

EFSHT COUNCIL MEETING - Minutes

Basel 2nd–3rd June 2026

Present:

The Executive Committee:

Marianne von Haller	President
Angeliki Vervainioti	President-Elect
Gabi Versümer Bucker	Treasurer
Çiğdem Öksüz	Secretary
Karin Boer-Vreeke	Past-President

Full Member Societies:

Claudia Pacher	Austria
Caroline Meulyzer	Belgium
Karen Boldreel Madsen	Denmark
Milla Velama	Finland
Michel Reisdorf	France (observer: Marie Schwebel)
Ingela Henningsen	Germany
Erifyli Ntikoudi	Greece
Simone Derham	Ireland
Giulia Pompili	Italy
Rob van Huis	The Netherlands
Kristine Lundby	Norway
Urška Levičnik	Slovenia (observer; Eva Močnik)
Núria Carnicero	Spain
Jenny Thorburn	Sweden
Ursula Osterwalder	Switzerland
Semin Akel	Turkiye
Leanne Topçuoğlu	United Kingdom

Milada Kukackova (Czech Republic) joined at 10 o'clock on the second day.

Apologies:

- Portugal

Guest:

- Stacey Doyon – IFSHT President
- Francesco Romagnoli – IFSHT President elect

Committee members attendance:

Scientific Committee:

- Alice Orts Hansen
- Lisa Newington
- Marie Petelet

Education Committee:

- Raquel Cantero
- Marloes Hofstra

Communication Committee

- Paul de Buck
- Francesco Romagnoli
- Hayley Smith

The Council Meeting began with a warm welcome from President Marianne von Haller, after which each delegate and committee member introduced themselves.

1/26 Previous meetings minutes 2025 Helsinki

To be voted on: Do all accept the minutes of the 2025 Council Meeting in Helsinki?

Voting: unanimously accepted. (all in favour)

2/26 Matters Arising

No matters arising were raised.

3/26 President's report: sent by email

No questions or remarks.

4/26 Treasurer's report: sent by email

No questions or remarks.

5/26 Secretary's report: sent by email

No questions or remarks.

6/26 Overview timeline including Action Points from CM 2025

The ExCom presented the action-point timeline in detail, reviewing the items from CM 2025 (Helsinki) with an update on whether each action had been completed, was ongoing, postponed, or had become outdated. It was noted that several action points had been delayed because they depended on the new website; development with LightMedia had been slow, but the website went live the week before this Council Meeting. The ExCom held a face-to-face meeting and an informal delegates' coffee meeting earlier in the year. For the coming quarter the ExCom will implement the new committee structures. A joint Action-Point Spreadsheet (APS) has now been created for all committees so that tasks and responsibilities remain transparent. No additional questions were raised.

7/26 Application for full membership: Hungary

a. Proposal 2026-1 (to be voted on)

Hungary applied for full membership at the start of the year, together with its bylaws. The ExCom confirmed that all requirements were met; the application had been circulated with the agenda prior to the Council Meeting.

Voting: unanimously accepted. (all in favour)

The Hungarian society was approved as a full member.

8/26 Finding Our Super Delegate

To remind the delegates of their duties and to promote communication among them, the "Finding our Super Delegate" activity was conducted again. Urška Levičnik, delegate from Slovenia won this edition and was rewarded with the cup and crown.

9/26 Elections

a. Treasurer: To be voted on (Proposal 2026-2)

Two candidates had been nominated for the position of Treasurer of the EFSHT: Mrs Hayley Smith (United Kingdom) and Mr Michel Reisdorf (France). Before the vote, Mr Michel Reisdorf withdrew his candidacy for personal reasons, so the election proceeded with a single candidate.

Voting: Mrs Hayley Smith was unanimously elected as the next Treasurer of the EFSHT (all in favour).

b. Appoint 2 new auditors

Two delegates stepped forward to complete the auditing: Simone Derham (Ireland) and Michel Reisdorf (France).

AP 9/26-01: Following the Treasurer election, the ExCom will update the Chamber of Commerce and bank signatory documents accordingly.

10/26 Future meetings

- XXXII. FESSH Congress, June 02–05, 2027, Prague, Czech Republic – fessh2027.com
- XXXIII. FESSH Congress, June 28–July 01, 2028, Strasbourg, France – fessh2028.com
- XXXIV. FESSH–EFSHT Congress, May 30–June 02, 2029, Porto, Portugal – fessh2029.com
- 17th IFSSH–IFSHT Congress, October 23–27, 2028, Singapore – ifssh-ifsht2028.org

The Prague 2027 congress was presented by Milada Kukackova, president of the Czech Society: the congress will take place on June 02–05, 2027, the venue is a university with good transport links and affordable accommodation, and the EFSHT will be responsible for three one-hour therapist slots; the EFSHT meeting room and possible workshop space will be arranged near the venue. This will be the first congress organised by the new Congress Committee.

