

## Annual General Meeting Minutes 2024

Date:	Friday, 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 / 18:30–20:30
Location:	Hall Brown 3, MiCo, Milan, Italy
Chair and Presenters:	<p><b>Council:</b> Ulrich Baumann (UB), Mary Fewtrell (MF), Lorenzo D’Antiga (LDA), Emer Fitzpatrick (EF), Ilse Broekaert (IB), Marta Tavares (MT) Lissy de Ridder (LdR), Jernej Dolinsek (JD), Jiri Bronsky (JB), Julie Lanigan (JL), Andreia Nita (AN), Carlo Agostoni (CA)</p> <p><b>Others:</b> Sanja Kolacek (SK, Liaison Officer) Jesus Quintero. Annual Meeting bid Barcelona (via video) Frederic Gottrand, Annual Meeting bid Lille</p>
Members present:	224 (129 Full members with voting rights/in good standing)

	Item
	The meeting started at 18:30hrs on Friday, 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>1</b>	<b>President’s Welcome</b>
	UB welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting in Hall Brown 3, MiCo, Milan, Italy
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Official apologies received from Richard Russell and Peter Aggett
<b>3</b>	<b>Notification of other business</b>
	No notifications of any other business.
<b>4</b>	<b>Approval of AGM Minutes (Vienna 2023)</b>
	The assembly made no comments, and the minutes were <b>approved</b> as being a true record <b>by the majority of Members in the room and online.</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>President’s Report</b>
	<p>UB presented the Presidents’ report as follows.</p> <p><b>Membership</b> The current statistics for Membership numbers are 1690 active Members with the breakdown of Members as follows: Full Members (45%), Trainee Members (28%), AHP Members (7%), Corresponding Members (10%), Emeritus Members (10%).</p> <p><b>Council Members</b> UB confirmed the turnover for 2024, which will see a transition of 5 positions (General Secretary, Scientific Secretary, President Elect, Chair of Committee on Nutrition and Young ESPGHAN Chair), to be addressed later in the agenda with updates on the Membership voting. The Local Organising Chair will transition automatically for the next congress.</p> <p><b>Milan 2024</b> The first figures from the meeting were presented, with the following highlighted: Abstracts: 1547 (860 presented, 317 E-poster presentation, 370 E-Poster viewing). Late breaking: 236 accepted Attendees: 5.601 Innovations: Joint sessions with EPC, Conect4Children, ELPA, ECCO, ESPID, ESPEN and ERNICA. The IBUS workshop was highlighted, in addition to the AI Session. Several steps were taken to reduce waste, with printed programme only available upon request and limits to congress bags, which had to be purchased. Congratulations were expressed for the 50th anniversary of the Nutrition Committee.</p> <p><b>Scientific Development</b> The Research Curriculum creation, Task force on AI and collaborations on scientific papers were outlined as the biggest developments. Papers such as the MAFLD nomenclature, the FDA paper and WHO Statement were highlighted as examples of good interactions with other societies. A survey on AI was sent to Members which will complement the AI Task Force creation. Improvements in the journal are ongoing after the transition of Wolters Kluwer to Wiley for publishing of the journal.</p> <p><b>Relations with Industry</b></p>

Members were informed on the recent interactions with industry, with the Annual Meeting offering a more balanced approach to symposia, given the feedback received from Vienna. Medicine and medical device availability were highlighted, with progress made via the Liaison Officer. A stakeholder meeting is planned for October to engage industry and patient groups, with more discussion to follow later in the agenda. Mitigation of conflicts of interest is ongoing and many improvements have been made already with the updates to the DOI forms.

#### **Reaching out**

Going beyond the ESPGHAN bubble, Young ESPGHAN have been engaged with APPSPGHAN and LASPGHAN to help create similar structures for trainee members. Interactions with general paediatric societies was outlined with a successful project realised on functional abdominal pain. The project garnered over 600 news articles across Europe and is in the second phase. The transition alliance was also raised as a good opportunity to create a workshop and syllabus in collaboration with adult societies. The Quality-of-Care project outcomes were presented, with the project to come to a close in 2025.

