

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

# Who we are

EASL is a medical association dedicated to pursuing excellence in liver research, clinical practice of liver disorders, and in the provision of best-in-class education for all those interested in hepatology.

While the roots of the association were established in Europe in 1966, EASL now actively engages with all global stakeholders with an interest in the liver to facilitate the spread of knowledge and expertise in hepatology.

# Our mission

The mission of the European Association for the Study of the Liver is to be the Home of Hepatology so that everyone involved in treating patients with liver disease can realise their full potential to cure and prevent it.

# Our purpose

We promote communication among all professionals, in Europe and beyond, interested in the liver and its disorders, particularly by:

- promoting liver research and facilitating scientific exchange
- fostering research interactions across Europe and beyond
- supporting the next generation of researchers, including Young Investigators, as they develop through involvement in EASL activities
- promoting education of physicians, scientists, allied health professionals, other medical professionals, and patients
- promoting public awareness of liver diseases and their management
- acting as an advisor to European and national health authorities concerning liver diseases, the provision of clinical services, and the need for research funding
- working with patient groups to ensure their perspectives and views are represented in our work

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# MESSAGE FROM OUR SECRETARY GENERAL AND VICE-SECRETARY

# Forging the future of hepatology

Although 2021 brought us unexpected obstacles via the iterations of COVID-19, EASL reacted with agility, turning stumbling blocks into steppingstones. We have navigated uncertain terrain, proving that challenging times can catalyse creativity and innovation. At the time of writing, Ukraine is suffering ongoing conflict and we extend our solidarity and support to those affected, in the country and in neighbouring regions. We endeavour to keep them on board with us, despite the difficulties they face.

Through 2021, we increased and refined our core offerings of education, science, and advocacy, and boosted our efforts to disseminate them using digital channels. The high-quality content that we provide and the learning it fosters are felt worldwide. We have succeeded in reaching an ever-broader liver community across the globe. The traction we gained shows clearly in the social media numbers below.

# Diversifying our digital offerings

The channels we use to communicate with our network are dynamic throughout the year: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and now Instagram, too. We maintain a vibrant stream of newsletters, news articles, blogposts, and webinars, and share them across multiple platforms.

We are connecting with the spirit of the next generation, developing our presence in the communication forums they frequent and formats they prefer.

The European Year of the Youth, 2022, serves to shine a light on the importance of young people living in Europe to build a better future. We will draw inspiration from young hepatologists, showing us how and where exchange takes place. We will not only lead, but also follow.

Our crowning achievement for 2021 was the launch of EASL Studio. From its first broadcast,



#### **EASL SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS 2021**

devoted to Liver Cancer Awareness Month in October 2021, interest has been spectacular: 510 people from 63 countries attended live. EASL Studio now broadcasts weekly and at the time of writing, the Studio had garnered 20,000+ combined views for all episodes.

#### High-impact publichealth events and activities

In October, we held a noteworthy high-level online event, coorganised with the European Liver Patients Association (ELPA) under the patronage of the Slovenian presidency of the Council of the EU, titled: Beating liver cancer in Europe – the empowerment of prevention and early detection. We are proud to be forging the future of hepatology via such prestigious collaborations and look forward to more, in the years ahead.

In December 2021, we were thrilled to hold a prestigious high-level event, the EASL-Lancet Liver Commission Report launch, with the long-awaited publication: Protecting the next generation of Europeans against liver disease complications and premature mortality. We were privileged to have as keynote speaker, Dr Ursula VON DER LEYEN, President of the European Commission, representing more than 447 million citizens, and Dr Richard HORTON, Editor-in-Chief of The Lancet, representing this pioneering, globally respected medical journal. Their contributions were truly excellent.

This project was conceptualised and driven by former EASL Secretary Generals, Professors Tom HEMMING KARLSEN and Philip NEWSOME, highlighting the vision and calibre of EASL's former leadership. The event was much more than a publication launch. It offers a window on the general health challenges of Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and it is a key, evidence-based reference document that will be cited repeatedly as this topic evolves. For example, we will draw upon it and its key recommendations as we move forward with our advocacy, policy, and public health work pushing for a paradigm shift towards prevention and early diagnosis of liver diseases. Our Open Letter: 10 Asks to Improve Liver Cancer Care in Europe, addressed to the European institutions, called for the prioritisation of liver health in cancer care. By the end of 2021, it had collected 1,530 signatures from individuals and 194 endorsements from relevant health organisations.

## EASL CAMPUS METRICS 2021



### THE LONG-AWAITED EASL-*LANCET* COMMISSION REPORT LAUNCH WAS HELD IN DECEMBER 2021







The EASL–Lancet Report included several user-friendly infographics, such as to illustrate how a strategy focussed instead on tackling the main causes of liver disease would be cheaper to implement and have a substantially greater effect.

Furthermore, we launched a Policy Paper on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in people with chronic liver disease, hepatobiliary cancer, and liver transplant recipients.

### Working for change in closer collaboration with patients

The role of patient engagement in all that we do is crucial. We developed our Patient Synergies network of eight members as of end-2021, its dedicated web presence, and we held our second online Patient Forum on health literacy to empower patients and address inequities. We were proud to publish our first patient-centred Clinical Practice Guidelines, on managing NAFLD, in the *Journal of Hepatology*.

