

Minutes of the EuTi Meeting on 10 December 2008 in Munich Airport

Dr. Biesinger declares the meeting open at 11:50 a.m. His initial words are dedicated to Dr. Ulrich Wegehaupt who found a tragic death a fortnight ago, when his plane crashed into Lake Chiemsee. The participants observe a minute of silence.

Dr. Biesinger reports on the Gothenburg conference saying that he and Dr. Mazurek have been eagerly lobbying for DTL grants.

He then invites participants to give an overview of their respective organization and/or activities:

Mr. Otorino, president of AIT and a tinnitus sufferer himself, says that the Italian association has 2000 members. The annual membership fee is 15,000 €. The money goes into promoting studies and financing the office with 2000 €. However, there are no means to assist or counsel tinnitus sufferers. AIT relies on 4 medical counsellors for professional assistance. Prof. Paula Perrin is engaged in tinnitus research. In order to raise money, 900 letters were sent to citizens and members of Parliament. The target group was asked, both in writing and orally, whether they could donate money. There was no positive feedback. An annual event is organized in Udine. Dr. Biesinger points to the upcoming TRI Meeting in Stresa.

The president of the Austrian Tinnitus League (ÖTL), Prof. Dr. Manfred Koller, talks about the congress organized to celebrate the 10th anniversary of ÖTL. Dr. Koller thanks EUTI for its 1000 € donation. The congress was attended by 370 participants, most of them German speaking, but there were also people from South Tyrol. An attractive social program and several receptions completed the event. The amount of work that went into the preparation of the congress was enormous. Subsidies to finance such events are rather scarce. The ÖTL has 1200 members. 17 self-help groups are distributed across the country. Some of them invite doctors and psychologists to hold lectures. Dr. Koller is also trying to establish contacts with Slovenia. So far this has proved unsuccessful. He will continue with his efforts and asks for assistance.

Mr. Larsen from Denmark speaks for "Hörferenigen". The association represents the interests of 3000 members organized in 5 regional sections who suffer from tinnitus and/or Morbus Menière. There are also subgroups for the hard of hearing, affected children, etc. Last September a conference was held for Morbus Menière sufferers.

Dr. Schapowal of the Swiss Tinnitus League (STL) reports that STL has 380 members. The annual membership fee is 80 SFr, incl. the quarterly Tinnitus-Forum. Every year, 3 events are organized for those suffering from tinnitus. Advanced tinnitus training is also offered to counsellors. The first results of this continuous training can now be seen. An autumn meeting was held on 15 November. A good cooperation exists with "pro audito schweiz" whose office is co-financed.

The president of the German Tinnitus League (DTL), Mr. Volker Albert, talks about the manifold tasks involved in managing the DTL with its approx. 16000 members. The focus of his address is on consolidation and qualification measures. A qualification project, which has been financed, is underway. It has for objective to further improve the work accomplished in the self help groups. To this end, it is intended to provide training to active members so as to ensure the nationwide quality of their assistance to others. Mr. Albert and Mrs. Knör answer questions concerning the different aspects and contents of the training.

Dr. Landgrebe has details about the 3rd Tinnitus Research Initiative Meeting (TRI) to be held in Stresa, Italy, from 24 - 26 June 2009. One seat is reserved for each organization

in Europe free of charge. Travelling and accommodation costs are at one's own expense. For more details visit <http://www.tri2009.com> .

With a view to better present the aims and objectives of EUTi, it is decided to produce a flyer. Dr. Goebel, Dr. Biesinger and Dr. Mazurek agree to cooperate in its production. Deadline for the submission of the text is end of January 2009. It is planned to have 500 flyers printed for distribution in Stresa. As a speaker in the TRI meeting, Dr. Goebel will use the opportunity to also present EUTi.

Mr. Schätz, webmaster of the EUTi homepage, reports that the site has been visited by 1500 people. Since September 2008 the Mini-Tinnitus Questionnaire (Mini-TQ) was viewed and filled in by 189 users. He presents the results of his first evaluation. It appears that tinnitus distress (four degrees of severity according to the Mini-TQ by Miller and Goebel) is more pronounced in female than in male visitors. A more differentiated assessment taking into account the respective national language will be presented by Dr. Goebel in Stresa.

Participants discuss and approve the idea of links. All members will be contacted to obtain their opinion. Mr. Schätz wants to know whether the texts are still up to date. To clarify this topic, it will be necessary to also check with Dr. Greimel. Dr. Biesinger mentions a database that is maintained by TRI but not available online. Dr. Koller inquires if pictures are allowed on the website. The answer is yes. Dr. Biesinger will decide on the insertion of pictures. Texts are only to be sent as Word files.

It is reported that Mrs. Chery Croze has become a new member of the Board of Directors of France Acouphènes. She will contact EUTi and give an account of how things progress in France.

The information available about Spain is as follows: There are three groups. The main group is the Madrid group led by Carlos Heraiz and Isabel Diges (AESHA). Both of them coordinate activities with a second group in Bilbao (ATTINEUS). The relationship between these groups is good. There is a third group in Barcelona (APAT). Regrettably, the contact with this group is not satisfactory. There is a lack of cooperation.

Mrs. Knör presents the treasurer's report detailing income and expenditure. Mr. Albert proposes that discharge be granted to the treasurer and to the members of the Board of Directors. This is unanimously agreed to by all members present. Five persons are entitled to vote. Mrs. Knör abstains from voting regarding her discharge as treasurer.

Dr. Goebel gives a presentation of the DTL website and the Mini-TQ. The five members present agree to have the questionnaire translated into all European languages and post it on the Internet.

There is a request from Prof. Dr. Richard Tyler, USA, who asks for permission to present the questionnaire in the United States. Permission is granted.

Dr. Schapowal talks about his project to organize an English speaking congress to celebrate the 20th anniversary of STL. Funding has already been secured. The congress is scheduled to take place in Zürich from 27-28 August 2010. It is mainly meant for a professional audience. Simultaneous translation should definitely be provided, either German/English or English/German. EUTi will consider making money available for this event. DTL will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2011. The event should take place under the auspices of EUTi. The proposed date for the congress is 1-3 October 2011. The venue will most likely be Kassel.

Dr. Mazurek reports on a meeting with the American Tinnitus Association (ATA). Efforts will go into the realisation of bilateral support. It is typical for ATA that individuals are

contacted on a regular basis to win them over as sponsors. ATA also encourages potential donors to leave their estate to them in their will. Dr. Mazurek and Dr. Biesinger speak out in favour of endowments, i.e. sponsors donate a certain amount of money to be invested, the earnings from which provide the financial resources that can be withdrawn.

New objectives and projects will have to be formulated. Dr. Biesinger poses the question whether EUTi should have a scientific advisory council. Dr. Mazurek is in favour of this proposal. It should, however, be difficult to get funds from the European Union. Dr. Biesinger would like to sell the idea as a hearing project intended to highlight the gift of hearing. He would also like to present his project in Ecuador and do some canvassing to raise money.

Dr. Mazurek is unanimously appointed advisor to the Board of Directors. She is vested with the authority of the board to recruit professionals in Europe for EUTi's scientific advisory council. Dr. Biesinger is in touch with several sponsors. Dr. Mazurek will use her contacts in the Charité. Dr. Biesinger has been approached by a certain Mr. Weber, a retired attorney from Munich, who is a board member of Eurotinnitus. For the time being participants decide to wait and see. Only Dr. Schapowal is in favour of going ahead.

Dr. Biesinger proposes to hold the next EUTi meeting again in Munich on 09 December 2009. He declares the meeting closed at 02:30 p.m.