EUROSPINE
20 years of promoting excellence in spine care
Annual Report 2018
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**Timeline**

- **1996**: First joint meeting of the European Spine Society (ESS) and the European Spinal Deformities Society (ESDS) held in Zurich, Switzerland.
- **1998**: ESS and ESDS united at the joint meeting in Innsbruck, Austria on 26 June to form ‘The Spine Society of Europe’ (TSE) with corresponding logo following a motion at the 1997 General Assembly (GA) in Kos and vote at the GA 1998 in Innsbruck.
- **1999**: First Annual Meeting held as a merged society.
- **2001**: First survey carried out on the ‘Future Style of EUROSPINE Meetings’. The chosen format still resembles the one we have today.
- **2002**: Presidential and past-presidential pins designed.
- **2003**: First abstract submission online. Modified to today’s standards in 2008.
- **2004**: First TFR course “Fundamentals of clinical research: Learning to design my own clinical study” held in Istanbul with 22 course participants from 9 countries.
- **2005**: Poster walls changed to e-posters at the Istanbul meeting.
- **2006**: EUROSPINE’s conference newspaper, launched. Distributed to delegates each year since 2011 on all three meeting days.
- **2010**: New EUROSPINE app introduced to provide all information about the Annual Meeting on smartphones, including an automatic response system (ARS).
- **2011**: Spine Times, EUROSPINE’s conference newspaper, launched. Distributed to delegates each year since 2011 on all three meeting days.
- **2012**: First Education Week held in Lucerne, Switzerland with all five modules and a surgical skills cadaver component.
EUROSPINE Diploma (ESD) programme for surgeons redesigned.

New ‘Young Member’, ‘Institutional Member’ and ‘Associate Member’ categories introduced, leading to growth of the membership base by more than fifty percent over the following three years.

First Spring Specialty Meeting held in Prague, Czech Republic where delegates explore a single important topic in depth.

All educational activities consolidated by the ExCom under “one roof” – within the legal entity of EUROSPINE, the Spine Society of Europe, due to strategic and economic considerations.

EUROSPINE goes green: paperless Final Programme created for EUROSPINE Annual Meetings. Online subscription only for the European Spine Journal (ESJ) from 2018 onwards.

#TeamEUROSPINE set up for Wings for Life world run.

First EUROSPINE Advanced Course held in January.

Diploma equivalence offered to countries meeting quality criteria. The first countries selected were Germany, Turkey and France due to their strong existing programmes.

Patient Line website relaunched with content re-written in simple language (in English, French, German and Spanish).

EUROSPINE membership topped 1,000 full members, almost tripling since 2010.

Margareta Nordin named the first female president of EUROSPINE.

Structure of the Executive Committee (ExCom) revised to include a EuSAB representative as a permanent member.

EUROSPINE Annual Meeting in Berlin had a record high attendance (> 3,000 delegates and 159 exhibitors).

New EUROSPINE Foundation (ESF) website launched to reflect its new status as a non-profit fundraising organisation (in English and German).

More than 1,000 abstracts submitted for the Berlin meeting – highlighting the growing acceptance for EUROSPINE’s Annual Meeting as the leading spine congress in Europe and one of the most important spine meetings worldwide.

Formation of a multidisciplinary task force approved by the ExCom to develop an educational diploma for non-surgeons (EDISC).

Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence (SSCeX) certification programme launched for spine centres.

First EUROSPINE Foundation (ESF) charity run organised to support advancing knowledge of spinal disorders, improving the standard of care, and the recovery and well-being of patients with back and neck problems.

First two Honorary Memberships awarded for outstanding contributions to the Society and/or the field of spinal disorders and related problems.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with EFORT and EANS.

Spring Specialty Meeting 2018 held in April in Vienna with the first non-surgical topic ‘Prevention Strategies for Spine Disability’.

Partnership formed between ESF and the ON Foundation, who agreed to fund research projects selected jointly by the Task Force Research (TFR) and representatives of the ON Foundation.

Education Week held at IRCAD in Strasbourg with all five EUROSPINE Diploma course modules, two Advanced Modules and the Critical Appraisal of the Spine Literature Course for the first time.
Wall of Fame

1. Carlos Villanueva
   President 1999
   "As a first president, I felt the privilege of meeting with a small group of doctors.
   The concept of the ESSNR was born that year. Today, Euro Spine is a well-recognized
   spine society. We have a special role to play in the world, and we should be proud of all
   the members of this success."
   Carlos Villanueva, President 1999

2. Jilf Dvořák
   President 2000
   "It is with much joy that I can report that Euro Spine has achieved
   remarkable success in the first year. The ESSNR has been
   successfully developed, and we are proud of the work done.
   Euro Spine is now recognized as one of the most
   important spine societies in the world. It is an honor to represent this society.
   Jilf Dvořák, President 2000

3. Dieter Grob
   President 2003
   "It was an honor to be elected as the second president.
   Euro Spine has grown significantly in the past three years.
   The society has become more active and has
   established a strong foundation for future success.
   Dieter Grob, President 2003

4. Charles Greenough
   President 2007
   "Congratulations to EuroSpine on its 20th anniversary.
   It is a proud moment for all members and the
   Euro Spine community. We have come a long way in the past 20 years,
   and we are excited to look forward to the future.
   Charles Greenough, President 2007

5. Peter Suchomel
   President 2004
   "It was an honor to be elected as the third president.
   Euro Spine has made significant progress in the past
   three years, and we are proud of the work done. We
   are looking forward to continuing our growth.
   Peter Suchomel, President 2004

6. Robert Grundberg
   President 2008
   "Our 2008 presidential address was the first
   presidential address since the founding of Euro Spine.
   It was a special occasion, and we are proud of the work done.
   Robert Grundberg, President 2008

7. Jean-Charles Le Huec
   President 2012
   "Our 2012 presidential address was the second
   presidential address since the founding of Euro Spine.
   It was a special occasion, and we are proud of the work done.
   Jean-Charles Le Huec, President 2012

8. Haluk Berk
   President 2015
   "It was an honor to be elected as the president.
   Euro Spine has made significant progress in the past
   three years, and we are proud of the work done. We
   are looking forward to continuing our growth.
   Haluk Berk, President 2015

9. Michael Opon
   President 2016
   "Our 2016 presidential address was the third
   presidential address since the founding of Euro Spine.
   It was a special occasion, and we are proud of the work done.
   Michael Opon, President 2016

- The EuroSpine team has worked tirelessly to bring
  Euro Spine to where it is today. We are proud
  of the progress we have made and are looking forward
  to the future.

EUROSPIKE
Gordon F. G. Findlay
President 2001

"I am delighted to celebrate 30 years of EURAPFEM and have been very impressed by the success stories of participants and the success of our initiatives. The highlight of my presidency was the recognition of the 30th anniversary and the successful organisation of the Annual Meeting in particular."
Gordon F. G. Findlay, President 2001

Norbert Passuti
President 2002

"I would like to wish you a fantastic new year for the 30 years of EURAPFEM! From the bottom of my heart, we are looking forward to the new EURAPFEM Foundation (EF). It was my honour to be part of the Board. I wish you all the best for the coming years.
Norbert Passuti, President 2002

Max Aebi
President 2005

H. Michael Mayer
President 2006

"The value of the group of specialists in even fragile bone has been acknowledged by the European Union, which has granted us the status of delegated agency."
H. Michael Mayer, President 2006

Federico Dalogli
President 2009

"The highlight of my presidency included the following: the agreement of the future and the future support of the Secretary (indefinitely) to ensure the smooth operation of the Foundation. The agreement was successful. The President agreed to sign the agreement of the President of the Foundation."
Federico Dalogli, President 2009

Hans-Joachim Wilke
President 2010

"I am sure of EURAPFEM: The group has greatly matured. Keep it up! I am sure of the future."
Hans-Joachim Wilke, President 2010

Ferran Pellissé Urquiza
President 2013

"EURAPFEM is a dynamic multicultural multidisciplinary patient organization with a focus on bone health. It is the only patient organization in Europe that focuses on bone health."
Ferran Pellissé Urquiza, President 2013

Margareta Nordin
President 2017

"I am elected President for EURAPFEM and am very happy and proud to be the first woman.EURAPFEM was founded by the 70th anniversary of the International Bone and Joint Decade and its first meeting was held in Athens. EURAPFEM was born in an era of economic and political challenges."
Margareta Nordin, President 2017

Frank Kandziora
President 2018

"EURAPFEM is a great success story. It has developed into a leading organization in Europe and beyond."
Frank Kandziora, President 2018
EUROSPINE, the Spine Society of Europe, was founded on 26 June 1998 in Innsbruck, Austria.

The aims of EUROSPINE are to stimulate the exchange of knowledge and ideas in the field of research, prevention and treatment of spine diseases and related problems and to coordinate efforts undertaken in European countries for further development in this field.
Welcome Statement from the President

EUROSPINE: ACCOMPLISHING OUR MISSION

Dear Members, Friends and Colleagues,

This year as we celebrate EUROSPINE’s 20th anniversary, we can see just how far we’ve come, and be confident that we are well-positioned for what lies ahead. Over the past six years, since the design and implementation of the Way Forward, we have made significant progress towards positioning ourselves to be the driving force as well as the primary and preferred partner in Europe for all spinal care issues. This includes our mission to:

• Promote improvements in patient care
• Support the prevention of spinal disorders
• Provide and support “best practice” lifelong learning and research in spinal disorders
• Bring together all spine-related European stakeholders across disciplines, cultures and countries

Thanks to strong leadership and considerable work by the Society since the Way Forward was designed and implemented five years ago, we have made real progress towards meeting our objectives. I would like to summarise our recent accomplishments and look at the projects we are currently working on to ensure the future success of EUROSPINE.

STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR SPINE PATIENTS

This year we launched our “Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence” (SSCoE) programme to certify spine centres who meet strict quality standards in the provision of patient care, spine surgery and education, among other criteria. The first SSCoE accreditations have been awarded following independent certification audits by a professional audit company, and the SSCoE programme is now open to spine centres across Europe. In the coming years, we hope to see the programme roll out across EUROPE, offering patients a guarantee of quality care no matter where they live or what kind of health care system they have in their respective countries.

A NEW ERA IN SPINE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

We have continued to build upon our educational offerings, by enhancing our two existing diploma programmes, the EUROSPINE Diploma
(ESD) and the EUROSPINE Advanced Diploma (ESAD). We are currently developing a new, education programme for non-surgical treatment, the EUROSPINE Diploma in Interprofessional Spine Care (EDISC). The Executive are very committed to this opportunity to meet educational needs across all spine disciplines, in particular to meet the needs of all our members. Our special task force is looking forward to launching EDISC in 2019.

We have also begun the development of an e-learning programme to form part of the ESD and the ESAD, making spine education more accessible than ever before. Starting as part of our Education Week (EduWeek), from 18–20 November 2019, it will be possible to complete certain diploma modules online, combining efficient online learning with live learning, where participants can personally interact with experts. We believe that this blended learning option will better fit the needs of our members.

We are continuing to make research a top priority. Last year we awarded €150,000 of grants to fully appraised research applications. Our research skills course continues to provide education to those wanting to better understand the research process.

