European Committee for Homeopathy

Meeting	**Extraordinary General Assembly**		
Venue	**online meeting, due to Covid-19 travel restrictions**		
Date	21 November 2021	**Time**	10.00 - 11.25am CET
Attendees	44 members attended	**Apologies**	n/a

DISCUSSION OF TOPICS

1		*Opening of the GA*	*Dr Ileana Rîndașu*
Discussion summary		General Secretary, Dr Ileana Rîndașu welcomed everyone and reminded delegates of the voting procedures. She thanked the retiring office bearers and warmly welcomed new colleagues. She added that, although positions may be for a fixed term, friendships last for life.	

2		*Address by outgoing President*	*Dr Hélène Renoux*
Summary		Dr Hélène Renoux stated that she had been General Secretary for 5 years and President for 4. Although she was elected for a further term, she feels she should now step down as the situation has changed and she realises she no longer shares the views of most of the members. She has become increasingly concerned about the global control by governments of their citizens in the present crisis; she spoke of the vaccination pass, the use of patients' health data, and the launch of an Academy in France which would lead to standardised prescriptions selected by algorithm and resulting in the end of individualised medicine. Homeopathy would only be available to those who could afford to pay for private treatment. Dr Renoux believes that ECH must stand firm and state a position strongly aligned with the views she has expressed, but this approach is not supported by the Council and by the majority of members. Consequently, there is now a gap between the President of ECH and its membership. Dr Renoux therefore resigned, which will allow her to regain her freedom of speech without being seen to represent ECH. She concluded by thanking everyone for all their kind messages and their friendship. She would remain as a member of SC Provings and looked forward to meeting everyone face-to-face in the future. She sent her very warmest good wishes to the new team and hoped they would remain faithful to the founding principles of ECH and to the will of its members.	

3		*Address by outgoing Treasurer*	*Dr Arlette Blanchy*
Summary		Dr Arlette Blanchy was not present.	

4		*Address by outgoing Vice-President*	*Dr Hetty Buitelaar*
Summary		Dr Hetty Buitelaar was unable to attend but had sent a letter, which was read to members by Dr Jean Pierre Jansen. She had first joined ECH at Heidelberg in 2007, becoming a member and then coordinator of SC Politics. She became Vice-President in 2020 but has had to resign due to burnout. Meeting everyone and having the opportunity to visit so many different countries has enriched her life. Homeopathy is a wonderful tool in medical treatment and is well-represented in many different European organisations. She expressed her gratitude to Natalia Tzima for taking on the role of SC Politics Coordinator and latterly also that of Vice-President, and also thanked Dr Edward De Beukelaer for his active participation in European matters. She thanked Dr Jean Pierre Jansen for stepping into the gap created by Dr Renoux's resignation. She wished everyone well and hopes to see some people in the future when ECH members can next meet again physically. In the meantime, she wished everyone a bright future and sent her love.	

5		*Address by Treasurer*	*Dr Tiziana Di Giampetro*
Summary		Dr Tiziana Di Giampetro, SC Research Coordinator, introduced herself to members. She explained that it had been very difficult to find someone to agree to become ECH's Treasurer, and she had been persuaded to take on the challenge. She would do her very best to take up Arlette's torch and to keep ECH not only solvent but with funds to undertake some new useful and necessary projects to support our members and homeopathy across the EU. She added that she would not be doing this alone – Astrid Dedrie, in the Secretariat, would continue to oversee to the banking, and our long-standing accountants in Brussels would continue to produce our accounts. She was also delighted to have the support of all the Council members, and particularly of Cristal Skaling-Klopstock, from the Patients' Group, and Margaret Wyllie, from SC Documentation. Cristal and Margaret run Homeopathy UK, which is a national charity with fairly complex accounts and state requirements and are therefore very familiar with what is involved in dealing with the financial affairs of an organisation. She concluded by saying she looked forward to this exciting new challenge and to presenting some very healthy figures when we next meet.	