The 17th IFSSH–IFSHT Congress in Singapore (2028) was presented by the IFSHT president Stacey Doyon: the co-chairs and a scientific committee of about 25 members with worldwide representation have been appointed, four keynote speakers have been invited (not yet confirmed). Singapore was presented as safe, accessible and well connected.

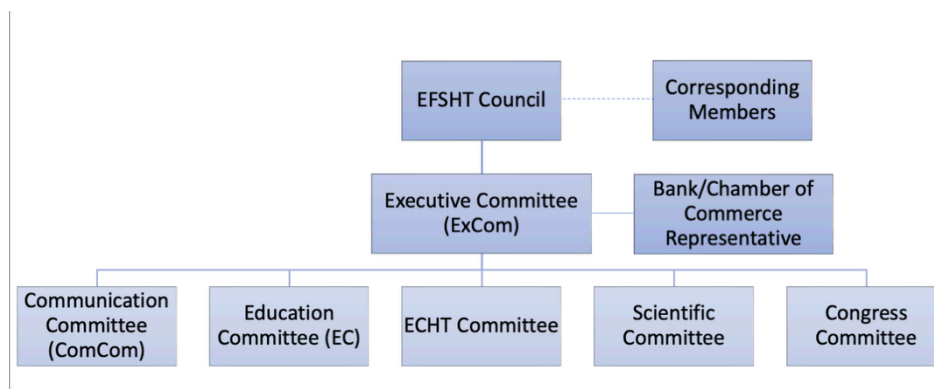
11/26 Hand Therapy Journal

The annual report was not available in time, for personal reasons of the editor in chief, Tara Packham, and will be circulated to delegates by email.

12/26 Structure of EFSHT organization (new Organogram)

The ExCom presented the new organisational structure, building on the draft approved at CM 2025 (Proposal 2025-4). To manage the Federation's growth and increasing workload, additional committees were created so that the work could be shared. Under the Council and the ExCom, the committees are: Communication Committee (ComCom), Education Committee (EC), ECHT Committee (separated from the Education Committee), Scientific Committee (SC), and a new Congress Committee. Detailed and evolving tasks are now tracked in an Action-Point Spreadsheet (APS) for all committees rather than in the job descriptions or regulations.

a. Proposal 2026-3 (to be voted on): new Organigram



Voting: unanimously accepted. (all in favour)

b. Proposal 2026-4 (to be voted on): updated Job Descriptions

The job descriptions now define each committee's main purpose and key responsibilities, with detailed tasks held in the separate tracking document to avoid repeated revision. A delegate suggested that future planning consider the impact of AI and possible guidelines for committee tools. She recommended creating a policy on how AI can be used in a healthy way within the EFSHT organisation.

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

c. Proposal 2026-5 (to be voted on): updated Regulations

All committee regulations were harmonised into one document, including the reimbursement protocol; no substantive content changes were made.

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

d. Proposal 2026-6 (informative): new Reimbursement form

A redesigned, easier-to-use reimbursement form with the same content was presented. Reimbursement continues through the existing process for now.

The new committee membership lists were presented. The Congress Committee (3–4 members) is recruiting urgently to organise the therapist sessions at the FESSH 2027 Prague congress; a sign-up list will be available at the EFSHT Booth during the Basel Congress and expressions of interest will be confirmed through the national societies.

AP 12/26-01: The ExCom will implement the new committee structure and continue recruiting members, in particular for the Congress Committee.

13/26 Recommendations for National Societies / Presentation Package

Following AP 18/25, the ExCom presented a draft information letter/package for national society boards, explaining the EFSHT and the delegate's role (including term and duration), and invited feedback. There was a discussion of changing some details.

AP 13/26-01: The ExCom will finalise the information/presentation package – including the committee job descriptions – and send it to the national society boards.

14/26 Communication Committee

(members: Paul De Buck (chair), Francesco Romagnoli, Milla Velama, Hayley Smith; one further member to be recruited)

a. Annual Report

The committee's main work over the past year was the new website (a long project, now live) and promoting the Congress on social media, with the Instagram account growing. Delegates were asked to tag the Federation in Congress-related posts.

b. Proposal 2026-7a: Discussion of the purchase of the Canva Business package

The committee presented the case for a Canva (Pro/Business) subscription to streamline marketing materials, shared layouts and brand colours, and to allow several users. Delegates asked whether Canva is free for non-profit organisations and whether a professional or agency should manage social media. The ComCom responded that it was checked and is not applicable to EFSHT. The related budget was voted under item 21/26. The committee is also drafting a social media policy (what may be shared and what to avoid) to bring to the Council for approval, and asked delegates to provide lists of relevant national societies/organisations to follow and of companies in hand therapy/surgery as potential contacts or sponsors.