NETWORKING AND EDUCATION UNDER ONE ROOF

Our 20th anniversary celebration in Barcelona, EUROSPINE 2018, was a landmark event. Our annual meetings have built a reputation for providing excellent cross-disciplinary and cross-culture networking opportunities for both spine care professionals and industry representatives. Delegates come from far and wide for our rich scientific content, and this year we were delighted to welcome more than 3,500 participants representing 80 countries. The next EUROSPINE Annual Meeting will take place in Helsinki, Finland from 16–18 October 2019, and promises excellent opportunities to interact with the fellow professionals in spine and to learn about latest techniques and technologies.

EUROSPINE’S EUSSAB: WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SPINE CARE STANDARDS

We are honoured that 30 national societies have elected to become members of the European Spine Societies Advisory Board (EuSSAB) over the past four years. This will allow for collaborative work, such as setting standards for education and spine care centres, addressing important political issues and seeking solutions for universal improvement throughout Europe in spine care for patients. At EUROSPINE, we are making EuSSAB a high priority, setting up a dedicated task force and offering a position for a EuSSAB elected representative on our Executive Committee (ExCom). We hope to see even more proactive involvement of our EuSSAB representatives going forward, leveraging EUROSPINE’s core activities.

DATA COLLECTION AND INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Our international Spine Tango registry is currently transitioning to a new provider that offers the technical infrastructure to grow and expand the registry. The aggregation of data documenting the safety and effectiveness of spine care, treatments and technologies will provide a solid evidence base for treatment effectiveness and best options for care. Data are also being collected for the benchmarking of spine centres and education programmes. As increasing numbers of hospitals begin to participate, we believe that this anonymised data will be of interest to industry as they are required from next year to provide longitudinal data on implant performance. This may help the project towards its objective of cost-recovery.

Patient Line, our online reference tool for patients is being continually updated and new languages added. Furthermore, EUROSPINE is developing a new website to offer comprehensive information regarding all of its activities and to ensure transparency and manage complexity.
Since setting out our mission and vision in the Way Forward six years ago, we’ve worked to ensure our work plans are in line with the goals set out in the plan. We will continue to work with the action plan, updating it as needed as we face new challenges and establish new goals.

I wish to thank all my colleagues on the Executive Committee, committee heads and committee members, who work tirelessly to achieve our objectives. A big thank you as well to my predecessor, Frank Kandziora, for his commitment and hard work as EUROSPINE President, and for handing over a well-managed and streamlined Society.
20 years of EUROSPINE. What an honour it’s been to stand as EUROSPINE President in this 20th anniversary year! The tremendous work my colleagues and predecessors have achieved in just two short decades is nothing short of awe-inspiring. EUROSPINE has become a successful and dynamic organisation made up of around 1,400 full members and 7,200 associate members from the full spectrum of spine care disciplines. Our Society presents the most important spine meetings in Europe, and plays a leading role in spine education, certification standards, research, evidence-based registries and bringing together national spine societies under one umbrella to speak with a united voice. I would like to highlight just a few of EUROSPINE’s accomplishments to trace a path from the Society’s successful past toward our bright future.

EUROSPINE ANNUAL MEETING: THE LEADING CONGRESS IN EUROPE

EUROSPINE’s first official Annual Meeting took place in Munich, Germany in 1999 with 560 participants and 355 abstracts submitted. Since that inaugural meeting, the Annual Meeting has grown exponentially, with EUROSPINE 2016 attracting a record high attendance (more than 3,000 delegates and 159 exhibitors) and over 1,000 abstract submissions. To date more than 14,000 abstracts have been submitted and we have enjoyed the company of more than 34,000 delegates! Furthermore, 13,000 industry participants have taken part, demonstrating the latest in spine technology, and 63 awards have been presented. The EUROSPINE Annual Meeting has become the leading spine congress in Europe.

Our 20th Anniversary Annual Meeting this year in Barcelona, Spain was a resounding success, with almost 1,000 abstracts submitted and 3701 participants. The scientific programme content was rich and diverse, with topics covering all disciplines of spine care, both surgical and non-surgical. Local hosts Ferran Pellisé, Juan Bago, Luis Alvarez Galovich ensured that everything went off smoothly, leaving delegates free to learn, network and simply enjoy.

DELVING DEEP INTO SPECIALISED TOPICS

In contrast to the EUROSPINE Annual Meeting, which covers a broad spectrum of topics, our Spring Specialty Meetings have been designed to explore specific subjects in greater depth. EUROSPINE’s first Spring Specialty Meeting took place in 2014 in Prague, Czech Republic.
The 2018 edition in Vienna was the first to deal with a non-surgical topic: ‘Prevention Strategies for Spine Disability’.

DEFINING STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION

In 2002, EUROSPINE introduced spine courses as part of the educational curriculum. They were held twice a year until 2009, alternating between Barcelona, Spain and Liberec, Czech Republic. In 2012, the first Education Week (EduWeek) was held in Lucerne, Switzerland (in partnership with other providers) with all five modules and a surgical skills cadaver component. Two years later, due to strategic and economic considerations, the EUROSPINE Executive Committee (ExCom) decided to consolidate all of EUROSPINE’s educational activities under “one roof” – within the legal entity of EUROSPINE, the Spine Society of Europe.

In 2015, the Education Committee completely redesigned the EUROSPINE Diploma (ESD) for surgeons. The following year, EUROSPINE began offering diploma equivalence to countries meeting specific educational standards. The first countries selected for equivalence were Germany, Turkey and France, due to their strong existing programmes. In 2017, the EUROSPINE Advanced Diploma programme was launched.

This year for the first time, EduWeek comprised all five EUROSPINE Diploma Modules, the two Advanced Modules and the Critical Appraisal of the Spine Literature Course. The Diploma Equivalence Programme has been extended to include eight spine societies and an MoU has been signed with EFORT and EANS.

EUROSPINE’s Education Programme offers innovative learning opportunities for spine specialists at all stages of their career. We have begun designing an education programme for non-surgical specialists: the EUROSPINE Diploma in Interprofessional Spine Care (EDISC) to be launched in 2019. What’s more, we’re currently adding e-learning modules to our EUROSPINE Diploma programme to offer better learning opportunities and improved accessibility.

ADVANCING TREATMENT THROUGH RESEARCH

The Task Force Research (TFR) was set up in October 2009 during the EUROSPINE Annual Meeting in Warsaw, Poland to provide courses on research techniques and distribute funds for highly-promising research studies. In the past nine years, more than €1,000,000 has been granted and 18 courses have been held to educate researchers.

MAPPING THE WAY FORWARD

A pivotal point in the development of our Society as it is today was the design and implementation of the Way Forward strategy in 2013/14. Following 14 years of growth and success, the Executive Committee (ExCom) determined that EUROSPINE needed a clear plan its future development. Following intense workshops and long hours of work, EUROSPINE’s new mission and vision were defined. Strategic priorities were established, as were the Society’s core activities. For the past four years the Way Forward has been the definitive guide for all of EUROSPINE’s activities and is certainly responsible in large part for the huge growth of our Society. Priorities are reviewed and updated on a yearly basis to ensure that EUROSPINE is meeting new challenges head on with exciting offerings and initiatives.

EUROSPINE’S EUSSAB: UNITING NATIONAL SOCIETIES

In 2014 EUROSPINE founded the European Spine Societies Advisory Board (EuSSAB) as a means of bringing national spine societies together under one umbrella to address issues of common concern in a non-biased environment. In just four years, 30 national societies have joined EuSSAB as institutional members of EUROSPINE, bringing with them approximately 7,200 associate members, making EUROSPINE the second largest spine society in the world.
EUROSPINE is working hard to support the continuous development of EuSSAB and cultivate its role as an umbrella organisation for national societies. In 2016, a seat was created on the ExCom for an elected representative, and this year we took things a step further by creating a dedicated council to better address the needs and priorities of our institutional members. Moreover, we are working hard to intensify and formalise our relationships with organisations such as EFORT, EANS, UEMS, etc.

CERTIFYING CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

This year, in collaboration with the German Spine Society (DWG), EUROSPINE launched an accreditation programme to certify spine centres across Europe who meet pre-defined standards of excellence, with the goal of enhancing the overall quality of treatment in spine surgery. After undergoing an exhaustive audit procedure, the first two test cases were certified as Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence (SSCoE). The programme is now open to spine centres in Europe who wish to be accredited and recognised as providing a high standard of care.

THE GREAT MINDS BEHIND EUROSPINE

It’s impossible to list all of the people here who have worked hard over the past 20 years to make EUROSPINE the primary and preferred partner in Europe for all spinal care issues. For a flavour of the spirit of EUROSPINE, I encourage you to read the messages of our former presidents in the preface of this report. To everyone who has ever served on a committee, task force or the ExCom, and especially our EUROSPINE staff members, I would like to extend a huge thank you for helping to make our Society great. I would especially like to thank Ferran Pellisé for setting the Way Forward ball in motion and Beat Leimbacher, Delegate to the ExCom, for the design and implementation. To all of you who have carried the ball forward, Phil Sell, Haluk Berk, Michael Ogon and Margareta Nordin – thank you for making my job so easy.
Addressing Current Trends and Future Challenges

In the face of globalisation, digitalisation and skyrocketing health-care costs, the world of spine care is constantly changing, requiring that we continuously transform to meet tremendous challenges. Low back and neck pain and many spine conditions are placing a growing burden on society in terms of work absenteeism, loss of employment, exponential healthcare costs and – most importantly – the quality of life of individuals suffering with spine problems.

As a dynamic and international organisation, EUROSPINE too is evolving – to meet challenges head on and ensure the provision of top-quality spine care across Europe.

EFFECTIVE TREATMENT IN THE FACE OF STEEPLY-RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS

In this new context, inappropriate, ineffective or unaffordable spine care are viewed as unacceptable. Going forward, paying bodies, private or public, will no longer agree to pay for treatments without objective proof – not only of effectiveness, but also of cost-effectiveness. No longer will patients agree to undergo treatments with unproven results or excessive complications. **We must be able to prove the rationale and effectiveness of what we are doing.**

EUROSPINE’s tool for outcome assessment of both surgical and conservative treatments is **Spine Tango**, which provides:

- A high degree of confidentiality
- Unbiased outcome assessments by means of standardised forms
- Descriptions of demographics, pathology and treatments provided
- Validated, patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs)

Sophisticated statistical methods allow for valid analyses of accumulated, individual data – reported with completeness and honesty – providing evidence for treatment indications, effectiveness, and safety. Spine Tango’s benchmarking capability allows for the comparison of individual, group or regional data with a large data pool and is helpful in improving the performance of individual surgeons or of implants through constructive, non-binding information.

A new service provider, Northgate Public Services (NPS), was selected in 2018 to further develop the database – in full compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). When the new database goes live in 2019, we hope to make the project self-sustainable.
through the provision of data to industry and insurance in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

SETTING GLOBAL STANDARDS

As globalisation continues to expand – with countries forming alliances such as the European Union and Schengen, and standardising trade, immigration and health care practices – EUROSPINE has also entered the global stage. In 2014, EUROSPINE launched the European Spine Societies Advisory Board (EuSSAB), an unbiased platform where national spine societies can meet and address issues of mutual importance. Thirty national societies (representing over 7,200 spine specialists) are now collaborating to ensure that patients receive the highest standard of care Europe-wide.

