



ERO-Plenary Session
14th September 2024, Istanbul, Türkiye
08h30 – 12h00
Istanbul Congress Centre (ICC) - Beyazit
Darulbedai Cad. No: 3 34367 / Şişly Maçka Istanbul

Minutes

A Welcome

A.1 ERO-President

Simona Dianišková welcomes all participants and opens the assembly with the following remarks:

"Today, we celebrate a remarkable milestone - 60 years of the European Regional Organization (ERO) of the FDI. This anniversary is not just a testament to our longevity but a reflection of our shared commitment to advancing oral health across Europe.

For six decades, ERO has brought together leaders in the dental field, promoting high standards and fostering continuous learning. Through challenges and opportunities, we have remained united, always focused on improving oral health. Our community, built on collaboration and shared purpose, is stronger because of it.

Let this plenary session reflect that spirit - our belief that together, we can achieve more. I want to express my deep gratitude to all those who have contributed to ERO's success over the years - past presidents, board members, volunteers, and especially you, our members. Your dedication has shaped this organization into what it is today.

Thank you for your commitment, and let's continue working together to improve oral health for future generations."

A.2 Welcome of guests

The president welcomes the former FDI President Michèle Aerden, the former ERO president Anna Lella and the former ERO president Gerhard Seeberger.

B Standard agenda of the business meeting

B.1 Roll call

Establishment of the quorum

Taner Yücel declares; 28 National Dental Associations are present. Excused are Georgia, Israel, Kosovo, Luxemburg, Slovenia, Ukraine.

51 of 63 announced Delegates are present. The Quorum is established.

Jörg Krainhöfner and Paulo Melo are nominated as tellers.

B.2 Approval of the agenda

The agenda is approved unanimously.

B.3 Approval of the minutes of the Plenary session 2024 – Limassol

There were no changes requested, informs Taner Yücel.

The minutes are approved unanimously.

B.4 Report of the Board

Simona Dianišková expressed heartfelt gratitude to the FDI for providing the opportunity to hold our plenary session within the framework of their World Dental Parliament and annual congress. She highlighted the value of this collaboration, noting that it offered a productive and inspiring environment for our session and allowed for the exchange of meaningful ideas among global dental professionals.

Additionally, she congratulated the FDI and the local team on the exceptional success of their congress. She acknowledged the high level of organization, the engaging sessions, and the impressive turnout, all of which contributed to advancing the field of dentistry and promoting new insights for participants.

To strengthen our social media presence, we need support from NDAs and all members here, declares Paula Perlea. Please send us news, updates, and achievements from your organization. Highlights can include upcoming events, educational initiatives, and policy updates. Whenever possible, share photos or videos to make posts more engaging. Together, we can create a dynamic social media platform that showcases our collective work and raises awareness about key issues in dentistry across Europe. Looking forward to your contributions!

At this point Paula Perlea welcomes the representatives of **EDSA**. Together with Simona Dianiskova and Taner Yücel, she presents this delegation with the diplomas of this year's ERO/EDSA award competition on behalf of the absent prize-winners. These are: Yi-Ze Chen, Taiwan (1st prize), Maide Nazlı Kaya, Türkiye (2nd prize), Adrian-Cosmin Pop, Lithuania (3rd prize).

Edoardo Cavallé presented the new **ERO Code of Ethics**, developed with legal consultation, and requested that members review the draft and submit comments in written form. The Code outlines the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each member, guided by the ERO Constitution and the Swiss Civil Code. It aims to uphold the association's core values, covering:

- General principles guiding ERO's actions.
- Conduct rules governing interactions between NDAs, delegates, and the ERO Board
- Compliance monitoring for conflicts of interest and sponsor relationships
- NDA and member obligations ensuring loyalty, respect, and confidentiality.

Timeline for review includes:

- Istanbul Plenary (Sept. 2024): Presentation, no discussion
- Sept. 2024 - March 2025: Written amendments
- April 2025: TTEC review
- May 2025 (Almaty): Final approval

He thanks all those that have helped him to elaborate this Code of Ethics.

B.5 Finances

Oliver Zeyer is pleased to report that ERO's finances are in good health. However, there are still outstanding membership fees from four National Dental Associations. More details on the finances will be shared in Almaty.

