

Organising an ESOPRS Annual Meeting

Guidelines for local organisers

1. Preconditions and Aims

Organizing an ESOPRS Annual Meeting is always a challenge for the local organizer - but also a great honour and pleasure -, which gives satisfaction and merits. This meeting is the most important gathering of ESOPRS members, and during the last years it became increasingly an international podium for colleagues interested in Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Periorbital and Orbital Diseases and Surgery and Lacrimal Surgery with an increasing number of participants, both members and non-members.

The local organizer usually has applied several years before to run the Annual Meeting and was approved by ESOPRS Committee. With his application he agrees to organize the meeting under the auspices of the ESOPRS committee.

In the ESOPRS bylaws the following statements regarding meetings are put down:

- Meetings are to be held once a year in different European cities and where possible the meeting to be related to the national ophthalmic meeting of the host country.
- The meeting has to be a combination of free papers and invited didactic presentations.
- The meeting has to be open to anybody on payment of the registration fee, which will be decided by the local organising committee of the host country. There will be a reduced registration fee for residents in training.

A successful ESOPRS Annual Meeting should be

- **Scientifically ambitious and stimulating**
- **Socially appealing and integrative, emphasising the local flavour of the venue**
- **Affordable for the participants, but financially well balanced (with some surplus for the Society desirable).**

For all e-mails that the secretary ought to know about, please copy to the secretary (at present: christoph.hintschich@med.uni-muenchen.de) and for anything financial, copy to the treasurer (at present: mb@lidsurgery.co.uk).

As meeting organiser, you are in charge of everything, but you need to have the agreement of the ESOPRS committee for the overall plan of the meeting, as this is the annual meeting for the membership. In practice this means that the executive need to see the concept and the business plan min. 12 months ahead of the meeting, and should broadly agree with your plans for the programme **before** key speakers are invited etc.

2. Dates

September is the usual month for ESOPRS annual meetings. Please check out SOE, World Ophthalmology Congress and other important national European meetings to ensure they do not clash. Ideally avoid the first week in September (still school holidays in many countries) and the last week in September (many other national meetings). Exceptionally, for example for geographic reasons, ESOPRS meetings have been organized in June, and might again be organized in agreement with the Committee.

3. Congress organisation:

Usually a professional congress organisation is involved to organize the meeting. It is rather helpful to choose a local firm, however, they should be familiar with organizing medical meetings.

Start very early (about 2 years ahead) in getting them involved. Take your time to explain the concept and all details.

4. Venue

Book ASAP: ideally more than one year in advance.

“Ideal” attributes of the venue:

- a) Seats for approximately 400 to 700 delegates, depending on how many participants are expected. Check last year numbers. Easily accessible (ranked seats are desirable, but not always to find). Check out disabled access although we have yet had disabled delegates.
Medical / university conference facilities can be a good alternative to commercial theatres (prestigious, central location, reasonable price)
- b) Good audio-visual facilities; screen size / clearly audible with good microphone system, dimmer. Speaker's -get-ready-room with personal is mandatory.
- c) Adjacent space for the poster exposition and industrial exhibition and sponsors. This area needs electricity supply. It should be well integrated into the venue with no extra detours necessary to reach. Ideally serve drinks/food and show posters: the sponsors like these to be combined – otherwise they get sidelined.
- d) Easy transport links to major airports and railways.
- e) Good access to range of hotels at different prices
- f) Gala dinner: local flavour, not too many activities (people want to chat to each other), avoid long bus travel

- g) Catering during the day: This needs to be reasonably nice: it contributes an important part to the lasting impression your meeting may make.
- h) Sponsors stands: suitable tables for the sponsors as well as electricity supplies for them (make them feel “integrated”)

5. Audio-visual needs

Audio-visuals will make or break the meeting, so make sure you have professionals at work, and explain your requirements at least twice! (Rapid fire, video clip, extra lectures etc.). Two microphones are helpful and reduce time loss.

6. Programme

The scientific meeting runs for two full days, usually a Friday and Saturday. A prior “ESOPRS instructional course” of more didactic teaching has been organized since 2004 and is very popular and increases delegate numbers.

For both parts of the meeting, if time allows, round table discussions, panel discussions and interactive sessions can be included (other formats might include “pro et contra“, “live surgery“, “guidelines/best practice patterns“, “consensus statements“. Lectures should not be longer than 25 minutes.

For the scientific meeting, the number of invited lectures should be limited to probably not more than a handful speakers. **It is one of the foremost aims of the annual scientific meeting to give both ESOPRS members and other young scientists a podium to introduce their results and ideas and to have time for discussion!**

On invitation of key speakers: the organizer should equally invite speakers from all member countries first and additionally from friendly societies (ASOPRS, APSOPRS). The committee might modify the list of invited speakers, if this would be felt appropriate.

No parallel sessions should take place!

