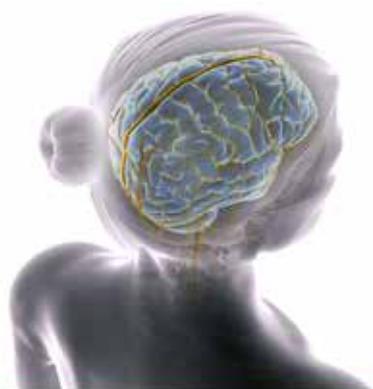


EANS2019today

Issue 1
Wednesday
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THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF EANS2019 Dublin

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Join Stryker's lunch symposium!

Live surgery in review: challenges and solutions in skull base surgery by Dr Paul Gardner

Thursday, September 26, 13:15
Wicklow Hall 1



Words of an expert!

On the similarities of organising a congress and a neurosurgical department

Dublin born and raised, Congress President Ciaran Bolger led not only the scientific programme development of EANS2019 but the local entertainment too. Speaking to EANS Today, he described the themes and new features of the meeting, and the challenges of its organisation.

What is involved in organising a congress such as this?

I'm the president – the host, if you like – of the congress. I chair the programme committee, deciding what talks happen and who gives them, what the whole theme of the meeting will be, and how we fit all of that into the few days that we have.

“Neurosurgeons are more difficult than any other group of surgeons I’ve ever organised a conference for. It just goes with the territory.”

Ciaran Bolger

I also organise the social side of things. People are visiting your city, and you want them to have a good time. You want to show off your city and your unit. So we have a welcome reception on Tuesday



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“My own band are playing the networking event...so if anyone doesn't like the programme, they can come and boo me on stage!”

Ciaran Bolger

night, a networking event at the Guinness storehouse on Wednesday night, and a more formal president's dinner on Thursday night.

We organised the venues, the food, the entertainment – making sure it has a local flavour and that it's going to be something that people actually enjoy.

This is an awful lot of work. Its organisation has been going on for the last two years, once the EANS decided that this is where they were coming. It started off pretty slow but got more and more intense the closer we got to it. There are all sorts of last-minute problems, with people saying that they can't make it, meaning that you have to find new speakers at short notice. Lots of last-minute hitches.

In a nutshell, how would you compare this to the organisation of a neurosurgical department?

Both are about managing egos... neurosurgeons just have huge egos! Managing them is impossible. Trying to organise and coordinate them into doing anything is difficult. It demands perseverance, patience and a lot of diplomacy. Neurosurgeons are more difficult than any other group of surgeons I've ever organised a conference for. It just goes with the territory.

Returning to the scientific programme, how was the theme developed, and are there any new features you would highlight?

The central theme we proposed was 'Technology, techniques, training and transparency' – so, training of neurosurgeons, new technology, and how that is impacting on surgery. Transparency is a big issue at the moment, with doctors under scrutiny to be honest and report complications. That is all quite topical.

In the programme committee, for each topic that we are going to discuss we have a local host – one of the local surgeons from the UK – partnered up with a European surgeon. That committee goes off and each pair will come up with a proposal covering their own section. Then we come together and try and put the whole thing together, marrying it so it will flow.

The big thing this year was the emergence of the Global Neurosurgery section. That was supposed to be a small section at the meeting, but it's become a very big topic, so we've made it a plenary session at the meeting [Wednesday, Auditorium, 14:30-16:10].

Global Neurosurgery is all about surgery in low- and middle-income countries and how we get nations up to scratch. The World Health Organization (WHO)

produce a report showing that, while we always concentrate on malaria or lack of vaccinations, an awful lot of people die simply from a lack of access to a surgeon¹. We need to recognise that surgery is actually a very important front-line treatment.

We have a big session on this topic, with speakers from around the world, with the Taoiseach of Ireland speaking at it as well.

Lastly, could you give a few hints about the flavour of entertainment we can expect at the welcome reception?

When you are organising a meeting like this, the entertainment is important. That is why I'm doing the entertainment myself: my own band (I am the lead singer) are playing at the networking event.

This is a cheap way of providing the entertainment. So if anyone doesn't like the programme we have created, they can come and boo me when I'm on stage!

Connect with your international peers and enjoy the evening high above Dublin's historic rooftops at tonight's networking event takes place at the Guinness Storehouse (St James's Gate, Ushers, Dublin 8) from 19:30.

Footnote

1. According to a recent report by the WHO (drawing on the recently published Lancet Commission on Global Surgery, Global Surgery 2030), five billion people do not currently have access to safe, timely and affordable surgical care and anaesthesia worldwide. In low- and middle-income countries, 9 out of 10 people cannot access even the most basic surgical services. Underpinning this are numerous misconceptions, including the notion that surgery is too expensive to implement as part of public health interventions. (Bae JY, Groen RS, Kushner AL. Surgery as a public health intervention: common misconceptions versus the truth. Bulletin of the World Health Organization 2011;89:394).



