



Minutes of the 2nd ICOH Board Meeting

February 13, 2020
Rome, Italy

Time: Thursday, 13 February 2020, 09:00 – 12:45

Venue: INAIL, Via IV Novembre 144, 00187, Rome, Italy

Participants:

Dr. Jukka Takala (Finland) - ICOH President
Prof. Seong-Kyu Kang (Rep. of Korea) - ICOH Vice President
Ms. Claudina Nogueira (South Africa) - ICOH Vice President
Prof. Sergio Iavicoli (Italy) - ICOH Secretary General
Dr. Kazutaka Kogi (Japan) - ICOH Past President
Prof. Maureen Dollard (Australia) – ICOH Board Member
Prof. Frida Marina Fischer (Brazil) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Mats Hagberg (Sweden) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Martin Hogan (Ireland) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Seichi Horie (Japan) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Sunil Kumar Joshi (Nepal) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Stavroula Leka (United Kingdom/Ireland) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Olivier Lo (Singapore) - ICOH Board Member
Ms. Rosa Maria Orriols Ramos (Spain) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Shyam Pingle (India) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Kari Reijula (Finland) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Paul Schulte (USA) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Francesco Violante (Italy) - ICOH Board Member

ICOH Secretariat Staff
Ms. Valeria Boccuni (Italy)
Ms. Erika Cannone (Italy)
Mr. Pierluca Dionisi (Italy)

Apologies:

Prof. Christophe Paris (France) - ICOH Board Member
Ms. Maria Luisa Tupia Gonzales (Peru) - ICOH Board Member

The ICOH President, Dr. Jukka Takala, opened the second session of the Board Meeting, welcoming all the participants.

1. Report of the Working Group (WG) on Occupational Infectious Agents (BD9.6)

Prof. Kari Reijula took the floor to report on the WG on Occupational Infectious Agents (WGOIA) on behalf of Prof. Mary Ross, Chair of the WG. Prof. Reijula briefly illustrated the activities carried out in relation to the four focus areas: Priority Groups of Workers, Occupational Travel Medicine, Support for National and International Organisations, and Priority Infectious Agents. Priority was given to the collaboration with national and international organisations and with relevant ICOH



Scientific Committees (SCs). Then the Board members carefully discussed the conversion of the WGOIA to a SC. There was general agreement on the growing relevance of the topic, but also on the need for reviewing the existing SC structure to identify solutions for improved interaction and integration of SCs. The ICOH Midterm Meeting provided opportunities for discussion about the current structure and work of the SCs. A common thread throughout the discussions was that there are too many SCs, which are difficult to manage by their respective leadership, and by ICOH. Various SCs are not very active, and many have duplication in their deliverables and objectives. Hence the current structure will undergo a review that will yield proposals for streamlining/merging/collapsing SCs.

The Secretary-General proposed proceeding with the conversion of the WGOIA into a SC, given the importance and nature of the work which is overarching across ICOH, the work being undertaken in collaboration with the ILO and also in consideration of the work being important in relation to e.g. pandemics and their management, like the current hot topic of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak in China. Also, the name of this new SC should indicate a focus on the prevention aspects of communicable diseases at work, and should go beyond 'biological agents'.

The Board agreed on the intention to establish a new SC but decided to postpone the decision until the ICOH2021 Congress, after defining in more detail the specific context, domains of work and criteria, and after the review of the current SCs has been completed.

Decision:

- **The Report of the WG on Occupational Infectious Agents was approved.**
- **The decision on the conversion of the WGOIA to a SC will be taken at ICOH2021 Congress in conjunction with the systematic review of the current status of the existing SCs, in order to consider possible merging of SCs and the termination of dormant/inactive SCs.**

2. Report of the Finance Committee (BD10)

Dr. Martin Hogan reported on the main tasks carried out by the Finance Committee. The remittance of the extra fees coming from the ICOH2018 Congress was performed according to the institutional rules set up by the ICOH Constitution and Bye-Laws. The amount transferred was 123,855 CHF. The tax portion of the extra fees was 1797,00 € and it was reconciled in compliance with Italian regulations. The budget shows that as of September 30, 2019 incomes reached 90% of the estimated budget, whereas expenditures were about 23%. General trends are safe as they reflect those of previous triennia, where the expenses were mainly incurred in the final phase of the triennium. Finally, Dr. Hogan reported that the ICOH Secretariat is investigating the introduction of new modes of payment (i.e. mobile payment) that could be more accessible to developing countries in order to simplify further membership dues payments.