#### **General Societal Updates**

The PIBD congress will take place in Sorrento in October 2025, 22-25. The ESPGHAN Website development project is ongoing, with improvements to become evident in the coming months.

A moment of silence was observed for Prof. Emanuele Lebenthal who passed away in April and was an important mentor to many ESPGHAN members.

**The majority of members voted to approve the Presidents report both onsite and online**

## **6 Financial Report**

LDA presented the Annual Financial Audit 2023, the Financial Year End Report 2023, and the updates to the Budget for 2024.

### **i. Annual Financial Audit 2023**

LDA reported that the 2023 Audit has been completed and ESPGHAN is compliant with all Swiss financial laws.

### **ii. Financial Year End Report 2023**

LDA outlined the main aspects of the 2023 budget as follows:

- Modest expectation of income from Annual Meeting
- Continued structure for Committee/WG/SIG Budgets
- Continued structure for Societal paper budget allocation
- Funds for Endoscopy Fellowships and AHP Award
- Continuation of podcast and QoC initiative
- Continuation of funds for standing Awards and Grants
- Reintroduction of Research Grant Initiative

**2023 Final Income: € 2.077.125,50**

**2023 Final Expenditure: € 2.625.380,33**

An overall deficit of € 548.254,83 was reported. The Outcome was better than expected. Many unforeseen costs and projects were realised (€258.758,62), together with the reintroduction of the research grant and award payments that were delayed from the COVID Hiatus (€214.338,06). PIBD congress expenses were also high. Some costs were affected by currency fluctuations (CHF and USD).

**The majority of Members approved the 2023 Treasurer Report both onsite and online**

### **iii. Updates to the Budget for 2024**

LDA gave an overview of the main lines for the 2023 budget as follows:

- New initiatives for Research Curriculum and MOOC
- Continuation of LO allocation
- Continuation of podcast and QoC initiative

Reduction in Awards for Network and Research Grant

**Estimated Income 2024: €2.182.923,00**

**Estimated Expenditure 2024: -€3.039.737,00**

**Estimated Profit/loss 2024: -€806.450,00**

Negative budget due to continuation of operational budget, Awards and Grants and Research Grant close off. Additional projects have also added to expense lines. All figures are based on full expenditure. The floor was opened to questions.

Jorge Amil Dias asked what type of expenditures were included in the contingency/project line as this was the second largest expense. LDA responded with an overview on unforeseen costs and projects and stated that a full breakdown of the costs could be made available. An overview could also be found in the supporting documents.

Peter Milla asked LDA if plans were in place to reverse the trend of negative budget balances going forward. LDA confirmed that plans are in place to ensure the losses of the previous years would not become routine.

Dominique Belli highlighted the fact that a realisation of the budget deficit would bring the finances to the limit of operational safety, as agreed in the past. This was recognised and will be taken into account for the 2025 budgets and beyond.

One Member enquired if the investment was based on ethical considerations, with LDA confirming that the ESG scores formed a vital element of the investment selection.

**The content of 2024 Budget report was approved by the majority of Members both onsite and online (3 no, 3 abstain).**

## **7 Additional Discussions – 2023 AGM Follow ups**

MF gave the AGM an overview on the actions taken to address the AGM 2023 queries regarding the appointment of the Liaison Officer Role, which included:

- Conduct a survey on the LO role and on paid roles more generally
- Discussions at the Strategy Day 2024
- Provide an overview of the survey and Strategy Day feedback to members with discussion and voting at AGM 2024

The information and outcomes from the tasks were made available in the supporting documents of the meeting and are available also in the members area of the ESPGHAN website. In addition, it was agreed to provide a report on the progress/tasks carried out by the Liaison Officer at this AGM.