EUROSPINE’s efforts to set international standards for patient care extend also to education. Through EuSSAB, EUROSPINE has formed partnerships with many of its institutional members, whereby national spine societies can adapt their programmes to the EUROSPINE Diploma and EUROSPINE Advanced Diploma learning outcomes, ‘5+2 modules’ model and formats. Diploma equivalencies have now been established with eight European countries and the European Association of Neurosurgical Societies (EANS).

IT AND DIGITALISATION: IMPLEMENTING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

With the rapid growth of digitalisation, people have come to expect that information be made available anytime and anywhere at the click of a mouse. Companies and organisations around the world are striving to meet this demand while still ensuring a secure data environment.

EUROSPINE is responding to this challenge on multiple fronts. Our website is being upgraded and Spine Tango expanded through NPS, our new service provider (see above). Furthermore, we have begun work on a new e-learning platform (in cooperation with Medtronic) to be launched in 2019 that will offer participants the opportunity to complete modules of the EUROSPINE Diploma online.

In spite of its wonderful, almost infinite capabilities, information technology also brings with it causes for concern in the medical world. Privacy must be maintained at all times and unauthorised data sharing prevented. Misinformation spread to patients through unaccredited websites is a constant battle. Through Patient Line, EUROSPINE has created an accessible source of unbiased and understandable information for patients with spinal ailments. Our membership should refer all patients to this valuable, non-commercial source website at www.eurospine-patientline.org (now available in 8 languages).

ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY CARE

Patients need to know that they will receive the best care available, no matter where in Europe they happen to be.

The Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence (SSCoE) project is intended to ensure that spine centres certified under this programme meet strictly-audited quality standards, with the ultimate goal of enhancing treatment quality in spine surgery and providing guidance for patients with spinal disorders.

The project was started in 2018 in collaboration with the German Spine Society (DWG) and the EUROSPINE Foundation (ESF). The certification process, based on EUROSPINE’s defined criteria, is carried out by CERTIQ, an independent certification organisation selected through a tender process. The first test centres received certification at the end of 2018. The process is now open for any spine centre that wishes to apply.

NETWORKING, THE GOLD STANDARD

With exponential developments in telecommunications, online networking tools and video-conferencing technology, face-to-face
contact is becoming a rare opportunity. The EUROSPINE Annual Meeting and Spring Specialty Meeting offer spine specialists the chance to meet and explore the newest ideas and technologies in the spine world today. Indeed, each year we host increasing numbers of delegates who choose to take advantage of our rich scientific content, including workshops, a keynote lecture, debates, 82 oral presentations and posters selected from roughly 1,000 submissions. Papers published in the European Spine Journal are also presented, thanks to the work of the editors and reviewers, many of whom are Society members.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

EUROSPINE is active across all fields: Education, research, effective organisation of care, outcome assessment, reliable patient information, and diffusion of our knowledge are the pillars to tackle successfully the challenges presented by all of these global trends. As we move into the future, EUROSPINE will continue to evolve with the changing times, to promote and orchestrate high-quality, cost-effective, evidence-based spine care across Europe and beyond.
It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Michael Ogon, EUROSPINE President 2015–2016.

We are mourning a warm-hearted visionary, colleague and friend. As a highly-esteemed spine surgeon and scientist, Michael was dedicated, helpful and supportive to our Society on so many levels. He was a very active member of our Executive Committee for many years, holding positions such as Treasurer before being elected EUROSPINE President. Michael was instrumental in the growth and success of EUROSPINE and presided over one of the most successful EUROSPINE Annual Meetings to date in Berlin in 2016.

He fully supported the redesign of the surgical and non-surgical education programmes and the need for EUROSPINE to be inclusive by standardising education and creating diploma equivalencies. He subscribed to the research adage “we are stronger if we educate our members and give them means”. He later championed development of the EUROSPINE Diploma for Interprofessional Spine Care (EDISC) for the continuum of care. As a spine surgeon who was interested and knowledgeable in both surgical and non-surgical care, he was a true asset in the EUROSPINE community.

Michael was a formidable mentor and respected by his peers, fellows, residents and patients, who always spoke of him with great affection and admiration. His commitment to continuum of care was deep and unwavering.

As EUROSPINE President, Michael advocated the reorganisation of the EUROSPINE Executive Committee into Councils. Michael was a firm believer in the need for change and promoted the creation of the EUROSPINE’s EuSSAB with the view that harmonising spine surgery in Europe would lead to great success. He was so right. He thought we should listen to Europe in a much more effective way by creating institutional memberships – a resounding success today with 30 European countries participating. Michael always predicted that EUROSPINE’s future would be a bright one and he was right. We will continue to carry the torch in his honour. The Michael Ogon Award will be officially established in 2019, providing grants to hospitals from less-affluent countries to complete the application process for Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence (SSCoE) certification free of charge.

We will all remember Michael fondly – his vast knowledge, his low-key personality, his warmth, his humour and persistence in achieving goals and welcoming new challenges. Michael was of German nationality but moved to Vienna in 2002 and headed the comprehensive Spine Centre at the Orthopaedic Hospital Vienna-Speising in Vienna, Austria, for the past 16 years. He eventually became Head of both the spine surgery and conservative medicine departments.

Michael Ogon passed away unexpectedly on 10 September 2018. Our deepest sympathies are with his wonderful wife Evi and five children. Michael is missed.
Thanks to EUROSPINE’s substantial membership benefits – unsurpassed networking opportunities, content-rich meetings, comprehensive education, and state-of-the-art technology, research and innovation – EUROSPINE welcomed **221 new members in 2018**, further increasing our membership base by **12%**. **EUROSPINE is now over 8,600 members strong**, with close to 1,400 full members and 7,200 associate members representing **79 countries**.

**SPECIAL INCENTIVES FOR EUROSPINE MEMBERS**

Since the implementation of the Way Forward strategy five years ago, EUROSPINE has introduced a series of incentives for joining our Society, effectively doubling our membership base. **In 2016, we exceeded 1,000 full members for the first time, and since then our membership numbers have continued to climb, reaching nearly 1,400 in 2018, another record high.**

The following incentives are available exclusively to members of EUROSPINE:

- **Special reduced registration fees** at EUROSPINE educational events
- **Low membership fees** remaining at €140/year (€70/year for Young Members)
- **Discounts** for the Annual Meeting, the Spring Specialty Meeting and Task Force Research courses
- ‘**Young Member’ category** offering professional colleagues under the age of 40 the opportunity to join EUROSPINE for 50% of the regular membership fee for the first two years
- ‘**Institutional Member’ and ‘Associate Member’ categories**, inviting national spine societies to join as Institutional Members, with the
added benefit that all their members automatically become Associate Members
of EUROSPINE
• **EUROSPINE’s EuSSAB**, a neutral platform for Institutional Members to come together and work jointly on common issues
• **Further membership benefits**, such as a subscription to the online version of the European Spine Journal and access to research grants, the Open Operating Theatre (OOT) platform, Annual Meeting webcasts and more.

**EUROSPINE eSOCIETY**

The EUROSPINE eSociety is an online gateway that allows members to:

• Check membership status
• Update personal data (address, specialisation, portrait picture)
• Make annual membership payments
• Download payment confirmations
• Register for EUROSPINE educational events
• Download CME certificates
• Read the European Spine Journal online

If you haven’t done so already, we encourage you to log in and check it out!

**MEMBERSHIP SURVEY**

In 2018, we conducted our first formal survey to learn more about the needs, expectations and wishes of EUROSPINE members. 360 members completed the questionnaire, which covered areas such as attendance of our Annual Meeting, satisfaction with the EUROSPINE website, usage of our electronic platforms—including the exclusive users’ area—and readership of the European Spine Journal. We were delighted to learn that **85% would recommend EUROSPINE membership to their colleagues**, and that our website received a satisfaction rating of **87%**.

In addition to statistical data, respondents provided thoughtful insight and constructive suggestions for potential future improvements. We wish to extend our sincere thanks to all who participated and encourage all of you to take part in our next survey. It is this feedback that helps us to add even more value for our members.

**HONORARY MEMBERSHIPS AWARDED**

This year for the first time, two honorary memberships were awarded to EUROSPINE’s first two Presidents, Carlos Villanueva from Barcelona, Spain and Jirí Dvorák from Zurich.
Switzerland, for their outstanding contributions to the Society. Given that we were celebrating 20 years of EUROSPINE, we can’t imagine more fitting or deserving recipients, and we wish to extend our warmest congratulations.

Honorary memberships are awarded for outstanding contributions to the Society and/or in the field of spinal disorders and related problems. Eligibility for honorary memberships extends to:

- EUROSPINE members and non-members
- Persons of any age
- Nominees deserving of honour for their remarkable service in the field of spine care

In 2019 we will once again award an honorary membership to a nominee who has made a superlative contribution to the field of spine care.

MEMBERSHIP GOALS FOR 2019

It is our goal to increase our attractiveness to members year on year, making EUROSPINE the number one choice for both surgical and non-surgical specialists in Europe and around the globe.

We are continuing our work on initiatives that address the needs of young members. In 2018, we held our first “Young & Strong” workshop at the EUROSPINE Annual Meeting in Barcelona, with the goal of motivating future officers and faculty to become active in the Society, take over council functions and tasks and participate in other core activities.

I would like to welcome our new members and thank our existing members for your wonderful contributions. Thanks to you, EUROSPINE is a society of the best and the brightest in spine care. We hope to attract 250 new members in 2019. If you would like to be part of our multi-disciplinary, international organisation and network with top minds from all over the world, please join EUROSPINE today!
EUROSPINE’s European Spine Societies Advisory Board (EuSSAB) is a platform where national spine societies from all over Europe unite to address issues related to spine health and education, standardise processes and influence political policies with one strong, united voice. Established by EUROSPINE only four years ago, EuSSAB is now supported by 30 institutional members of EUROSPINE whose goal is to improve the standard of spine care for patients Europe-wide.

NEW EUSSAB COUNCIL AT EUROSPINE

EUROSPINE set up EuSSAB as part of its Way Forward strategy in 2014 to create a network of spine societies across Europe (who are institutional members of EUROSPINE) who could act together as a single body to promote spine education, guidelines, meetings, research, etc. All EuSSAB members have equal voting rights, including EUROSPINE.

Due to the strategic importance of EuSSAB as a political entity, in 2016 EUROSPINE created a seat on the Executive Committee (ExCom) for a EuSSAB representative. As EuSSAB continues to expand, so too does its role at EUROSPINE. This year the EUROSPINE Executive Committee took the decision to remove EuSSAB from under the auspices of the Stakeholder Council and establish a separate EuSSAB Council in order to realign and focus priorities that best fit the demands of our institutional members. The mandate of the EuSSAB Council is to:

- Align spine-related education across Europe
- Integrate core spine competencies in the national curricula
- Bring spinal medicine up to an equal and comparable level in all EuSSAB countries
- Establish certificated spine centres all over Europe

INCOMING EUSSAB REPRESENTATIVE

Following his one-year term as EuSSAB Representative to the EUROSPINE ExCom, Christoph Josten of Germany handed the torch to Ioannis Magras of Greece (2017 EuSSAB Vice Representative) at the 2018 EUROSPINE Annual Meeting in Barcelona. Ioannis Magras will represent EuSSAB in EUROSPINE’s ExCom until the EUROSPINE Annual Meeting in October 2019. We wish to extend our warmest thanks to Christoph Josten, Ioannis Magras and Johan van Lerbeirgh for their terrific work on behalf of EuSSAB.

