



The EACH MEETING STEERING COMMITTEE 25-10-2013 - AMSTERDAM

Present: Myriam Deveugele (president), Jonathan Silverman (president-elect), Sandra van Dulmen (honorary secretary/treasurer), Marc Van Nuland, Jette Ammentorp, Sara Rubinelli, Olivier Nardi, Cadja Bachmann, Pål Gulbrandsen, Lidia Del Piccolo, Marcy Rosenbaum, Arnstein Finset (skype), Karolien Aelbrecht (daily secretary)

1. Welcome

2. History of EACH

EACH was founded in 2001 as an incorporate association according to the law in the Netherlands (see bylaws).

3. Aims of EACH

The aims are:

- EACH was founded in September 2001 with the aim to establish a multidisciplinary society of all people who are active in communication research and training.
- Close cooperation between educators and researchers is necessary to enhance knowledge about effective communication, establishing best practices and improving education to comply with the changing needs of health delivery which emphasize a patient-centered approach, shared responsibility and decision making.
- The association is meant for all who are active in communication research and /or training. The aim of the association is to stimulate the growth of an active network to improve the quality of communication in healthcare in Europe through research and education.
- It supports dialogue and collaboration as well as exchange and dissemination of ideas by facilitating contacts, organizing international conferences, workshops and meetings, and collaborating with existing networks and associations.

We currently accept members from throughout the world. The only restrictions within the association related to country of origin are that the president has to be European and that the conference needs to be held in a European city . This was decided in the discussion paper about formal EACH (2009) by Jozien Bensing, Arnstein Finset and Myriam Deveugele. This document contains rules for the working procedures of EACH. These rules were amended during the SC in St

Andrews 2012, when it was decided that the president/president-elect/past-president will no longer be NRs. On election of the president-elect, the deputy of that country will become NR and there will be elections for a new deputy.

4. What organisational support do we need?

We need administration management, membership management, financial management and website management. If we want to grow and professionalize, organizational support should also be included. For the latter, a detailed business plan needs to be constructed (which has never been done before).

5. Current administration of EACH

The administration and accountancy is currently provided by Nivel, i.e. Netherlands institute for health services research.

When EACH was founded in 2001, by Jozien Bensing and others, Nivel provided the administration of EACH: the website, financial administration, membership organization, contact with Elsevier etc. Jozien and Sandra Van Dulmen acted as our liaison. Sandra still does this in her position as secretary and treasurer. For these services, EACH pays Nivel 15.000 euro annually. We do not have a formal contract with Nivel, and until now the arrangement is 'an act of friendship'. We are very grateful for all the years Nivel have taken this position, which has definitely enabled EACH to grow.

Nivel is primarily a research organisation, with 200 researchers all looking at the process of health care. Besides EACH, Nivel has 3 other organisations located at Nivel, although these are not individual member-based organisations, but organisations where the membership is made up of businesses or institutions.

6. Need or time to change?

Legally EACH is an incorporate organisation, with a conference every two years. If growth is important, we will need professional help, as until now all tasks are done on a voluntary basis by members of the executive and steering committees.

So:

- a) We wish to grow the organisation;
- b) All organizations as they grow need to move at some point to a more professional administration;
- c) The current arrangements are not ideal:
 - administration and finances are connected to Nivel's systems;
 - there is no clear contract for these services;
 - the organisation of Nivel has been slow to respond to requests for information;
 - the website administration has proved difficult;
 - dependent on the goodwill of Nivel;
 - difficulties for the presidents to get insight into the administrative arrangements.
- d) If we want to attract more members, we need to have a more responsive membership system, offer activities and maintain an interactive website. The latter is an important issue for all national representatives at the meeting.

e) If we do not get help with financial arrangements, PR, activities, and organization on a larger scale, EACH might end as an organization with a good conference but nothing else.

