

**Minutes of the Plenary Assembly of the
European Society for Separation Science (EuSSS)
held on Monday, 10th September 2012**

Venue: Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland

Time: 17.00

Chair: B Buszewski

Participants: D Berek, V Coman, D Corradini, V Davankov, A Felinger, J Glennon, T Greibrokk, S Hjerten, M Kaljurand, V Kasicka, H Kazoka, J Lehotay, W Lindner, J Lough, A Maruska, M Martin, Y Pico, I Vovk, D Westerlund, M Hertig-Saric, W Buchberger, M Laemmerhofer, H Frank.

Apologies: V Pichon (France)

In attendance: J Kowalska

(During a lively meeting, discussions moved backwards and forwards from topic to topic, moving from time to time away from the agenda. In order to set out the meeting outcomes more clearly, in the minutes below the record of the meeting has been allocated to each topic on the agenda rather than in the chronological order of the actual statements made.)

1. WELCOME FROM THE EuSSS PRESIDENT Prof. Boguslaw Buszewski

In opening the meeting BB introduced the national representatives, 14 out of 21 members were represented, and proclaimed a new concept for EuSSS with a greater focus on young people and the popularisation of separation science. EuSSS would continue as an umbrella for those who wanted to cooperate. The period from the previous general assembly in Valencia at ISC 2010 had been one of relative hibernation with AF having staged HPLC 2011 in Budapest and BB working towards ISC 2012 in Torun. Now that these onerous tasks had been completed, it would be possible to proceed with EuSSS matters with renewed vigour.

On publicity, there had been two articles on EuSSS in Chromatography Today and Journal of Separation Science had been adopted as the official journal of EuSSS.

2. MINUTES FROM EuSSS MEETING IN SPAIN AT ISC 2010 [John Lough acting Hon Sec on behalf of Chris Bevan]

2a. Acceptance of the minutes as being an accurate record of the meeting

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

2b. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

3. **FINANCIAL REPORT Prof. Atilla Felinger [Hon Treasurer]**

AF gave a verbal report on EuSSS finances with key figures presented on screen. The accounts had been transferred from Innsbruck to Hungary on June, 2010. 10 of the member countries had paid their 250 euros. 345.07 euros had been spent on the website. The current account balance stood at 2620.65 euros.

It was pointed out that the Nordic Separation Science Society made no profit and had no budget. However, even under these circumstances, the 250 euros annual membership fee was not a problem.

There were no ongoing costs relating to awards made by EuSSS. 20 copies of the prize had been purchased.

4. **CHARITABLE STATUS & REGISTRATION IN GERMANY [Prof. Hartmut Frank]**

HF explained that EuSSS was registered in Germany and had tax-exempt status which depended on a check by the local tax office which was due in 2014. This check would be tougher this time given the transfer of accounts from Innsbruck to Hungary. There should be an annual plenary assembly but it is hoped that the German Revenue Service will, exceptionally for the upcoming tax declaration, accept the fact that currently only one every two years has taken place. HF agreed to continue to look after charitable status and registration matters.

5. **DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT EuSSS RULES & REGULATIONS**

5b. Periods in office for office bearers

5c. Decisions on changes to the rules

There were no significant discussions on this item other than under Item. 7

6. **DISCUSSION OF THE FUTURE DIRECTION FOR EuSSS**

6a. Members' responses to the Questionnaires [ALL]

6b. Decisions for the future direction of EuSSS [SC]

This was vigorously debated agenda item and discussions returned to this topic from time to time.

There was still a need for a Nordic Society, including Finland, but this should be under the umbrella of EuSSS. A role for EuSSS should be to coordinate dates and engage new member countries.

The inter-relationship with EuChem was discussed. There was a possibility that an independent Division of Analytical Chemistry would be set up. This would be useful for securing grants. MM pointed out though that EuSSS needed to be lobbying at the right level. TG commented that there should be different levels of input and that industry should be involved.

JL pointed out that many of the points being raised had been covered by the questionnaire (Appendix), and summary of responses therefrom, recently conducted by the EuSSS Secretary,

Chris Bevan (CB), before his very recent resignation. BB questioned whether the responses had been representative. CB had not had all the correct e-mail addresses. There had only been 6 respondees from a possible of 26. JL ventured that there was enough evidence to suggest a need to conduct a review of EuSSS's 'reason for being'.

VK said that he was surprised that anyone was prepared to pay the EuSSS membership fee. Nordic members supported this statement.

VD explained the situation in Russia. Since the "tragedy of the Soviet Union" he didn't now know who he represented.

The issue of poor education was raised but the Nordic groups that no issues in this area. They emphasised that in an organisation everyone has to work together, noting that there were too many different scientific meetings and that the small countries did not enough critical mass on their own. HF reflected that it was a matter of morality. He also pointed out that EuSSS had been offered 20 free pages in Journal of Separation Sciences to publicise its activities but these had not been used.

WB thought summer schools would be valuable. On meetings he agreed that coordination was difficult and, in any case, the HPLC series was dominant.

It was AGREED that the CB questionnaire would be considered by the Steering Committee (SC) and then a new survey would be made taking in all members. TG noted that in doing so it was important to clearly identify the role for EuSSS to inform the constituent separations groups and their related analytical societies.