We would also like to welcome to the new EuSSAB Vice Representative, Alberto-Maximo Diez-Ulloa of Spain, who has made significant
contributions to EuSSAB over the past four years.

NEW INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

This year we received another application to join EuSSAB. Based on the two-step application process, all societies are first required to apply for a EUROSPINE institutional membership.

We are very pleased to welcome the Slovak Spine Society as the 30th member of EuSSAB. Founded in 1993, the Slovak Spine Society has 83 members from a variety of disciplines, including neuro-, orthopaedic and trauma surgeons among others.

EuSSAB’s membership of 30 EUROSPINE institutional members represents approximately 7,200 spine specialists from all over Europe.

SPINE CENTRE CERTIFICATION

The European community seeks to promote excellence in health care across all of its member states, independent of differences in the various national health care systems. In 2018, the EUROSPINE Task Force on Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence (SSCoE), in partnership with the DWG and the EUROSPINE Foundation, developed a certification programme for spine centres across Europe. Independently certified by CERTiQ, the first spine centres have already received certification. Following a trial run, the programme is now available for spine centres throughout Europe wishing to apply for certification.

EUROSPINE’S EUSSAB SPRING MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The EuSSAB Spring Meeting on 16 April 2018 in Munich, Germany, had a terrific turn-out with 20 delegates in attendance. At this meeting we reviewed EUROSPINE initiatives that could benefit EuSSAB members such as education, e-learning, diploma equivalency and spine centre certification, discussed current and future challenges and operational issues, and drew further conclusions based on our analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

The second EuSSAB meeting of the year was held at the EUROSPINE Annual Meeting in Barcelona with 25 EuSSAB members present. The SWOT analysis results were revisited and a number of exciting new EUROSPINE initiatives relevant to EuSSAB were presented. In addition, the new EuSSAB Representative for 2018–19, Ioannis Magras took office, and Alberto-Maximo Diez-Ulloa was elected as the new Vice Representative.

MUTUAL PROMOTION OF EVENTS

EUROSPINE and EuSSAB have a wonderful opportunity to work together to build a stronger spine community by promoting each other’s societies and activities through websites and other communication channels. EUROSPINE’s Patient Line, Spine Tango and other activities benefit the EuSSAB community as a whole and are deserving of enhanced visibility through mutual promotion efforts.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

A ¾ day Spring Meeting will be held in Munich, Germany on 18 March 2019 and a 2-hour session is planned for EUROSPINE 2019 in Helsinki, Finland. These events promise to be highly informative and an excellent venue for planning next steps in strengthening our commitment to the improvement of spine education and care across Europe.
Advancing Spine Education through Cooperation, Innovation and Accessibility

Bernhard Meyer
Chair, Education and Fellowship Committee

The key driver in the delivery of education and provision of training opportunities to spine care professionals is to ensure that patients suffering from spinal disorders consistently receive a high standard of care. The EUROSPINE Education Committee (EduCom) offers a variety of educational programmes and courses that not only transcend borders and language but are tailored to the needs of spine professionals across the entire spectrum of spine disciplines. In addition to the EUROSPINE Diploma, the EduCom has developed advanced programmes and initiatives to provide high-quality education and training opportunities to a variety of spine care professionals:

- New surgeons completing their training with the EUROSPINE Diploma
- Advanced surgeons continuing education with the EUROSPINE Advanced Diploma
- Spine care specialists at any stage of their careers with the Observership Programme
- All spine care specialists with the non-surgical EUROSPINE Diploma in Interprofessional Care (EDISC) to be launched in 2019

In 2018, the EUROSPINE Education Committee advanced on a number of fronts:

- Continued development of the EUROSPINE Diploma programme (Basic and Advanced Diplomas)
- Delivery of high-quality live events (EduWeek 2018)
- Further development of the EUROSPINE Diploma Equivalence programme
- Finalisation of EDISC, our non-surgical diploma programme to be launched in 2019

EUROSPINE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

The EUROSPINE Diploma programme has been running since 2012 and has awarded a total of 275 diplomas. Following its launch in 2017, the first 11 EUROSPINE Advanced Diplomas were awarded this year.

The EUROSPINE Diploma Programme offers training modules for both new surgeons and advanced surgeons. Surgeons are awarded the basic EUROSPINE diploma upon completion of five modules. They can then move on to advanced surgical training by completing two advanced modules and a six-month validated fellowship delivered by an endorsed host training centre.
EDUWEEK 2018

This year, both the basic and advanced EUROSPINE Diploma courses were delivered at EduWeek (18–22 June 2018) in Strasbourg, France at the world-renowned IRCAD facility. The five basic diploma modules and two advanced modules were delivered over a very intensive five-day period. In light of busy schedules, advanced surgeons were able to complete the two advanced modules over five days. 130 participants from 30 countries, 51 distinguished faculty from all over Europe and 6 industry partners took part.

The diploma programmes deliver basic and advanced education, offering innovative learning opportunities for spine specialists. Participants engage in classic plenary sessions, highly-interactive and challenging case discussions, group case discussions and roundtable discussion between experts. Participants are exposed to hands-on skills training through workshops with cadavers, synthetic bone models and simulators.

This larger group of participants had the chance to network with peers and interact with faculty – renowned surgeons from all over Europe. New surgeons benefited from pearls of wisdom offered by advanced surgeons. State-of-the-art spine surgery, pioneering ideas, new innovations and future trends are all on the menu at EduWeek.

Day two of EduWeek wrapped up with the Innovation Hour. Our 2018 industry partners presented their latest innovations in seven minutes.
and 21 slides to faculty and course participants. All were invited to participate in three minutes of questions and answers. Both industry representatives and participants completed their day with a view of the future trends in spine care.

**DIPLOMA EQUIVALENCE PROGRAMME WITH OTHER SOCIETIES**

The Education Committee continues to support the alignment of programmes with other national curricula. Through the delivery of standardised learning outcomes for attendees, we are drawing closer to reaching our goal of formalising a recognised European Spine Specialty. Under the equivalence programme, national spine societies adapt and deliver the EUROSPINE Diploma programme learning outcomes, ‘5+2 module’ model and formats.

Faculty members of these national society programmes hold EUROSPINE Diplomas. Validated graduates of a national society diploma may obtain the EUROSPINE Diploma following completion of their respective national society courses. EUROSPINE Diploma graduates may obtain the corresponding national society diploma.

EUROSPINE has worked in partnership with the German Spine Society since 2016. EUROSPINE Diploma equivalence has also been in place with the national societies of Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Greece and France since 2017. A further European professional society, the European Association of Neurosurgical Societies (EANS), agreed to a partnership of diploma equivalence related to the EUROSPINE Diploma and the EUROSPINE Advanced Diploma in 2017. The EANS Spine Course and EANS Advanced Course are aligned with and equivalent to the EUROSPINE Diploma and EUROSPINE Advanced Diploma courses. In 2018, the Turkish Spine Society aligned its Advanced Course with that of EUROSPINE. This year, 130 equivalent individual EUROSPINE Diplomas were awarded. To date, a total of 253 diplomas have been awarded on the basis of the diploma equivalence programme.

**OBERVERSHIP GRANT PROGRAMME**

Observership grants of €1,500 (up to 14 days) are available to EUROSPINE members. Grant recipients gain valuable experience from a EUROSPINE member. In 2017, the cycles and deadlines of the application process were streamlined. In 2018, three observership grants were awarded to EUROSPINE members with worthy educational observership projects.
EDISC (EUROSPINE DIPLOMA IN INTERPROFESSIONAL SPINE CARE)

The non-surgical management of spinal disorders is rapidly evolving and moving away from an “intervention-centric” approach to a “patient-centred” approach. With EDISC, EUROSPINE is taking the global lead to change the nature of the management of spinal conditions. Finalised this year, this education programme will be evidence-based, patient-centred, interprofessional, and collaborative.

The EDISC programme’s target audience includes all professionals in the whole spectrum of spine care: primary care physicians and surgeons, physiotherapists, chiropractors, osteopaths, naprapaths and others who have graduated as clinicians from a recognized institution (i.e. professional school or university). Physicians working in insurance are also welcome. At least two years of clinical experience is recommended, but all new graduates are encouraged to register.

Modules 1 to 4 will be launched at EduWeek 2019 and Modules 5 to 7 at EduWeek 2020.

HYBRID EDUWEEK: A BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH

To enhance training accessibility, the EUROSPINE Education Committee is currently developing a blended learning approach that includes e-learning in the delivery of the EUROSPINE Basic and Advanced diplomas. Surgeons who take part in the Hybrid EduWeek will complete the first part of the course via e-learning, and then deepen their knowledge and understanding in live, onsite sessions. This new approach will help participants to significantly hone skills in clinical decision-making and surgical approaches with case-based discussions and cadaver laboratory workshops.

PLANS FOR 2019

2019 is shaping up to be a very successful year for EUROSPINE education with the following:

- **EUROSPINE Diploma Programme:** The Hybrid EduWeek will be offered in the fall of 2019

- **EduWeek 2019:** Both basic and advanced diploma courses plus the new EDISC will take place at the new premises of the SWISS Foundation for Innovation and Training in Surgery (SFITS) in Geneva, Switzerland on 1–5 July 2019. The engagement of faculty, participants and industry partners will be enhanced and intensified through the interaction of an interprofessional group. Innovative formats such as e-learning components, case-based discussions, audience response systems and hands-on skills workshops (simulators, cadavers and bone models)
will be further evaluated and refined. An EduWeek app is being developed to enhance the educational experience.

- **Innovation Sprint:** During the 2019 EduWeek, the innovation hour format will be further enhanced. Each industry partner will present a short pitch to EduWeek participants regarding key breakthroughs and challenges being addressed by their company. Participants will then be given an innovation challenge. They will work in groups to quickly brainstorm around key spine care challenges.

- **Diploma Equivalence:** With the existing partnerships of the EUROSPINE Diploma Equivalence programme, we are looking forward to awarding more individual equivalent diplomas. Advanced course equivalence will be worked on with Germany and Iberia, moving beyond basic diploma equivalence. Countries and regions for priority equivalence will be Benelux, Italy, Russia, Scandinavia and the United Kingdom.

- **EDISC Programme:** Pilot delivery of the first four modules will take place at EduWeek 2019.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

We wish to express our utmost gratitude to Yann-Philippe Charles and Ioannis Magras for their years of service on the Education Committee. Both have worked extremely hard and made a significant contribution to the development and execution of our programmes and initiatives, particularly EduWeek and Diploma Equivalence.

**CONCLUSION**

Digitalisation, new approaches and the inclusion of interprofessional spine care specialists are taking EUROSPINE education to the forefront. We endeavour to deliver accessible education and training opportunities across all spine disciplines. Going forward, we hope to increase the participation of national societies, spine centres, MedTechs and all spine care professionals, enabling all to excel in patient care and safety.
In January 2017, the EUROSPINE Executive Committee approved the creation of the EUROSPINE Diploma of Interprofessional Care (EDISC). The two chairs worked closely with Julie-Lyn Noël and Sandy Sutter and the EUROSPINE Education and Research committees to assemble a highly-qualified team of experts to form a task force. The EDISC Task Force is made up of a primary care physician, physical therapists, a physiatrist, a radiologist, a geriatrician, spine surgeons, rheumatologists, chiropractors, an osteopath, a naprapath, epidemiologists and an educational specialist. The group represents spine clinicians from many countries in- and outside of Europe, including France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom and Canada.