### **Liaison Officer Report**

Sanja Kolacek (SK) gave the attendees an overview on the progress of the initiatives delegated by Council. The role was created to:

- Improve visibility
- Facilitate efficacious communication with various stakeholders
- Involve ESPGHAN in addressing key paediatric problems

### **The main tasks undertaken in the past year included:**

- Participate in identifying extent of the problem & facilitating solutions for:  
**shortage of medical devices for children**

Joint activities were carried out with EU MEPs in addition to awareness campaigns within ESPGHAN. A proposal for a resolution was put forward, with the hope of submitting an amendment advocating for improvements in the status of paediatric device supply. This will be addressed with the incoming parliament, as time was too short for the previous MEPs.

### **insufficient availability of paediatric medicines**

ESPGHAN led a series of comments on the EU Pharma regulations leading to an amendment being written by MEPs who agreed to support and facilitate the ESPGHAN proposals. As a result of this, 4 amendments were accepted in the voting rounds and made it into the final regulation.

- **establish a network with the General Paediatric Societies to collaborate on PGHN initiatives**

A database was created with all the Presidents of the respective countries with initial contact made to collaborate on particular topics. The first meeting was held in the Vienna 2023 congress, and the second held onsite in Milan. The first project identified for collaboration was Functional Abdominal Pain and has seen coverage in 21 countries and has garnered a large amount of media coverage and translations into 20 languages.

- **improve cooperation with various stakeholders such as UEG, EMA, and Biomed Alliance & at the EU level with MEPs**

EMA eligibility status was achieved, with meetings realised with PedCo and senior EMA officials. Collaboration with BioMed Alliance is ongoing, and SK is now a member of the board of directors. For UEG, interaction is ongoing on several projects and support was gained for the EU pharma regulations.

- **create a Multistakeholder Platform & Alliance to efficiently address paediatric problems, with an emphasis on PGHN**

The potential gains for the meeting were outlined as allowing more efficiency to address and solve paediatric issues, become more visible on the EU policy making level and offer partnership to patient and parent organisations and commercial companies relating to medical devices and drugs. Invitees will include Council, PAC, Pharma and Patient and Parent reps, and it is also hoped that members of parliament and the EMA can attend.

	<p><b>Questions and Answers:</b></p> <p>Deirdre Kelly asked if the PAC was involved in the FAP Campaign as this is a large amount of work which would need support outside of the Liaison Officer role and what resources were used. SK explained that the LO role forms a part of PAC, and that the funding used for the FAP campaign was €30.000,00. In previous years, a one day meeting in the EU parliament was €10.000,00. The inclusion of P&amp;P groups was also queried as they seemed to be absent from the campaign. SK confirmed the collaboration was done with General Paediatric and National Societies.</p> <p>Jorge Amil Dias questioned the need to forgo other industry payments while undertaking the LO role. Additionally, it was raised that a paid role for such activities is not needed as Committees and Working/Special Interest Groups are in place, and have been for many years, to undertake these initiatives. Relating to medical devices, ESPGHAN should join forces with other paediatric societies as we are a small and niche market.</p> <p>SK explained that the paediatric device issues were undertaken as these were obvious gaps, and many affiliated societies have tried to address with no success. C4C have highlighted the recent successes of ESPGHAN in addressing the awareness. The aim is to unite with more societies for such projects. MF also highlighted the scrutiny officers can come under for compliance and conflict of interest, especially for any issues related to nutrition, hence the need to refuse industry support while taking on the role.</p> <p><b>Voting</b></p> <p>The votes were anonymised, and eligible members were given voting slips onsite, and access to a voting tool online. The following questions were put forward to AGM Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you favour the continuation of the Liaison Officer Role in the present paid format beyond the current mandate? Yes/No/Abstain</li> <li>2. Do you think it is acceptable to pay ESPGHAN members in other exceptional roles or where no volunteer can be found? Yes, if approved by the ESPGHAN Council Yes, but only with approval by the General Assembly No Abstain</li> </ol> <p>It was explained that counting would occur in the meeting room with outcomes to be announced towards the end of the meeting.</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>ESPGHAN Constitution 2024 and Rules and Regulations</b></p> <p><b>i. Constitution 2024</b></p> <p>MF gave the AGM an update on the Constitution, with no comments received on the proposed changes sent in December 2023 within the timeframe for change. The main changes put forward were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AHPs to have voting rights</li> <li>- Removal of reference to current member voting and letters of support for new applicants (new procedure would be included in R&amp;R, and would remove letters of support and streamlined, open process)</li> <li>- Confirmation of Young ESPGHAN Chair position on the Executive Committee (non-voting)</li> </ul> <p>Voting was once again via an anonymous ballot, with the questions posed as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you approve of the voting rights for AHP?</li> <li>2. Do you approve of the changes of membership voting procedures?</li> <li>3. Do you approve of the addition of the Young ESPGHAN Chair to EC as a non-voting member?</li> </ol> <p>Yes/No/Abstain to all</p> <p>It was explained that counting would occur in the meeting room with outcomes to be announced towards the end of the meeting.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>New Members and Elections</b></p> <p>MF presented an overview on the new membership applications for intake 1 2024.</p> <p><b>i. 2024 New Member applications</b></p> <p>Intake 1 – March 2024: 112 New Member applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 34 Full Members</li> <li>- 65 Trainee Members</li> <li>- 4 Allied Health Professional Members</li> <li>- 9 Corresponding Members</li> </ul> <p>Voting will commence in June and notifications will be sent to applicants on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July.</p>