New evidence in streamlining care access and satisfaction



Shekar Kurpad of the Department of Neurosurgery at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MI, USA) described the process of improving access to spine care and patient satisfaction at his centre, during yesterday's session on the latest updates in neurosurgery.

Back and neck pain affects up to 84% of the US population, carrying a total cost of \$100 billion in terms of lost revenue.[#1] Dr Kurpad's Froedtert Tosa Health Center and the affiliated Medical College of Wisconsin clinic is one of five spine clinics in southeastern Wisconsin, with a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to care involving neurosurgery, orthopaedic surgery, physical medicine and rehabilitation, chiropractic care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and pain psychology. "Our goal is always to render the right care at the right time and the right place," he told delegates.

The process of improving patients' access to appropriate care involves a staged, reiterative process. Dr Kurpad stressed the importance of teamwork, and of the involvement of department leaders, executive sponsor teams and departmental faculty, in bringing about the changes that can bring down barriers preventing patients from accessing appropriate care. "Really [this work] is relevant to any group trying to build a large private practice."

The first part of this process was to

"Our goal is always to render the right care at the right time and the right place."

Shekar Kurpad

identify barriers in patient access to care within a neurosurgery spine specialty practice. Then, a method of incorporating advanced practice provider (APP) clinics into a neurosurgical specialty spine practice was devised. The effects of the implementation of APP clinics were then studied and optimised in real time, in terms of lag time, patient satisfaction and surgeon efficiency.

"It is always important when you start to do new things, to first do things with low effort but high impact," advised Dr Kurpad. "We made some early, minimal changes that would have (in our opinion) a big impact, then established success to make sure it was working, and then moved on to the next project. Obviously you only want to pick issues that you can influence."

Detailing further the functioning of his large-volume spine practice, Dr Kurpad cited 12,500 new referrals per year and a total of 52,000 visits per year, with a traditional triage system that had resulted in

excessive lag times to appointment, a large number of declined patients, complaints and lost referrals, and a lack of transparency of processes. Moreover, support teams did not have clear roles.

"Why collect data?" He posed. "First, it helps to establish trust. Data can tell people about the things they are doing not necessarily as well as they could be done."

The existing triage process involved 40+ questions over multiple patient calls and a 10-day review process, he said, which resulted in 44% of patients declined. Those who were not declined waited a further 16 days till being seen.

"We decided to define some aspirations and set some clear goals. In a large department, you want to [do this] in order to create change."

As well as redesigning triage, a Dyad model was introduced to improve APP and surgeon teamwork, as well as engaging APPs in the full scope of practice. The new triage process involved a single phone call and ten simple patient-centred questions, with patients being given appointments on the same call if this was needed. Improving communication, transparency and trust among various members of the team was achieved by increasing the frequency of meetings and ensuring diversity among the leaderships.

Outlining the outcomes of this strategy, Dr Kurpad explained: "This work represents roughly a three-year process. We had a 28% increase in new patients seen – almost a third increase. We went from 44% to 20% of patients declined. This is a significant improvement. There was also a much shorter time to appointment, from 26+ days to 10 days. In other words, if you came in with a back or neck problem, you were seen by someone the next week. We are trying to get this down to the same week right now – this is the next step in our evolution."

Surgeons' efficiency was increased, he added, as well as the surgical clinics' efficiency – demonstrated by the surgical conversion rate increase from 21% to 36%. Patient satisfaction reportedly increased from 71% to 90.1%, and referring and spine providers satisfaction was significantly heightened.

"These are transformative improvements," concluded Dr Kurpad, "Because the initiatives have now been implemented in other specialties across the healthcare system."

References

1. Friedly J, Standaert C, Chan L. Epidemiology of spine care: the back pain dilemma. *Phys Med Rehabil Clin N Am*. 2010 Nov;21(4):659-77.

The challenges of working for EANS!

Our new Events & Admin Coordinator Martina De Gregorio shares first impressions of her role.

“It’s not brain surgery is it?” That is, of course, a common line that people use to mean that a task or project under discussion should not be considered more complicated than it really is.

Yet, in my case, when people ask me what my new job is, brain surgery is almost exactly what it is. Or more to the point, my job is to organise and prepare the full portfolio of the EANS HandsOn Courses, CME Educational Courses and being in charge of the administration of all EANS Observership & Award programmes.