In 2017, the goal was to have the EDISC course ready to welcome registrants at the 2019 EUROSPINE Education Week (EduWeek). Following intense collaboration, four meetings, several revisions and approval from the Executive Committee, we are ready. In November 2018, the EDISC programme information and schedule was posted on the EUROSPINE Website.

Our slogan is “EDISC is EPIC”. Our programme is Evidence-based, Patient-centred, Interprofessional and Collaborative (EPIC). It includes all of the attributes necessary in today’s competitive environment to deliver the best possible care for spine patients. The objective of the non-surgical diploma programme is to provide the most up-to-date evidence to clinicians from clinicians and researchers. With this intensive continuing-education programme, EUROSPINE is taking a bold lead in harmonising and modernising conservative care amongst spine clinicians, clinical researchers, insurance companies and other interested parties.

It is the goal of the EDISC Task Force to provide clinicians with useful and practical skills to manage spine patients of all ages – from children to the elderly. The programme includes short lectures and provides ample time for discussion and group work among participants. The EDISC Diploma programme has been reviewed by 40 international experts with overwhelmingly positive support and some very constructive
critical assessments that have already been addressed in the modules.

COURSES BEGIN IN JULY 2019

The EDISC programme offers seven modules over a total period of two weeks. The first four modules will be delivered from 1–5 July 2019 and following three modules will be made available in 2020 (see figure 1). A maximum of four modules can be taken during a single EduWeek. To receive the EDISC Diploma, all modules must be completed.

HATS OFF TO THE EDISC CREATORS

A warm THANK YOU to EDISC Task Force Members: Emre Acaroğlu, Spine Surgeon, Federico Balagué, Rheumatology, Richard Brown, Chiropractic, Jamiu Busari, Pediatrics, Christine Cedraschi, Psychology, Stéphane Genevay, Rheumatology, Bernard Meyer, Spine Surgeon, Anette Helen Ranhoff, Geriatrics, Lisa Roberts, Physiotherapy, Rachid Salmi, Epidemiology, Eva Skillgate, Naprapathy, Steve Vogel, Osteopathy, Eric Werner, Primary Care, Fabio Zaina, Physiatry and Alberto Zerbi, Radiology. Without your dedication, interest and formidable work, EDISC would never have been developed. EDISC is novel, important and, we hope, attractive to all spine clinicians.

Welcome to EDISC, a shining new addition to EUROSPINE’s superb education programme. Please visit our website for more information (www.eurospine.org/edisc).

• MODULE 1 (Core Skills 1): Using literature to inform my practice
• MODULE 2 (Core Skills 2): An interprofessional approach to spine care
• MODULE 3 (Core Skills 3): Communication and consultation skills
• MODULE 4: Assessment, diagnosis and management of spinal pain

2019

2020

• MODULE 5: The aging patient seeking spine care
• MODULE 6: Spinal deformities
• MODULE 7: Management and prevention of disability
The EUROSPINE Foundation (ESF) is a non-profit, charitable organisation set up in 2007 by EUROSPINE and the European Spine Journal. Its mandate is to:

- Advance knowledge and understanding of spinal disorders
- Improve the standard of care, recovery and well-being for patients with back and neck problems
- Foster the development of new, and the evaluation of existing, treatments
- Support the education of care providers at the highest, evidence-based level

As a charitable foundation, ESF is heavily reliant on donations and funding activities.

EUROSPINE SURGICAL SPINE CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE (SSCoE)

The Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence (SSCoE) project, started by EUROSPINE in 2018 in collaboration with the German Spine Society (DWG) and the EUROSPINE Foundation (ESF), is an accreditation programme for spine centres who meet strict quality standards. This certification helps ensure that patients receive a high level of care, no matter where they are located. Centres are audited by CERTiQ, an independent certification organisation selected through a tender process based on criteria defined by EUROSPINE. Following a pilot phase, the first certifications were awarded in 2018 and the programme is available to all spine centres throughout Europe. The profit earned from the accreditation process will allow financing of EUROSPINE projects through the ESF.

ESF CHARITY RUN

The first ESF Charity Run, sponsored by Spineart, took place at EUROSPINE 2018. In the early morning hours, as the sun rose over the beaches of Barcelona, 122 runners and walkers covered the 5 km course, with the first participant crossing the finish line in just 15 minutes. Spirits were high and the atmosphere was fantastic. The proceeds of €2,200, which represented 100 percent of the registration fees, were paid directly to ESF to help fund its charitable objectives.
NEW CHAIR ELECTED

In September 2018, Cirian Bolger was elected as the new ESF Chair to succeed Everard Munting, who has served on the ESF Board for seven years and is now Vice-President of EUROSPINE.

EVERY DONATION COUNTS

The EUROSPINE Foundation (ESF) relies on fundraising activities to support its objectives, and plans are in the pipeline to create additional funding sources. ESF is currently funded through several channels:

- Patient donations
- Donations from EUROSPINE members
- Sponsored running event at the 2018 EUROSPINE Annual Meeting in Barcelona
- Accreditation of Spine Centres of Excellence

Flyers have been created to inform potential fund providers about ESF’s objectives and funding options. Members are encouraged to add an additional amount when paying membership fees that will be paid directly to the foundation. If each EUROSPINE member were to contribute just €10 to €50 (or more), the ESF could start funding a research fellowship for Spine Tango and provide useful real-life outcome data for Patient Line and all EUROSPINE members. We have set up a link between the membership fee payment facility on the EUROSPINE website and the ESF website. In addition, an online donation facility is available on the ESF website at www.eurospinefoundation.org.

PLEASE HELP US SUPPORT SPINE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Individual donations from EUROSPINE members and their patients will have a strong impact on the foundation’s ability to finance highly worthwhile projects to advance spine research, sponsor education and improve patient care. Please give generously. Thank you in advance for your support.
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF EUROSPINE

This year marked EUROSPINE’s 20th anniversary, and we couldn’t have chosen a better place to honour the occasion than Barcelona, Spain, the beautiful and world-famous pearl of the Mediterranean. The EUROSPINE Annual Meeting is our Society’s most important yearly event, providing a venue where spine experts from all over the world gather to network and share knowledge while learning about the latest treatments and approaches in spine healthcare. More than 3,500 participants representing 80 countries met in the heart of the capital city of the community of Catalonia (Barcelona International Convention Centre) to celebrate with us and mark the achievements of the past two decades.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME 2018: NEW TECHNIQUES AND INNOVATION

The EUROSPINE Annual Meeting is considered the leading congress in Europe. As such, we work continuously to offer exciting, comprehensive and multidisciplinary content presented by renowned experts. We were very pleased to once again receive close to 1,000 abstracts covering a wide range of techniques, technologies and disciplines.

Following an extensive review process, the dedicated staff of the Programme Committee and co-reviewers selected 90 abstracts for regular podium presentations, 90 for oral ‘quick fires’ and 155 for e-posters. Spirits were high as debaters took to the floor with lively and thought-provoking discussions on hot topics in today’s world of spine care.

In honour of our 20th anniversary, we presented a time capsule in the main lobby. Delegates enjoyed the display of highlights and fun facts about EUROSPINE over the past two decades. Of particular interest were the photos of all past presidents alongside a quotation of their impressions and the most important achievements in their respective years as EUROSPINE President.

Other highlights of the scientific programme included the Best of Show papers, and the Award Lectures. The Medal Lecture, presented by Martin E. Schwab, from Zurich, Switzerland on “New therapies to repair the neuronal hardware and improve functional recovery after spinal cord injury” demonstrated incredible new potential in the regeneration of the spinal cord (www.eurospinemeeting.org/medal-lecture-2018.htm).
EUROSPINE 2018 IN FIGURES

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<th>Countries Represented</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Number of Attendees (excl. Pre-day)</td>
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<td>Industry Representatives</td>
<td>Top 9 Countries</td>
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<td>Participants at Pre-day Courses</td>
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<td>Scientific Programme</td>
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<td>E-Posters</td>
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<td>Industry Lunch Workshops</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Russian Federation</td>
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Exhibition

| Total Number of Exhibitors incl. Spine Village     | 150                    |
| Platinum, Gold, Silver Partners                    | 6                      |
| Industry Exhibition in net sqm.                   | 2,568                  |

PROGRAMME COMMITTEE 2018

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<td>Paulo Pereira</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Degenerative (cervical) Tumour (whole spine)</td>
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<td>Basic Science: Biology, Biomechanics &amp; Epidemiology, Medical economics</td>
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<td>Growing Spine &amp; Minimal invasive surgery</td>
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<td>Baoge Liu</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Infection (whole spine) &amp; New techniques &amp; Complications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Obeid</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Adult deformity (whole spine) &amp; Nonoperative treatment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We would also like to extend our deepest thanks to our co-reviewers, for their huge contribution and support:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degenerative (cervical) Tumour (whole spine)</th>
<th>Degenerative (thoraco-lumbar) &amp; Patient Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ulrich Hubbe, Germany</td>
<td>Aron Lazary, Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sait Naderi, Turkey</td>
<td>Javier Pozones, Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Science: Biology, Epidemiology, Medical Economics</td>
<td>Trauma (whole spine), Diagnostics and Imaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karin Wuertz-Kozak, Switzerland</td>
<td>Sebastiaan Schelfaut, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrzej Maciejczak, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Science: Biomechanics, Medical Economics</td>
<td>Infection (whole spine) &amp; New Techniques &amp; Complications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Joachim Wilke, Germany</td>
<td>Haluk Berk, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Ferguson, Switzerland</td>
<td>Dominique Rothenfluh, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult deformity (whole spine) &amp; Nonoperative Treatment</td>
<td>Growing Spine &amp; Minimal Invasive Surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrico Tessitore, Switzerland</td>
<td>Viola Bullmann, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elias Papadopoulos, Greece</td>
<td>Phil Sell, UK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRE-DAY MEETING AND LUNCH SYMPOSIA

This year’s annual meeting was launched with three highly-popular meetings: Anterior Approaches to the Thoracic and Lumbar Spine, Emerging Technologies in Spine Surgery, both of which offered hands-on and industry demonstrations, and the Spine Tango Users Meeting (STUM). The EUROSPINE 2018 pre-day courses were granted CME credits (ECMEC®s) by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME®). Our lunch symposia topics were clearly well-aligned with our delegates’ interests – all of them were filled to capacity.

Our warmest thanks go to the Lunch Symposia and Pre-day Meeting Committee for their preparations:

- Hossein Mehdian, London, UK (chair)
- Klaus Schnake, Fürth, Germany
- Pedro Berjano, Milan, Italy
- José Cavanilles Walker, Barcelona, Spain

TWO DESERVING HONORARY MEMBERS

For the first time at our 20th anniversary meeting, two longstanding members of EUROSPINE who have made outstanding contributions to the field of spine health were awarded Honorary Memberships. The first and founding EUROSPINE President, Carlos Villanueva of Barcelona, Spain, received the award in a moving tribute by former EUROSPINE President and local host, Ferran Pellisé. An honorary membership was also bestowed upon Professor Jiří Dvořák, second EUROSPINE President from Zurich, Switzerland and founding member of our Society, by Anne Mannion of Zurich, with a warm accolade.

