

Minutes of EUTi Meeting including new Elections, held at Munich Airport on 09 December 2009

Participants: Volker Albert (German Tinnitus League, Germany) Dr. Eberhard Biesinger (Germany), Sylviane Chery-Croze (France), Yolande Delobbe and spouse serving as interpreter (Belgium), Isabel Diges (Spain), Prof. Gerhard Goebel (Germany), Dr. Carlos Herraiz (Spain), Dr. Manfred Koller (Austria), Frode Larsen (Denmark), PD Dr. Birgit Mazurek (Germany), Savani Ottorino (Italy), Dr. Paola Perin (Italy), Dr. Schapowal (Switzerland), Conrad Schätz (System Administrator, Germany), Mrs. Staudinger (Tinnitus Research Initiative), Kirsten Worsoe (Denmark). The treasurer, Elke Knör, is excused for health reasons.

Part I

The meeting of the members is opened at 11:30 a.m. by EUTi President Dr. Eberhard Biesinger, who states that the invitations to this meeting were sent out in accordance with the statutes. There are no objections concerning the Minutes of the last meeting and/or the Agenda. The President proceeds to check which of the members present are entitled to vote and whether there is a quorum. Representatives with a right to vote are those from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium and Spain. The meeting of the members is thus quorate. Countries represented with no right to vote as of yet: Italy and Denmark.

Guests invited to attend the meeting: Dr. Mazurek of the Charité Berlin, Mrs. Staudinger as representative of the Tinnitus Research Initiative and Prof. Goebel as board member of the German Tinnitus League.

Dr. Biesinger once again draws the attention to the preconditions for full membership of EUTi: the respective tinnitus association of a country designates two persons to be sent as representatives to the EUTi meetings. As laid down in the new statutes each country shall be represented by a member of the respective tinnitus league suffering from tinnitus himself and by a professional (e.g. a medical doctor or psychologist). These preconditions are currently not met by the representatives from Italy and Denmark attending the meeting.

Report of the President

Dr. Biesinger gives a short overview of EUTi's activities and development in 2009. A special highlight was the participation in the TRI Congress in Stresa, Italy from 24 - 26 June. EUTi was represented by Volker Albert (German Tinnitus League), Dr. Biesinger and Prof. Goebel, who presented the tinnitus test (Mini-TQ 12) incorporated into the EUTi website and gave a first evaluation.

Dr. Biesinger suggests that the representatives of the different countries in attendance draw up short reports on activities and projects to be published on the EUTi website. A hotline for tinnitus sufferers (if available) shall facilitate contacting the respective national self-help organisation. Moreover, Dr. Biesinger reminds participants that contact data and texts of the national sites (behind the flags) need to be checked and that any changes should be sent to him or directly to the web administrator. He also points out that except for Austria membership fees are still outstanding.

Reports from the individual countries

The annual reports of the individual countries are published in detail on the respective websites of EUTi's homepage.

Speaking for Switzerland, Dr. Schapowal reports that the total number of members has remained constant. There are regional activities and training courses for patients. To

mark the tenth anniversary of the Swiss self-help organisation next year, it is planned to organize a congress in St. Gallen.

Dr. Koller reports that in Austria the number of members, training and patient education are also relatively constant.

As regards Spain, an increasing number of training courses for patients, medical doctors and psychologists can be noted. Contacts with the Catalan tinnitus league have improved, and it is expected that communication with this group will become better.

Kirsten Worsoe and Frode Larsen from Denmark report that within the relatively big organisation for the hard of hearing a tinnitus section is in the process of being set up. It is intended to officially send representatives to EUTi in due course. Mrs. Worsoe plans a one-year stay in Munich and will maintain close connections with EUTi, also with a view to helping Frode Larsen.

Mrs. Delobbe reports that in Belgium the level of activity is good and that publications appear on a regular basis. She is assisted in her work by her husband. She will see to it that PR work will figure more prominently on the Belgian homepage.

Mrs. Sylviane Chery-Croze talks about the problem that in France only a few medical doctors, researchers and psychologists are in a position to cooperate with the tinnitus league due to lack of time. In spite of this, the French self-help group is quite active and has been able to hold two congresses in 2009.

As outlined by Mr. Savani Ottorino, in Italy efforts are being made to support research projects. Moreover, a question concerning the subject of tinnitus was put to Parliament and taken up by twelve members of the Italian Parliament and discussed. As of yet, no concrete measures of support have resulted from this approach. Mr. Savani Ottorino will endeavour to provide more information for the homepage and strive for full membership of EUTi.

The German Tinnitus League is represented by its president, Volker Albert, as well as by Dr. Biesinger in his capacity as delegate of the league. The number of members of the German Tinnitus League is relatively constant. The work done is professional and training carried out in seminars for patients is on a very high level.

Dr. Mazurek talks about the difficulties to find sponsors in the prevailing tense economic situation.

As representative of the Tinnitus Research Initiative (TRI), Mrs. Staudinger informs about TRI activities in 2009 (Stresa Congress) and upcoming changes in the TRI structure: it is intended that TRI will take on the form of a foundation. (www.tinnitusresearch.org).