7. **ELECTION OF STEERING COMMITTEE**

7a. Resignation of Prof. Wolfgang Lindner

7b. Resignation of Dr. Christopher Bevan as EuSSS Hon Sec

7c. Results of the elections to fill the vacancies on the Steering Committee

VK accepted suggestion of WL to substitute him in the SC, which was agreed by the other members of SC (vacancy was created by resignation of WL) and could take up the post of Hon Sec which had been held by CB. Looking forward it was noted that BB and AF would need to seek re-election in 2013, VP in 2014 and VK in 2016. HF would continue to deal with queries regarding legal status *etc.* WL asked about who can nominate candidates and who decides upon who gets elected. The SC itself decides who becomes a new member of the SC. As before TG would prepare for the next election. HF would see to it that the election was publicised in JSS

8. **THE EuSSS WEBSITE [Prof. Atilla Felinger as website manager]**

The representative for each country could be seen on the website. VK had helped update the calendar and would add PhD and Post-Doc positions. He needed more information. VP was finding young students as potential speakers.

9. **THE TSWETT-NERNST PRIZE**

9a. Awardees and process for making awards [All]

Awards were to be made to VD, Gunther Bonn and Pat Sandra.

9b. Defining the rules for nomination and selection of awardees

Despite having resigned from the SC WL will still prepare the rules. Each country was allowed to nominate.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

WL suggested that there should be a general assembly every year rather than every two years. For example a meeting could be held at HPLC 2013 in Amsterdam. The SC would decide.

Action List:

- **SC to reflect on CB questionnaire and then take feedback from all members.**
- **TG to prepare for next elections**
- **WL to prepare rules for Tswett – Nernst Award**

APPENDIX

A SUMMARY OF THE EuSSS QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (Chris Bevan, Hon Sec, 2012)

The questionnaires were returned completed by nine countries and comments provided by two further countries who chose not to use the form.

The following is a summary of the statements and opinions of the respondents.

As far as UK is concerned the EuSSS currently does little for our Chromatographic Society members.

The EuSSS could provide a means for communicating to all the European countries and EuSSS has an infrastructure to achieve this. However, because of the lack of goals and immediate targets and practical ideas for doing things that other societies do not do, there is a severe lack of purpose and reason to be.

After reading the questionnaire responses I was not surprised to learn that the French and Austrians felt broadly the same as the UK, but the Russians, Ukrainians, Czech Republic and Portuguese countries do not share these views. They feel that the EuSSS should provide an important conduit link between them and the other European chromatography communities and want to see it flourish. They do recognise it has not done much in this respect so far. The calendars of international meetings on the web site are said to be valuable to these former eastern bloc people. European economics may still play an important influence, as one might expect, with the so called "poorer" countries expecting to get more out of EuSSS membership than the richer ones.

No one has directly criticised the EuSSS for not running meetings, respondents don't see this as its role and see many other societies fulfilling this role well already. Many view it as an umbrella organisation but see issues of control if it were to try to take over established meetings.

Specifically the following points were made:

The Czech Republic joined EuSSS to:

1. Receive information in the area of separation science.
2. Receive information concerning the symposia, conferences, seminars, workshops and courses on separation methods.
3. Have a possibility to participate in the meetings and gatherings of the Society representatives.

The Czechs see the future of EuSSS as:

1. Promotion of separation science at the all-European level.
2. Dissemination of knowledge and information on separation science.
3. Dissemination of information on conferences, symposia, seminars, workshops and courses on separation science.
4. Coordination in planning of the international symposia on separation science in cooperation with regional groups, Central European Group for Separation Sciences, Nordic Society of Separation Science and International (California) Separation Science Society (CaSSS).
5. Providing promotion and support to the conferences, symposia, seminars, workshops and courses organized under the auspices of EuSSS, e.g. financing the "best poster awards" or "best young scientist presentation".

6. Organization of biennial (in the even years) all-European symposia on separation science – continuation of the series of International Symposia on Chromatography; in these years the regional symposia of CEGSS and NoSSS should not be organized.
7. Support of students and young scientists, providing travel grants (if there are sufficient financial funds for these purposes).

These goals should be achievable by an:

1. Active policy of the steering committee in general.
2. Providing expertise for political decisions concerning chemistry and analytical chemistry in general and separation science in particular.
3. Providing relevant and topical information on separation science on the EuSSS website and also in the Journal of Separation Science.
4. To obtain sponsorship and financial support mostly from companies and science foundations.

The Czech republic also suggested the SC to consider the following topics:

1. To establish electronic conference where the problems in separation science could be discussed and topical information could be exchanged by all people registered in this conference. We have such conference on the national level.
2. On the EuSSS website, to introduce a section, where offers or requests for PhD or post-doc positions could be published.

Russia believes that EuSSS could become the most important EUROPEAN coordination centre giving an “umbrella” to numerous national groups. Russia believes that the introduction of the international Separation Science Award will be extremely helpful in achieving this goal. They suggest we have to advertise the award broadly and properly organise submission of nominations.

There is never sufficient research money. But, there are huge fluctuations in financing politics. At present time, all research money in Russia goes to universities, while Academy of Sciences is allowed to die. This is fully irrational since knowledge and experience in basic research is accumulated in the Academy. By supporting international cooperation, in one way or another, EuSSS could promote grants for visits of young students from Russian universities to experienced research teams in the West. On the contrary, old scientific schools in the Academy could be very useful in joint research projects, but badly need any kind of financial support. By understanding this strange situation in Russia (not necessarily in other former USSR republics), could contribute to supporting chromatographic teams in Russia.

Finally, I am tempted to suggest that the Steering committee be run by members of the former eastern bloc countries but that would weaken an important link to the western European member countries.

Prof. Lindner intends to resign from EuSSS in Torun at ISC and therefore a place will be available for his replacement on the Steering Committee. I would consider handing over the Hon Sec position to someone else too but feel I want it to be someone who will take the EuSSS forward and not just sit on a committee.