The president thanks the treasurer for his excellent work in maintaining our financial stability. There are no questions.

B.6 Working groups

The presentations shown by the WG chairs can all be found on the ERO Website ([Istanbul 2024 - European Regional Organisation of the Fédération Dentaire Internationale](#))

6.1 Ageing Population

Jean-Philippe Haesler presents the members of his working group. He reports the following: Since the last plenary session in Limassol, the working group has held one in-person meeting and exchanged numerous emails and phone calls to advance the

Toothbrushing App project. Key challenges have included low-quality graphics due to an insufficient master file and the maintenance costs.

The graphics were professionally redrawn, vectorized, and problematic images were replaced, enabling zoom functionality without quality loss. A new offer from a Czech IT company proposes developing a responsive webpage instead of a web app, reducing development costs by around 30% and maintenance costs to about 1% of the original estimate.

To finalize the project, the next steps are to negotiate remaining contract terms with the IT company, obtain contract approval from the ERO board, complete the project, and promote the webpage through ERO members and the NDA.

Next, the group plans to focus on nutrition for the elderly and nursing home residents, with specific attention to sugar consumption, chewing ability, and balanced diets.

6.2 Liberal Dental Practice in Europe

Gerhard Seeberger reports that Thomas G. Wolf presented a new ERO project in Limassol, Cyprus, focused on young dentists preferred working structures. For the first time, an ERO questionnaire was made available in six languages (EN, DE, FR, ES, IT, RU). Responding to a query from the Dutch Dental Association (KNMT), Prof. Dr. Wolf clarified that the study targets “young dentists” — defined as those from post-exam up to 20 years of practice — though all national dental association members are encouraged to participate (<https://survey.zmk.unibe.ch/surveys/?s=39HXJDFJ38NKTXDM>). Results will be analysed and published, aiming for sufficient responses to allow country-level breakdowns.

By August 15, 2024, 429 responses were received, with Slovakia (101), Czechia (73), and the Netherlands (72), France (61) leading in participation.

Additionally, Gerhard Seeberger mentioned a recent CED/ERO Task Force meeting focused on corporate dentistry and its related survey. He referred to a publication in *Quintessence* titled “*Changing Dental Profession in the WHO European Region*,” which concludes that private practice remains the predominant working environment for dentists. This publication will be shared with ERO NDAs.

6.3 Relations between dental practitioners and universities

Collaboration between NDAs and dental faculties

Mare Saag is highlighting the importance of collaboration in bridging theory and practice, enhancing patient care, fostering professional development, and advancing policy. Appreciation is extended to the NDAs that participated in the survey.

Key findings include:

- **36%** of NDAs contribute to undergraduate dental curriculum development, often through partnerships with health and education ministries or council memberships.
- **88%** of NDAs engage in providing continuing education with dental faculties; **43.90%** rate the collaboration as good, while **14.63%** consider it excellent.

Collaboration with dental faculties in negotiations with authorities focuses on adjusting undergraduate curriculum content, advocating for dentistry-related legislation and health policies, ensuring recognition of foreign qualifications, securing better funding for dental schools, and developing clinical guidelines.

- **63.4%** rate their collaboration on national oral health initiatives as good or excellent.
- **53.66%** collaborate on dental workforce planning.

Areas needing improvement include national oral health (56.1%) and dental workforce planning (56.1%). **87.8%** of respondents have noted positive changes in NDA-faculty partnerships over the past decade, and **73.17%** report more frequent meetings. Key discussion topics include student competencies, continuing education, outpatient practice, and curriculum development. Additional areas addressed are dental licensing, workforce needs, funding, and recognition of non-EU-trained dentists.

Mare Saag informs that the final report will be presented in Almaty.

During the discussion, various speakers highlighted key issues in European dental education and practice. They noted the importance of establishing equivalence in training standards across independent countries, despite significant differences in educational

systems and healthcare structures. The introduction of a dental team approach, where *no dentist works alone*, underscores the shared responsibility in patient care. Concerns were raised about the number of dental schools and the “*production*” of dentists, with some countries experiencing “*over-production*” and others facing shortages. While public-private distinctions were deemed irrelevant to these core challenges, policies like *numerus clausus* help manage admissions, though effective distribution remains difficult across regions. These discussions emphasize both shared goals and diverse approaches among European nations.

