be forthcoming on this.

4. Update on Planned ESPCG Educational Meetings in Romania and Bulgaria and associated UEG Funding

JM reported that the meeting scheduled in Romania at the end of March was unlikely to now happen in 2020. Originally it was hoped to reorganise the event for November 2020 and this had been discussed with Romanian colleagues. However a mixture of national holidays at the end of the month and other planned events have meant this will not be possible.

JM was able to report that a number of discussions had taken place with Bulgarian colleagues and the opportunity to deliver the event at the end of September was still possible. Instead of holding the event in Sophia it had been moved a 100km to Plovdiv and a venue was provisionally booked.

Secretariat reported that since the last meeting UEG had reaffirmed the funding was for live face to face events only. The intention being that the opportunity for local healthcare professionals to meet European colleagues and hear talks first hand plus share experiences was a key element of the funding. Recognising the impact of the outbreak UEG are however prepared to fund replacement online events to a maximum of €2,000.

There then followed an extensive discussion on the pros and cons of proceeding with the Bulgarian event as a mixture of both live and broadcast talks. The overall view was that few people from ESPCG would be prepared to travel and many thought it would not be a wise course of action. Both GR and PLF were concerned that if the ESPCG went ahead with the event in the current circumstances UEG would not welcome that news. JM has taken the feedback away and will report back on other options if viable.

5. UEG Week, Amsterdam 2020 – update

Having been part of a recent meeting of the Science Committee GR was able to report as follows:

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UEG Week 2020 will be an online event with 3 types of sessions, live events, semi-live (where recorded talks will be supported with the opportunity to discuss and question the speakers live) and pre recorded sessions. The meeting will be hosted via an online platform that will give attendees the opportunity to visit various sections of the conference with breakout lobbies for further discussion.

Talk times have been reduced down to 10 minutes and in total there will be 126 sessions which represents a 30% reduction in the overall programme.

Registration fees are predicted to be between €210 and €220

A general concern was raised on the impact on UEG finances and the future of funding for societies like ESPCG.

JM reported that following UEG meetings he had been part of he was confident UEG are well placed to withstand the potential financial impact and he was hopeful there would not be too much of an impact on ESPCG.

GR was also able to report that as part of the online platform there would be a virtual industry section and also industry funded events.

However as UEG normally attracts 12,000+ it is impossible at this point to ascertain the actual impact.

6. Secretary's Report

Unfortunately Jean Muris was on holiday during this week and in his absence the Secretariat were able to summarise ESPCG activities and contributions across UEG, WONCA Europe and UEG funded events in 2019/2020.

This included continued representation on the Science, Research, Education and Public Affairs Committees. In addition JM had been appointed to the Standards and Guidelines Committee and FA had joined the Members Council as the 3rd ESPCG representative.

7. Treasurers Report

LA ran through a summary of the accounts for 2019 based on the approved accounts and auditors report. Although the bank balance had reduced significantly by the end of 2019 this was mainly due to the later payment of the UEG funding for the society and payment for the funded educational event.

The increased UEG funding of €40,000 was paid in early February 2020 and so in round terms the balance of €47,000 in 2019 has reduced to €44,000 at the moment.

Concerns were raised during the meeting about the impact of an online UEG Week on future funding. Whilst the likelihood of any impact is difficult to judge at this point the good news from LA is we have enough funding to continue as we are for at least another 12 months.

LA thanked both our auditor Olle Pettersson and bookkeeper Sara Sjöborg for their efforts in the last 12 months.

8. Update - ESPCG Positions on UEG

LA has already informed the society he wishes to step down from the UEG Research Committee at the end of this year. In addition the terms of BS on the Public Affairs Committee and PLF on the Education Committee come to an end in 2020.

Both BS and PLF have indicated their willingness to serve either for another term or on a different committee. However UEG have requested that ESPCG refrain from proposing colleagues to the Education, Research and Public Affairs Committees that are or have been holding a position on UEG Council, or that are already serving on another UEG Committee in 2021.

A detailed discussion followed and various options were aired. NdW made it clear he felt he had served his time at UEG and others should be given the opportunity. One factor that was noted is the need to propose someone who is suitably qualified for the Research Committee.

PH, GR, NdW and LA all have some ideas and will give this further thought. The deadline for nominations is November 8th 2020 and it was agreed to have a further conference call/meeting to discuss and finalise options at the end of September/beginning of October.

Secretariat will propose dates and circulate to all the UEG role descriptions for each committee.

9. ESPCG Election of Officers

The ESPCG Officers are elected on a two year cycle and this year the positions of President, Treasurer and Communications Officer were open for election. All 3 officers had indicated their willingness to serve another term

and Notices were sent out to this effect earlier in July. There being no other candidates who put themselves forward and no further comment from the meeting all 3 officers were duly re elected to serve a further 2 years.

As there was no other business JM brought the meeting to an end by thanking everyone for having faith in him to act as the Society President and looked forward to an interesting coming 2 years.

End