## Driving advocacy and relationships

At the EU level, we focussed ceaselessly on liver cancer, collaborating with leading organisations. These included the World Health Organization, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, and several EU institutions, including the European Parliament and European Commission, as well as numerous umbrella organisations related to the liver.

## A partial return to in-person events, augmented by online engagement

As a follow-up to the skills we mastered during the pandemic relating to running online events, in 2021, we held two summits entirely digitally and they were well attended: Digital Liver Cancer Summit 2021, with 622 delegates attending in February; and Digital NAFLD Summit 2021, for which 479 delegates attended in September. Additionally, the EASL-AASLD HCC endpoints meeting, held online end-October, convened 132 delegates.

Furthermore, our first truly hybrid event was held when COVID-19 restrictions began to lift, the monothematic event: Bleeding, Thrombosis, and Vascular Liver Diseases, attracting 226 delegates early in October. It was held in our hometown, Geneva. We enjoyed the buzz of face-to-face interaction again.

Additionally, from September to November, we were fortunate to be able to hold four in-person EASL Schools, in Frankfurt and Hamburg, Germany; in Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and in Barcelona, Spain. We are looking forward to having more and more of our events again face to face or as a combination of onsite and online.

## Our flagship congress has grown in digital reach and polish

International Liver Congress<sup>™</sup> (ILC) 2021 was a ground-breaking four-day event, held 23–26 June. It was the 56<sup>th</sup> iteration of the congress and the second to be held fully digitally, this time with live session streaming and live TV-style broadcasts from EASL Studio, onsite in Geneva. The congress convened 6,340 delegates from 111 countries and 443 faculty.

There was an extraordinary buzz on social media, in addition to the tremendously interactive components, chats, polls, and Q&As with delegates. We wish to express thanks for the loyal and enthusiastic contributions from our healthcare industry partners.

As signature resources, we offered our sought-after "Best of" Slide Decks and EASL Takeaways. Our online press conferences garnered considerable international interest and coverage.

Online, we held three press conferences and corresponding



## **ILC 2021 PARTICIPATION AND REACH**



## ILC 2021: ATTENDANCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS









press releases. The conference was widely covered by top-tier media across the globe, e.g. Agence France-Presse, BBC, and the New Scientist as well as widely read medical and scientific outlets such The Lancet, Nature, MedPage, Medscape, APM Media, and trade media such as Healio, Hep Mag, and AIDSMAP.

# Supporting research across Europe

We maintained solid relationships at many levels. We provided ongoing support to our five EASL Consortia: ENS-CCA Consortium; EASL-Clif Consortium; EASL Consortium for Regenerative Hepatology; EASL SALVE Consortium; and EASL-VALDIG Consortium. Additionally, we publicised the Baveno VII Consensus Workshop held online in October 2021.

Additionally, we continue to support the dissemination efforts of five EU-funded projects: A-TANGO, DECISION, LITMUS, LiverScreen, and MICROB-PREDICT.

### Building global partnerships

We stayed engaged with our sister societies, exploring how best to serve the global liver community. We held two Global Hepatology Society Summit meetings with the Latin American Association for the Study of the Liver (ALEH), the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver (APASL), and the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD), at which we shared updates and explored future collaborations.

At the Conference on Liver Disease in Africa (COLDA) 2021, EASL contributed to a session on diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis B and D in Africa.

### EASL membership throughout one's career

We support and encourage our members from their first engagement with EASL, through to their post-retirement participation. We have active members in their twenties, and yet others attending our events in their nineties. A member can pursue their career, taking advantage of fellowships and bursaries, the opportunities to showcase their science that we offer, and develop a thriving professional network.

Through 2021, we had 4,795 members from 104 countries. From mid-2022 onwards, we are implementing new strategies to boost our membership services and our global reach. Stay tuned for exciting developments in membership.

## Developing relationships with our industry partners

Despite fewer face-to-face events, EASL developed new ways to collaborate with our industry partners in 2021. Their expertise and perspectives are crucial to the changes underway in hepatology. They develop new tools, diagnostic approaches, changing the face of hepatology as it is practised and reaches patients, including in biomarkers and imaging and exploring the frontiers of precision medicine.

In line with EASL's long-term partnership strategy, we remain focussed on stronger, more qualitative, and robust partnerships with the private sector. Because medical and scientific education does not end at congresses, we developed sophisticated, regular projects and initiatives throughout the year, such as a thriving EASL Studio broadcast schedule. These steps were secured thanks to the loyalty of industry partners, whom we value and acknowledge for their support, expertise, and complementary perspectives.

#### Hepatologyfocussed progress against the backdrop of COVID-19

EASL kept apace with the development of COVID-19, as the hepatology community rolled out related research and publications. We contributed to Position Papers, Policy Statements, calls for COVID-related registries, and continued to support the EASLsupported COVID-Hep Registry, for the second year in a row.

We published the "EASL position paper on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in patients with chronic liver diseases, hepatobiliary cancer, and liver transplant recipients" in the *Journal of Hepatology*. A second, commissioned on the impact of COVID-19 on the liver and on the care of patients with chronic liver disease, hepatobiliary cancer, and liver transplantation, is in the pipeline.

