

# Report from the European Regional Organization of the FDI (ERO-FDI)



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ERO President

Dear colleagues and readers,

I feel very privileged to share with you my impressions from the wonderful ERO Plenary session that was held in Istanbul in April, 28-29th, 2023.

Currently, ERO represents dentists from 34 countries and has 42 Dental associations as members. The 2023 Spring meeting was attended by 49 delegates.

A special welcome was extended to the guests professor Ihsane Ben Yahya President of the FDI, FDI-CEO Enzo Bondioni and some of his staff members, former FDI and ERO-President Gerhard Seeberger, former FDI-President, Michèle Aerden, former ERO-Presidents Anna Lella and Michael Frank. The delegates appreciated the presence of Freddie Sloth-Lijsberg, Council of European Dentists (CED) President, who addressed a few words to the assembly. Both organisations share the same goals, as he mentioned in his short speech, to improve and maintain oral health in Europe.

A very interesting presentation was the one by the President of the Turkish Dental Association Ahmet Tarik İşmen who expressed his pleasure as host of this meeting in his country, which celebrates the 100th anniversary of its foundation in 2023. He introduced the country and the Turkish Dental Association.

I had the pleasure to inform about the good cooperation with our mother organization, the FDI. It has resulted, for example, in the workshop that took place on Saturday on the margin of the Plenary session and was widely attended. It was a pilot workshop on Vision 2030, which will hopefully be duplicated in other regions of the FDI. Lively contact was also maintained with the ADEE and the CED. A CED-ERO task force on "Liberal Profession in Europe" has also been established to deal with the hot topic of corporate dentistry versus liberal dental practice nowadays and in the near future. The importance of working with young colleagues who, after all, represent our professional future, is of the utmost importance for the ERO. This interest has led to the ERO-EDSA Awards – in this respect, prof. Taner Yücel and prof. Paula Perlea read 16 submitted essays and evaluated them using a grid and finally selected 3 winners, who were announced during the Plenary session.

Prof. Paula Perlea presented the new social media plan. ERO is to become more active in communication. Together with a small team, we wish to promote ERO's greater presence on the social media.

The real work comes from our working groups (WG).

The Chair of WG Aging Population, Jean-Philippe Haesler, informed that the web application of the "Toothbrushing manual" has been finalized and will be available in 6 languages. It is an amazing product helping elderly people with their daily hygiene. The caregivers in institutions and hospitals would also hugely profit from the web application. The delegates welcome this endeavour.

Gerhard Seeberger, who chairs the WG Liberal Dental Practice, reported a good response to the survey relaunched from 2016 on the topic of "Liberal practice at times of multi-dentist dental offices, office networks and ambulatory healthcare centers". The results will be presented in Sydney, and we can't wait to see the development.

The WG Relation between Dental Practitioners and Universities represented by prof. Mare Saag presented a paper on "Interprofessional Education: Strengths, Weaknesses, Barriers".

Integration of the non-EU countries is the task of the WG Integration. Ilshat Yuldashev was appointed as its new chair. The updated CED manual, to which non-EU countries dental associations contributed, will reflect dentistry as practiced in the European countries.

In her report, prof. Hande Şar-Sancakli, as Chairwoman of the WG Continuing Medical Education in Dentistry, points out the importance of the FDI Vision 2023 in promoting oral health as an essential component of overall health and well-being. Thus, one of the main pillars of Vision 2030 is the training of high-performing oral health personnel. They strongly believe that both basic and advanced training must serve this goal. The working group has conducted a survey to find out what theoretical and practical gaps exist in training and how any deficits can be remedied.

Doniphan Hammer's report representing WG Oral Health Highlights the many technological innovations and challenges that the dental team faces and must overcome. This is not only about dental technology, but also about management and communication. The working group strongly recommends that member associations adapt professional and educational standards regarding digitalisation in dentistry.

Roman Šmucler presented the results of a survey conducted by WG Digitalization in Dentistry - E-Health - Artificial Intelligence - on digitalisation in dental practices and dental education. One of the most significant challenges posed by AI in dentistry seems to be data quality. There needs to be human control, appropriate guidelines, and patient information when such technologies as AI are used. Finally, safety is also very important, and the ethical implications must not be forgotten.

Underlining the importance of the relation between oral health and general health, ERO decided to create a new working group on "Oral Health and General Health".

There are three main themes which emerged from the submitted National Associations reports. Certainly, a major concern is "corporate dentistry" and changing the traditional model of the dental practice, in some countries, the training of young dentists or the training centres are as many topics of discussion. Finally, the insufficient insurance systems or failing reimbursement for dental services by the insurance companies are a cause of concern for dentists in several countries.

The increased costs for energy supply, rent and personnel cause problems for many dentists across Europe.

Overall, it has been a great meeting of colleagues, professionals, and friends, in the beautiful historical city of Istanbul. Looking forward to meeting many of you in Sydney during the FDI Parliament in September 2023 and/or in Limassol, Cyprus for the ERO Spring Plenary Session 2024!

Faithfully yours,

Simona Dianišková  
ERO President