Decision:

- **The Report of the Finance Committee was approved.**

3. ICOH Budget

Following Dr. Hogan's report, the ICOH Secretary-General gave an update on the ICOH budget as at December 31, 2019. General trends are secure as they reflect those of previous triennia, where the expenses were mainly incurred in the final phase of the triennium. In terms of incomes, the results are satisfactory as they almost reached what was budgeted (95%). This was due also to the adoption of the new fees system based on three levels, which works well financially and attracts more members. Also the expenditures are in line with those of previous triennia. Prof. Sergio Iavicoli stressed the importance of using all the resources allocated for financial support of SCs by the end of the triennium. So far, around 47% of these funds have been granted. During the Joint Meeting of February 11, Prof. Iavicoli invited the SC Chairs to submit requests for financing the organisation of events/conferences planned for 2021. A similar situation occurs with the Noro Fund budget line, where only 4.5% of the allocated resources have been granted so far. With the support of Vice President Prof. Seong-Kyu Kang, the National Secretaries (NSs) of developing countries will be invited to send applications for the Noro Fund in order to have the funds used by the end of the triennium. Prof. Iavicoli also reported to the Board that the



Secretariat is currently exploring the possibility of restyling the ICOH members database in order to make it a more modern, user-friendly and a well-structured tool. The database development will be realised with the funds from the ICOH Website budget line.

Finally, Prof. Iavicoli stated that the budget will be closed on October 31, 2020 and the interim period budget will be from November 1, 2020 until March 26, 2021. One sixth of the 2018-2020 budget will be allocated as the interim budget.

Decision:

- **The Report on the ICOH Budget was approved;**
- **The Interim Budget from November 1, 2020 until March 26, 2021 was approved. One sixth of the budgeted expenditures for the current triennium will be allocated as the interim budget.**
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4. Election procedures for 2021-2024

Prof. Iavicoli went on to talk about the election procedures for the next tenure. Firstly, he drew attention to the deadlines set for the candidature submissions and showed the eligibility situation for the current Officers and Board members. Then he focused on the electronic voting as the main novelty of the next election procedures.

Prof. Iavicoli reminded all present that the First General Assembly held in Dublin on April 29, 2018 approved the amendments to the ICOH Constitution, aimed at introducing the electronic vote. The comparison between the traditional postal vote and the electronic one showed some of the advantages of the e-system in term of costs (about 7,000 € for the postal vote vs about 5,000 € for the electronic vote) and coverage challenges (5-10% of invalid postal addresses vs 7% of invalid email addresses).

As for the technical development, a careful market analysis was conducted by the Secretariat: three web companies were contacted and their proposed solutions were analysed in great detail. The best solution was identified as being ELIGO, a professional company with a long experience in the field of the electronic voting and a wide customer portfolio, including associations, universities, public administrations and private companies. The ELIGO platform is certified by the Italian Data Protecting Authority and the Court of Rome. The ELIGO platform will guarantee good alignment with the ICOH requirements of international coverage, secret ballot, transparency and security of the whole voting process.

After a lively discussion, all the Board members agreed on the adoption of the electronic voting system through the ELIGO platform. Furthermore, it was agreed to open the voting for a limited period of time (three weeks) to avoid unnecessary delays by members who are entitled to vote. In order to guarantee clear communication on the new voting procedure, ICOH members will receive a mass email with information on the voting process, in English and French. A communiqué will also be published on the homepage of the ICOH website and in the Newsletter. During the voting period, two/three reminders will be sent to voters from the Secretariat. As for the scrutiny process, the Board agreed to carry this out before the ICOH2021 Congress during a face-to-face meeting with the Scrutineers Committee (to be organised in January/February 2021). A report on the scrutiny process will be submitted to the ICOH President by the Committee. Formal ratification of the results will be done during the General Assembly of the ICOH2021 Congress in Melbourne.