Furthermore, we also launched a second survey for the transplant community on how they have navigated the COVID-19 era in transplantation and related services.

## Rising prestige of EASL's journals

EASL's journals have grown in reputation as they continue to push the frontiers of science publishing in hepatology. In June 2021, our *Journal of Hepatology* received its highest-ever impact factor of 25.083, up from the 2019 score of 20.582. *JHEP Reports* is additionally being indexed by PubMed Central and Scopus in 2021. In January 2022, it was announced that *JHEP Reports* would receive its first ever impact factor. Launched in only May 2019, *JHEP Reports* has just celebrated its third birthday.

## Commissioning a list of Clinical Practice Guidelines

EASL's Clinical Practice Guidelines are highly respected and rooted firmly in the Delphi approach, which ensures panels and rounds of expertise distilling the best of consensus in recommendations and findings. In 2021, we published *Clinical Practice Guidelines on non-invasive tests for evaluation of liver disease severity and prognosis – 2021 update*, and for the first time, patient guidelines on managing NAFLD, opening a door for future patient-focussed CPGs.

We are proud to say that more CPGs have been commissioned and are in the pipeline, including: on managing bleeding and thrombosis in patients with cirrhosis; haemochromatosis; Wilson's disease; hepatitis delta; sclerosing cholangitis; pregnancy and liver disease; cystic liver disease; genetic cholestatic diseases; acute-on-chronic liver failure; and an update of the CPGs on liver transplantation, extra hepatic cholangiocarcinoma, hepatocellular carcinoma, and hepatic encephalopathy.

#### Tributes to those who paved the way for us

We pay tribute to the passing of three giants in hepatology in 2021: Prof. Wolfgang GEROK who played a decisive role in the development of clinical and scientific hepatology; Prof. Roberto GROSZMANN who played a crucial role in the development of the field of portal hypertension as we know it today; and Prof. Peter L.M. JANSEN who devoted his life to cholestatic and metabolic liver disease.

## Thanking the adaptable and hands-on EASL Office team

Our Geneva-based staff continued to work through 2021 predominantly from home, with spells in the office, as stipulated by prevailing health guidelines.

The many achievements of EASL could not have been carried out without the EASL Office, an agile, dedicated, and skilled team, under the leadership of Ben HAINSWORTH in his third year as Managing Director. The staff continued to show amazing adaptability to the home office and to the numerous twists and turns that the months brought, remaining responsive and engaged throughout. The staff were a major driver of the success of EASL, during this singular time.

Strategies priorities to improve efficiency and workflow were: digital transformation, becoming more customer-centric, streamlining business and operations, and forging greater strategic growth and impact.

Our Governing Board adapted to governance meetings held both onsite and online, often over several days, showing dedication and diligence throughout. You can see who they are and read more about their roles and committee contributions in this Annual Report.

# Next steps for ILC 2022 and beyond

The highlight of 2022 is undoubtedly ILC, taking place in London, under the slogan: Savour science together again. We are acutely aware of the plight of our colleagues from Ukraine and are offering them free digital access to ILC 2022, to help them stay connected to the community. To this end, we are also supporting the in-person attendance of a small group.

Delegates will see that the programme has been changed, following lessons learned while programming the pandemic. The faculty is more diverse and representative than ever and there is more time out between sessions to facilitate the crucial spontaneous encounters and unstructured learning that take place. We are additionally giving different visibility to our main stakeholders, such as the consortia and registries, so they can showcase their achievements. This Annual Report will be published at our General Assembly taking place at ILC 2022.

# Looking forward to 2023

EASL remains fully committed to uniting hepatology. We were founded in Europe, but our scope is global. If you are engaged in fighting for liver health, EASL is where you belong. Despite the dark days of the conflict in Ukraine and aftermath of the pandemic, we will continue to fight the good fight to promote the well-being of the liver, in Europe and beyond.

We will lead our community forward drawing on our new four-year management strategy, outlined in a recent Editorial in the *Journal of Hepatology*, which we urge you to read.

We express heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed, members of our Boards, Committees, and Task Forces, the speakers and faculty at our events, and the delegates, who bring their curiosity and expertise.



## SECRETARY GENERAL Prof. Thomas BERG

Head of the Division of Hepatology, Department of Medicine II, Leipzig University Medical Center, Germany



## VICE-SECRETARY Prof. Aleksander KRAG

Professor and Head of Hepatology, Odense University Hospital, Denmark



# EASL OFFICE

From early 2020 through 2021, the office operated in a work-from-home configuration, and work practices and output underwent a radical digital transformation. Governance, administration, education, science, events, publishing, and advocacy all moved online. Determined reskilling and agile shifting of resources were necessary at every step of the way. Through 2021, our key priorities have remained constant: focus on our constituent bodies and members, operational excellence, diligent business management, and strategic growth. Our staff come from 14 nationalities, speak 16 languages, and eight of them have scientific doctorates.



## EASL Office, May 2022

#### **Management & Administration**





Laudina ASOMANING







Christophe







Claire CHOMBEAU





**KRUIJS** 



Johnny AINSWORTH



Adonia DHANJAL



Géraldine FANKHAUSER



Giovanna GIUGA



Estelle JOBSON





































# EASL EVENTS 2021

In 2021, we converted several events to fully digital. We also held both in-person and hybrid events.