BARCELONA: SUNNY HOSPITALITY

We celebrated our anniversary in fine style under the Spanish sun thanks to the support of our colleagues and hosts, Luis Alvarez Galovich, Ferran Pellisé, and Juan Bago. Due to their efforts, everything ran smoothly at EUROSPINE 2018, leaving our delegates with warm memories of time well spent.

ONE GREAT EVENT LEADS TO THE NEXT

Preparations for EUROSPINE 2019 in Helsinki, Finland (16–18 October 2019) are already in full swing. The incoming Meeting Council, Tamás Fekete, and the Programme Committee are working full out to maintain and even improve our scientific level. It’s shaping up to be a “don’t miss” event for delegates, our MedTech partners and all other involved stakeholders. See you in Helsinki!
The 4th EUROSPINE Spring Specialty Meeting “Prevention Strategies of Spinal Disability. A Global Burden and a Concern for All Communities” was held in Vienna, Austria from 26–27 April 2018.

Delegates from 28 countries from all fields of spinal care enjoyed six interdisciplinary symposia covering a wide variety of topics – both surgical and non-surgical – on this pressing issue with worldwide impact.

The excellent feedback received from the participants through the delegates’ survey decisively strengthens our commitment and effort to establish Spring Specialty Meetings as an essential part of our annual education programme.

We wish to thank our Meeting Chairs, Margareta Nordin (FR), Frank Kandziora (D) and Pierre Côté (CAN) for helping to make this event a great success.
An Active Research Community: High-Quality Patient Care

Excellence in spine care can be achieved with a research community committed to high quality and evidence-based care. EUROSPINE places a high priority on research and aims to stimulate, facilitate and promote an active research community within EUROSPINE. The goal is to advance knowledge and evidence in treatments for spinal disorders, thereby optimising care for patients.

The main objectives of the Research Council are to:

1. Support spine research
2. Educate spine researchers
3. Foster an active spine research community within the Society

The Research Council works to reach its objectives by supporting and educating current and new groups of researchers who will engage in high-quality research projects. It is responsible for managing three programmes:

1. Task Force Research (TFR)
2. Spine Tango
3. EUROSPINE Awards

SUPPORTING RESEARCH: RESEARCH GRANTS AND AWARDS

The Task Force Research (TFR) evaluates applications for research grants. The paperless application system can be accessed by members of EUROSPINE via the EUROSPINE website (www.eurospine.org/rules-for-submission-of-proposal-for-funding.htm). Grant applications undergo a rigorous review process by the TFR, who then recommends funding for selected applications to the EUROSPINE Executive Committee (ExCom). Funding is subsequently distributed in accordance with the ExCom’s decisions.

There are three grant categories (www.eurospine.org/types-of-grant.htm):

1. Development grant – up to €10,000
2. Pilot study grant – up to €30,000
3. Main grant over 3 years – up to €100,000

A total of €1,171,354 has been distributed in research grants during the period 2011–2018 for research projects managed by EUROSPINE members. Funding has been provided for 33 projects run by research groups from 13...
countries: Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK and the USA.

The Awards Committee manages two awards presented at the EUROSPINE Annual Meeting:

1. the “EUROSPINE Full Paper Award” (£10,000)
2. the “Best EUROSPINE Podium Presentation Award” (£2,000)

EDUCATING SPINE RESEARCHERS: RESEARCH COURSES

The Research Council develops and runs courses and collaborates with renowned institutions and organisations. The education programme covers a spectrum from reading research to applying research in the spine care professional’s daily practice.

EUROSPINE and the Institut Franco-Européen de Chiropraxie (IFEC) renewed their collaboration to deliver the research course “Critical Appraisal of the Spine Literature: The Fundamentals” on 11 January 2018 at the IFEC premises in Toulouse. There were 17 participants with various profiles in spine care, including chiropractors, surgeons, government and veterinary medicine. The critical appraisal course was once again delivered and attended by 12 spine surgeons on 18 June 2018 during the EUROSPINE EduWeek in Strasbourg, France. This included a presentation of basic study designs and a discussion on the various threats to the validity of clinical studies. Learning methods consisted of lectures, group work and workshops.

The 2018 TFR Research Course “Fundamentals of Spine Research Methodology: how to make your research more relevant, feasible and publishable” was held in Porto, Portugal from 12–16 March 2018. This highly-interactive course was hosted by Paulo Pereira. The faculty was comprised of TFR members, ExCom members and other EUROSPINE members led by TFR Research Course Director Rachid Salmi. 13 participants representing seven countries (Egypt, France, Germany, Mexico, The Netherlands, Portugal, and Saudi Arabia) with multidisciplinary backgrounds took part. This five-day course, which included lectures, small working groups and workshops, was well-appreciated by the participants for the very rich exchanges that transpired.

One travel grant was awarded to a participant to attend the Ulm Biomechanics Course from 24–27 July 2018. This grant aims to encourage spine professionals to pursue research and have exposure to biomechanics.

In 2019, the Critical Appraisal of the Spine Literature course will again be offered during the EUROSPINE EduWeek and will also be incorporated as a mandatory module in the soon-to-be-launched EUROSPINE Diploma in Interprofessional Spine Care (EDISC) programme.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

We would like to thank all the faculty and reviewers who have been or are currently involved in the important work carried out by the Research Council. Such commitment and contribution is instrumental for EUROSPINE to continue to be the leading spine society in Europe.

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH: VITAL FOR PATIENT CARE

Through its efforts to foster and support the spine research community, EUROSPINE aims to facilitate the delivery of excellence in research, leading to the very best care for spine patients.
EUROSPINE’s international Spine Tango registry (established in 2002) is a dynamic tool for quality assurance and research on both surgical and conservative treatments, offering:

- Standardised data forms for any type of spinal intervention and follow-up with a long history of ongoing development
- Validated patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs)
- Data protection in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Quality assurance through reporting and benchmarking
- Flexible reporting elements to meet the needs of specific groups e.g. national societies
- Data aggregation to produce statistically robust analyses sooner
- Independent usage by surgeons, hospitals, countries, etc.
- Access to anonymised pooled data for benchmarking and research
- Participation in an international research network
- Proof of performance for surgeons, departments or spine societies
- Prognostic modelling of treatment outcome for shared decision-making to establish realistic patient expectations and standardise spinal care across borders

**A NEW SERVICE PROVIDER**

In 2018, at the request of the Executive Committee (ExCom), the Task Force Spine Tango (TFST) opened a tender process to identify a service provider who would have the infrastructure, experience and expertise to meet the demands of hosting a complex and powerful registry platform. After a long and very thorough process, we selected Northgate Public Services (NPS), the company that manages the National Joint Registry (NJR) in the United Kingdom (more than 2 million cases). In addition to further development of our high-quality international database, our objective is to make the project self-sustainable. For this we are checking the neutral and supplier-independent approach of the NJR for collaboration with industry and insurance.
The decision to change from our long-lasting and best-known university partner at the end of the contract period to an international IT service provider with an extensive track record in registry services was not taken lightly. We wish to extend our sincere thanks to the University of Bern for their strong support over many years in building up the Spine Tango registry.

We are currently in a transition phase that will lead us to a professionalised registry service not only for individual contributors and industry, but also for national spine societies, and private and public health insurances. Of course, strict data protection in adherence to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a constant requirement. In the first quarter of 2019, we plan to begin the changeover from ISPM to NPS. On 1 May 2019, the new Spine Tango Registry will be fully operational, and all historical data will be securely transferred to NPS, the new service provider. In the meantime, our collaboration with ISPM will be prolonged to ensure a smooth transition phase. Each stage of this project has been carried out in consultation with legal counsel.

A USER-FRIENDLY TOOL FOR INDIVIDUAL CLINICIANS, HOSPITALS, AND NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The new registry will provide robust implant data and feedback services to clinicians, hospitals, organisations and medical device manufacturers to strengthen implant surveillance networks. This easy-to-use platform will enable registry users to benchmark performance, comparing individual, group or regional data with a large data pool to improve performance of treatment techniques and implants. Sophisticated statistical methods can prognose treatment effectiveness, safety and outcome across countries. Spine Tango’s benchmarking capability will allow for the comparison of individual, group or regional data with a large data pool and be helpful in improving the performance of individuals or of implants through constructive, non-binding information.

AN EFFICIENT APPROACH TO EUROPE’S NEW DATA COLLECTION LAWS

New data-collection laws across Europe make it mandatory to provide life-cycle evidence on medical devices. With the European spinal implant market continuing to grow in volume (expected to reach $3.46 billion by 20211), and in the development of new implant technologies, effective tracking and monitoring of patient outcomes is of vital importance. The Spine Tango registry’s robust implant data and feedback services will make it easier to comply with these new data-collection laws. Discussions for collaboration with national spine societies are underway regarding the amalgamation of national registers to aggregate data for comparison and analyses.

Some of Europe’s northern countries have led the way in data collection and analysis for roughly 20 years. Data from the National Swedish Registry document how, over a relatively short period of time, outcome assessment has led surgeons to modify their habits in the treatment of degenerative spondylolisthesis, favouring simple decompression over costly instrumentation with equal success and fewer complications.

EASY TO JOIN

To date over 700 hospitals and departments from five continents have contributed data to the registry. Having achieved international recognition, we would like to encourage national societies, hospitals and individual clinicians to join the registry and become part of a worldwide movement to collective evidence.

Patient Line is a multilingual patient information platform operated by EUROSPINE that offers public access to the accumulated know-how and expertise represented by Society members. The website provides patients and their families with comprehensive, up-to-date information on spine disorders and related problems. Managed by a committee of experts from different disciplines, including clinicians and researchers, and edited by a non-clinician, all information is based on the most recent evidence.

Patient Line provides patients with the information they need to discuss treatment options with their doctors. Health care professionals can also direct their patients to Patient Line’s simple and short but pertinent texts, and where appropriate, videos.

Our goals are to:

- Provide patients with information that represents the high ethical standards of the EUROSPINE membership: caring and compassionate.
- Deliver information of high quality that allows freedom of choice and informed decision-making for patients and their families, regardless of background.
- Enable patients to have better satisfaction and confidence in managing their problems.

**ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018**

- A series of new short videos: “Talking Heads: Before Surgery”, providing patients with advice on what to consider before proceeding with surgery, was launched in spring 2018.
- In addition to the existing languages of English, German, French and Spanish, new translated versions of the Patient Line website in Dutch, Italian and Turkish and Hebrew were launched in the fall of 2018.
  - Dutch, Italian and Turkish are the next most common languages spoken by the EUROSPINE membership.
  - Through EUSSAB, Hebrew was commissioned for translation by the Israeli Spine Society.

**PLANS FOR 2019**

Patient Line will continue to provide valuable information to patients. The website will continue to be updated with the latest evidence-based information, and new languages will be added to make information accessible to a wider audience. The committee will continue to work with experts from different disciplines to ensure that the information provided is accurate and up-to-date.
information to a wider audience of patients with translations into Greek, Polish and Portuguese. A patient-centred approach regarding selection of languages will be adopted. Migrant languages will be considered in the future.