Decision:

- **The adoption of the electronic vote for the election procedures for the next triennium (2021-2024) was unanimously approved.**
- **A proposal to amend the ICOH Bye-Laws reflecting the new electronic procedure will be circulated among the Officers and Board members and will be approved electronically;**
- **As for the scrutiny, the Board agreed to carry out this process before the ICOH2021 Congress during a face-to-face meeting with the Scrutineers Committee in January/February 2021;**
- **The election procedure was agreed upon and the deadlines fixed as follows:**



- **By March 21, 2020 – Setting up of the voting list; the call for election of Officers and Board members for the tenure period 2021-2024 will be published in the Newsletter (1-2020) and on the Website;**
- **By April 2020 – Checking of the validity of email addresses of the voters;**
- **By June 21, 2020 – The candidatures have to be submitted to the ICOH Secretariat;**
- **By September 21, 2020 - The candidates' curricula vitae will be published in the ICOH Newsletter (2-2020) and on the Website;**
- **By October 15, 2020 – ICOH members with a right to vote will receive instructions on the voting procedure;**
- **From November 16 to December 6, 2020 (three weeks) – Voting through the electronic system; reminder emails will be sent during the voting period;**
- **January/February 2021 - Scrutiny during a face-to-face meeting with the Scrutineers Committee;**
- **During the Congress (March 21–26, 2021) – Formal notification of the results to be announced at the General Assembly.**

5. Report of the Task Group on Constitution, Bye-Laws and Guidelines (BD11)

Dr. Takala briefly reported on the main activities of the TG. These were mainly focused on the revision of the Guidelines on Congress Organisation, which Dr. Martin Hogan clearly illustrated during his report in the first session of February 12. Secondly, the introduction of the electronic vote implies amendments to the Bye-Laws reflecting the new procedure, as already discussed by the Board during the previous agenda item.

Finally, Dr. Takala reported on Prof. Kang's proposal to amend the NSs Guidelines in order to set clearer deadlines for the NSs election procedures. The aim of this amendment is to have the appointments of NSs completed at the beginning of the new triennium, in contrast to the currently used process which can take much longer, with many NSs being appointed after long delays. To this end, the Board had an in-depth discussion about a possible rephrasing of Article 3 of the NSs Guidelines, as indicated below:

Proposed by Prof. Kang:

Art 3. Election Procedures

The election of each NS takes place according to secret ballot or election procedures endorsed by the members of the country or area and approved by the President before the Congress. A member who is an officer in the occupational health societies or association in the country or area or one who has a close relation to those organisations is preferable to be a candidate for NS. If special reasons exist not to proceed with the election before the Congress, then the election may be held up to the three months after the Congress in consultation with the President. In this case, the eligible voters are those who were in good standing in the past triennium and those who are in good standing at the time of the election. In the case of the election by secret ballot, votes should be counted in the presence of scrutineers designated in advance of the election. Officers, Board Members, SC Chairs and Secretaries, in principle, should not be eligible to serve as NSs at the same time. If no candidates have been nominated for the position of NS within three months after the Congress, the President can appoint a Secretary according to Art. 2.

Approved by the Board:

Art 3. Election Procedures

The election of each NS takes place according to secret ballot or election procedures endorsed by the members of the country or area before the Congress and approved by the newly elected President at the Congress. In the case of the election by secret ballot, votes should be counted in the presence of scrutineers designated in advance of the election. Officers, Board Members, SC Chairs and Secretaries, in principle, should not be eligible to serve as NSs at the same time. If no



candidates have been nominated for the position of NS before the Congress, the President can appoint a Secretary according to Art. 2.

Decision:

- **The Report of the TG on Constitution, Bye-Laws and Guidelines was approved;**
- **Prof Kang's proposal for the amendment of the 'Election Process for NSs', as indicated in the Guidelines and Bye-Laws, was revised and approved by the Board.**

6. ICOH2027 Congress

Firstly, Prof. Iavicoli reminded the ICOH terms of reference for congress organisation. Then, he illustrated the main novelties of the bidding and organisation processes as a result of the update of the Guidelines on Congress Organisation and of ICOH Bye-Law 7.

The main change is the establishment of the following three binding criteria for the organisation of the congresses:

- (a) The entity that commits to take financial responsibility for the Congress is a public institution or a national scientific/professional association with solid economic capacity and proven experience in the organisation of large international congresses;
- (b) Identification of a professional conference company with documented experience in the organisation of large international congresses;
- (c) Identification of a congress venue that is adequate in terms of size, services, security, accessibility, in line with the format of ICOH Congresses.

The review process introduced a pre-screening of the bids prior to the voting. Only those bidding committees that can meet these minimum criteria and give evidence of their capacity to host a large international congress, will be admitted to the voting. The ICOH Officers will verify in person, with a site visit, the fulfilment of the basic criteria and the solidity of the promoting committee, while the final decision on the admission to the voting will be taken by the ICOH Board, through electronic consultation. Such consultation will be done at least two months before the Congress where the voting will take place. Other novelties concern the timeline revision, the introduction of a structured checklist for bid site visit, and an updated scheme of the standard contract, which now includes more elements to protect ICOH in case of emergencies.

