

**Minutes**  
**of the General Assembly of EURO-CIU,**  
**Nottingham, Saturday, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2007**

Delegates from 12 member countries were present as well as representatives of our supporting members (see annexe 1)

Point 1

**Opening of the assembly and approval of the agenda**

The following agenda was approved:

1. Opening of the assembly by the President
2. Activity Report 2006
3. CI-Identity card
4. Financial Report 2006
5. Statement of the auditor
6. Discharge of the board
7. Voting on internal rules of EURO-CIU (Amendments)
8. Election of the board for a 4-year mandate  
Nominations: see annexes
9. Budget 2007
10. Nomination of an auditor (§8)
11. Assembly 2008 in  
Luxembourg  
Linz/Innsbruck (Austria)  
Barcelona (Spain)  
Saragossa  
Assembly and Symposium in 2009: PROPOSALS  
Linz/Innsbruck?
12. Orientation of EURO-CIU activities for 2007/2008
13. Information from the new member countries
14. Presentation by producers
15. Miscellaneous
16. Installation of the new board
17. Closing by the newly elected President

The President, Mr. Gilles Cognat, opens the assembly by telling some personal words to François and Sylvie Appy, in memory of their recently deceased daughter Julie. We, as EURO-CIU community, are sad about this, as Julie was part of our big CI-family and she will remain so. We admired her courage and her friendly temper. She will stay with us.

Sylvie Appy said some words of thanking to everybody for having accepted Julie like she was and for having given attention to her.

The President Cognat, being a CI-wearer himself, proposes that the chair of this meeting be Mr. Hendrik Fehr and that Mrs. Andrea Bikardi fulfil the secretarial tasks. The assembly approves this proposal.

Mr. Cognat pursues by welcoming the delegate of the Estonian CI-association for children, Mrs. Epp Müil, as a new member of EURO-CIU. We hope that she will enjoy the benefits of our European network.

## Point 2

### **Activity Report**

Our secretary prepared the results of the 3 inquiries of this year:

1. the usual state-of-the-art on implantation
2. the possibilities and state of bilateral implantation in the various countries and
3. the state of management of CI's.

This year, the response on the inquiries was rather slow and unfortunately, no data was obtained from Austria and from Spain, due to hard disk-problems.

The secretary, Mr. van Hardeveld shows some slides that indicate that the absolute number of CI-wearers in the larger countries is the highest. However, if we look at the relative numbers, this is the number of CI-wearers per million of inhabitants in a country which is the most important, so the mutual positions change dramatically.

Without the data of Austria, Sweden is the country with the highest implantation rate, both regarding the total number of unilateral cochlear implantations as well as the number of bilateral implantations. Especially in Scandinavia and in Switzerland, the care for CI-children is a top priority.

Ruud promises to publish the detailed results in the forthcoming Newsletter. However, before doing so, he has to contact a number of members to get more specified information, especially on bilateral implantation and management.

He made some calculations on the yearly number of implantations from the data provided by the members in the past and he has to conclude that not all numbers are reliable. Therefore, he asks the members to do their utmost to provide us with reliable data and to check the continuity.

All questionnaires have to be revised to make the answers unambiguous.

Hendrik Fehr says that enforcing the statistical analysis will be a strong point of interest of the new board and that he wants to push the European Commission to participate in harmonising the statistics. Furthermore, the producers can be of help, and if necessary, the headquarters should be contacted.

Ann-Charlotte suggests that EURO-CIU should make an official questionnaire to be sent by the country-organisations to the implantation clinics and to the manufacturers (or country representatives) to obtain more specific data on adult/children/bilateral implantation and on their implantation rates. The difficulty with clinics is that they do

not want to answer to such a questionnaire, as for example in Germany. The non-willingness of these clinics to participate should be clearly mentioned in the statistics.

Mustafa Koyuncu remarks that he can only get detailed figures if EURO-CIU is member of a Europe CONECCS (Consultation, la Commission Européenne et la Société Civile).

### Contacts with producers

Gilles Cognat reports on his contacts with producers and the discussions on a “producer symposium” as well as on a possible producers’ participation in the “Newsletter”. Cochlear is willing to pay a membership fee of €5000/year during 3 years to finance our symposium, which should not be a “producer symposium”. They also support the idea of an advisory and scientific counsel.

