

Minutes of EPA Executive Committee Meeting, January 24th 2020, at Rector Peset Hall of Residence of the University of Valencia, 9:15-13:15

Present:

Mauricio D'Auria (MDA), President
Julia Pérez Prieto (JPP), Past President and PPS matters
Alberto Credi (AC), New information technologies
Alexandre Fürstenberg (AF), Treasurer
Norbert Hoffmann (NH), EPA Newsletter editor
Cédric Mongin (CM), Webmaster
Uwe Pischel (UP), Public relations and associate editor
Werner Nau (WN), guest, PPS taskforce

1) Approval of minutes for EC meeting from January 25th, 2019

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2) President's Communications (MDA)

(a) EPA Awards

PhD Prize 2020

The PhD prize call was made only in the Newsletter and we have only 3 applications so far. We should extend the deadline to the end of February, send out an email with the call, and advertise the call on the webpage.

NH and UP will go through the abstracts of theses published in the Newsletter to see if some students can be invited to apply for the prize.

To evaluate the applications, MDA proposes MDA, UP and JPP.

Guidelines for the evaluation were defined and JPP will send them to the EC.

The 2020 laureate will be invited to PhotoIUPAC 2020.

Action: AF, CM, NH, JPP, MDA

EPA Young Investigator Award 2019

For the EPA Young Investigator Award, to avoid applications from people who just defended their PhD, it is decided to modify the rules. At least 3 years of post-PhD will be required. The website should be updated to reflect that. Guidelines for the evaluation were defined and JPP will send them to the EC.

Haining Tian will receive the first award at the PhotoIUPAC 2020.

We need to open the next call at the end of the year. No deadline was defined.

Action: CM, JPP

PPS Prize

AF will ask Andrews Shore for the metrics and cross-check among the most cited papers which ones qualify for the award. MDA will then be informed and will inform the laureate.

Action: AF, MDA

Teachers Award

We need to open a call this year. No deadline was defined.

Action: ?

Community Award

Silvia Braslavsky will receive the first award at the PhotoIUPAC 2020.
The next call needs to be open at the end of this year.

General calendar

In the future, the awards of the even years (PhD, PPS, Young Investigator) should be given out at the PhotoIUPAC. The awards of the odd years (Teachers, Community) should be given out at the CECP. AF will make a calendar and distribute it among the EC for evaluation.

Action: AF

3) PPS issues (MDA, AC for the task force)

After being informed by PPS that the RSC would like to terminate their contract with EPA and ESP and transfer the journal to another publisher, a task force was created in the summer of 2019 to find a new publisher. The task force consists of AC, WN, JPP, AF. The task force had phone calls and email exchanges with potential publishers as well as with the ESP. It met on January 23 to summarize its work since it started and defined a list of recommendations in 9 points for the transition of PPS to a new publisher. The EC approved every individual point unanimously. The points are:

- **Journal title:** EPA opposes changing the title of the journal.
Changing the title would lead to an IF of 0 and would be unfair to members who submit this year and would find their paper in a new journal with a different name and an IF of 0. ESP is pushing for a change of a name.
- **Financial involvement:** EPA will not subsidize the journal permanently. An initial investment up to the amount of the royalties we will receive this year (~10 kEUR) would be acceptable.
PPS was overall a bad financial investment because a sum of ~100'000 CHF was spent during the first 10 years, and PPS started making money only around 2010.
- **Preferred publisher:** PPS should be kept as a journal only if it can be transferred to Wiley-VCH or to Springer Nature. MDPI and Frontiers should not be pursued. The EC expresses a slight preference for Wiley-VCH over Springer Nature but negotiations with both publishers should be pursued. A careful examination of the contractual framework will be essential for making a final decision.
Wiley-VCH, Springer Nature, MDPI and Frontiers were contacted; Wiley-VCH and MDPI by the EPA task force, Springer Nature and Frontiers by ESP. Wiley-VCH and Springer Nature have better reputation than Frontiers and MDPI who are sometimes classified as predatory. ESP seems to prefer Springer Nature.
- **Editorial control:** EPA does not need to retain editorial control. If we move to a professional publisher, we should take advantage of the professional managing editors that will be assigned to the journal and who will handle the submissions. EPA should have a representative in the editorial board of the journal. However, should we retain editorial control, we should then obtain more royalties.
- **Member benefits:** Reduced access fees (ideally free), reduced open access fees, full journal archive should be transferred.
- **Affiliation with ChemPhotoChem:** Should the negotiation about PPS with Wiley-VCH fail to materialize (or PPS move to Springer Nature), a society affiliation to ChemPhotoChem should be pursued.

- **Deadline for negotiation:** We should ask RSC to extend our publishing agreement for a year (which they suggested unofficially) if we do not have a signed contract by the end of April 2020.