#### Digital Liver Cancer Summit 2021, 5–6 February 2021

- 622 participates from 53 countries
- covering basic, translational, and clinical data, on hepatocellular carcinoma, cholangiocarcinoma, and rare primary liver cancers

#### International Liver Congress™ 2021, 23–26 June 2021

- 6,340 delegates from 111 countries
- originally planned for Amsterdam, the event was pivoted to a digital-only offering, launching EASL Studio
- a groundbreaking event for the global hepatology community

DIGITAL LIVER CANCER SUMMIT 5-6 FEBRUARY 2021



3-4 September 2021

Frankfurt, Germany



School of Hepatology



## Management of acute-on-chronic liver failure

# EASL School: Management of acute-on-chronic liver failure, 3–4 September 2021, Frankfurt, Germany

- 25 students from 10+ countries
- blended learning: pre-event, students complete an EASL Campus course, and onsite, follow lectures, discuss clinical cases, and take hands-on sessions

#### Digital NAFLD Summit 2021, 16–17 September 2021

- 455 participants from 53 countries
- an update on the epidemiology, public health relevance, key challenges in clinical practice and drug development in NASH and NAFLD



#### Monothematic event: Bleeding, Thrombosis, and Vascular Liver Diseases, 7–9 October 2021

- 215 participants from 33 countries, both onsite and online
- back face to face again, enjoying person-toperson exchange, learning, and networking
- offering an update on the epidemiology, public health relevance, key challenges in clinical practice and drug development in NASH and NAFLD

## \* EASL

# Bleeding, Thrombosis, and Vascular Liver Diseases

#### 7–9 OCT 2021 GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

An EASL meeting organised by Virginia HERNÁNDEZ-GEA Ton LISMAN Pierre-Emmanuel RAUTOU Erica VILLA

Register now! easl.eu/btvld



School of Hepatology

15–16 October 2021 Amsterdam, Netherlands

# School of Pathology

- EASL School, Liver Pathology: Inflammatory liver diseases; new developments, new challenges, 15–16 October 2021, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 17 students from
  11 countries
- focussing on the risk– benefit balance of a liver biopsy versus non-invasive test
- grading and staging different liver diseases and discussing relevant scoring system
- blended learning: preevent, students complete an EASL Campus course, and onsite, follow lectures and smallgroup discussions



EASL School, Rare Liver Diseases: Improving diagnosis and care, 22–23 October 2021, Hamburg, Germany

> 23 students from 17 countries

- co-organised with the European Reference Network, ERN RARE-LIVER
- enabling hepatologists to sharpen their clinical knowledge, addressing issues of transitional care, including paediatric

liver transplant recipients becoming adults

 blended learning: preevent, students complete an EASL Campus course, and onsite, follow lectures and smallgroup discussions

#### EASL-AASLD HCC Endpoints, 28–29 October 2021

- 132 registrations from 31 countries
- online event on clinical trial design and endpoints in hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), taking place virtually



# BEASL The House of Heaterber

School of Hepatology

19-20 November 2021 Barcelona, Spain

# Progress, pitfalls and challenges in the management of portal hypertension

EASL School: Progress, pitfalls and challenges in the management of portal hypertension, 19–20 November 2021, Barcelona, Spain

> 24 students from 13 countries

 focussing on the field of portal hypertension: cirrhosis aetiology, traditional diagnostic methods, new therapeutic approaches, evidencebased and individualised treatment of portal hypertension  blended learning: preevent, students complete an EASL Campus course, and onsite, follow lectures and smallgroup discussions

#### **Postponed and cancelled events**

We were obliged to postpone these events:

- AASLD-EASL Endpoints meeting
- Monothematic event, Biliary Fibrosis: Pathophysiology and translational opportunities
- AASLD–EASL Masterclass

# EASL LEADERSHIP

## EASL Governing Board

Throughout 2021, the majority of our leadership meetings – of the Governing Board, Executive Board, and the Scientific, Education, and Policy and Public Health Committees – were held digitally. There were, however, several occasions when we were able to meet face to face.

ILC 2021 was delivered live from Geneva, 23–26 June, where many of the Governing Board and other leaders were able to spend a few days together. Due to prevailing

**Executive Committee** 

travel restrictions, Secretary General Prof. Philip NEWSOME was unable to join us in person. He nonetheless did a sterling job of steering proceedings remotely.

The EASL General Assembly took place online on 28 June and saw Prof. NEWSOME hand the baton on to Prof. Thomas BERG, and we also welcomed in Prof. Aleksander KRAG as Vice-Secretary.

In early July, the Executive Board convened for a strategic meeting in Ebersbach, near Frankfurt, Germany. Under the motto, *The whole soul is nothing*  other than rationality, memory, and will, Profs BERG and KRAG launched the development of a four-year strategy for EASL.

In September, the new Governing Board convened in Geneva, adopted the strategic plan and commenced work on two workstreams: Uniting Hepatology in Europe, and Membership.

To conclude 2021, the EASL Extraordinary General Assembly was held online on 29 November, reflecting on the sound work carried out through 2021 and on prospects for 2022.