6.4 Integration

Ilshat Yuldashev reports. The Working Group (WG) aimed to involve Eastern European National Dental Associations (NDAs) in ERO, successfully adding over ten NDAs as regular members by 2011. Key tasks identified from a questionnaire included enhancing the role of new NDAs, ensuring financial independence with low membership fees (5-10 Euros annually), and establishing mandatory Continuing Dental Education (CDE) for practitioner dentists.

Further tasks involve:

- Establishing licensing requirements for dental practices
- Securing insurance for dentists and patients
- Supporting retired dentists

The questionnaire revealed that while EU regulations apply in many Eastern European countries, newly independent former USSR countries have developed their own licensing requirements, aligned with basic medical institution standards.

The Manual of Dental Practice 2015 outlines EU requirements for dental equipment and practices, and it is due for an update.

Additionally, the European Society of Dental Ergonomics expressed interest in reactivating cooperation, potentially through a workshop before the upcoming congress in Almaty, which could engage new countries from the former USSR.

The WG will also focus on unifying undergraduate education and aligning postgraduate standards in Eastern European countries with European and global certification benchmarks. There is a notable distinction in terminology, as many CIS countries refer to dental specialists as “Stomatologists” with current efforts retraining dentists into roles such as dental hygienists.

Future tasks include implementing preventive programs and raising public awareness, especially among children, to promote oral health. The WG intends to discuss these objectives further with the ERO Board and newly independent state NDAs, emphasizing the need for collaboration and integration with findings from other working groups.

6.5 Continuing medical education in Dentistry

Hande Sar Sancakli introduces and presents the Consent Paper elaborated by her working group. The full text can be found on the website ([Resolutions/Statements 2024 - European Regional Organisation of the Fédération Dentaire Internationale](#)). Here is a summary of it.

Building the Continuing Education Structure for the Young Dentist's Prospect

Continuing education (CE) for oral health professionals (OHPs) is crucial for enhancing the quality of oral healthcare and addressing public health needs. As frontline practitioners, OHPs must stay updated on both oral and non-communicable diseases, making CE essential for their long-term professional development.

A survey conducted by ERO and EDSA reveals a significant gap between current educational methods and the preferences of the new generation of dental professionals. ERO recommends that National Dental Associations tailor CE events to meet the specific needs of younger dentists.

Key findings include:

- Educational Preferences: Young professionals prioritize achieving proficiency, enhancing patient education, and improving clinical skills, particularly in clinical and operative topics.
- Preferred Formats: While conferences and lectures are valued for their effectiveness, hands-on courses and workshops are seen as the most beneficial for developing clinical skills.

- **Participation Criteria:** Factors influencing course selection include the credibility of the course, lecturer qualifications, format, timing, venue, and cost. Smaller group sizes (up to 15 participants) are favoured for better engagement.

In conclusion, young dentists are highly committed to their professional development and prefer practical, hands-on learning experiences. Their proactive approach to education will enhance their capacity to deliver high-quality patient care. ERO emphasizes the need for collaboration among European NDAs and educational institutions to support the evolution of CE topics for future OHPs, incorporating emerging technologies like virtual reality and hands-on workshops.

The delegates approved unanimously the presented Consent Paper.

6.6 Dental Team

Doniphan Hammer thanks the members of this working group for their collaboration. He reminds of the survey which has as objective to find out more about the ongoing training of dental teams across ERO member countries.

The goals are:

- **Discover Existing Training Initiatives:** Investigate current training programs in ERO countries and identify best practices.
- **Provide a Useful Information Base:** Compile data on training resources and create a centralized repository for stakeholders.
- **Create or Improve Continuing Education Systems:** Encourage member organizations to assess their education systems and identify improvement areas.

How is this going to be achieved?

- **Online Survey:** Launch a survey to gather information on training practices, knowledge gaps, and preferred formats.

Answers have been received from 23 countries.

The survey results shall be analysed, and findings presented at the Spring Plenary Session 2025. The procedure is to form analysis teams to focus on specific roles within the dental team. Each subgroup will report on themes, challenges, and opportunities for development.