I have to say I am loving learning more about the profession, but also getting to know and assist so many young and developing neurosurgeons. Their enthusiasm and dedication is happily infectious. These individuals, through the EANS hands-on courses, are working and learning at the cutting edge of science. It is both an honour and a privilege to play some role in helping to ensure their rapid uptake of new skills in order that they can take that to patients in need right across Europe and beyond. This means that when I work on organising events such as the Young Neurosurgeons Meeting in Zurich (27-28 March 2020), there is a pleasant self-reward in knowing the positive difference that the uptake and application of the learning will have in so many healthcare systems.

Moreover, as I have been finding out, brain surgery training courses mix elements of both the new and the old. While technology in imaging or surgery will continue to develop at a rapid pace, it seems certain that traditional elements of training will also continue to be a fixture. By that, I mean the truly hands-on elements of learning and practice with cadavers. Fortunately for me, as a horror film addict in my free time, the films of Dario Argento, John Carpenter and (early) Peter Jackson have more than prepared me to take this part of the job in my stride, where many others might have fainter hearts!

I want to end by saluting and thanking all of the wonderful neurosurgeons I have had the pleasure of working for so far, the



“EANS is an ambitious organisation working hard to continually improve its offering to members and the community it serves.”

Martina De Gregorio

EANS Board of Directors, the course directors and my colleagues. The welcome provided to me has been remarkable. I’ve been humbled by how approachable so many very busy and distinguished professionals have been. Finally, they have all helped to convey to me the EANS ‘can do’ spirit.

EANS is an ambitious organisation working hard to continually improve its offering to members and the community it serves. I can’t wait to play an ever more active role in helping to deliver that.



A personal view!

Ways of collaborating between European and National Societies

Neil Kitchen, who last September took up the position of president of the Society of British Neurological Surgeons, describes the importance of continuing to stand together with EANS as one of its member organisations – regardless of the turbulent political waters the UK currently finds itself in.

The UK is, at present, in extremely uncertain times politically, especially surrounding our relationship with Europe. Indeed, between writing this contribution to the newsletter in early August and it appearing in our Congress newsletter in late September anything could have happened (!), with a new Prime Minister elected and another Brexit date of 31st October rapidly approaching.

Regardless of the political outcome, the Society of British Neurological Surgeons (SBNS) will remain totally committed to the EANS as it has throughout the history and development of this continental association of neurosurgical societies. Of course, we are delighted to host this Congress in Ireland, whose neurosurgeons the SBNS also represents. Dublin is an amazing place and perfect to allow neurosurgeons across Europe to meet and exchange ideas during EANS 2019.

Collaborating comes in all guises, ranging from formal joint national neurosurgical society meetings to individual neurosurgeon visits to centres of neurosurgical excellence across Europe. Whenever I talk to SBNS members, their

feedback from such visits are very positive; the practice and challenges of neurosurgery are often very similar across Europe, though the methods used to address such challenges vary according to healthcare systems, culture, and neurosurgical resource, organisation and excellence. Conversely, there are a large number of European neurosurgeons who work in the UK and are a valuable part of our NHS workforce.

From the research perspective, neurosurgeons across Europe can be justly

“The Society of British Neurological Surgeons will remain totally committed to the EANS.”

Neil Kitchen

proud of large scale randomised controlled trials that are based across the continent and which exemplify constructive cooperation and engagement.

Collaborating clinically and academically together across the EANS is fundamental in raising neurosurgical standards across the continent to the benefit of our patients. We are stronger together!





UPCOMING EVENTS FROM THE EANS

- 27 - 29 OCT 2019** **EANS Advanced Course in Spinal Surgery - Part I**
Madrid, Spain
For recently qualified neurosurgeons
- 7 - 10 NOV 2019** **EANS Microneurosurgery Course**
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
A complete microvascular experience
- 19 - 22 NOV 2019** **EANS Cranial Step I HandsOn Course**
Brno, Czech Republic
Essential neurosurgical anatomy and the planning of surgical procedures
- 5 - 6 DEC 2019** **EANS White Matter Dissection Course**
Tours, France
Focusing on the anatomy and function of white matter tracts
- 13 - 17 JAN 2020** **EANS Lyon HandsOn Course**
Lyon, France
Suitable for recently qualified neurosurgeons, those still in training, and anyone else looking to refine their skills
- 21 - 22 JAN 2020** **EANS Spinal Step II HandsOn Course**
Lyon, France
Most suitable for neurosurgical residents in their last years of training
- 26 - 28 MAR 2020** **EANS 10th Annual Young Neurosurgeons' Meeting & Research Course**
Zurich, Switzerland
- 18 - 22 OCT 2020**  **EANS2020 Belgrade** *Neurosurgery beyond technology*

For more details and to register for all EANS events, please visit www.eans.org

Book now! Our courses fill up fast!



THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
OF NEUROSURGICAL SOCIETIES



Giving more value to associations events

Lisa Widhalm of AIM Group International describes the challenges of collaborating with an organisation such as EANS

The European Congress of Neurosurgery, organised by AIM Group for the fifth consecutive year, recorded a boost in sponsorship and a surge in the use of digital tools for engagement and attendance, thanks to a collaborative dialogue with the association client and sponsor partners.

Having collaborated with EANS in the past five years we know the challenges we may encounter when serving a high-profile organisation and an event like the EANS Congress.

The annual meeting is an important part of an association's life and business. A successful annual meeting requires strategic planning and the effective involvement of members.

When approaching the organisation for a conference there are always plenty of things to do, but before starting the project it is important to stop and fine-tuning the association's overall strategy with the congress planning. It is crucial to identify how the association's clients can benefit from events and how events can generate better results.

Understand the broader objectives

The first step professional congress organisers (PCOs) must do is to ask themselves: what does this association expect from the event organisation? We know that the most common goals for associations are: strengthening their relationships and expanding their network; building their reputation and becoming influential; establishing new partnerships; improving economic performance. On top of this, each year there is a focus on specific goals.

The actual trends

As regard to meeting and event management, associations nowadays focus on two needs:

- Innovate in formats, knowledge sharing, training tools and methods, participants engagement, technologies and communication platforms, networking opportunities, fundraising activities, etc. These aspects are all essential to raise the value generated for the association and



the participants.

- Attract a greater number of participants thanks to a well-structured event marketing campaign, accurate information and timely communications.

Define the strategy

All endeavours need a strategic plan. The PCO needs to understand the client's marketplace, its competitive environment and its capabilities (real, not perceived). Through working together, the client and PCO will find an overall strategic sense of the meeting and what results can be achieved. Knowing this will help allocate budget and staff resources properly while making smart design and supplier choices. If you can't define why you're having the meeting then you shouldn't have that meeting.

Engage the stakeholders

Every meeting or event has internal and external stakeholders - clients, CEOs, board members, participants, officials, sponsors, etc. Once you know who your stakeholders are you can define what it's important to them and prioritise those interests, issues and concerns. The effective communication with stakeholders is a key when executing the defined strategy. Ultimately it is about building fruitful relationships with those most valuable to the association.

For EANS Congresses, for example, we focused on facilitating sponsorship, creating more valuable partnerships and attracting new sponsors. Building on the collaboration that was developed with the sponsor community at previous congresses, more sponsorship opportunities were found and more space was dedicated to booths. This resulted in a substantial increase in sponsorship and exhibition area.

Align your tactics

While your strategy defines the broader goals, your tactics are how you achieve them. Therefore, when organising it's essential to be clear about how each specific tactic aligns with the overall conference strategy and reflects on all the meeting logistics down to the smallest detail.

For example, in order to make the whole procedure smoother and easier, for EANS 2018 it was decided to go digital. A complete digital experience was offered to attendees: a user-friendly poster area, interactive e-posters, and special scanning stations which sped up the completion of evaluations for CME credits.

To foster learning outcomes, more space was given to small interactive sessions - such as the Masterclasses, where a small group could freely interact with well-known surgeons to discuss clinical cases.

We also take this route for EANS 2019. We envisage the Congress Digital Environment as one single harmonised platform seamlessly managing participants' interaction and communication (from the scientific programme to targeted marketing campaigns), which will become the fulcrum of the congress organisation.

De-briefing

Finally, every strategic goal has to be implemented by a specific tactic, and as a consequence reflected in all the meeting logistics and little details that follow. Of course, at the end of the project you must analyse feedback and results, share the key learnings and fine-tune the updated objectives for the future.



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Congress App



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Maximise your connectivity and speed up your planning during the EANS2019 congress!



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Network: EANS2019
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How can the research funding improve neurosurgical care throughout the world?

An interview with Professor Peter Hutchinson, Research Fund Director

What is the role of the EANS Research Fund?

The fund was started in 2018 to promote research into diseases of the brain and spine in Europe. These diseases are of major importance to patients, their families and society. There are 165 million Europeans with brain disorders, causing a global cost (direct and indirect) exceeding 800 billion € for national health budgets.

The focus of the EANS is on neurosurgical conditions which include brain injuries, brain tumours, stroke, epilepsy, hydrocephalus and disorders of the spine. While advances have been made in the treatment of these conditions there remain many unanswered questions and major opportunities to improve treatment and outcome for patients.