6	*14.34*	*Questions*	*All*
Summary		There were no questions.	

7		*Introduction to the Elections by Vice-President*	*Dr Natalia Tzima*
Summary		Dr Natalia Tzima explained the voting procedure. She then went on to introduce herself briefly - She had become Coordinator of SC Politics only a year ago and now found herself as Acting Vice-President. She thanked Drs Hélène Renoux and Arlette Blanchy and particularly her predecessor Dr Hetty Buitelaar, and was looking forward with pleasure to working with the new Council.	

8		*Candidates Presentations*	*Dr Edward De Beukelaer* *Prof Dr Neli-Kinga Olah* *Dr Joan Vidal-Jové* *Dr Susann Buchheim-Schmidt*
Summary		**Dr Edward De Beukelaer** Dr Beukelaer is a member of SC Politics. Although he is Belgian*, he works in a conventional veterinary practice in the UK. He already represents vets in ECH and EPHA and knows he can do more for vets if he becomes a member of Council. He looks forward to an increasing involvement with Integrative Medicine, which is already how he works within his practice, and feels strongly that homeopathy must be part of IM. He is also a candidate for the Board of EPHA (European Public Health Alliance). *Note: under Belgian law, one member of Council must be from Belgium.	

Prof Dr Neli-Kinga Olah
Dr Olah is a member of SC Pharmacy. She has 25 years' experience in the pharmaceutical industry, manufacturing homeopathic medicinal products (HMPs) and managing quality control. She also teaches Industrial Pharmacy at the Vasile Goldis Western University in Arad, Romania. She wishes to join the Council to share her experience to encourage a better understanding and acceptance of homeopathy.

Dr Joan Vidal-Jové
Dr Vidal will join SC Research. He is a surgical oncologist and has always been interested in less invasive techniques. He is a member of various professional organisations and sits on the Board of Acadèmia Medico Homeopàtica de Barcelona (AMHB). He leads a Clinical Oncology Guidelines group in the Catalonian Ministry of Health.

He has always been interested in holistic medicine, with its interconnection of body, mind and soul, and fell in love with homeopathy. His commitment to ECH is to help to strengthen it internally by producing good research and good data. He is also used to sharing experiences and working as a group towards a common objective. His aim is always to do his best for his patients and his colleagues.

Susann Buchheim-Schmidt
Frau Buchheim is standing as Joint Coordinator SC Pharmacy, where she has been a member since 2010. She specialises in the toxicology (specialist subject mushroom poisoning) and also works as a naturopath focussing on homeopathy. She has been employed by Deutsche Homöopathie-Union (DHU) since 2015 and also lectures in the professional for pharmaceutical technical assistants (NTK) in Mainz where she has created courses for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Her particular interests are the history of homeopathy and pharmacopeias.

She wishes to help ECH to gain more recognition within IM and believes her knowledge of the availability of remedies and pharmacopeias will be useful to the Council.

9		*Results of the Voting*			*Dr Natalia Tzima*
Summary			For	Against	Abstentions
		Dr Edward De Beukelaer	171	0	0
		Prof Dr Neli-Kinga Olah	114	0	57
		Dr Joan Vidal-Jove	166	0	5
		Dr Susann Buchheim-Schmidt	125	0	46
		All candidates were duly elected to Council.			