News items and new videos will be developed, targeted to a continued increase in public reach of the Patient Line.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to Tamar Pincus, psychologist and researcher in the field of acceptance and commitment therapy for chronic pain, for his outstanding work as Chair of the Patient Line Committee from 2015 until the fall of this year. Philip Sell, spine surgeon, succeeded Tamar Pincus as Chair of the Patient Line Committee in October 2018. Members include Federico Balagué (rheumatologist), Derek Cawley (spine surgeon), Ivan Domazet (spine surgeon), Erland Hermansen (spine surgeon), and Eva Rassmussen-Barr (physiotherapist). The committee is supported by Katelijne Vercaeren (communications professional) as editor and Julie-Lyn Noël (director of education and research and a general medical doctor) for administration.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Julie Lyn Noël for her on-going commitment and support, without which we could not achieve our goals.

A DEPENDABLE RESOURCE FOR PATIENTS

Regardless of how well a consultation goes in terms of rapport, empathy and trust, patients only feel reassured when they receive clear information about aetiology, diagnosis and available interventions of their condition. There is evidence for this and therefore Patient Line is structured to address exactly these points. Patient Line, with its platform and content, hopes to empower patients to work together with their health care professionals to determine the best courses of action related to their spine condition. We believe that through this platform, patients will have better satisfaction, reassurance and confidence to manage their problems. These would ultimately lead to better outcomes.
Advocacy for Spine Health and the Prevention of Spinal Disabilities

It is a privilege to chair the Stakeholder Council following the skilful leadership of Christoph Siepe and Joerg Franke with the collaboration of Beat Leimbacher, Delegate of the ExCom.

The Stakeholder Council of EUROSPINE are represented by Tim Pigott (EUROSPINE President), Jörg Franke (Liaison to MedTechs), Haluk Berk (Liaison to Governmental and Educational Institutions), Everard Munting (Liaison to the Spine Tango Task Force), Phil Sell (Liaison to EUROSPINE Patient Line and Patient Organisations), Christoph Siepe (Liaison to EuSSAB), and Ciaran Bolger (Liaison to the EUROSPINE Foundation). Beat Leimbacher and Julie-Lyn Noël participate as support at all meetings.

CULTIVATING A STRONG NETWORK

The purpose of the Stakeholders Council is to advocate and promote EUROSPINE by building relationships with our network of stakeholders, including national/international spine societies, the MedTech industry, government, political institutions and others throughout Europe and beyond.

As the leading spine society in Europe, EUROSPINE offers a rich combination of attractive programmes and activities. Our best-practice education and research programmes for surgeons are second to none. The newly developed non-surgical EUROSPINE Diploma for Interprofessional Spine Care (EDISC) will be offered for the first time in July 2019. The recently-created accreditation programme, Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence (SSCoE), is an attribution to EUROSPINE’s interest in promoting excellence in spine care around the world. As one of Europe’s oldest medical registries, Spine Tango is in high demand. The registry’s high quality and indication of efficacy for patient outcomes is attracting governments and other organisations who wish to collaborate with EUROSPINE on its continued development. EUROSPINE’s Patient Line has been translated into eight languages to date, and more translations are under development. This patient information platform delivers high quality information that will allow freedom of choice and informed decision making for patients and their families. It is considered one of the best information sources in Europe for patients with spine ailments.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND COLLABORATION

The Stakeholder Council is currently developing advocacy strategies to promote EUROSPINE's
educational and quality-enhancement programmes for spine care clinicians. We are also reviewing strategies to improve patient education and participating in global promotion for spine health by working together with governments, institutions, professional societies and organisations.

Advocacy for best-practice spine care based on evidence is becoming increasingly important as EUROSPINE grows into one of the most prominent global spine societies. Our Society is active throughout Europe and around the world. With our steadily-growing membership base, our excellent education and research programmes, our conferences and much more, we now are in a position to make an impact on policies and governance. For that we need advocacy and new strategies.

The EUROSPINE Stakeholders Council should reflect our members’ wishes. Special thanks to the council members and to all EUROSPINE and EuSSAB members who carry the interest in spine ailments forward into all European communities.
Minutes

Thursday, 20 September 2018, 17:10–18:10
(Members only)

Barcelona (Spain) CCIB, Room 111

84 Members Present

1. WELCOME

Approval of the last protocol: Dublin, 12 October 2017: Approved

2. PRESIDENT’S UPDATE:
   MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS 2017/2018

Frank Kandziora,
EUROSPINE President 2017/2018

Report on the major achievements from each of our strategic priorities: members, spring and annual meetings, education, research, stakeholders and organisation. Setting of standards and latest developments in the realm of quality assurance including SCoE, Patient Line, and Spine Tango.

3. OUTLOOK 2018/2019

Tim Pigott, Incoming President

Address on the future and imminent projects of EUROSPINE, goals and review of our mission and vision to be the driving force and primary partner in Europe for all spinal care issues.

4. SOCIETY BUSINESS:
   FINANCIAL REPORT 2017-2018

Marco Teli, Treasurer

Approval of the Balance Sheet as per 31 December 2017, Income Statement for 2017 and 2018 and Budget 2018: Approved

For details, refer to: “Treasurer’s Statement” and Audit 2017.

Preliminary Budget 2019: Approved

Audit 2017: Approved


5. ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES & FUTURE MEETINGS

Thomas Blattert, Secretary

Executive Committee:

- Create a President-Elect position to be initiated in 2019
- Eliminate the Assistant Treasurer position
- Separate EuSSAB from Stakeholder Council and establish dedicated council

Nomination committee: Kick-off in 2018 to ensure a transparent and high-quality nomination process.

New logos (created to highlight the key areas of EUROSPINE):
6. NOMINATIONS/ELECTIONS 2019

Thomas Blattert, Secretary

The following nominations were supported by the EUROSPINE Executive committee and voted on and ratified by the GA:

President:  
Tim Pigott, UK

Vice President:  
Everard Munting, Belgium

Secretary and Member of the Executive Committee:  
Jörg Franke, Germany

Meeting Council and Member of the Executive Committee:  
Tamás Fekete, Switzerland

Research Council and Member of the Executive Committee:  
Rachid Salmi, France

Stakeholder Council and Member of the Executive Committee:  
Margareta Nordin, France

EuSSAB Council and Member of the Executive Committee:  
Christoph Siepe, Germany

Committee Members:

Education Committee  
Yu Mi Riang, Germany  
Peter Foersth, Sweden

Programme Committee  
Conny Neidlinger-Wilke, Germany  
Javier Pizones, Spain  
Sait Naderi, Turkey

Pre-Day and Lunch Symposia Committee  
Stavros Stavridis, Greece

Patient Line  
Phil Sell, UK (Chair)  
Eva Barr Rasmussen, Sweden  
Ivan Domazet, Hungary

Task Force Spine Tango  
Everard Munting, Belgium  
Josef Grohs, Austria

Task Force Research  
Yann Philippe Charles, France  
Bart Depreitere, Belgium

EuSSAB  
Johan van Lerbeirghe, Belgium

20 September 2018
Thomas Blattert, EUROSPINE Secretary  
Judith Reichert Schild, EUROSPINE Administrative Director
Dear EUROSPINE Members,

Based on our new policy to issue the previous year’s figures before the General Assembly, allowing you to review the figures well in advance, this report covers fiscal year 2018.

REVENUES FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

As stated in prior Treasury Reports, EUROSPINE’s financial performance continues to reflect a strong correlation to revenues generated by the EUROSPINE Annual Meeting. Revenues from EUROSPINE 2018 (held in Barcelona) exceeded not only the forecast amount but also the revenues from the Dublin 2017 meeting.

The Society’s 2018 total income of €2,043,901 is almost on the same level as the 2017 revenue of €2,067,726. This is both due to a steady income from membership fees and to the excellent outcome of the Barcelona Annual Meeting, which was a success both financially and scientifically, based on the feedback we received from delegates. EUROSPINE 2018 attracted over 3,700 participants to Barcelona, taking advantage of our platform to bring together spine specialists from all over the world.

The income from our education activities continues to make a strong and ongoing contribution to the Society’s revenues. The figure for 2018 versus 2017 (€321,043 versus €469,968) is lower because two Education Week (EduWeek) courses were held in 2017, versus one in 2018.

HIGHER THAN EXPECTED NET INCOME

In accordance with our long-term policy to limit our spending to what we earn, and based on the positive income aspects and on some costs that were lower than originally budgeted, we achieved a much better result than originally forecast.

Our Executive Committee considers the loss of €26,807 – which is significantly less than the budgeted loss of €238,300 – to be an acceptable result, with the understanding that the forecast budget for 2019, which includes some extraordinary investments, will definitely result in a loss in 2019.

COST CONTROL

EUROSPINE expenses are grouped into the following categories:
• **Major Activities** (mainly education, research and quality assurance, including registries)

This expense category has been reduced from €755,664 to €644,676. This was due mainly to the lower costs of presenting only one Education Week (combining advanced and basic courses) and to lower research grants. Research grants were lower because we adhered to our high quality standards for awarding grants and this year the only applications to meet those standards totalled €116,048 (2017: €150,482).

• **Special Projects** (Spine Tango, Patient Line, Springer/ESJ) and Committee Costs

Special project expenses once again increased from €295,941 to €329,178 (+ 11.2%), with the highest portion allocated to the Spine Tango registry and its task force (€205,143).

The increase in special project expenses reflects EUROSPINE’s policy to further strengthen its quality-assurance activities. EUROSPINE is fully dedicated to improving outcomes for patients suffering from spinal disorders and injuries. The Spine Tango registry (originally created in 2002) has been switched to a new provider with expert technology to further improve the tracking and monitoring of treatment, implants and surgical outcomes for patients on a global scale.

The ongoing and slightly higher annual investment for Patient Line (€25,890) has again made a great impact. Returns based on the new website generate on average tens of thousands of hits per month.

The much lower costs for Springer (subscription to the European Spine Journal included with our membership) were due to the fact that we switched from the hard copy version to the electronical version.

Another important investment this year has been the development of our new education course, the EUROSPINE Diploma of Inter-professional Spine Care (EDISC). This non-surgical diploma programme is designed to harmonise and modernise conservative care amongst spine clinicians, clinical researchers, insurance companies and other interested parties, providing clinicians with useful and practical skills to manage spine patients of all ages – from children to the elderly.

Committee costs of €91,372 were stable and covered committee work (travel costs and meeting-related expenses) and are in general well-controlled and managed.

• **Human Resource Expenses**

Human resources have represented the highest increase in expenses over the last few years due to the implementation of the Way Forward strategy and the addition of many services and activities for our individual and institutional members, our patients and other important stakeholders.

In 2018, personnel expenses grew by 11.2 % to €717,721, due to the full-year cost impact of the education specialist hired on 1 June 2017.

We are, however, aware that the workload for our team is constantly growing. Exciting new projects are underway to strengthen our registry activities, implement the new EDISC programme and launch our new e-learning platform, requiring the hiring of additional resources which will have a cost impact on future budgets.

• **Other Operating Expenses** (office and marketing expenses)

This cost position is well managed and very stable, with total expenditures of €221,386. However, in the future the stronger focus on social media and general PR activities, and the need for a new website, will require additional investments.
STRONG AND SOLID BALANCE SHEET

As of 31 December 2018, our cash and liquidity position remain very solid at €2,268,012.