#### **Secretary General**



Prof. Thomas BERG Germany



Prof. Francesco NEGRO Switzerland

#### **Vice-Secretary**



Prof. Aleksander KRAG Denmark

#### **Educational Councillor**



Prof. Ulrich BEUERS The Netherlands

#### **Scientific Committee**



Prof. Emmanuel TSOCHATZIS

#### **EU Policy Councillor**



Prof. Maria BUTI Spain

#### **Scientific Committee**



Prof. Emmanuel TSOCHATZIS UK



Dr Tobias BÖTTLER Germany



Dr Virginia HERNÁNDEZ-GEA Spain



NAULT

France



Prof. Luca

VALENTI

Italv



Prof. Saskia VAN MIL The Netherlands

- leadership handed over by Prof. Pierre-Emmanuel RATOU to Prof. Emmanuel TSOCHATZIS
- nominations and appointments of two new members: Dr Virginia HERNÁNDEZ-GEA and Dr Jean-Charles NAULT
- engagement with online and onsite events
- reviewing, commenting on, and developing programmes for events and summits
- coordinating the development of Clinical Practice Guidelines
- providing input on the allocations of fellowships and grants
- improved abstract review system, ensuring a more homogeneous evaluation process across reviewers

#### **Educational Committee**



- nominations and appointments of new members: Prof. Henning GRØNBÆK; Prof. Josep LLOVET; Prof. Rajeshwar MOOKERJEE; and Prof. Krista ROMBOUTS
- massive growth in EASL Campus: 6,200+ resources, 19,291 registered users, and 516,454 page views from 182 countries
- event Takeaways and Slide Decks, the EASL Quiz series, EACCMEaccredited online courses and modules, offering blended learning
- Iaunch of EASL Studio
- gamification of EASL Campus (143 badges, 100 levels, challenges)

## **Policy and Public Health Committee**



Prof. Maria BUTI Spain

Prof. Mojca

MATIČIČ

Slovenia

Care in Europe:

194 endorsing

organisations

Open Letter of 10 Asks

1,529 signatures with

large advocacy initiatives

Beating Cancer Plan and

New amendment including

EU4Health programme:

under the Europe's

to Improve Liver Cancer



Prof. Peter JEPSEN Denmark



Prof. Frank MURRAY Ireland



Marko KORENJAK Belgium



Prof. Nick SHERON UK

Liver Cancer Screening in the draft BECA Report on the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

- several high-level advocacy events with key policymakers
- extensive collaboration with partners: Awareness Week on Alcohol



Prof. Jeffrey LAZARUS Spain



Prof. Shira ZELBER-SAGI Israel

Related Harm (AWARH); European Week Against Cancer (EWAC)

 working with WHO Europe: EASL Live Statement for the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe: Reinventing Primary Health Care in the post-COVID-19 era

#### **EASL** Patient Synergies

- January 2022, celebrating two years of EASL Patient Synergies: network for European umbrella patient organisations engaged in liver diseases
- eight members as of May 2022
- second online EASL Patient Forum held in November 2021 on health literacy
- patient engagement in all levels of EASL activity



#### **EU-funded projects**



EASL remains the communications and dissemination arm for five major EU-funded projects for diagnosing and combatting liver disease:

- A-TANGO
- DECISION
- LITMUS
- LiverScreen
- MICROB-PREDICT

#### **Ethics Committee**



Prof. Christian TRAUTWEIN Germany



Prof. Marina BERENGUER Spain



Dr Guido Heinrich GERKEN Germany



Prof. Valérie PARADIS France



Prof. Mark THURSZ UK

- Chair, Prof. Christian TRAUTWEIN, starts a second three-year term
- yearlong monitoring and management of interests at EASL leadership level
- regular review of Clinical Practice Guidelines panels
- engagement in BioMed Alliance Europe's Code of Conduct Working Group

## **EASL's prestigious journals**

#### JOURNAL OF HEPATOLOGY



Prof. Paolo ANGELI Italy Editor-in-Chief



Prof. Patrizia

**BURRA** 

Italy

Deputy Editor



Prof. Vlad RATZIU France Co-editor



Prof. Bruno SANGRO Spain Co-editor



Prof. Frank

TACKE

Germany

Co-editor



Prof. Stefan ZEUZEM Germany *Co-editor* 

• EASL's Journal of Hepatology: June 2021, announcement of our impact factor of 25.083 for 2020

#### **JHEP REPORTS**











Prof. Robert

SCHWABE

USA

Editor



Prof. Morris SHERMAN Canada *Editor* 

Prof. Jessica ZUCMAN-ROSSI France Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Marina BERENGUER Spain Editor

Prof. Sven FRANCQUE Belgium Editor



Prof. Thierry GUSTOT Belgium *Editor* 

Dr Sophie LOTERSZTAJN France Editor

 EASL's JHEP Reports: accepted for indexing in Clarivate's Science Citation Index Expanded<sup>™</sup>, meaning that it will receive its first impact factor in 2022.