Martina Junius met with Med-EI’s Dr. Hochmair who said to be interested in a cooperation with us. They would look for a permanent participation.

Gilles Cognat met Mr. Miller from Advanced Bionics twice. He asked for a partnership for exchange of information and survey of results. Furthermore, they are interested to have a link on our website. Advanced Bionics is willing to pay a membership fee of €3000/year during 3 years with an evaluation after 2 years.

Gilles Cognat also spoke to Neurelec, the French producer. They want to give information to our members and to have a link on our website as well as a participation in our Newsletter.

Like Med-EI, Neurelec is willing to pay a membership fee of €1500/year during 3 years with a review after 2 years.

Regarding the remarks that it seems unfair that producers pay such different fees, Brian Archbold says that this was also the case in sponsoring the EURO-CIU symposium yesterday. Branding the contributions as gold, silver and bronze solved a possible problem that might have risen.

The representative of Advanced Bionics elucidates that they are keen to help supporting an independent EURO-CIU and we are looking at the ways how to do this. He thinks it is fair to address to manufacturers for funding. As it is mainly a financial sponsoring for the EURO-CIU symposia, he prefers to stick to the traditional joint sponsorship instead of an aid just for a particular event.

### Point 3

#### **Identity card**

Martina Junius gives a short overview. The ID card was proposed by the Spanish delegation in the Antalya-meeting. In Barcelona 2006, we discussed the draft and today, we present the final version, which can be introduced by the individual national associations. The card may facilitate information at checkpoints for safety control.

Cochlear, which is willing to continue the project, approves the present proposal. The card is very simple and a specimen is presented as annexe 2.

#### Point 4

##### **Financial Report**

The treasurer, Mr. Henri-François Baiverlin being unable to be present in this meeting asked Mr. Fehr to present the data.

He says that the balance sheet totals at €23005.67, which amount is made up of membership fees, generous donations and some other small amounts. A number of membership fees is still due.

The expenditures totalled to €7199.05 and consists of the usual things. Thanks to the large donations, we can afford a part-time secretary to support us, Andrea Bikardi – present here. Our main costs are: travelling costs to the board meetings in Luxembourg and the cost of the GA.

#### Point 5

##### **Auditor Report**

Peter has examined the financial information as Excel file and he has also compared them with the original bank notes. He checked all of them and found that the accounting was done properly and correctly.

Brian Archbold as a retired banker is less satisfied with the overall data. Without detailed figures he cannot make much out of all presented.

He proposes that in the next meetings, the detailed figures be presented in writing in front of us and not only by reading them out from a presentation.

The board takes notice hereof.

#### Point 6

##### **Discharge of the board**

Mr. Peter Helmhout proposes the assembly to discharge the board. The voting shows that 22 votes agree and that the Spanish delegation is against, without explaining their vote.

**The board is discharged.**

## Point 7

### **Voting on amendments of internal rules**

The amendments have been sent to all members by e-mail. We did not receive any comment. Consequently, the amendments on the articles 8, 10 and 11 can be voted.

Article 8 gives the rules for the election procedure and the way in which nominations can be made.

Voting on article 8: present 24 votes: pro 22 votes; against 0; abstentions 2.

Article 10 concerns practical points on managing the General Assembly.

Voting on article 10: present 24 votes: pro 22 votes; against 0; abstentions 2.

Article 11 says that if something is not ruled, the board decides how to act.

Voting on article 11: present 24 votes: pro 22 votes: against 0: abstentions 2.

### **The members approve all amendments.**

## Point 8

### **Election of the board for a 4-year mandate and its advisors**

The members were invited to propose candidates for the various positions in the board. The nominations were sent to all members together with a small CV.

We received one nomination for Mr. Gilles Cognat as President from the French delegation.

For the two positions of Vice-President, we received three nominations:

1. Mrs. Maria-Teresa Amat by AICE (Spain)
2. Mr. Richard Byrnes by NCIUA (UK) and
3. Mr. Hendrik Fehr by DCIG (D).

For the position of Treasurer, one nomination was received for Henri-François Baiverlin by Apedaf (B), whereas for the position of Secretary Mr. Ruud van Hardeveld was nominated by NVVS (NL).

For advisor to the board, 4 nominations were received: Mrs. Alison Heath from NCIUA (UK), Mrs. Gabriele Stevens from DCIG (D), Mr. Jean Welter from LACI (LUX) and Mr. Fernando Giménez from AICE (Spain).