Report of the Web Administrator

Conrad Schätz reports that the total number of visits of the website amounts to currently 21 300. This is an increase of visits in 2009 by approx. 10 000. In addition to updates and changes to the existing website and to the individual national sites behind the flags, the Italian site was implemented and the database was adapted accordingly. Moreover, the Mini Tinnitus Test was enlarged. Texts of recommendation for several countries (in the respective local languages) were incorporated. Questionnaires for Switzerland (in the official languages German, French and Italian), Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia were implemented. For presentation at the Stresa TRI Congress and today's EUTi meeting, an evaluation of the respective existing database was done in keeping with Dr. Goebel's instructions. Conrad Schätz suggests to publish current contents (activities of self-help groups, latest news from the individual countries) on the website to increase the interest of tinnitus sufferers.

Report of the Treasurer

On behalf of the treasurer, Elke Knör, who is unable to attend for health reasons, Dr. Biesinger presents the financial report detailing income and expenditure. Dr. Koller proposes that discharge be granted to the treasurer, which is unanimously agreed to. Upon request, Dr. Biesinger is also granted discharge in his capacity of EUTi President.

New Elections

Mrs. Staudinger and Prof. Goebel agree to form the election committee and carry out the elections.

The results of the new elections to the Board are as follows:

- President: Dr. Eberhard Biesinger, Germany (unanimous vote)
- First Vice President: Dr. Koller, Austria (no opposing vote)
- Second Vice President: Dr. Andreas Schapowal, Switzerland (no opposing vote)
- Treasurer: Volker Albert, Germany (unanimous vote)
- Secretary: Carlos Herraiz, Spain (no opposing vote)

All persons accepted the election.

Part II

Amendments to the Statutes

As stipulated in the statutes, the proposed amendments have been submitted to all EUTi members. Objections and counter-proposals have not been received. Dr. Biesinger once again explains the proposed amendments. After a short discussion, a request to amend the following provisions of the statutes was made and unanimously agreed to:

Article 5, paragraph 4

- Old** Each general member shall be obliged to name a contact partner to the association.
- New:** Each general member shall name a professional representative (e.g. a medical doctor or psychologist) and an affected representative of his organisation. Each member organisation shall be represented by these two persons. As a rule, the representatives of the member organisations are the presidents of the individual tinnitus associations or a person authorised by them.

Article 9, paragraph 1

- Old** The meeting of the members shall be the ultimate executive organ of the association. It shall take place at least every two years, the first time being in 2003. It shall be convened in writing by the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman on the basis of a resolution of the Board and shall include the provisional agenda and the appropriate documents, in particular the financial report. A period of no less than three months shall be complied with. It shall commence with posting. The venue of the meeting shall be resolved in the prior meeting of the members or otherwise stipulated by the Board.
- New:** The meeting of the members shall be the ultimate executive organ of the association. It shall take place at least every two years. It shall be convened in writing by the President or the Vice-President on the basis of a resolution of the Board and shall include the provisional agenda. A period of no less than four weeks shall be complied with. The invitation shall be sent to all members by e-mail.

The venue shall be decided upon in the previous meeting of the members or otherwise determined by the Board taking into consideration members' wishes.

Article 9, paragraph 3

Old The meeting of the members shall be quorate if one half of the general members are present or properly represented. The present or represented general members can decide to disclaim this condition. Every general member has one vote.

New: The meeting of the members shall be quorate if one half of the general members are present or properly represented. In case of an insufficient number of votes, the general members present or duly represented can decide to waive this requirement by a majority of their votes. Each general member has two votes pursuant to the procedure on sending delegates.

Article 13, paragraph 3, phrase 2

Old The members of the Board, the delegates of the general members to the General Meeting, all by the Board called honorary co-workers and the members of an advisory board have right to reimbursement of their necessary expenses. Travel expenses are reimbursed within the frames of the existing rules.

New: The members of the Board and the volunteers appointed by the Board shall be entitled to reimbursement of all necessary expenses actually incurred. Travel expenses shall, however, only be reimbursed in accordance with the relevant provisions, if the national association concerned is unable to take over the costs.

These amendments will be submitted to a notary and subsequently to the Amtsgericht (Local Court) Wuppertal for entry in the registry of associations. Mrs. Knör has agreed to take over these tasks.

Part III

After having dealt with the organizational part, participants discuss measures and projects for the coming year. Dr. Biesinger requests that ads referring to EUTi's website be placed in national high-circulation papers so as to make EUTi, and thus the national self-help groups, better known to tinnitus sufferers and professionals. EUTi intends to financially support such ads with up to 200€ per country.

Dr. Biesinger reminds the national representatives that the delegation of each country should consist of a professional and a person affected by tinnitus. Every effort should be made to achieve such constellation. The professionals from the different countries would make an explicit scientific Advisory Board superfluous. Mrs. Chery-Croze points out that such a constellation would be difficult to achieve due to the high workloads of professionals.

Dr. Biesinger reiterates the importance of finding sponsors for EUTi. In this context, participants consider initiating a concrete project (e.g. training of national self-help groups) to increase the willingness to donate of potential sponsors.

Finally, it is decided to hold the next meeting on **19 January 2011** at Munich Airport.

Munich, 09 December 2009 ([back to top](#))

[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.