AP 14/26-01: ComCom will finalise the social media policy and bring it to the Council for approval.

AP 14/26-02: Delegates will send ComCom lists of relevant societies/organisations and companies to follow.

15/26 Review of the new Website

Delegates explored the new website and its login area through a team "treasure hunt" activity. The aim was for all delegates to become familiar with the site and be able to use the login area, where they can also enter and update their own contact details.

AP 15/26-01: Delegates will log in to the new website and enter/update their contact details.

16/26 Financial matters

a. Finances 2025 / Financial balance / Auditors' report

The Treasurer presented the 2025 financial balance (opening balance, income, expenses and closing balance). The auditors gave a positive statement, praising the transparency and organisation of the bookkeeping, and the financial documents were found to be in order.

b. Discharge of the Treasurer (to be voted on)

Voting: the 2025 financial balance was accepted and the Treasurer was discharged. (all in favour)

c. Savings account (AP 14/25-01)

The ExCom reported on its investigation of an additional savings account at the same bank: the interest is low (around 0.5%), there are no fees, and funds remain retrievable (interest would be lost if withdrawn within twelve months). The matter will be considered within the future financial plan of EFSHT. Delegates suggested checking fixed-term/higher-return options and confirming that funds would not be invested.

d. Credit card

The ExCom is considering to acquire a credit card for day-to-day business (hotel reservations, paying bills, and the website's Stripe account). The ExCom also informed delegates that it is considering moving the bank account from Belgium to the Netherlands, to align with the Chamber of Commerce registration.

AP 16/26-01: The ExCom will progress the savings-account decision within the financial plan (continues AP 14/25-01).

AP 16/26-02: The ExCom will look into a credit card for daily business.

AP 16/26-03: The ExCom will progress the relocation of the bank account from Belgium to the Netherlands.

17/26 Scientific Committee

(members: Alice Ørts (chair), Sonja Pelzmann, Lisa Newington, Maaïke van der Hoeven, Marie Pételet)

a. Annual Report

The main task over the past year was reviewing all Congress abstracts using the committee's own scoring system to ensure consistency, and proposing speakers for the therapist sessions at the FESSH and other congresses. The committee is preparing guidance to enhance scientific content (for example, how to write a good scientific abstract, to be published on the website) and a process to evaluate and distribute member surveys, drawing on the UK model.

18/26 Education Committee

(members: Marlous Hofstra (chair), Vera Beckmann (ECHT coordinator), Anna Pantouvaki, Brigitte Sparl, Raquel Cantero, Greta Colaiacovo)

a. Annual Report

The Chair presented the committee's work. It was noted that the ECHT coordinator, Vera Beckmann, will step down, and Raquel Cantero will take over as the new coordinator. Vera Beckmann will accompany the process over the next six months.

b. ECHT promotional video

The finalised promotional video prepared by the EC was presented.

c. Proposal 2026-8 (informative): Seal of Quality

The EFSHT seal of quality is intended to confer a quality mark on national and international education in the field of hand therapy. The online application process is being developed (via the website, similar to ECHT); assessment will be carried out within the committee for now and may evolve with the volume of applications.

The committee is working on improving the ECHT application and assessment process (document storage, consistency between assessors, scoring) and, following feedback, has reviewed and re-aligned the documents and the online survey. Progress has been limited by the development of the new website.

The committee's work plan for 2026/2027 includes: a social-media video; organising webinars together with the Scientific Committee; centralising information about ECHT across the national websites which can be translated; developing the scoring system for assessors;

AP 18/26-01: The ExCom will give the EC access to the relevant areas of the new website to finalise the ECHT / Seal of Quality application process.

19/26 Dissemination of Hand Therapy Content

The ExCom noticed a growing number of requests to advertise or disseminate hand therapy content (newsletters, courses, podcasts, surveys). Delegates discussed, in small groups, what to publish, the quality levels required, practical management (assessment, responsibility, finances) and where to publish the content. The main points discussed were:

- content should be relevant for all of Europe with papers possibly split into English and other-language sections (Open Access papers may be shared in full, otherwise only abstracts, with full access possible for members);

- national societies/boards should perform the first quality check, using European guidelines, before content is published on the European site (might be covered by the Seal of Quality);
- ideas raised included internship listings across Europe, a register of scientific/therapy speakers by country, a central European job board, and accreditation points for courses, with the EFSHT acting as an accreditation body (= seal of quality);
- the general preference was to link to existing high-quality content (national societies' resources, the journal, Congress videos) rather than to create new content;
- for social media, a clear strategy and purpose are needed before posting, with sharing/reposting existing content seen as lower-risk.
- The EFSHT representative shared the EFSHT practice of sharing partner newsletters, posting national meetings on the EFSHT website.