Our mission is to achieve this through comprehensive research strategies, including basic science laboratory research, translational research and clinical studies, including trials. Access to research funding from large grant funding bodies such as the European Union, national government agencies and charities is highly competitive and usually requires initial pilot research data.

We therefore created the research fund to pump prime projects to enable the acquisition of the pilot data necessary to apply for more substantial funding. The fund provides 10,000 € seed grants for neurosurgical research projects.

Who can apply for an EANS Research Grant?

We aim in particular to support young researchers. The fund provides four to six seed grants per year across the various neurosurgical specialities addressing the following conditions: brain injury, vascular neurosurgery, oncology, spine surgery, functional neurosurgery and paediatric neurosurgery. The grants are available to neurosurgeons in all member countries of the EANS to encourage European cooperation and collaboration. Laboratory, translational and clinical research projects are eligible for funding.

What progress has been made with the fund?

There have been two rounds of the fund with ten grants made, as follows.

In 2018:

- Alkinoos Athanasiou (Thessaloniki, Greece) – Brihaye EANS Research Grant; Adaptive and maladaptive plasticity of brain networks following spinal cord injury.
- Md. Iftakher Hossain (Turku, Finland) – Integra EANS Research Grant; Combining neuroimaging and blood biomarkers in the assessment of traumatic brain injuries.
- Davide Croci (Basel, Switzerland) – EANS Research Grant; The effects of Interleukin-6 receptor antagonist in reduction of vasospasm and delayed cerebral injury in a rabbit closed cranium subarachnoid hemorrhage model.
- Jérôme Cochereau (Montpellier, France) – Stryker EANS Research Grant; Cognitive control neural networks organisation and reshaping: a functional and structural neuroimaging study in low grade glioma patients.

In 2019:

- Sajjad Muhammad (Helsinki, Finland) – Monocyte / macrophage polarization and their therapeutic implications in SAH.

- Christian Blume (Aachen, Germany) – Degenerative cervical myelopathy: the secondary harm.
- Niek Djuric (Leiden, The Netherlands) – Effect of infection, Modic and Inflammation on Clinical outcomes in Radiculopathy (EIMICOR).
- Alfredo Conti (Messina, Italy) – Pre-conditioning of motor network by repetitive navigated transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) in patients who are candidate to elective surgery in motor areas.
- Vanessa Hubertus (Berlin, Germany) – Alteration of neurovascular repair and blood spinal cord barrier disruption post traumatic spinal cord injury through modified expression of VEGF-A.
- Levin Haeni (Bern, Switzerland) – Ex-vivo tissue diagnostic through impedance spectroscopy in neuro-oncology.

Who supports the fund?

The fund is supported by a number of sources. We are particularly grateful for the support of Stryker, Integra and the family of Jean Brihaye.

How do I apply for a grant?

Application for the 2020 round will be via the EANS website: eans.org



What have the last couple of years brought to you as EANS Treasurer?

EANS Treasurer Nikos Foroglou reports on the successes of his term and ongoing challenges.

Coming from a small European country such as Greece, it was a great honour to participate as a board officer. EANS is an important association developing neurosurgery in Europe through education, congresses and networking with the spirit of mutual respect, voluntarism and friendliness. The main aim of EANS is to advance European neurosurgery through elimination of discrepancies across the continent.

Being EANS Treasurer involved a number of administrative and strategic challenges, with each venture requiring thorough auditing, negotiating and brokering of agreements. Financially, the two greatest

“The two greatest challenges of the last two years have been the reorganisation of the office and the development of the annual congress.”

Nikos Foroglou

challenges of the last two years have been the reorganisation of the office and the development of the annual congress.

The resignation of various executive staff in recent months presented the opportunity to reorganise the office around new

recruitment. We have now selected a new Executive Director (Valentini Amaratidou), a Financial Manager (Beata Vasiliakova) and an Office Manager (Martina De Gregorio) who build a very dynamic team with the very experienced in EANS affairs Visi Navarro. Given our expanding operations, in the future we aim to engage more staff in the running of EANS affairs in order to depend less on outsourcing for our operations.

Our annual congress is evolving and expanding in its reach. We are developing our ties with medical industry, as well as bringing in more neurosurgeons from all corners of Europe. As always, a great deal of work goes into preserving and building upon the high quality of scientific content on offer at the congress. This represents a great opportunity for networking as well as learning. A future challenge we are considering is how to maintain this quality with increasing numbers of delegates year on year.

Amid all of this change, financial management had to be renewed, including bank relations, expenses claim and control, cash flows, accounting and auditing. None of those would be possible without the dedication and professionalism of Beata Vasiliakova, our financial manager since 2017, who I was very lucky to collaborate with.