Conclusion: This plan aims to foster collaboration and data-driven insights to create effective continuing education systems, enhancing dental professionals' skills and improving patient care. Participation in the survey is vital for success.

6.7 Digitalization in dentistry – E-Health – Artificial Intelligence

Roman Smucler reported that the group held an online meeting on April 26, 2024, finalizing the proposal for implementing teleconsultation in European dentistry. The proposal was approved by the Board and sent to national organizations for feedback. Following discussions of all comments on September 11, the final text was submitted to the Board and is now presented.

Implementation of Teleconsultation in European Dentistry

The full text can be found on the ERO Website ([Resolutions/Statements 2024 - European Regional Organisation of the Fédération Dentaire Internationale](#)). Here is a summary of it.

Teledentistry leverages telecommunication technologies to provide remote dental care, encompassing consultations, diagnosis, treatment planning, and patient education. The primary objective is to improve access to care, enhance operational efficiency, and facilitate self-management of oral health among patients.

The benefits of teleconsultation are manifold. Firstly, it significantly increases access to dental services, particularly for individuals in remote areas or those facing mobility challenges. Moreover, it promotes efficiency and cost savings by reducing the time and resources needed for in-person visits, potentially lowering overall healthcare costs.

Teleconsultation also enhances continuity of care by fostering ongoing communication and monitoring between patients and their dentists. Furthermore, it helps mitigate the risk of transmitting infectious diseases by minimizing physical interactions in clinical settings. From an environmental perspective, teleconsultation contributes to sustainability by reducing travel and its associated carbon footprint. Finally, it enables the incorporation of the latest diagnostic and therapeutic modalities, thereby improving the overall quality of care.

Teleconsultation can be categorized into several modes:

In doctor-to-doctor interactions, specialists provide guidance or second opinions, sometimes without the patient being present - this is known as tele-interconsultation.

Doctor-to-patient consultations involve direct interactions between the dentist and the patient.

Teleconsultation can also be classified as synchronous, which allows for immediate interaction, or asynchronous, where communication occurs at different times without real-time interaction.

However, implementing teleconsultation is not without its challenges and considerations. There is a pressing need for consistent regulations across Europe concerning data privacy and licensing to ensure the legal framework supports teleconsultation practices. Additionally, establishing sustainable reimbursement models is essential for the long-term viability of teleconsultation services. Equitable access to reliable technology and infrastructure is crucial, as is the need for adequate training for dentists to ensure they can provide effective teleconsultation. Furthermore, it is vital to address disparities in access to technology and digital literacy to promote equity and inclusion in tele-dentistry.

Legal and regulatory frameworks must be robust. Teleconsultation practices need to align with European health policies regarding eHealth and cross-border healthcare initiatives. Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is essential to ensure patient data is handled securely. Additionally, dentists providing teleconsultation must be licensed in their respective regions, adhering to local professional standards and regulations.

Ethical considerations also play a significant role in teleconsultation. Informed consent is critical, ensuring that patients understand the nature and limitations of teleconsultations. Furthermore, it is essential to maintain high standards of care and adhere to established clinical guidelines.

To support successful implementation, technical requirements must be established. This includes defining technology standards for security, interoperability, and usability, as well as ensuring equitable access to teleconsultation, particularly for patients with limited digital literacy.

An effective implementation strategy may include initiating pilot programs to assess the efficacy and patient satisfaction of teleconsultation. Additionally, training and education programs for dental professionals, along with awareness campaigns for patients, are necessary to facilitate a smooth transition to teleconsultation.

Finally, to evaluate the success of teleconsultation initiatives, clear performance metrics should be defined, focusing on patient outcomes and cost-effectiveness. Establishing a framework for ongoing regulatory oversight and quality assurance will further ensure that teleconsultation maintains its integrity and effectiveness in delivering dental care.

Roman Smucler then outlines the objectives before the next meeting

1. Publish the document: If approved, we will proceed with the publication of our findings.
2. Engage with other working groups: We plan to discuss relevant topics with other working groups to foster collaboration and gather diverse insights.
3. Explore AI applications: We will focus on the inspection and manipulation of images, including X-rays and optical images, within medical records, particularly regarding the integration of artificial intelligence.

4. Enhance education in digital dentistry: We will address educational initiatives related to digital dentistry for both pre-graduate and post-graduate programs.