AP 19/26-01: The ExCom will work with the committees over the coming year on guidelines and a strategy for publishing/disseminating content, supported by a shared action-point spreadsheet.

20/26 Future management of EFSHT finances (discussion)

The ExCom explained that, as a non-profit organisation run by volunteers, the EFSHT's income derives from membership fees, ECHT certifications and congress income, while expenses are mainly committee and assessor reimbursements. With more committees (more expenses) but also more income potential, the future financial situation needs planning. The current balance is around €90,000; the Federation recorded a loss of about €13,000 in 2025 and expects a further loss in 2026, largely due to website costs (a budgeted deficit of around €11,000). Delegates brainstormed income ideas, including:

- increasing the per-member annual fee (seen as the most equitable option, however taking into consideration the financial situations of each national society);
- caution on relying on certification fees as income, to keep certification affordable and free of conflict of interest;
- negotiating a percentage of therapist ticket sales and a share of sponsorship for non-triennial congress years;
- associate/individual memberships for professional bodies and companies, with a donate option;
- a central European hand-therapy job board as a longer-term income stream;
- paid webinars (splitting fees with presenters; differentiated member/non-member pricing) with subtitles/AI translation;

- stronger sponsorship via the new website (the current sponsor fee is around €600 per company), with tiered options;
- merchandise (noted, but with caution about logistics and volunteer workload);
- support/start-up budgets for smaller societies, with travel support for delegates/therapists from countries without a national society (clear criteria needed).

AP 20/26-01: The ExCom will develop a financial plan/roadmap from these ideas and bring concrete proposals to the Council for approval.

21/26 Finances / Budget votes

Committee budget proposals were voted to give an overview of the year ahead. For face-to-face meetings, a maximum budget per committee was set (the same amount for all committees, for fairness; actual spend may be lower). For 2027 there will be no congress income, but the three income pillars remain (membership fees, sponsors, and ECHT candidate fees).

a. Proposal 2026-9: Education Committee budget

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

b. Proposal 2026-10: Scientific Committee budget

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

c. Proposal 2026-11: Communication Committee budget

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

d. Proposal 2026-7b: Communication Committee Canva budget (annual fee approx. €160)

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

e. Proposal 2026-7: Canva Business package

Voting: accepted, together with the Canva budget above. (all in favour)

f. Proposal 2026-12: Congress Committee budget

Although the Congress Committee is not yet fully in place, a budget was proposed to allow a first face-to-face meeting, which is important for a new committee.

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

g. Proposal 2026-13: ECHT Committee budget

Although the ECHT Committee is not yet fully in place, a budget was proposed to allow a first face-to-face meeting, which is important for a new committee.

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

h. Budget EFSHT 2027 (general)

The general budget includes the Zoom account, ExCom meeting expenses, assessor/coordinator reimbursement and website maintenance (around €8,000). For reference: website spend in 2025 was about €19,000 against roughly €39,000 budgeted, and around €8,000 is expected in 2026 – within budget.

Voting: accepted. (all in favour)

22/26 AOB

- **Communication / website (raised by Spain):** a change of email addresses during the Spanish society's website rebuild had caused a miscommunication with the Treasurer about the payment of membership fees. It was suggested that a backup-communication guideline be agreed (e.g. personal email, telephone or WhatsApp) for situations where the official channel fails. The ExCom noted that the new website allows delegates to enter and update their own contact details and alternatives, which should resolve this; a retry/escalation protocol for the Treasurer would also help; and public versus internal contact details should be clarified.
- **Earlier distribution of documents:** a delegate asked that Council Meeting documents be circulated earlier as they have no time to consult the national boards. The documents were sent 4 weeks in advance as defined in the bylaws. Delegates were advised to plan a board meeting about two weeks before the Council Meeting.
- **Information package:** it was noted that including the committee job descriptions in the EFSHT information package sent to national society chairs and delegates will help to inform and recruit candidates for committee roles.

The Council Meeting was closed by President Marianne von Haller with warm words of gratitude to all participants and especially to the host, the Swiss Society for Hand Rehabilitation, for their warm welcome and perfect organisation. She thanked the delegates and committee members for their contributions to a successful meeting and expressed her anticipation for the Congress and the year ahead.

The outgoing Treasurer, Gabi Versümer Bucker, was warmly thanked for her 20 years of dedicated service to the EFSHT and Hayley Smith was welcomed as the new Treasurer.

Overview of Action Points CM 2026

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AP 12/26-01: The ExCom will implement the new committee structure and continue recruiting members, in particular for the Congress Committee.

AP 13/26-01: The ExCom will finalise the information/presentation package – including the committee job descriptions – and send it to the national society boards.

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