To start a journal in January 2021, Springer Nature needs a contract signed by April 2020. Wiley-VCH will probably have a similar deadline. By having the RSC backup plan, we do not need to inform our members immediately.

- **Exit Strategy:** We do not want to move PPS to MDPI or Frontiers and would stop pursuing a transfer if this was the only possible outcome.
- **Communication to members:** we will inform Dario Bassani immediately of the decisions made today. The members do not need to be informed for now and we should keep the matter confidential. Members can be informed at the General Assembly. We should nonetheless be ready to address leaks and rumours. Suggested strategy: since the contract with the RSC is coming to an end at some point, we are considering moving to a new publisher. The stability of the journal is not at risk at the moment and the journal will keep running.

Action: taskforce

- **Communication to ESP:** journal title; not Frontiers or MDPI; deadline; discuss communication to members.

Action: taskforce

- **Communication to MDPI and Frontiers:** undefined.

Action: taskforce

4) **Advanced Photochemistry School (MDA)**

The project of an advanced photochemistry school organized by EPA (decided in 2019) is put on hold until we have the situation with PPS under control. In the meantime, EPA will support local schools (Italy) and the HRSMC-EPA school and other student-oriented activities.

5) **Porter Medal**

MDA has received no nominations so far. We should quickly send out an email to members (not done so far) to ask for nominations and include a PDF file with the nomination guidelines. The EC should strongly encourage nominations from European candidates. The deadline is February 3. The names of Miguel Miranda and Sebastiano Campagna are circulated.

Action: AC, UP, MDA

6) **Finances and membership (AF)**

Finances are stable. Income from membership was a bit lower in 2019 because AF did not make a call for payment due to the lack of the promised online payment system. Many members have however paid by themselves and it should be no problem to collect the missing membership fees this year. The online payment system is now working and will be made available online in the coming weeks/months thanks to CM's work.

The number of members is also stable. But the membership in countries like The Netherlands, Sweden or Finland is still very low. There must be ways to increase it. Offering fully online subscription should help with the younger generation.

7) Newsletter (NH, UP)

The June issue of 2019 was successful. For December 2019, however, we did not receive many contributions, with an overall page number of 60 pages, which is thinner than usual. NH will finalize it anyway in the current stage. Overall, the use of the Newsletter is poor. UP and NH are trying hard to increase the number of manuscripts.

8) Electronic Media (AC)

AC keeps the Facebook page up to date with job and conference posts, and responds to messages which sometimes arrive. We have 600 likes at the moment.

Twitter is more difficult. For it to be successful, regular activity is important, but the question is what to post? Options include: images, anything related to photochemistry, new issue of PPS. Following other Twitter accounts and retweeting could also be beneficial.

Joining ResearchGate as an association turned out to be unfortunately impossible.

9) Webpage (CM)

The webpage was down for a few months. An update in the WordPress core did not go well at some point and it took CM a lot of time to fix the problems. Now it is fully working again. CM had to buy full licences for some of the plugins installed by FidelisConsultores who gave us licences only for one year.

Online payment does not use PayPal but Stripe, a well-known online payment provider. It is working now and compliant with the GDPR. It uses all new security features for credit card payment. Members will soon receive an email to create their online account with EPA, from which they will be able to renew their membership and make online payment. New EPA members will also be able to join directly through the website.

For open positions, any member can submit a job offer online directly.

Action: CM, AF

10) Next EC (MDA)

The EC proposes to nominate UP as our next president. UP is willing to accept the challenge.

Other new EC members: MDA proposes Rachel Evans (University of Cambridge) and the EC supports inviting her. WN would also be a very valuable addition.

Action: MDA

11) Support to conferences (AF)

The EC approves financial support to CECF (reduced fee), PhotoIUPAC 2020 (reduced fee) and the HRSMC-EPA 2020 summer school (500 EUR).

In addition, especially while the project of creating an EPA summer school is frozen, the EC decides to support (at their request) national meetings organized for PhD students in Italy and in Switzerland by giving them a support of 300 EUR. AF will inform the Italian and Swiss sections.

The suggestion is made to extend the support to similar events in other countries in order to try to increase the membership. In this case EPA should offer a discount of 10 EUR to EPA members. UP will ask in Spain/Portugal. AC and MDA will ask about the existence of similar events in Hungary and Poland at the CECP. We should also try to find out about the situation in Sweden and Finland which are poorly represented among EPA members.

Action: UP, AC, MDA, AF

12) PhotoIUPAC 2020 (UP)

UP will request slots for the PhD-Prize, the PPS Prize, the Young Investigator Award and the Community award from Fred Brouwer.

UP will also ask for a room and slot for the EPA General Assembly and how and where to organize the EPA reception.

Action: UP

AF 24th January 2020