Voting for Mr. Cognat for President:

Present 24 votes: pro 23 votes; against 0; abstentions 1.

### **Mr. Gilles Cognat is elected and accepts.**

To shorten the voting procedure for the Vice-Presidents, it is proposed that each delegate with voting right writes down two names on the voting ballot.

Before the voting starts, Mrs. Maria-Teresa Amat and Mr. Richard Byrnes present themselves to the assembly.

Voting for the Vice-Presidencies:

Present 48 votes:

<b>pro Hendrik Fehr</b>	<b>24 votes;</b>	<b>elected and accepts</b>
<b>pro Maria-Teresa Amat</b>	<b>18 votes;</b>	<b>elected and accepts</b>
pro Richard Byrnes	6 votes:	not elected
abstentions	0 votes	
Total	48 votes.	

Both the nominations of Henri-François Baiverlin for Treasurer and Ruud van Hardeveld as Secretary obtain **unanimity of the assembly**.

**Both accept their election.**

For advisor to the board, 4 nominations came; while in the past, only three advisors were nominated.

After a personal presentation given by **Gabriele Stevens (DCIG)**, highlighting her achievements as a lawyer and judge, EURO-CIU would be glad to welcome her as a juridical expert advising the board. The other candidates are well-known to all of us: Mrs. **Alison Heath (UK)** as advisor, dealing with the Newsletter, Mr. **Fernando Giménez (Spain)**, dealing with the website and Mr. **Jean Welter (LUX)**, dealing with administrative and Luxembourgish legal matters. All would like to continue their efforts.

Mr. Fehr as chairperson proposes the assembly to agree on an increase of the number of advisors to the board to four. The assembly agrees unanimously on this proposal.

**This means that all four nominees are elected as advisor to the board.**

All accept their position.

The chairperson notes that after this election, the number of implant users in the board is maintained and that furthermore, the male /female ratio is decreased.

Mr. Fehr says some words of sincere thanks to Mrs. Martina Junius, one of the founders of EURO-CIU who is now leaving us after 12 years of service. As a small gift, Ruud presents her a bronze replica of the ammonite, which served as model for the logo of EURO-CIU.

Mrs. Martina Junius thanks for the gift and gives a nice dia presentation on the founding of EURO-CIU 12 years ago. Many friends are recognisable like Ann-Charlotte, Anne-Marie, Sylvie, Hendrik and the late Franz Wimmer.

Finally, she wishes the new board and us all the best in continuing the work that started 12 years ago.

In between the voting procedure, Mr. Fehr gave some information on our relation with EDF, the European Disability Forum. EDF requires that full members represent at least  $\frac{1}{2} + 1$  of the existing European member countries. EURO-CIU meets this condition since we have more than 14 members of the 27 countries of the EU.

EURO-CIU has bought access to the new website EUROPE. Thus, we will go to a new web address [www.eurociu.eu](http://www.eurociu.eu) in the near future.

#### Point 10

##### **Nomination of an auditor**

Mr. Fehr proposes on behalf of the board to appoint Mr. Peter Helmhout as auditor for the next mandatory period.

The assembly agrees unanimously on this proposal.

**Mr. Helmhout is appointed as auditor and accepts this position.**

#### Point 11

##### **Assembly sites 2008 and 2009**

###### **GA 2008**

During last year's Barcelona GA, proposals for the 2008 GA were made by:

LACI - Luxembourg

CIA – Innsbruck

AICE – Saragossa / Barcelona.

A representative of CIA being absent, we have to abandon Innsbruck, whereas Spain withdraws the Barcelona option.

Danielle Welter (LACI), representing her mother Anne-Marie (absent this afternoon for personal reason), highlights the possibilities that LACI has to host the GA in Luxembourg. The fact that Luxembourg is easily reachable by cheap flights and by railroad turns out to be very good. Hotel prices are currently rather high due to the status of Luxembourg-city as European capital of culture, but it is expected that next year, the prices get down to the normal ones.

Fernando Giménez (AICE) gives a video presentation of Saragossa.

Voting result: Luxembourg 16 votes, Saragossa 7 votes, abstention 1.

**LACI is proud to organise the GA next year on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2008**, a date that might interfere with the Luxembourgish Easter holidays.