#### **Nurses and AHPs Task Force**



Dr Patrizia KÜNZLER-HEULE Switzerland



Dr Palle BAGER Denmark



Dr Núria FABRELLAS Spain



Kathryn JACK UK



Jennifer TOWEY UK



Felicity WILLIAMS UK

- two new members: Dr Núria FABRELLAS and Jennifer TOWEY
- dedicated sessions, abstracts, and an EASL Takeaways
- launched Rising Star Awards at ILC 2021 to recognise excellence in nurses and Allied Health Professionals in hepatology
- a webinar on the management of NAFLD, live and on demand on EASL Campus
- held a survey of liver nurses across Europe

#### **Young Investigators Task Force**



Dr Marta AFONSO Portugal



MANDORFER Austria

- EASL provided ongoing support to the Task
   Force, to sustain efforts through a hybrid year
- dedicated YIs Forum and Symposium at ILC 2021



Dr Johanne POISSON France

on-demand webinar on

Dr Mattias MANDORFER,

and Dr Philipp SCHWABL

Dr Johanne POISSON,

career development

• three new members:



Dr Anna SABOROWSKI Germany Dr Philipp SCHWABL UK

 selection of two recipients of the Emerging Leader Award: Dr Qiuwei PAN and Prof. Charlotte SCOTT

# COMMUNITY AND MEMBERSHIP

At EASL, we strive to serve our membership and offer them robust yearlong support.

Our membership remains solid, despite the difficult circumstances, and we thank our members for their commitment and trust.





# FELLOWSHIPS AND RESEARCH SUPPORT

EASL remains steadfast to the research community. In 2021, EUR 1,025,000 was awarded in fellowships and grants. In cases where research projects were delayed by the pandemic, we also extended research grants.

#### Fellowships and research grants

This competitive, doctoral

or clinical hepatology. The programme is open to candidates living anywhere in the world, wishing to conduct a PhD thesis at a European centre, in a country different to that of their home institution.

fellowship programme is directed at young graduates who want to achieve a PhD degree in the field of basic, translational,

- providing scientists with opportunities through their careers
- fostering the next generation of excellence in hepatology
- for young talent, opportunities to excel, advance, network, and become a key member of the vibrant global hepatology community
- fellowships are for PhD or post-doctoral qualifications, short-term or longer-term goals
- EASL Emerging Leader Award dedicated to young fellows, up to 40

In 2021, three fellowships moved to be administered by the EASL International Liver Foundation (EILF) and accordingly, are now named EILF–EASL Fellowships:



Florent ARTRU PhD candidate UK



Ugne BALASEVICIUTE PhD candidate Spain

#### **EILF-EASL Juan RODÉS PhD Studentship**

#### EILF-EASL Sheila SHERLOCK Postgraduate Fellowship

This competitive, postgraduate fellowship programme targets the most promising newly qualified postgraduate researchers who wish to expand research fields and start developing their independent research careers.





Belgium

#### EILF-EASL Andrew K. BURROUGHS Short-term Training Fellowship

This programme is directed at postgraduate investigators (basic and clinical investigators) who intend to spend a limited amount of time (three to six months) at a foreign institution to accomplish a very focussed research project. It can be to learn an experimental procedure or methodology or to get in-depth knowledge on a sophisticated, clinical diagnostic procedure not available at the home institution. It is open to candidates from anywhere in the world, planning to do post-doctoral work at a European centre, different to their home institution.



Dr Antonio D'ALESSIO UK (Spring session)



Dr Ahmed ASHIM Italy (Autumn session)



Dr Ezequiel MAURO Spain (Autumn session)

These two awards remain administered by EASL:

#### EASL Daniel ALAGILLE Award

The Daniel ALAGILLE Award provides research support for Young Investigators active in the field of paediatric and adult genetic cholestatic disease-causing mechanisms. It is generously supported by unrestricted grants from Cell Therapies Research & Services (CTRS).



Dr Michele PINON Italy

#### **EASL Emerging Leader Award**

The EASL Emerging Leader Award is a yearly award specifically dedicated to young fellows, up to 40 years of age, who are active members of EASL. Every year, two Young Investigator Awardees are selected, based on their international liver research achievements to date.



Dr Qiuwei PAN The Netherlands



Prof. Charlotte SCOT Belgium

# Registry grants for scientific research

As a major European association dedicated to pursuing excellence in liver research and to providing education to all those interested in hepatology, EASL promotes research and education through the sharing of research findings in hepatology.

Considering the difficulties faced by researchers in our field, the EASL Governing Board has decided to create the EASL Registry Data Collection Grant to provide funding in support of consortia groups dedicated to gathering data with a specific focus on liver disease.

#### EASL Registry Grants

#### Dr Jordi RIMOLA,

Epithelioid Hemangioendothelioma International Network, Spain

#### **Dr Rohini SHARMA**

Fibrolamellar Hepatocellular Cancer Registry, United Kingdom

#### Dr Thomas MARJOT and Dr Ellie BARNES

COVID-19 Vaccine Efficacy and Immunogenicity in Patients with Liver Disease and Transplantation (COVID-Hep 2.0), United Kingdom

# EASL INTERNATIONAL LIVER FOUNDATION

## Delivering a multidisciplinary global response to NAFLD

In 2021, the EASL International Liver Foundation (EILF) supported a global collaboration, which enabled 218 liver experts from 98 countries to develop consensus statements and recommendations on how to advance the public health and policy agenda. The landmark resulting publication provides a foundation for policymakers, advocates, researchers, and patients seeking to improve the management and care of this underestimated disease. More than 100 organisations have endorsed the statements and recommendations so far.