The ICOH2027 Congress bid presentation timeline was discussed and agreed by the Board. Prof. Iavicoli informed the participants about the expressions of interest received to date from Peru, India and Germany.

Decision:

The procedure to determine the ICOH2027 Congress venue was agreed upon and the following deadlines were fixed:

- **April 2020 – Call published on the Website (reminder in the August issue of ICOH Newsletter);**
- **By September 21, 2020 – Bid submission deadline;**
- **By December 21, 2020 – Site visits by ICOH Officers;**
- **By January 21, 2021 – Notification of accepted bids;**
- **During the ICOH2021 Congress – Board recommendation and General Assembly vote by secret ballot;**
- **By September 26, 2021 – Written confirmation by the host country (6 months after the election);**
- **During the ICOH2023 Midterm Meeting – Signing of the contract.**

7. Any other matter presented by Board Members

Prof. Mats Hagberg took the floor to submit to the Board members a topic for discussion. He pointed out that there are some areas of great importance to occupational health physicians and personnel that are not directly covered by the existing SCs, such as health economics, insurance medicine, seafarers' medicine, diving medicine and aviation medicine. He wondered whether



these relevant areas could be covered in some way by the existing SCs. Additionally, he proposed investigating ways to increase benefits for ICOH, by encouraging collaboration between the SCs and the corresponding national and international organisations. The ICOH President found the issue interesting and suggested to Ms. Claudina Nogueira that she take Prof. Hagberg's suggestions into consideration when reviewing the current status of the existing SCs, so as to include the proposed topics within the SC areas of interest.

Prof. Iavicoli suggested that another way to move forward could be to identify other bodies or institutions, possibly in official relations with the UN, interested in establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with ICOH to enhance possible cooperation on these areas of occupational health which are not yet covered in the existing ICOH framework.

8. WHO-ILO relationship and NGOs (BD12)

Dr. Takala reported that relationships are quite good and profitable with both ILO and WHO.

ICOH is supporting the ILO Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health (2003), ILO Conventions and Recommendations on Occupational Safety and Health, Resolutions and Codes and Guidelines, and the WHO Plan of Action for Workers' Health (2007), in collaboration with relevant international organisations. Furthermore, ICOH will participate in the 22nd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work to be held in Toronto in the fall of 2020, organised by ILO in collaboration with the International Social Security Association (ISSA). On the occasion of this international event, ICOH will organise a symposium/side event on the "Future of Work" and preparatory plans include contributions from ICOH members.

ICOH has participated in several in-person and teleconferencing meetings with both the ILO and WHO and has been in constant communication with both organisations, promoting specific programmes such as strong emphasis on occupational cancer and occupational health services; working together for several conferences and events such as those of the WHO Collaboration Centres in Occupational Health; and contributing as a member of the Global Coalition on Occupational Safety and Health.

Decision:

- **The Report on WHO-ILO relationship and NGOs was approved.**

9. Proposal for Honorary Members appointment

Prof. Iavicoli invited the Board members to think about possible ICOH members to be proposed for Honorary membership status and reiterated the appointment procedure and requirements. Honorary members are individuals who have made exceptional contributions to international occupational health, within or outside of ICOH. Five members in good standing, from at least two different countries, can submit proposed names of individuals to be considered for Honorary membership. If approved by the Board, the election will take place during the General Assembly of the next ICOH Congress. Terms of reference are set out in Bye-Law 1. Dr. Takala invited the Board to submit possible suggestions, if any, for his consideration by the next Officers Meeting to be held in Toronto in the fall of 2020.

Decision:

- **Board members are requested to send their suggestions for potential Honorary members, if any, to the ICOH President, by September 2020, for his consideration.**

10. Overall discussion on ICOH current strategy and beyond

The ICOH President considered that this agenda item had been covered comprehensively across the various topics of discussion which had arisen during the two-day Midterm Meeting. As concluding remarks, he observed that the ICOH strategy should aim to take actions to further increase the visibility of the organisation.

The ICOH President thanked all the participants and closed the meeting.



These minutes reflect the general discussion and the decisions taken at the ICOH Midterm Meeting held in Rome on February 11-13, 2020. They will be approved electronically by the ICOH Officers and Board Members.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, which has spread in many countries and territories around the world since the beginning of the year and was declared a global pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020, the deadlines fixed in the minutes may be subject to adjustments, as required.