In my role, I spend a great deal of time travelling around the continent, participating in meetings and solving challenging financial issues – time well spent of course, because at the end of this term EANS is in a great



“Our annual congress is evolving and expanding in its reach.”

Nikos Foroglou

position. We are doing better financially and can offer more courses and develop more actions. Our new website is now launched, and communication between members has also improved with the new digital platform. Our examination process is also going digital. We have moved our office to Brussels onto the premises of the European Brain Council, and our new office operations are running smoothly. The congress is more successful every year, we have established our research fund – and more actions are in the pipeline, under the guidance of our next President Karl Schaller supported by the new board.

Thank you for having allowed me to be part of the EANS family.



The vision of a new EANS

A few words from our new EANS Executive Director Valentini Amarantidou

As the EANS Executive Director, I would like to personally welcome you to Ireland for another successful EANS Annual Congress. It is our honour and pleasure to host you in Dublin, and I sincerely wish you a fruitful participation and a pleasant stay in this beautiful city.

I have been working for EANS for the past seven months, and already I have understood the great value and contribution of this association to the neurosurgical society in Europe and the rest of the world. EANS has been and will always remain the cornerstone of the European neurosurgical community, promoting better healthcare for a better world and ensuring that the European standards of neuroscience practices will always reach the highest possible level. In a world of change and progress, EANS is destined to mark the path that European neurosurgery should follow in terms of research and practice, in order to remain in accordance with – and even determine – the latest evolutions in the global neurosurgical community. Always working with and for the European neurosurgeons, it is definite that the Association symbolises the strong effort of the European medical community to promote progress, development and solidarity.

In this context, I have undertaken the challenging yet charming task of running the EANS office, ensuring that the association will not only maintain its high standards in all terms, but will further evolve and develop its practices and ideas. I envision an EANS that will be accessible to everyone and will further strive to enhance the influence of European neurosurgery to the global neuroscientific community. With EANS at the top of policy making discussions across Europe, I am positive that the association will be crucial in setting trends in medical research and practice across the European continent and globally.

By being involved with all the global decision-making networks, leading the society to conform with the digital era and its challenging necessities, establishing the unremitting access of all physicians and patients to the society and its policy-making, promoting research and practice through the various EANS activities, EANS will further raise its already high standards of operation and performance. I consider EANS as the foundation stone of European neurosurgery, and I face the needs of such a multidisciplinary and complex body with zest. I will work hard to add value to the constant efforts made by the Board and members of the association. Connecting EANS with the word 'excellence' is indubitably the essence of my goal as the EANS Executive Director.

I once again welcome you to Dublin for EANS 2019! I am certain that the 2019 EANS Annual Congress will be an absolute success. I urge you to actively participate in all sessions and to contribute to this top-quality scientific event, representing an impactful educational experience for the young neurosurgeons attending the congress.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any suggestions, thoughts or ideas to further develop the association – and enjoy your stay in Dublin.



"EANS has been and will always remain the cornerstone of the European neurosurgical community."

Valentini Amarantidou

President's report 2017-2019

Jesus Lafuente ends his term as EANS President this year.

Dear friends and colleagues,
I would like to express to all of you my sincere gratitude for such a great honour of having served you as EANS President from 2017 to 2019. It has been a long and bumpy ride, but worthwhile every single day.

Please allow me this opportunity to communicate to you our achievements over the last couple of years. None of this would have been possible without the commitment and hard work of all the members of the Board without any exception. I will not mention any by name in my Presidential Report as I believe that the individual is not as important as the group and the EANS family in particular.

At the beginning of my term we requested an external audit by Deloitte to account for financial responsibility during the 2016 period. This was the first time that EANS has ever had an external audit and I believe the exercise helped us for several reasons:

1. To confirm whether there was any irregularity, and to be accountable for it;
2. To understand the type of society we were managing; and
3. To get professional recommendations on how to be a more tax secure organisation.

Deloitte emphasised two points: insecurity with the current bylaws; and tax repercussions if we were to proceed to becoming a society with more than an average of 1 million € in our bank account.

In response to the first point, we are currently professionalising our bylaws to make them more protective for the organisation.

The second point is very relevant to our everyday activities. We have investigated and understood that we need to have a back-up amount in the bank which would allow emergency support for all our activities, for a period of two years. This amount is recommended to be 3.5 million €. We currently have 500K euros available.

We have agreed that we should be able to reach this target within five years.

This will of course have tax implications in our type of organisation, but we believe this will not only give us security in case of a rare event that could jeopardise our congresses/courses budgets, but it will also allow the interest from such money to be invested in fellowships and educational activities, further re-expanding our mission.



