



***Draft Minutes – EONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY***

***Date: Tuesday 8 June 2021 18.00-19.40 PM CET***

***Location: online meeting***

**MINUTES Final**

**Present:**

Johan de Munter (JdM)	President
Virpi Sulosaari (VS)	President-Elect
Lena Sharp (LS)	Past-President (Advocacy)
Theresa Wiseman (TW)	Board member (Board Secretary)
Andreas Charalambous (ACh)	Board member, (Communication)
Wendy Oldenmenger (WO)	Board member, Treasurer
Amanda Drury (AD)	Board member (Research)
Merel van Klinken (MvK)	Board member
Wendy McNally (WMc)	Board member (Education)
Matt Fowler (MF)	Board member
Nikolina Dodlek (ND)	Board member YCN
Emma Woodford (EW)	EONS COO
Rudi Briké (RB)	Coordination and Membership Manager
Anne Revell (AR)	EONS Finance and HR Manager

***Also:***

11 representatives of the National Oncology Nursing Societies and 25 EONS individual members.

***Acronyms:***

<i>Working Group</i>	<i>WG</i>
<i>Task Group</i>	<i>TG</i>
<i>European Cancer Nursing Day</i>	<i>ECND....</i>

***Part 1- EONS business***

**Item 1 Welcome**

JdM welcomed the participants to the General Assembly. He referred to the many challenges the cancer nursing community had to face due to COVID and stressed the importance of having a positive view on the future. EONS will remain focused on the key values of cancer nursing. JdM expressed his thanks to the members of the EONS Board, the EONS WG's, the membership and the EONS staff for their cooperation and input. JdM presented an overview of the draft agenda of the meeting.

**Item 2 Minutes of the previous meeting:**

The members approved, and the President signed the minutes of the previous online General Meeting held on Tuesday 16 February 2021.

**Item 3 Presentation of the 2020 Audited Accounts.**

AR reminded the meeting participants that the Audit report was included in the supporting papers forwarded in advance of the GA. This Audit report records the fact that EONS ended the financial year 2020 with a positive result of 453,000€. AR provided an outline of how EONS finances are

managed. The carry-over of the 453,000€ is because a major part of the budget related to travel and face to face meetings has not been spent because of the COVID restrictions.

AR provided an overview of the different sources of income for EONS in 2020 and an outline of the budget spent against actual spending in 2020, highlighting the fact that across most of the budget lines EONS is underspend. Only the office costs have slightly exceeded the budget line, and this is related to the increased audit expenses.

JdM invited the meeting participants to approve the 2020 Audited Accounts via the Mentimeter App.

Results are available under item 8.

#### **Item 5 Presentation of the election results**

JdM informed the meeting participants about the results of the call for elections for a Board member Young Cancer Nurse. Nikolina Dodlek (ND), Croatia, has been elected as the new EONS Board member Young Cancer Nurse. JdM congratulated ND and a warm thank you was also given to Tugba Pehlivan, Turkey, for offering her expertise through her candidature.

JdM invited the meeting participants to approve the election result via the Mentimeter App. Results are available under item 8.

#### *Part II: Cancer Nursing Panel, Covid and Cancer Nursing in 2021*

#### **Item 6 Cancer Nursing Panel**

JdM welcomed the participants of the Cancer Nursing Panel and invited them to shortly introduce themselves.

*- Introduction of the panel members:*

**Fernanda Conceicao (FC):** Head Nurse of Intensive, Intermediate and Recovery Oncology Care at Champalimaud Foundation, Lisbon.

**Matt Fowler (MF):** Nurse Consultant for Oncology and Haematology, Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, UK.

**Sara Parreira (SP):** head nurse of the oncology unit in CUF Tejo Hospital, Lisbon, Portugal.

**Tamer Aljafari (TA):** palliative care coordinator nurse in Bethlehem, Palestine.

*How was the nursing community informed about the covid19 pandemic and was cancer care still a priority?*

FC: There was a lack of information from the government, and it was very confusing initially. Due to the pressure to take care of COVID patients, there was a high loss in the staff for the follow up of cancer patients. In order to protect the cancer patients, several steps were cancelled such as screening.

SP: lack of information and knowledge about COVID and lack of protective materials. Patients were also afraid to come to the hospital for the follow up of their treatment.

TA: It was a very stressful situation in Palestine at the start of the COVID pandemic with many hospitals refusing patients with respiratory symptoms or fever. In TA's own hospital, priority was given to save cancer patients and there was a strong cooperation between hospitals.

MF: very confused information from the government about COVID. No access to testing for patients and staff, poor protective materials which had to be shared and the care for cancer patients in the curative and palliative setting was put on hold. Patients were also afraid to come to the hospital.

*How did your role as cancer nurse changed during the pandemic?*

MF: Increased work pressure with working late nights and weekend shifts. Working in the in-patient setting, reduced or no workforce to take care of cancer patients and as a result now facing long working days to reduce the backlog with cancer patients.