10		*Closing Address by Acting President*	*Dr Jean Pierre Jansen*
Text in full		Dear members of ECH Three Council members have stepped down, and you have elected four new members. Hélène Renoux recently decided to step down as ECH's President. Hélène started attending ECH weekends in 2009 in the Provings Subcommittee. Her strong beliefs about the principles of homeopathy immediately shone through her contributions! Later, she became ECH General Secretary in 2012 and President in 2016. On behalf of ECH, I thank her for her truly unconditional commitment to homeopathy and to ECH: Thank you! Arlette Blanchy has been ECH's Treasurer since 2014. It is a complex task to communicate the financial state of ECH to others, some of them not at all literate about accounts, balance sheets and membership fees. Nevertheless, Arlette, you managed, sometimes under difficult circumstances, to keep the accounts in order in a way that was understandable to the rest of us, the uninitiated. Thank you! Hetty Buitelaar is also leaving the Council. She was a Council member from 2012 to 2020 as coordinator of the Politics Subcommittee, becoming ECH's Vice-President in 2020. For myself and many others, you have been a wonderful compass in matters that require balanced judgement. Thank you! Since November 2020, four long standing Council members have stepped back, each of them for his or her own reasons. This process was really intense. The current Council have spent much time and energy compensating for this sudden loss of expertise. To address our new situation where the Council will have to work with less long-term expertise and in accordance with the statutes, the Council has elected myself as ECH's new President and Natalia Tzima as Vice-President. Tiziana Di Giampietro was recently elected as Treasurer. Natalia is a long-term member in, and latterly coordinator of ECH's Politics Subcommittee; Tiziana is a long term member in and, since 2018, coordinator of the Research Subcommitee; and I have been a Council member since 2008 as coordinator of the Provings Subcommittee. Furthermore, the Council is full of buzzing busy bees, continuing their fruitful work with dedication. And now, we welcome four new members. To know that I am given the opportunity to work with all of you is an exciting prospect! All these changes will create much-needed continuity. During the coming months we will communicate in more detail about the concrete steps to implement ECH's strategy and projects.	

	The position of homeopathy in society and in medicine brings old and new challenges. The consequences of reductionism are all too visible. Important changes such as climate and diversity crises go along with a crisis in healthcare. ECH has long been involved with European and global initiatives to address this and supports initiatives to clarify the role of homeopathy. As Hélène stated already in 2020, stimulating and setting up communication projects to counteract misinformation is vital. The science needed to counteract is relevant for this as well, and ECH strives for the further development of various case registries, that can show what we can do, on a daily basis. After all, patients will vote with their feet if we keep our reputation and image alive and positive. We plan to begin some education projects to win the interest of young colleagues that will reinforce this process. This is an addition to the priorities which Hélène presented in November 2020. Elucidating the role that homeopathy can have in dealing with the crisis of humanity's relationship with nature adds another dimension to this. We need to see if attention to the more general interest of caring for a natural life will allow us the opportunity to make the deep knowledge of homeopathy useful for a shift of consciousness about nature. The Council is considering the consequences of these changing times for ECH's policies. The most important items are: communication; the relationship between homeopathy and integrative medicine; ECH and EuroCAM; case registries; availability of remedies; the education of homeopathy's future young colleagues; attention to the development of provings; the conversion of 19th century language into 21st century language based on the most modern concepts. The next round of policy planning of the European Union in 2027 is an important milestone for us. I believe that every member of our ECH house can contribute, knowingly or unknowingly. Please do not hesitate to let us have your comments. Several of you already did that and gave us a hard nut to crack. But: If all agree, at least one person is not thinking! I thank you for all the cooperation we need, and wish you all a joyful path! Thank you.

11		*Close of meeting*	*Dr Natalia Tzima*
Summary		Dr Tzima thanked all for their attendance and formally closed the Extraordinary GA.	

Appendix

Appointment of Council Members

Previously, the Council has consisted of the office-bearers plus the SC coordinators. The office-bearers have run ECH and the coordinators have run their SCs. There has been no spare capacity to consider ECH's strategy or development as an important organisation representing homeopathy in Europe. Inevitably we were often more reactive than proactive. Indeed, many people regarded us as little more than a talking shop.

For the last few months, the Council has been working on a strategic plan. This is not yet complete as we wanted to allow time for our new members to share their views. Then we can set our priorities and begin to develop these. This will need more people to share the work, and the statutes allow for many more Council members than there have previously been.

The role of the new members is not specific but will vary as projects are initiated which fit with their skills and experience - and interests. Having a slightly enlarged Council gives us the opportunity to build on past work and further develop ECH in the future.