Building on earlier work, EILF also published a global review of

NAFLD policies in 102 countries, providing a baseline for future work in the field. Our report with Economist Impact, putting the spotlight on NAFLD in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, was also launched in March 2021. The report aims to help fill the void in strategic guidance around how to shape and deliver more comprehensive responses to NAFLD, with calls to action on this pressing public health issue.

EILF continued to collaborate with Wilton Park, a UK-based forum for strategic dialogue, developing a NAFLD public health and policy roadmap.

In the second half of 2021 and following discussions between the EILF Board and EASL Governing Board, a decision was reached to transition the NAFLD programme from EILF to the EASL Policy and Public Health (PPH) Committee.



The EILF Secretariat and EASL team have worked closely together during the transition to ensure continuity of ongoing activities and engagement with the Foundation's network. EILF Vice-chair, Prof. Jeffrey LAZARUS, who has been instrumental in the success over the past four years, joined the EASL PPH Committee and will continue to provide thought leadership for the programme.

## Supporting the Georgia Centre of Excellence in viral hepatitis elimination

In 2021, EILF continued to support the Georgia Centre of Excellence in viral hepatitis elimination working with our partners to host the annual Hepatitis Elimination Workshop in Tbilisi, Georgia and to elevate the blood safety system. Dr Rochelle WALENSKY, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has recognised the incredible work and partnership of the Hepatitis C Program in Georgia with an Honor Award, the agency's highest-level of recognition.

## EILF-EASL Fellowships

In January 2021, EILF took over the day-to-day management and awarding of the Juan Rodés PhD Studentship, the Sheila Sherlock Postgraduate Fellowship, and the Andrew K. Burroughs Shortterm Fellowship, all three now called EILF-EASL Fellowships.

#### The imperative for action on NAFLD



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Dear members,

It is my privilege to write this Treasurer's Report on EASL's 2021 financial accounts.

The year 2021 was the second of the COVID-19 pandemic, causing continued disruption to EASL's core activities. Nonetheless, throughout, we have striven to pursue our mission and to support the EASL community, prioritising delivery of service.

I wish to express my thanks to the entire EASL Office and to our Managing Director Ben HAINSWORTH, for their resilience, creativity, and diligence.

The EASL Office is constantly realigning our operations to the new reality, not only in paying attention to containing costs, but by optimising current and emerging business practices.

EASL has strengthened the digital congress platform, both technically and as a business model; partnered in constructive ways with the healthcare industry, valuing their loyalty and support; consolidated EASL's human, intellectual, and material resources; reduced reliance on third-party suppliers; and boosted the digitalisation of all they do bringing a data-driven customercentric focus to all activities.

Despite the uncertainty of 2021 and being in the second year of the pandemic, EASL managed to achieve a break-even budget, with a slightly positive operating result, before depreciation on the EASL building, of €92,000 (i.e. almost €100,000 better than the approved budget). The net 2021 result, after including non-cash and extraordinary items, saw a loss of €250,000, i.e. €312,000 better than the €560,000 initially budgeted.

If one looks at our figures in more detail, in 2021 we incurred an overall shortfall of revenues of €970,000 compared with the initial budget, due primarily to lower number of registrations for International Liver Congress<sup>™</sup> (ILC) 2021 and other events (€700,000), and to lower sales of online education products (€400,000). It should, however, be noted that ILC 2021 performed well, making a net result of over €2,000,000.

Income losses were largely offset by rigorous control and reduction of expenses by €1,000,000, primarily through the elimination of onsite expenses in events and governance and systematic renegotiation of major contracts.

The 2021 financial accounts were audited by an external audit firm, A. Gautier Société Fiduciaire. The auditors confirmed that EASL's accounts were in good order and properly reflected the financial status of the association.

Our financial management has taken a major step forward in that we have now completed the first full annual reporting cycle, in which the 2021 budget was approved by members in December 2020, adjusted forecasts of which were shared with members in July 2021 and again in December 2021, before finally being closed and presented to members in June 2022. In December 2021, members approved a 2022 budget allowing for a net loss of -€351,000, a budget influenced by caution and the optimism of a partial return to in-person events. Very much will depend on the result of ILC 2022 which at the time of writing is looking most promising. Beyond ILC, EASL is reinforcing its multichannel engagement with a combination of in-person events with a digital extension, some purely digital events, EASL Campus, EASL Studio, policy and public health forums, the launch of a new membership value proposition, and a new era of strategic partnerships with the healthcare industry.

My sincere thanks go again to the entire EASL Office for delivering passionately on our EASL mission while maintaining robust financial performance and stringent administration.