SP: Several nurses in the hospital were allocated to take care for the COVID patients and as a result, only a limited number of nurses were available in the Oncology team. They are still processing the backlog of cancer patients and patients are now receiving their diagnosis. The 3<sup>rd</sup> wave started at the beginning of 2021 in Portugal and there is a high pressure on the members of the Oncology Unit in the hospital.

*Did you have access to personal protective equipment?*

TA: In general, there was a lack of protective materials during the initial stage for the healthcare workers with few and improvised materials but in his own hospital protective equipment is available.

FC: Lacking professional protective equipment and improvising to have some kind of protective equipment. The cost of protective equipment and protective masks increased, and healthcare workers had to wear their mask during the whole shift. The situation has improved but there is still a high need to use the protective materials in a rational way.

*What was the hardest thing you had to do as a cancer nurse during the pandemic?*

MF: Stopping treatment for cancer patients and being confronted by phone with patients that are asking to continue treatment which was not allowed at that time. Very hard was also bringing bad news by phone. Communicating with cancer patients should not be done by phone. MF has lost colleagues and friends due to COVID and it was hard to see the funeral processions going through the hospital wards.

TA: In Palestine there is a patient setting but no home-based service and it was a real challenge to arrange transport to get patients into the hospitals. As West Bank and Gaza are 2 separate regions and transport of medicines from one region into another is not possible this caused treatment delays.

*Did your work during COVID had an impact on your physical/mental health?*

SP: Being away for a long period from your family and friends and the pressure of increased workload and little or no leave had a big impact on our physical and mental health.

TA: lot of psychological stress in the early phase of the pandemic with healthcare workers being afraid of getting in contact with patients, many stressful situations and lack of support.

FC: highlighted the effects of the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave in Portugal with the increased need for trained intensive care unit (ICU) nurses. Many nurses from outpatient and oncology units going to the ICU which resulted in a lack of nurses in the oncology wards. This resulted in a low moral as not feeling able to work in full capacity to take care of cancer patients.

*What positive aspects did you take from working as a cancer nurse during COVID19?*

MF: Increase of teamwork was very significant, cancer nurses succeeded in adapting the way of working, managing to do a lot of things by phone. The impact of bureaucracy in the public healthcare sector disappeared at the peak of the pandemic.

*How did you experience the transition from one-to-one care to teleworking and e health?*

FC: The use of e-health processes increased a lot, and this will be also the future. However, these tools can be more challenging as you are not face to face with the patient. There will always be a need for specifically trained specialised cancer nurses. In Portugal, the use of e-health technology can also be a challenge for the elderly cancer patients.

*What could be EONS role in post pandemic times towards the cancer nursing community?*

TA: It would be important to share the experiences of the cancer nurses in Palestine with the nursing community through EONS and to act as platform so we can learn from each other.

*How you think we can support and empower the YCN to go on and looking forward to a bright professional future?*

SP: A lot of Young Cancer nurses were reallocated to COVID wards without having experience in ICU. There is a lot of support from EONS towards the YCN and it is important to keep further liaising with the YCN and offering educational and specialisation activities.

*If you could name one action in the COVID policy that you missed and was needed to impact cancer care in a better way, what would it be and who would need to take the lead?*

MF: Early testing of patients so they could have access to cancer care and receive proper treatment. To make sure that we as cancer nurses are supporting each other within our community.

FC: It would have been better if the cancer nurses were more involved in the development of the national crisis management plan and had more input in the decision making to defend the cancer patients.

SP: Before COVID there were different sets of treatment options related to end-of-life patients but due to COVID we had to cut back in the follow up of these patients.

TA: There was no focus on palliative care and other diseases during COVID. The coordination between the different oncology centres/hospitals should have been better and we should develop a proper crisis management plan.

JdM thanked the panel members for their input and contribution. JdM pointed out that we all can learn from our experiences on how to manage such a crisis in a more efficient way.

*Part III: News from EONS*

## **Item 7 WG chairs presentations**

### *Communication*

ACh, chair of the Communication WG, informed the meeting participants about the members of the WG, the WG's Objectives and implementations in 2020 and 2021. He provided an overview of social media activities highlighting the steady increase of followers for all social media. He pointed out that the Comms. WG is actively involved in supporting and promoting the *NutriCaNurse Project* and the *ECND activity* which took place in May. He also stated that one person from the CWG will take part in the EONS Cancer Prevention Plan.

