

**Minutes of the 14th European Orthodontic Teachers' Forum**  
**Room Rhodes 9, Level 2, Nice Acropolis Convention Center, EOS Congress, Nice 18.06.2018**

Chairpersons: Stavros Kiliaridis, Pertti Pirttiniemi, Andreu Puigdollers and Guy Willems

Attendees: 68 attendees

## **Communication between postgraduate schools in Europe**

### **1. (SK) Opening, announcements**

Professor Stavros Kiliaridis opens the meeting and welcomes the delegates. He provides a small update on the goal of NEBEOP and EOTF. The network of NEBEOP was founded in Geneva in 2008 focusing on the content of postgraduate education across Europe by designing minimum criteria, now called the Erasmus guidelines. The goal of NEBEOP is to strengthen the training programs of orthodontic education in Europe and is restricted to either provisional or full members. For more information on the provisional and full membership application procedure and bylaws: see <http://www.nebeop.org>.

The EOTF on the other hand, aims to be an open forum for everybody involved in strengthening orthodontic teaching. He refers back to the first official meeting of EOTF in 2006. At that time the idea was to harmonize orthodontic training in Europe by bringing together teachers from across Europe.

In the past some interesting discussions on several pedagogical themes, trying to improve the quality of postgraduate education in orthodontics, have been held in both plenary and break-out sessions:

- 2006 Strengths and weaknesses of orthodontic education in Europe
- 2007 Development of NEBEOP and collaboration between programmes
- 2008 Self-assessment for quality control
- 2009 The minimum requirements for the undergraduate orthodontic curriculum
- 2010 How do we learn? Adult learning
- 2011 New ways of learning
- 2012 E-learning
- 2013 Competency based postgraduate education
- 2014 Quality assurance in postgraduate education
- 2015 Final examination assessment procedures
- 2016 Adopting a coaching approach to teaching
- 2017 Short courses leading to a "Master". A new era in orthodontic education?
- 2018 Interprofessional collaboration and education

This year the theme of the EOTF is 'Communication between postgraduate schools in Europe'.

## 2. Charles Bolender Award – dr. Julian O’Neill

Professor Stavros Kiliaridis also welcomes the president of EFOSA. EFOSA offers substantial support to NEBEOP and EOTF. This support for the main speaker comes in the form of the Charles Bolender Award (CB-Award). Charles Bolender was a Professor and teacher in France and involved in founding EFOSA. This yearly award serves to provide a fund for inviting a distinguished teacher to the EOTF. The CB-Award 2019 is granted to prof dr David Rice, University of Helsinki, and prof dr Timo Peltomäki, University of Tampere. EFOSA supports NEBEOP and EOTF because it supports the idea and principles NEBEOP and EOTF stand for.

## 3. Communication between postgraduate schools in Europe. Prof dr David Rice – Prof dr Timo Peltomäki

The topic of the 14th EOTF is ‘Communication between postgraduate schools in Europe’. The session is moderated by prof dr David Rice and prof dr Timo Peltomäki.

*Timo Peltomäki*, Professor of Orthodontics Tampere University and University of Eastern Finland, Finland, and EOS Distinguished Teacher for 2019

*David Rice*, Professor of Orthodontics University of Helsinki, Finland, and Editor European Journal of Orthodontics

The general aim is to discuss possibilities of enhancing national and European-wide communication and cooperation in postgraduate orthodontic education with the objective of improving education and learning. The learning goals of this interactive session will be to try to find out how much and the nature of communication and cooperation that exists across postgraduate orthodontic units. Examples that groups across Europe are using will then be worked through, including rationale for use, implementation, merits and future development. Finally, an example from Finland will be presented and discussed: the Finnish core curriculum digital lecture series.

Prof Rice started by giving some examples of good communicators. In the end it comes down to being able to **communicate**, to **co-operate** and to have the same goal or end result in mind, namely there must be **mutual benefit/education**. Very important and essential is that communication between postgraduate programmes should be based on trust, respect and a common goal or mutual benefit: don’t preach how to do things, but work together.

What is the rationale and aim of the topic of today? To work out some examples of good communication such as they are happening throughout Europe. Prof Rice will present the Finnish national digital lecture series, eventually, covering the whole three year curriculum of the orthodontic postgraduate programme.