The paper proposed by the working group is voted on and adopted unanimously.

6.8. Oral Health & General Health

Mick Armstrong refers to the WG report on the website.

The white paper has guided discussions on advancing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through enhanced oral health and disease prevention, which also benefits general wellbeing. Despite ERO's push for "quick wins," meaningful prevention requires government support, which is challenging. Dental teams are equipped to provide effective care, so advocating for stronger investment in oral health remains essential.

The focus remains on oral health improvement, with possible broader health roles considered for later. Current strategies include fluoridation, school brushing programs, a sugar tax, public health education, and better access to affordable oral care. Only 50% of the population currently receives preventive care, highlighting the need to expand the dental workforce.

In the UK, trained Oral Health Educators have successfully promoted oral health independently, and scaling up this model across the EU could further UHC goals. The group recommends formalizing and expanding dental roles, with profession-led efforts to shape workforce needs, or risk externally imposed solutions.

In Almaty the paper should be finished, declares Mick Armstrong.

6.9 Approval of the reports of the Working groups

All reports are approved unanimously.

Simona Dianišková on behalf of the whole board thanks the WG chairs for their presentation and all the members for their precious work.

B.7 Member countries/Platform for discussion

7.1 Request from Spanish Dental Association

In response to the request of the Spanish Dental Association addressed to the ERO Board, regarding the inclusion of the Spanish language in translations, Simona Dianišková expresses the appreciation for the valuable contributions of the Spanish Dental Council to the ERO-FDI. Recognizing the significance of the Spanish language globally, the ERO Board has thoughtfully considered their request and has decided to provide for the Spanish translation at the ERO plenary sessions which are held during the FDI WDP meetings. It is believed that this decision will enhance communication and foster greater collaboration within our community. The President of the Spanish Dental Association expresses his thanks to the Board.

New membership: Oleg Solomon, President of Moldavian Association of Stomatologists briefly introduces his organization, which is applying for membership of the ERO. The association is the only one in the Republic of Moldova and a regular member of the FDI. He hopes that the delegates will be in favor of admission. This request is granted with 41 votes in favor (the two-thirds majority is 34).

There has been no further news regarding the member organizations since the meeting in Limassol, announced Taner Yücel. Burning issues are still: Corporate Dentistry; Continuing education; Credit points.

B.8 FDI matters

Presentation of the candidates FDI elections

All candidates who are in person present may introduce themselves. Those candidates from ERO countries have priority. Many take advantage of this opportunity.

In connection with the small group proposed by the FDI, which is to discuss membership fees among other things, Edoardo Cavallé believes that it is essential that it includes a person/representative of the ERO. This demand seems justified to those present, but it is

not entirely clear what the selection procedure will be. It hardly seems possible to select someone from our ranks at this stage. It will probably be decided by the FDI Board. If a request is received, the NDAs could be asked for suggestions, which the Board would then decide on. Ultimately, however, the procedure will be determined by the FDI.

B.9 Next meetings

- Plenary session 2025 (Spring) – Almaty – 2/3 May
This is in preparation – information will follow.
- Plenary session 2025 (Autumn) – Shanghai – September – during the FDI congress

B.10 Miscellaneous

Nothing to report

C Close of the meeting

Simona Dianišková thanks all the participants for attending this meeting and the good collaboration and the interpreters for their very appreciated work. She adjourns the meeting.

Dr. Simona Dianišková
President

Monika Lang
Minutes

President: Dr. Simona Dianišková (Slovakia) • President-Elect: Dr. Edoardo Cavallé (Italy) •
Secretary General: Prof. Taner Yücel (Turkey) • Treasurer: Dr. Oliver Zeyer (Switzerland) • Councilor: Prof. Paula Perlea (Romania)

ERO-Secretariat, Monika Lang, Schlossgutweg 30, CH-3073 Guemligen, Tel. ++41 79 628 63 35/Fax ++41 954 60 35
mail: secretariat@erodental.org

Bank account: CREDIT SUISSE AG, 3001 Bern, Switzerland - Account No. 1872503-32, IBAN CH14 0483 5187 2503 3200 0, BIC CRESCHZZ80A
in the name of European Regional Organisation of FDI, 1216 Cointrin, Switzerland

www.erodental.org