Have a concept for the instructional course and give clear instructions to both oculoplastic and non-oculoplastic speakers on what we want to hear about.

Allow sufficient of time for discussion after lectures and papers and build in some slack time. As an estimate, free papers may vary between rapid fire (3 mins presentation and 2 mins discussion) and full length (7 mins presentation and 3 mins discussion).

The 2-day meeting contains roughly 11 hours of educational time outside of poster viewing at break times. The pre-meeting course is 6 to 6.5 hours. This has been practice during the last years. If you want to dramatically alter it this needs further approval.

Other options for sessions might include:

- 1) Topic based symposia with linked keynote lectures
- 2) ‘Breakfast with the experts’, where you bring your own difficult cases
- 3) Specific poster viewing times – detached from refreshment times

Chairmen / moderators will be chosen by the organizer. It has been a good tradition at least to involve all Committee members.

It should be emphasised, that chairmen have to be briefed on time keeping, including interrupting speakers if necessary. Nothing disrupts a conference more than speakers running over their time!

6a. ESOPRS pre-meeting course

Very popular (~200 - 300 delegates), but a lot of extra work and expense. Speakers get one night paid, and don't pay registration for the course. Usually there is a speaker's dinner before the meeting. Usually 20 to 30 min. per speaker.

Separate programme book (fairly expensive even if not spiral bound)

Don't forget the catering including sponsors if they are coming for all 3 days.

7. Advertising

Preliminary Advertising >9 months ahead of meeting

ESOPRS website

Announcements in as many journals and organizer's calendars as possible.

Flyers (early, min 6 months) for meetings etc.

ESOPRS member's emails to send electronic flyer

8. Sponsors

Preliminary contact with Sponsors

This is essential, and the local organizer himself usually best organizes sponsoring. Time consuming, but very helpful!

9. Deadlines

Work backwards from the meeting to set all the deadlines:

- a) End of early registration \geq 8 weeks before meeting
End of regular registration \geq 2 weeks before meeting
On-site registration: later than 2 weeks before and at the meeting
- b) Notification of acceptance of abstract for presentation / poster \geq 2 weeks before end of early registration
- c) Deadline for decision of review panel re abstracts \geq 2 weeks ahead of b) (*don't skimp on this: it really takes this long*)

- d) Deadline for abstract submission > 4 weeks before c) (*and make sure well ahead that you have your review panel in place and they know what dates they are working to*)
- e) Registration opens > 4 weeks before d) This means that registration probably opens in the new year and timetable must be reasonably well in place by then to be on website

10. Website

In 2011 ESOPRS Committee decided to use the Munich 2010 platform for corporate identity und practical reasons. Contact Mr. Markic (esoprs@mwd-agentur.de)

BEFORE registration opens the website should contain as much information as possible on the following:

1. Registration rates: pre-meeting course / main programme / early registration
2. Conference venue; full postal address of venue and details of nearest city if the address doesn't clarify this, so that people aim for the right airport. Telephone number if relevant.
3. Map / website link and or photographs of venue if possible
4. How to get to conference venue by public transport links and what public transport is available
5. How to find different priced hotels in the vicinity (city tourist websites may be useful links etc.)
6. Format for posters: size and landscape or portrait, although this can be emailed at acceptance if you don't know it yet.
7. Social programme
 - Drinks reception if there is one: venue and full address of venue /photos if available: cost (if not included in registration); start and finish time.
 - Gala dinner: venue and full address of venue /photos if available: cost: start and finish time.
 - Any other activities: cost and arrangements for booking.
 - Spouse programme

11. CPD

Apply for CPD via the national authorities:

12. Identifying Key helpers: Begin well prior to the start of registration

- a) Abstract review panel: Write to 7 -10 abstract reviewers well before the start of registration inviting them to review and explaining the process and the necessary deadlines. All reviewers must be available in a very short time frame to complete the task between a few days after the close of the deadline for submission and approximately 3 weeks later, so you must send them the dates when you invite them. Reviewers should be relatively senior members of ESOPRS; usually Committee members are involved.

Each abstract should be reviewed anonymously by 2 people neither of whom has been involved in its submission.

13. Committee meeting

The committee members meet on the afternoon/evening before the scientific meeting. A room suitable for min. 13 persons located possible close to the venue or the welcome reception should be reserved.

The secretary schedules the timing; usually it is organized from 15.30 or 16.00 and takes one to two hours. This business meeting may not clash with the welcome reception on Thursday night. Committee members always participate at the welcome reception. At the end of the welcome reception, the members of the committee with spouses, the local organizer, the Mustarde lecturer and invited speakers and maybe some few persons invited by the local organizer will have dinner together (Committee dinner). The local organizer chooses the location.

Christoph Hintschich
ESOPRS secretary

On behalf of the ESOPRS Committee

Munich, 28. Decenber 2012