"None of this would have been possible without the commitment and hard work of all the members of the Board without any exception."

Jesus Lafuente

Thus would be in line with sister societies like the CNS and AANS.

Financial restructuring and savings

Another one of our priorities was to review the pre-existing financial account structure. We visited Ghent, Belgium, to meet with our financial advisors, the EANS accountant's office and the EANS notary and lawyer – all of whom have been externally assisting the EANS for several years. The accountant's office also stand for our official EANS address.

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President's report 2017-2019

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We discovered that there were 17 bank accounts for EANS. We reduced these after a thorough analysis down to seven, still allowing for different funds, for example, for the training courses and the research fund.

In fact, we were paying a large amount of money annually to our Belgian accountants and notary, as they not only served as the EANS advisory body, but also made all our payments and collected our correspondence, for which they charged separately. We have since changed most of this infrastructure. Now, our own financial team in our own office looks after all countries' VAT issues and makes all relevant payments.

For the first time, we actually established an office in Brussels. This is within the EBC building.

And we now only use the notary for those changes in the bylaws that the Belgian law demands. We also – again, for the first time – control the accounts electronically and can make changes accordingly without going through a third party. We have, however, kept our lawyer, who has proven of great assistance when changing our office and personnel contracts, and as a legal advisor in many aspects that came up during our mandate.

Economic prosperity

Economically we have had two very successful congresses in Venice and in Brussels. Dublin, I am sure, will also be a great success. We have managed to top up our account to 1 million €, and with Dublin we expect this figure to rise even further.

We have had discussions with our PCO, AIM, and we have managed to transfer some of their benefits into our winnings. Both parties agreed this was a fair deal.

Academic development

During the last two Congresses, we established the two new sections of Peripheral Nerve and Skull Base, which are now functioning very well. This was in addition to the recently inaugurated Paediatric Neurosurgery section.

Furthermore, we have created a task force, "Frontiers of Neurosurgery", which is intended to preserve and protect areas of our surgical practice that are under threat of falling into other specialties.

We have collaborated with ESPN

(European Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery) and are happy to see that they are fully integrated with the EANS, as it should always have been. It is proposed that a member of their Board will have membership rights in the Pediatric section panel (pending bylaw change), so that communication between them will be swift and organised. This could lead to the opportunity of having joint input into the paediatric programme in the annual congress and other events.

Awards and recognition

We have created a Medal award for Exceptional Service to European Neurosurgery to honour some of our greatest neurosurgeons such as Paolo Cappabianca (2018), Bernard George (2018) and Alexander Konovalov (2019).

Annual EANS Congress

Historically the National Society hosting the congress has also had full control of the scientific programme. This, we realised, was on some occasions causing problems in accommodating all speakers who had been proposed from the EANS sections and

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national societies. We have recognised these issues, and we have created a board member position of Scientific Liaison, who has for the first time been working on creating guidelines for the organising committees of any future congress. This should facilitate the organisation of the annual meeting, making it more professional and with much better scientific quality, while at the same time mitigating against the loss of 'task memory' within our organisation. Similarly, we have

identified that we should have minimum requirements for cities organising annual congress, training courses and hands-on courses. We are currently working on this.

Education

We have consolidated the three cycles of our flagship training course, with around 600 participants benefiting from it annually.

We have completed a whole year of hands-on courses, and despite some initial economic problems, we have managed to improve our results. Already now there are hands-on courses fully booked a year in advance.

However, there is still a lot of potential for improvement both in the curriculum and in economic benefit.

Societal collaboration and global health

We have secured a contract of collaboration with AANS, whereby AANS will send six trainees per annum to our training courses in exchange for eight trainees from the EANS to courses in the USA.

Similarly, we have initiated our Intercontinental Collaboration for Training and for the first time in August 2019 we will be running an EANS Training Course (subject: oncology) in Argentina. Eight members of faculty from the EANS will be present in order to demonstrate how our courses run and work and to help FLANC run such courses following the EANS Training Course model.

Although getting to the 3.5 million € target is an objective for the EANS, we have decided not to reach this amount at the expense of training – the soul of EANS. It is for this reason that we have doubled the number of visiting observer fellows, allowing two for low- and middle-income countries.

In relation to cooperation with developing countries we have created the Global Education Forum, which kick-started in Brussels 2018. We will meet during our annual congress, with all continental presidents and their educational advisors, in order to find solutions and different ways of cooperating with developing countries on neurosurgical initiatives. Our International Relations Committee chair is trying to facilitate through the EANS Board a number of residents interested in cooperation to assist in recently developed neurosurgical centers providing medical assistance and training to local doctors in conjunction with

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the FIENS program from the AANS.