Communication is about transferring information and co-operation is about the process of groups working or acting together for mutual understanding/benefit so that education may improve. Its rationale is good communication, better cooperation and improved education. The aim of this session is to learn from each other.

When we look at **communication** between units or postgraduate programmes first, one should focus on the level of communication: how does A communicate with B? Is this communication only at the level of the postgraduate directors, or are students or other teachers involved? And what is the geography of this

communication? Is it at an international, a national, regional or local level? And is it on an interprofessional level? Are other organizations involved such as pediatric dentistry or oral and maxillofacial surgeons? Furthermore, communication may be at a physical or virtual level. Examples of physical communication fora are congresses, symposia, workshops, national postgraduate day, courses, practical courses, national exams, guest lecturers, lecture series, teacher exchange, student exchange etc.. Examples of virtual communication may be the use of social media networks (WhatsApp groups), messaging/email, telephone (single/conference). It is questionable whether the other communication modes can be organized on a virtual level, i.e. national postgraduate day, courses, practical courses, national exams, guest lecturers, etc.

At the level of **co-operation** between different postgraduate programmes also both physical and virtual examples of co-operation can be suggested. Some local as well as national and international examples of physical co-operation were given on a clinical, theoretical as well as scientific level. Often the principle of free student access to all courses was promoted. As far as virtual co-operation it seemed that only single lectures are the most suitable to manage whereas it might be very difficult or impossible for other forms of co-operation such as the national postgraduate day or symposia. Most important is the will to co-operate.

During the next 60 minutes different break-out groups were set up with specific assignments on communication, co-operation and education: How do you communicate? Give examples of inter-unit co-operation. What are obstacles to arrange co-operative education? Develop your ideal co-operation programme.

The different groups reported on the assignments. In general, the head of department is taking the lead and communicates with colleagues through a variety of methods. Some nice examples of co-operation between units are discussed: often the courses are free to attend, given in person, students attend on a national and international level and in an interdisciplinary context. Students often give positive feedback. Also the national exam is evaluated positively and often viewed as the facilitator for co-operation.

Issues with the co-operation set up are the lack of feedback from the audience during virtual teaching and the lack of time and administrative support to set things up.

The primary obstacle is actually the start: somebody needs to take the initiative. As for the most ideal curriculum, it is suggested that academic supervision is of utmost importance and that more basic courses be taught by experts in the field (i.e. genetics). It is well agreed that independence of each university on clinical education is important and that the curriculum should be a 3-year full time programme.

After the break-out groups, prof David Rice and prof Timo Peltomäki commented further on the Finnish model. They mentioned specific Finnish academic problems such as shrinking academic resources, university staff primarily being undergraduate teachers, clinical trainers primarily providing clinical service, regional politics resulting in small training centers with large inter-unit distances for travelling, trainees start at any time of the year (however trainees are highly skilled at start) which created the need for a rolling curriculum.

The Finnish model started in the fall of 2017 and the core curriculum covers core topics listed in the Erasmus programme (supplemented with additional teaching at the regional centers). It is a 3-year running programme and approximately 20 lectures per year (1,5 hours) are being organized. Lectures are given by experts from all universities and handouts (without facial photo's) are provided by lecturers. There is a great will to cooperate, also because of the shortage of faculty members. The distribution is organized through FUNET (Finnish university and research network). Access to the network is through URL login and for safety reasons the lectures are not tape recorded.

When students want to study orthodontics, they will have to apply at national level and training might be at one of 5 universities, two of which attained NEBEOP accreditation (Helsinki and Oulu). It is a 3-year programme (rolling training) with on average 35 postgraduates who will have to pass a national examination. Therefore, a competence-based curriculum is essential (both in education and examination: entrustable professional activities (EPAS))

Specific merits of the Finnish model are that it can rely on a highly trained workforce, willing to cooperate, with the desire to improve education and to learn from others. It's a small group of orthodontists which facilitated the above. The routes of communication are established and teaching is done by university staff.

Key in this Finnish model is the national postgraduate day in ortho with presentations by teachers as well as students and stimulating information and discussion fora. The organization of this annual meeting rotates between the different units.

#### Conclusion.

An inventory of the European core curriculum has actually already been published as the Erasmus programme in the EJO and is supported by NEBEOP and EOTF. Each unit can supplement this core curriculum with more theoretical and clinical expertise. The Erasmus education programme could be the mutual benefit. Trust and respect between units should be facilitated, i.e. by one party breaking the ice.