	<p><b>ii. 2024 New Council Member Positions</b></p> <p><b>President Elect:</b> Annamaria Staiano  <b>General Secretary:</b> Iva Hojsak  <b>Scientific Secretary:</b> Amit Assa  <b>Chair, Nutrition Committee:</b> Nadja Haiden  <b>Chair, Young ESPGHAN Committee:</b> Anne-Marie Grima  <b>Congress LOC 2025:</b> Kaija-Leena Kolho*</p> <p><i>*No voting required as position based on venue for Annual Meeting.</i></p> <p>In addition, MF confirmed that Giuseppe Indolfi will be the new Editor in Chief for JPGN, and Phyllis Barr will join the Office team after the journal transition is complete.</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>Annual Meeting 2026</b>
	<p>UB informed members of the 2 proposals put forward for the 2026 Annual Meeting hosting, with Lille, France, and Barcelona, Spain, the options for member voting.</p> <p>The pros and cons of each destination were presented, with finance, transport, accommodation and venue size and flexibility all taken into consideration. After the presentation, and a brief presentation on the destinations by the respective local organising chairs, eligible members were encouraged to vote for their preferred destination by anonymous ballot. It was explained that counting would occur in the meeting room with outcomes to be announced towards the end of the meeting.</p>
<b>11</b>	<b>Committee Reports</b>
	<p>Detailed Committee reports were provided as usual as supplementary documents, while during the presentation UB gave a summary of the Committee reports with only the main points highlighted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educational events: 14, approximately 500 delegates</li> <li>- Webinars: 21 held, approx. 840 attendees</li> <li>- MOOC on Enteral Nutrition: 2000 participants</li> <li>- Societal papers published: 15</li> <li>- Awards and Grants: 161</li> <li>- Committee Meetings: 15 face to face meetings across 8 different countries, 11 online meetings</li> <li>- WG/SIG Meetings: 26</li> </ul> <p>UB thanked all the Committee and Group Chairs for their continued dedication and productivity for ESPGHAN. No questions on the Committee reports were put forward.</p>
<b>12</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	<p>Heiko Witt, Michael Lentze and Elena Kornienko all raised the issue of Russian colleagues being prevented from attending the Annual Meeting in person, with points raised on the Constitution ruling out political actions. Many Russian colleagues are against the war, and it was deemed unfair to punish them further. Heiko Witt suggested consulting the members via survey. Counterarguments were put forward from Michal Brzezinski who felt that continued action is the best way forward as doctors had the chance to leave the country if they did not agree with the war.</p> <p>UB outlined the fact that the current status will be discussed and reviewed in the coming period with Council.</p>
<b>13</b>	<b>Thanks to Outgoing Council Members and Officers</b>
	<p>UB thanked the following outgoing Council Members and officers for their contribution over the last years.</p> <p><b>Mary Fewtrell, General Secretary</b>  <b>Lissy de Ridder, Scientific Secretary</b>  <b>Jiri Bronsky, Nutrition Committee Chair</b>  <b>Andriea Nita, Young ESPGHAN Committee Chair</b>  <b>Carlo Agostoni, L.O.C Milan 2024</b></p> <p>Additionally, UB thanked <b>Dominique Belli</b> for his service as JPGHJN Editor in Chief for the past 5 years.</p> <p><b>Next AGM</b>  Helsinki, Finland  Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2025</p>