### *Advocacy*

LS, chair of the Advocacy WG, presented the members of the WG and provided a short outline of what the Advocacy WG is doing. LS highlighted the different activities that have been done or are in process such as the *Patient and Occupational Safety* topic. She informed the meeting participants that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Patient & Occupational Safety Webinar will take place on 14 June 2021 with the topic "Personal Protective Equipment". LS provided an outline of the *EONS Cancer Nursing Index 2020* with the overall scores and the *EONS Cancer Prevention Plan* which includes several activities and where the Advocacy WG will be leading on the 12-month campaign on Cancer Prevention which will start in May 2022. A Task Group has also been put together to develop the *Advocacy toolkit*, a tool for cancer nurses to better advocate and this will be available in 4 parts with each a specific topic. MF, EONS Board member and member of the Advocacy WG, provided an update related to the *EONS Workplace accreditation*, a core set of workplace standards that will increase safety for cancer nurses and patients and that will empower cancer nurses to strive for excellence in several working place related topics.

### *Research*

AD, chair of the Research WG, updated the participants with the members of the Research WG and provided an outline of the main activities of the WG with the *virtual PhD and Research*

*Proposal Workshops in 2021, a Research Proposal Workshop in 2022 and the Novice Dissemination Award 2021.* AD informed the participants about the different ongoing research projects such as the *Cancer Patients Experience of Cancer Care during COVID19*, a Multi-national study lead by Professor Manuela Eicher, University of Lausanne, and the research project on *Core patient-reported outcomes and measures for supportive care in the context of targeted therapies for advanced renal and liver cancer*. AD informed the participants about two projects in development, the *Advanced Breast Cancer (ABC) for Nurses*, in cooperation with the Education WG and the *EONS Cancer Prevention Plan*, led by the Advocacy WG.

#### *Education*

WMc, chair of the Education WG, informed the participants about the current members of the WG. A call for two new members of the Education WG is now open. WMc pointed out that due to the COVID restrictions, the *EONS-ESO Clinical Fellowship Programme for Cancer nurses* and the *ESO-EONS Masterclass* had to be cancelled. At the time of the GA, no feedback was received from ESO related to the status of the *2<sup>nd</sup> ESO-EONS Eastern Europe and Balkan region Masterclass in Oncology Nursing*. Related to the ESO e-sessions, 4 sessions were presented earlier in 2021 and 4 more sessions are scheduled to take place in 2021. WMc provided an overview of the current educational projects. Related to the *European Cancer College for Nurses (ECCN)* she informed the meeting participants that a TG has been established and that a PA has been appointed. A TG is in preparation related to the update of the *Cancer Nursing Education Framework*. WMc reminded the meeting participants about the Twitter chat that is scheduled to take place on Thursday 10 June at 19.00 CET.

#### *Young Cancer Nurses (YCN)*

MvK, YCN Board representative, updated the meeting participants about the new YCN leadership and the membership. MvK pointed out that the YCN Group are still recruiting new members from countries that at this stage have no representative in the YCN group. She highlighted the fact that the YCN are very actively involved with the different EONS projects and opportunities such as the Cancer Prevention Plan and the upcoming EONS14 Congress. MvK provided an outline of the YCN activities related to the website and the different social media. The YCN Group is also very active in providing educational opportunities for other YCN's such as the Nightingale Challenge webinar series scheduled to take place in October/November 2021 and a YCN Conference in 2022.

### **Item 8 Voting results**

#### *2020 Audited Accounts:*

10 Society delegates and 22 individual members submitted their vote with unanimous yes to accepting the Audited Accounts.

The 2020 Audited Accounts are herewith accepted.

*Election results:* 11 Society delegates and 22 individual member delegates submitted their vote with unanimous yes.

The election results are herewith accepted.

### **Item 9 EONS Operations 2021-2026**

EW, EONS COO, provided an overview of EONS organisational goals, pointing out that related to financial sustainability, EONS finances are quite secure for 2021 but for the long term more work needs to be done to achieve financial sustainability. The EONS WG's are now much more engaged in helping to achieve EONS' strategic and organisational goals and the YCN network is now fully integrated as a working group. EW outlined the EONS income sources for 2021 with a total of 641,876€ of which 461,588€ from unrestricted funding. EW stressed the need to maintain a diverse income in 2022 and beyond, and because of the COVID restrictions related to travel and

having few or no face-to-face meetings, we should be able to carry over 141,179€ to next year. However, at the current time, there will be a deficit of 82,149€ which can be covered with the bank reserves but ideally, we should fundraise to fill this gap and increase our income beyond it. EW provided an overview of the EONS projects indicating the specific stage of the projects, and presented the EONS Fundraising Strategy highlighting the different flagship initiatives which include the involvement of all EONS WG's and provided the fundraising options for these initiatives.

**Item 10 EONS Activities 2021-2022 Highlights**

EW invited the meeting participants to register for the *EONS14 Congress* and she pointed out that Congress bursaries will soon be available to cover registration costs for a limited number of places. Related to the Patient & Occupational Safety webinars, she reminded the participants that it is still possible to register for the next webinar with the topic *Personal Protective Equipment*, scheduled to take place on 14 June at 18.30 CET.

**Item 11 Close of the meeting**

JdM closed the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2021 General Assembly, thanking all the participants for attending and for providing their input.

Signed:

Date:

*The presentations made during the meeting are available on the EONS website.*