## **Symposium and GA in 2009**

The only proposal made in Barcelona for GA and symposium in 2009 came from CIA. However, this proposal should now be annulled, CIA not being present.

Ann-Charlotte (S) says that she could perhaps organise it with the help of The Ear Foundation in the south of Sweden.

In the meantime, Spain is also willing to organise it and wants to know if sites on other continents might be possible. (This has to be discussed within the board).

Spain affirms to have the budget for organising the **meeting in Saragossa** and gets a go-ahead of the assembly after a **unanimous vote in favour of their offer**.

### Point 12

#### **Orientation of activities for 2008/2009**

Mr. Cognat gives a PowerPoint presentation on this matter. (See annex 3).

Additionally, the board has to focus on the point evidenced by Ann-Charlotte this morning regarding the inquiries and the unwilling centres. Obtaining an involvement of producers in the inquiries will also be explored.

The renewal of the old leaflet of EURO-CIU will be a priority point and so will be the preparation of a booklet with the inquiries as well.

Gilles Cognat will work on the partnership with the producers.

A possible opening of our Newsletter for information to producers will be discussed.

The formation of a scientific and advisory council will be given the President's attention too.

Hendrik Fehr will be involved in strengthening the relation with EU institutions and the EDF. Fernando Giménez will redesign our website under [www.eurociu.europa.eu](http://www.eurociu.europa.eu).

Naturally, there will be the standard work as for example the preparation of the GA and the symposium.

Ann-Charlotte Gyllenram argues that as part of the strengthening of relations within the EU, EURO-CIU should help the countries with poor implantation figures to raise the efforts.

Alison Heath wants an elucidation on the partnership with producers and their involvement in enquiries.

Gilles Cognat explains that it is of mutual interest to set up certain statistics or enquiries. Hence, the dissemination of new product information in the Newsletter is interesting. According to Ann-Charlotte Gyllenram, the latter is quite normal practice

in Sweden and helps a proper financing. She thinks that it has to be our ambition to come to a printed version of the Newsletter, maybe in English, enabling the various organisations to distribute them.

### Point 13

#### **Contributions from new member states**

This year, the presentations by the member countries had to be limited, due to the heavy agenda.

The board suggests that, in the future, the member countries disseminate during the General Assembly some written information on the state of the affairs in their respective country.

However, even the Newsletter is a good place to give information rather than discussion, it is not possible.

All members are asked to contribute to the forthcoming Newsletter.

Mrs. Epp Müil presents our new member Estonia. Since 3 years, Estonia is a member of the EU, so a EURO-CIU's membership became possible for it. Mrs. Epp Müil is the President of the 5 years old CI organisation, which was recently registered officially. Implantation in Estonia started in 2000 (her daughter being the first) and presently, there are 54 children and 12 adults with an implant. It exists only one very cooperative clinic. Currently, no bilateral for financial reasons, but she hopes to manage that.

Activities are among others seminars, courses, summer camps and the making of a DVD for the parents.

Mrs. Felicia Morgese, from Varese, Italy is member of the CI association founded in 1997. The association supports families and the hospital team. In Italy, the cooperation with hospitals is, generally spoken, problematic. The association has a foundation which funds people in the hospital to enlarge the effort in speech therapy and rehabilitation. They also try to enlarge the effort in neonatal screening, which covers in the north 50 % and only 20% in the rest of Italy. Thence, many parents discover the hearing problem of their child very late. Varese attracts many people from the south, the whole family indeed, in case of implantation and rehabilitation.

In Varese, there are 86 bilateral implanted people, 73 children and 13 adults.

Hendrik Fehr says that EURO-CIU had an Italian contact from the south, but we lost it.

## Point 14

### **Presentation by producers**

Mr. David Miller of Advanced Bionics Corporation (ABC) says the company aims 4 reference points:

1. Quality (both performance and reliability)
2. Resorting hearing (applying the latest technology)
3. Design (attractive, easy to use, flexible and upgradeable) and
4. Partnership (with both recipients networks and clinical- and social teams).

The performance has significantly increased over the time and signal rate to the auditory nerve has increased from 6500 to 83000 per second, whereas presently the stimulation has gone from 8 up to 120 channels.

ABC uses rechargeable batteries, which are steadily improved.

The dynamic range, in which optimal speech understanding is possible, being small (15 dB) for the early processors, is greatly enlarged in the new technology.