7. Two decisions to be made about change

During this meeting, two separate decisions have to be made:

1. Whether we are managed by:

- Nivel under a renegotiated contract OR
- an independent management company

When renegotiating with Nivel, we need to consider some pros and cons:

PRO	CON
Less costs (=15.800 euro)	Needs a formal contract and evaluation
Nivel knows the field of communication	Might not be so easy to work
Nivel knows the sensitivities when dealing f.e. with Elsevier.	Not Nivel's core business
Keen to have/support EACH	Can they deliver?
Offer more collaboration (needs further discussion)	Need to ensure that the level of services offered match that of dedicated association management organisations.

The pros and cons, when considering an independent management company:

PRO	CON
Easy to deal with	Probably more expensive (range 14.400 – 29.040 euro)
Core business	Do not know the field of communication (might be positive as well)
Setups include a dedicated phone-line, a secretary, a webmaster, highly responsive financial management and business administration	
Within the context of a strict contract	

Whatever we choose, we will formally evaluate the services provided by the company or organization after a specified length of time and based on this evaluation, decide if we want to continue to work together.

It was made quite clear that this decision is independent of the function of the honorary secretary and treasurer. The position of honorary secretary and treasurer is part of the formal composition of the executive committee and will be retained. However, instead of as currently being linked to a paid position within Nivel, the position of honorary secretary/treasurer will be in future on a voluntary basis as are all tasks within EACH.

Whether to change our legal position:

- to stay as an incorporated association OR
- to move to a non-profit organisation/international non-profit organisation

The term “incorporated association” is used when two or more people come together to pursue a general interest objective (a sports club, for example).

A non-profit organisation (NPO) consists of at least three people and pursues a non-profit making objective. It does not require a minimum capital; it cannot aim to make a profit but can charge membership fees and organize activities in return for payment where these are compatible with its purpose; it cannot distribute profits to its members.

The differences between a NPO and a de facto association are as follows: two of these are very important (in bold) in relation to EACH (see document):

- **Liability of the members:** in an incorporate association, the members are personally liable for the association’s debts.
- Filing and publication requirements
- Industrial and commercial operations
- **Subsidies and donations:** a NPO can accept donations and subsidies, as it is in itself a legal body. An incorporate association is a legal body by means of the group of members. E.g. if we do not evolve to a NPO, the University of Heidelberg might not be able donate money for the EACH conference in 2016.
- In court
- Assets

In addition, an I(nternational) NPO, is also possible. An INPO may better serve our needs as EACH is an international organisation. There is no real difference between a NPO and an INPO, legally, both have the same rights and duties. But in an INPO some rules are made easier (less founding members ect...) just to help international associations who have large distances to overcome. The document from Curia, overviewing the essential characteristics of an INPO and pointing at the differences between a defacto organization and an INPO is in attachment.

The current financial status of EACH is not particularly healthy although we are not in any danger. We are not a financially flourishing organisation. The ppt in attachment gives a simulation of the possible financial scenarios. It is very clear that we can spend up to 20 000 euro for a management company but no more for the present time.

In conclusion, even in the present situation the financial situation of EACH is not very healthy! We need to build savings and we need to raise incomes (by e.g. membership fees, new incomes, etc.).

8. Putting the two decisions to the vote, by a show of hands:

The members of the steering committee unanimously voted YES for an independent management company. The SC mandates the president and president-elect to look for the best offer. Therefore a document about the exact and specific needs of EACH will be written as a basis for obtaining quotations. After selection, the best offers (probably 3) will be send to the SC to make the definitive decision.

The members of the steering committee unanimously voted YES for an International Non Profit Organisation. The SC asked for different offers for this legal change. Curia can perform the change for 15000 euro. The president and president-elect are asked to look for more quotations.

The answers to the above questions will be given within 3 months from now (by the end of January) or earlier.

9. Any other business

There are some changes concerning PEC. The cover will change, and overall, the journal will have a more modern look. There are also some changes in the editorial board. Finally, the letter to the editor will be used more actively (for e.g. pilot studies).