During this period of time as president I had to travel on numerous occasions, sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied by members of the board. My personal expenses have been unexpectedly high, and it is for this reason that I proposed a presidential budget to be used by president elect, past or current of 20K euros per annum. This was approved in one of our board meetings. Of course as it was my proposal, it was agreed that I did not use it. However, this fund will be at the disposal of our next presidents. I believe this will enhance our visibility on the appropriate platforms, as we are now growing both in size and hopefully also in impact.

Research Fund

One of our great initiatives has been the creation of the EANS Research Fund. We have nominated as director of this fund a most relevant academic in European neurosurgery. We have established how we will finance the research fund (5% of annual congress income plus European centres and industry) and already we have granted 10K € grants to the best European project applications following a selection process.

In this context, I would also like to mention that we have agreed that we should be part of EBC (European Brain Council), following a meeting during the Brussels annual congress where part of the EANS Board met with part of the EBC Board. Having considered the benefits of our full membership, we have now joined forces with psychiatry, basic neuroscience, neurology and neuropharmacology, in advocacy efforts in the European Community. We have already presented a project and requested assistance to obtain European grants. As part of the same deal, we got an office at the EBC building for half price, where some of our office employees will be working.

Our official address is: EANS secretariat, EBC, Rue D'Egmont 11, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

The EBC comes in very handy with our recent research fund creation. The research fund director will also be one of our representatives at the EBC, alongside another academic neurosurgeon who has a longstanding collaboration with the EBC.

Transparency

A very important aspect has been bringing

more and more transparency to all processes that occur within the EANS. This has been done following the past-president's views on the matter, which we all regard as extremely important. We have regularly provided thorough treasurer reports, showing all numbers related to EANS operations. We have made these available to anyone interested. Similarly, we have provided transparency to anyone wanting to apply for any of the available positions on the EANS Council.

We have created guidelines for both the country delegates who have voting rights for the EANS Council positions and for the congress city selection. We also have now guidelines for the candidates who are interested in a board or section/committee position, with the intention of making it a more fair and good sport. We have also asked all our members of the board to produce a report of end of term to explain what they have done and what are their suggestions for the next persons taking up their position – I am doing mine with this report. The president's report will be published in *Acta* to reach out to as many as possible Individual members.

Publishing

We have discussed with our publishers of *Acta Neurochirurgica*, Springer, the fact that we are paying a lot of money to have our journal. Although we agreed to reduce the 70K € per annum to 25K € per annum fee that we pay them, we are trying to get a better deal. We have had a meeting, led by our president-elect, with *Acta Neurochirurgica* Editor-in-chief and editors from some other national journals, to look for a different agreement as well as a different platform to present the European journal with 21st century technology. *Acta* is a clear priority for EANS.

Website

We present our finalised new website, which offers everything you need to know about EANS in a user-friendly environment, with easy access and navigation, fast browsing and above all, a brand-new membership platform. Within this platform, EANS individual members and section members will be able to communicate with each other in various forms. Text and photo posts, group posts, participation in section groups, various updates on upcoming opportunities and events – these are just some of the

elements our new platform has to offer.

Our EANS Office team

I would like to end my report by talking about the office team. Earlier this year, I sent a letter to all expressing our frustrations with our then appointed executive director. For over a year the officers of the EANS have been doing the executive director job, meeting regularly via Zoom and saving the organisation 120K in executive director salary. We then had to make a quick move, and we contracted Artion, an association management company based in Greece with an international pedigree, who is acting as the EANS director. Valentini Amarantidou, who has been in office since February 2019, is heading this. We wish them well in their endeavor and welcome them to our EANS family.

We have had some departures from the old team; now we are proud to announce a new team, with the exception of Visi Navarro who remained with us. We believe we have organised a very professional team, with Visi looking after all three training course cycles and examinations, Martina looking after all hands-on and postgraduate courses and Beata dealing with financial and tax issues for the EANS.

Valentini will be overseeing all office activities as executive director. We have with her the benefit of the Artion team: Maria in communications and marketing, Prodromos assisting with web management and the Your membership platform, and a new employee will be looking after sponsorship.

This team is working very hard as always, and I am convinced that they will take us to our next level, the self-organisation of our annual congress which could imply an extra 150K per annum benefit. Please note that Maria will be in the team until communication and marketing is tidied up, so that an individual employee from EANS can take over (one year). Similarly, Prodromos will remain until the website is fully functional and the Your membership platform is fully operational and controlled by our EANS office (three months). We are in the process of employing two more members for our office staff: one to deal exclusively with sponsorship, and another for communications and marketing.

With my very best wishes to all,

Jesus Lafuente

President EANS 2017-2019



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