Mr. Miller stresses that the processor is made user-friendly, especially for children.

Another important point is the cooperation with the Ear Foundation, Mary Hare and with a users' network in the development of educative materials.

Mr. Hubert Chan of Cochlear gives an update on new products.

First of all, he mentions the development of a set of accessories for an easier conversion of a BTE into a body worn, giving a safe and comfortable solution for young babies and children. Furthermore, a "snug fit" was developed (a retention device to adjust and hold the earpiece in place for active babies and young children).

Recently, a tamper proof battery holder was launched, improving the safety for babies, which is available in pink and blue.

For the Freedom, he mentioned the flexible option of a rechargeable battery (which lasts at least 16 hours) or 3 disposable batteries. He referred to the new mini BTE that takes 2 zinc-air batteries, with a good battery life.

Recently, the Freedom for C24 implants became available and the development of a C22 implant - compatible with Freedom - is in progress.

Mr. P. Jeffrey of Neurelec (MXM) explains that MXM has been in cochlear implants since 1986 and launched the well-known Digisonic SP processor in January 2004.

Lately, the original 3-division structure of MXM (sterilisation, ophthalmic's and SP's) was converted into 3 separate organisations. The SP division was renamed to NEURELEC. The 20-channel Digisonic processor has very good reliability statistics.

Research focuses especially on reducing power consumption and improving the coding strategy. Currently, the processor runs at least 4 days on 2 batteries. For

children, they developed a lightweight BTE with remove battery pack, lasting at least 8 days but the recharge is also possible.

Brand new is the solution for bilateral implantation with uses one implant with double 12-channel electrode arrays, of which one goes contra lateral beneath the skin. Two microphones are used and the cost of the equipment is about 10 % higher than for a single CI.

Neurelec regularly publishes the reliability data of Digisonic.

Mr. Chris Durst of Med-EI says that Med-EI offers currently the choice of housing for the implant, the Pulsar with ceramics or the Sonata with Titanium. Both are MRI compatible and can come with a range of different electrodes to suit different cochleas. The OPUS 2 with a modular, switch free design was recently released.

Some new sound processing strategies are available for the Opus, the major one being a fine structure processing which allows a better speech perception in noisy environment as well as tonal languages than the traditional envelope-based strategies do.

Since long time, Med-EI has been involved in bilateral implantation that shows the restoration of the binaural abilities, speech understanding in noise and sound localisation.

Med-EI is highly involved in the preservation of low frequency hearing and combined electric stimulation, EAS, electro-acoustic stimulation. This asks for special surgery and the use of shorter electrodes. The DUET processor was introduced in November 2005.

Wishful thinking is still about fully implantable CI systems and drug releasing systems, encouraging the nerve's growth towards the electrodes.

Mr. Archbold asks what the other producers are doing in the field of EAS.

Mr. Chan says Cochlear is very interested in and is researching electrodes that can make it possible.

Mr. Miller says that Advanced Bionics is doing as well development work in that direction, while Mr. Jeffrey adds that at Neurelec, the situation is similar but presently, there have other priorities.

#### Point 15

#### **Miscellaneous**

1. Please inform us about all changes occurring in your associations: names, e-mail address, postal address, etc.
2. Please continue to send us your Newsletter

## Point 16

### **Installation of the new board**

The President Cognat invites Maria-Teresa to take place at the board table. He is very glad to have a new board member from Spain, which means that the south of Europe is now better represented.

He especially mentions the growth of EURO-CIU to a Baltic state and he hopes that further growth will be possible.

Mr. Cognat reflects on the base of EURO-CIU's existence and he asks all members to communicate to the board what they expect from EURO-CIU but also, to give us the necessary information for doing our work properly.

Upon closing the meeting, Mr. Cognat thanks Susie for palantyping the meeting so nicely and Mr. Brian Archbold for the marvellous hosting and organisation of both the assembly and the symposium.

### **Annexes:**

1. List of participants
2. Specimen of the ID card
3. PP presentation of activities

### **Action points:**

1. Proper presentation of the financial data in PP dia's
2. Agenda point "Approval of minutes of meeting prior to the GA"
3. Ask Spain what was the reason of their contrary voting on the discharge of the board and their abstention on the internal rules
4. GA and/or symposium sites outside the EU?
5. Follow-up of enquiries and statistics, official EURO-CIU questionnaires for local use and for "difficult" centres.