**14 Voting Outcome**

**After Meeting Note:** MF gave the attendees an overview on the number of votes cast for each option at the end of the meeting. Given the close nature of the voting, 2 recounts were carried out the following day to validate the numbers, and the legal team, Oberson Abels (OA) in Geneva, were engaged to ensure the voting outcomes were in line with the majority of members present as mentioned in Article 10 of the ESPGHAN Constitution. OA confirmed that the first two votes were not legally required for action as the content is covered as Executive council responsibility – however in the pursuit of societal consensus the voting should follow the principle of Article 10. The wording in Article 10 meant a clear majority (of members eligible to vote) in favour was required for the first 2 votes on the Liaison Officer and paid roles. In these cases, any abstain votes count towards the votes not in favour. As a result, the outcome of the voting is as follows:

**1. Do you favour the continuation of the Liaison Officer Role in the present paid format beyond the current mandate?**

Yes 59 (46.46%)

No 55 (43.31%)

Abstain 13 (10.23%)

Total votes 127. **Not approved by AGM.**

As a majority of members in favour was not achieved, the current mandate will end in March 2025. The tasks and roles will be reviewed internally to assess the best way forward without losing momentum.

**2. Do you think it is acceptable to pay ESPGHAN members in other exceptional roles or where no volunteer can be found?**

Yes, if approved by Council 37 (29.13%)

Yes, if approved by the AGM 50 (39.37%)

No 35 (27.56%)

Abstain 5 (3.94%)

Total votes 127. *OA explained that strictly speaking, each option presented for voting in this way would be considered separately and on that basis, no single option achieved a majority. However, given the clear intention that the two 'yes' options differed only in the manner of approval and the legal background as described in the first paragraph of section 14, Council decided that the result should be considered as approved, with AGM approval of any proposed role required.*

The next three questions were for Constitutional changes and required a two-thirds majority in favour to pass. The outcomes were as follows:

**3. Do you approve of the voting rights for AHP?**

Yes 89 (72.36%)

No 24 (19.51%)

Abstain 10 (8.13%)

Total votes 123. **Approved by AGM.**

**4. Do you approve of the changes of membership voting procedures?**

Yes 85 (65.89%)

No 32 (24.8%)

Abstain 12 (9.3%)

Total votes 129. **Not approved by AGM.**

**5. Do you approve of the addition of the Young ESPGHAN Chair to EC as a non-voting member?**

Yes 92 (75.41%)

No 22 (18.03%)

Abstain 8 (6.56%)

Total votes 122. **Approved by AGM.**

The above outcomes will be taken into account in the updated Constitution, which will be uploaded to the ESPGHAN website.

For the next Annual Meeting in 2026, the destination voting results were announced as follows:

**Lille, France: 85**

**Barcelona, Spain: 39**

The 2026 Annual Meeting will be held in **Lille, France**, with Frederic Gottrand as the Local Organiser.

Approved and signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ulrich Baumann, ESPGHAN President  
2022-2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Fewtrell, ESPGHAN Secretary  
2021-2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date