The sharp increase from €1,697,604 at the end of 2017 is due to the fact that the money transfer for part of the income from the annual meeting paid by the PCO this year arrived before year end, while in other years this payment was made in January of the following year. This amount, however, will be used to cover ongoing spending and we can assume that our cash position shall remain stable in the area of +/- €1.5 M.

Due to our almost break-even result, our equity also remained secure and stable at €1’691’112.

OUTLOOK FOR 2019

Looking into 2019 and beyond, EUROSPINE will continue to need this strong balance sheet, as market challenges are growing and it will likely become more difficult to obtain sponsorships from industry and other potential contributors.

Our Executive Committee remains fully committed to our mission and vision, which not only means further growth of the Society, but also efficient delivery of additional highly-focussed best practice services to our members and stakeholders at a reasonable cost.

For 2019 we have planned several investments that are crucial for the future success of EUROSPINE, meeting members’ expectations and ensuring that all our activities are for the benefit of patients. The highest priority will be to further build up our registry activities (Spine Tango), implement EDISC as a strong, value-added service for non-surgeons and launch our e-learning programme as a valuable addition to our live education courses.

We have also initiated work on a new website, which is not only a costly but also a challenging project in terms of human resources, considering the technical complexity of consolidating EUROSPINE’s many existing websites.

We are aware that we will have to continue our hard work in 2019 to manage all of these tasks and projects and keep the budgeted loss in the range of around €500,000.

Our final financial result in 2019 will once again be highly dependent on attracting as many delegates as possible to our Annual Meeting in Helsinki and on how quickly we invest in new projects.

As Treasurers, we are proud of the fiscal restraint maintained by the EUROSPINE ExCom, Councils and Committees, and we are grateful for the continuing industry support to our meetings and educational activities. This discipline has helped us to achieve an almost break-even result without drawing on the reserve position set up in 2016 when we achieved an outstanding profit.

May this summary serve as a testament to our full commitment to further improve our efficiency and get the best out of our current investments.

With the very best regards,

The 2017–18 Treasurer

The 2018–19 Treasurer
Balance Sheet as of 31 December (in EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
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<td>Current assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
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<td>Other short-term receivables</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
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<td>Accrued income</td>
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<td>due from third parties</td>
<td>89,288</td>
<td>678,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>due from members</td>
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<td>33,320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total current assets</td>
<td>2,407,780</td>
<td>2,425,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>2,407,780</td>
<td>2,425,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES &amp; SOCIETY’S EQUITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade accounts payables</td>
<td>38,018</td>
<td>127,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other short-term liabilities</td>
<td>14,669</td>
<td>13,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepayments from members</td>
<td>46,350</td>
<td>53,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for long-term prosperity of the Society</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued expenses</td>
<td>317,631</td>
<td>213,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total short-term liabilities</td>
<td>716,668</td>
<td>707,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities</td>
<td>716,668</td>
<td>707,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society’s equity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society capital</td>
<td>1,717,919</td>
<td>1,678,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit (loss) for the year</td>
<td>-26,807</td>
<td>39,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total society’s equity</td>
<td>1,691,112</td>
<td>1,717,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SOCIETY’S EQUITY</strong></td>
<td>2,407,780</td>
<td>2,425,548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Income Statement for the year ended 31 December (in EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member fees</td>
<td>143,570</td>
<td>141,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit EUROSPINE Annual Meeting</td>
<td>1,579,288</td>
<td>1,456,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education / TFR</td>
<td>321,043</td>
<td>469,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total net revenue</strong></td>
<td>2,043,901</td>
<td>2,067,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual meetings</td>
<td>-93,393</td>
<td>-39,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education week</td>
<td>-256,604</td>
<td>-234,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced course</td>
<td>-64,276</td>
<td>-251,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-49,881</td>
<td>-21,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Task Force, Course</td>
<td>-64,474</td>
<td>-58,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Task Force, Grants</td>
<td>-116,048</td>
<td>-150,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total activities</strong></td>
<td>-644,676</td>
<td>-755,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spine Tango</td>
<td>-205,143</td>
<td>-177,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Line</td>
<td>-25,890</td>
<td>-18,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal (Springer)</td>
<td>-25,000</td>
<td>-78,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Surgical Diplomas</td>
<td>-30,498</td>
<td>-6,959</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spine Centres of Excellence</td>
<td>-9,970</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>-2,199</td>
<td>-2,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>-9,850</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jubilee Year 2018 Activities</td>
<td>-20,628</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total projects</strong></td>
<td>-329,178</td>
<td>-295,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex Com</td>
<td>-59,926</td>
<td>-52,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Task Force</td>
<td>-8,764</td>
<td>-11,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Committees</td>
<td>-11,407</td>
<td>-6,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation with related societies</td>
<td>-11,275</td>
<td>-24,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total committees</strong></td>
<td>-91,372</td>
<td>-95,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total activities / Projects / Committees</strong></td>
<td>-1,065,226</td>
<td>-1,146,962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gross profit**

| 978,675 | 920,764 |
## Income Statement for the year ended 31 December (in EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross profit</td>
<td></td>
<td>978,675</td>
<td>920,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel expenses</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-717,721</td>
<td>-640,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and services expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>-106,598</td>
<td>-107,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>-21,722</td>
<td>-22,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT and website</td>
<td></td>
<td>-53,316</td>
<td>-57,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR and annual report</td>
<td></td>
<td>-39,750</td>
<td>-37,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total other operating expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>-221,386</td>
<td>-224,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating result</td>
<td></td>
<td>39,568</td>
<td>55,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial expenses/income</td>
<td></td>
<td>-12,160</td>
<td>-8,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and currency exchange expenses realised</td>
<td></td>
<td>-882</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and currency exchange expenses unrealised</td>
<td></td>
<td>-26,863</td>
<td>-8,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total financial income and expenses</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>-39,905</td>
<td>-16,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraordinary or prior periods expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>-26,470</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit (loss) for the year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>-26,807</strong></td>
<td><strong>39,307</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. GENERAL INFORMATION

These financial statements were prepared according to the principles of the Swiss Law on Accounting and Financial Reporting (Art. 957 - 962 Swiss Code of Obligations).

1.1 Currency and exchange rates

The functional currency of the Company is Euro, as it is the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates. The reporting currency of the Company is Euro.

In preparing the financial statements of the Company, transactions in currencies other than the Company’s functional currency are recorded at the rates of exchange prevailing at the date of the transactions.

2. KEY ACCOUNTING AND VALUATION PRINCIPLES

The main accounting and valuation principles used, which are not already specified by the Code of Obligations, are described as follows:

2.1 Prepaid expenses

Prepaid expenses are prepayments made for meetings in the following years.

2.2 Provision

A provision of EUR 300,000 has been made in 2016 in order to secure the long-term prosperity of the society and to straighten income fluctuation over the years. In 2017 and 2018 this position remains unchanged.

3. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3.1 Number of full-time equivalents

The annual average number of full-time equivalents for the reporting year, as well as the previous year, did not exceed 10.

3.2 Pension scheme liabilities

In 2018 there are liabilities towards the pension scheme of EUR 31 (previous year: EUR 8’476).

3.3 Tax exemption

The exemption from income and capital taxes was approved by the Cantonal Tax Office Zurich on 31 July 2008. EUROSPINE is a non-profit organisation.

3.4 Significant events after the balance sheet date

There are no significant events after the balance sheet date which could impact the book value of the assets or liabilities or which should be disclosed here.

4. OTHER NOTES

4.1 Profit EUROSPINE Congress Dublin 2017 and Barcelona 2018

Congress accounts were prepared by external service providers. The society’s accountants have performed procedures agreed in accordance with the Swiss Auditing Standard 920 in respect to these congress statements. The net results of these congresses are received by EUROSPINE.

4.2 Loss Spring Specialty Meeting Vienna 2018

Congress accounts were prepared by external service providers. No Spring meeting was held in prior year. No procedures agreed in accordance with the Swiss Auditing Standard 920 were performed in respect to these congress statements.

4.3 Explanations concerning extraordinary or prior periods items in the profit and loss account

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correction differences memberfees 2016 and 2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected differences</td>
<td>-26,470</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As statutory auditors, we have examined the financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes) of EUROSPINE, the Spine Society of Europe for the year ended December 31, 2018.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the board of the society. Our responsibility is to perform a limited statutory examination on these financial statements. We confirm that we meet the licensing and independence requirements as stipulated by Swiss law.

We conducted our examination in accordance with the Swiss Standard on the Limited Statutory Examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of company personnel and analytical procedures as well as detailed tests of company documents as considered necessary in the circumstances. However, the testing of operational processes and the internal control system, as well as inquiries and further testing procedures to detect fraud or other legal violations, are not within the scope of this examination.

Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not comply with Swiss law and the society's articles of incorporation.

TREUHAND VON FLÜE AG

H.-P. von Flüe
lic.oecc. HSG
licensed audit expert

G. Biotti
auditor in charge
licensed audit expert

Enclosures:
- Financial Statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes)
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### Future Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EUROSPINE 2022</td>
<td>19–21 October</td>
<td>Milan, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROSPINE 2021</td>
<td>13–15 October</td>
<td>Gothenburg, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFR Course 2020</td>
<td>14–17 March</td>
<td>Ljubljana, Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Specialty Meeting 2019</td>
<td>2–3 May</td>
<td>Frankfurt, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid EduWeek 2019</td>
<td>18–20 November</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EduWeek 2019</td>
<td>1–5 July</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Specialty Meeting 2020</td>
<td>30 April – 1 May</td>
<td>Frankfurt, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROSPINE 2020</td>
<td>7–9 October</td>
<td>Vienna, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROSPINE 2022</td>
<td>19–21 October</td>
<td>Milan, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROSPINE 2023</td>
<td>4–6 October</td>
<td>Frankfurt, Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The first 2 Surgical Spine Centres of Excellence (SSCoE) were certified in 2018 for meeting high treatment standards in spine surgery under EUROSPINE’s accreditation programme.

EUROSPINE’s Spring Specialty Meetings have added detailed insight into specialised topics in spine health since 2014.

Since 2009, EUROSPINE’s Task Force Research (TFR) has distributed > EUR 1 million and held 18 research courses.

EUROSPINE’s Annual Meeting is experiencing continuous growth as the leading spine congress in Europe, attracting >3,000 delegates, 159 exhibitors and >1,000 abstract submissions.

EduWeek: 5 EUROSPINE Diploma modules, 2 advanced modules and course on the critical appraisal of spine literature set the standard for diploma equivalence with 7 spine societies and MoU with EFORT and EANS.

Individual membership in EUROSPINE surpassed 1,000 in 2016 and has almost tripled since 2010. 30 institutional members representing 7,200 members have also joined through EuSSAB, making EUROSPINE the 2nd largest international spine society in the world.

Founded in 2003, >114,000 surgery cases & 72 Medline publications now document the effectiveness and safety of spine treatments and technologies for users from 67 countries.

an easy-to-understand, evidence-based information platform designed specifically for patients, is available in 8 languages: DE, EN, NL, FR, IT, ES, TR, IW

EUROSPINE 1998–2018: 20 Years of EUROSPINE: a small selection of EUROSPINE’s big achievements!