TREASURER Prof. Francesco NEGRO

#### **Auditor's Report**



## **2021 financial statements**

## Balance Sheet, as of 31st December

	2021 EUR	2020 EUR
Cash and cash equivalents	3,540,978	3,540,844
Accounts receivables and other receivables	1,206,478	888,538
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	2,647,810	1,902,469
Total Current Assets	7,395,266	6,331,850
Financial assets	5,148,927	5,735,300
Investments	0	0
Tangible fixed assets	4,116,462	4,380,083
Intangible fixed assets	0	0
Total Fixed Assets	9,265,389	10,115,383
Total Assets	16,660,654	16,447,234
Accounts payable	374,606	338,285
Other short-term liabilities	183,252	333,051
Deferred income and accrued expenses	2,167,684	1,585,090
Total Current Liabilities	2,725,541	2,256,426
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Mortgage loan	2,063,513	1,988,136
Long-term provisions	783,698	850,213
Total Long-term Liabilities	2,847,211	2,838,349
Unused restricted fund	127,107	141,657.04
Total Allocated Funds	127,107	141,657
	121,101	
Voluntary retained earnings	6,210,802	8,438,817
Reserve fund	5,000,000	5,000,000
Profit/Loss for the period	-250,007	-2,228,015
Total Equity	10,960,795	11,210,802
Total Liabilities and Reserve Funds	16,660,654	16,447,234

Income Statement for the year ended		
income otatement for the year chiefe	2021 EUR	2020 EUR
International Liver Congress	4,817,576	2,877,466
Liver Cancer Summit	417,634	573,717
NAFLD Summit	165,801	0
Small Conferences (Monothematic/Special conferences)	92,328	17,418
Membership	644,195	882,408
Journal of Hepatology	1,196,713	1,163,353
Sponsors – un/restricted funds	472,161	840,000
UEG support	0	148,155
Net Building Revenue	0	36,507
Other revenues	45,499	370,436
Total Operating income	7,851,906	6,909,460
	-,,	-,,
International Liver Congress	(1,289,130)	(1,367,759)
Liver Cancer Summit	(119,643)	(330,172)
NAFLD Summit	(91,223)	0
Small Conferences (Monothematic/Special conferences)	(263,509)	(173,782)
Education and Scientific Activities	(512,063)	(501,474)
Marketing and Communication	(61,729)	(74,000)
Memberships, Fellowships and Registry Grants	(1,058,012)	(918,764)
Journal of Hepatology	(460,404)	(476,872)
EU Advocacy/Policy and Public Affairs	(84,586)	(312,261)
GB Meetings and Honoraria	(214,400)	(224,452)
IT-related projects	(271,015)	(645,456)
Overheads	(30,267)	(223,000)
Legal, Consultancy, and Audit Fees	(87,425)	(684,959)
Other expenses	(93,017)	(35,938)
Total Operating expenses before Staff & depreciation	(4,636,422)	(5,968,889)
Staff/Salaries	(2 100 625)	(2 107 066)
Depreciation	(3,122,635) (264,413)	(3,107,966)
	(204,413)	(257,453)
Operating result	(171,563)	(2,424,848)
Financial income	99,717	115,052
Financial expenses	(46,390)	(67,152)
Interest of mortgage	(42,408)	(43,106)
Unrealised Financial Gain on Bonds	49,296	47,928
Unrealised Financial Loss on Bonds	(36,073)	(115,323)
Foreign Exchange Gain	(128,094)	(131,590)
Other expenses	0	0
Financial result	(103,953)	(194,190)
Exceptional income and expenses	10,960	401,944
Net result before changes in funds	(264,557)	(2,217,093)
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Changes in funds	14,550	(10,921)
Net result after changes in funds	(250,007)	(2,228,014)

### Notes to the 2021 financial statements

#### **General principles**

#### Accounting principles applied in the preparation of the financial statements

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of commercial accounting as set out in the Swiss Code of Obligations (Art. 957 to 963b CO, effective since 1 January 2013). Significant balance sheet items are accounted for as follows:

#### Accounts receivable

Accounts receivable are amounts due from parties for services performed in the ordinary course of business. If collection is expected in one year or less (or in the normal operating cycle of the business if longer), they are classified as current assets.

These receivables are valued at their nominal values. Credit default risks are accounted for by specific and general allowances. General allowances are recognised for items that have not yet been considered with a specific allowance. The general allowance is based on the assumption that the default risk increases as the debt becomes increasingly overdue.

#### Prepaid expenses and accrued income

A prepaid expense results from a business making advanced payments for goods or services to be received in the future. Prepaid expenses are initially recorded as assets, but their value is expensed over time onto the income statement. After the benefits of the assets are realised over time, the amount is then released to P&L (i.e recorded as an expense). Prepaid expenses are, in nature, short term assets. However, for the needs of EASL business model, it can occur that some advanced payments for goods or services will be received in the mid-terme future (i.e. two to five years ahead).

	2021 EUR	2020 EUR	2019 EUR
Prepaid for the upcoming year	1,874,696	579,431	856,845
Mid-term prepayments (2 to 5 years)	160,545	874,396	270,559

#### **Recognition of revenue**

The main revenue streams of the Association are the International Liver Congress (ILC) income, membership fees, and the two journals.

Membership fees are recognised in the accounting period in which the fees relate to.

ILC revenue is mainly composed of fees received from participants and sponsors. The sponsorship revenue recognition rule is based on the contract specifications that defined the duration and the amounts that should be measured reliably.

#### Non-current assets and leases

Property, plant, and equipment are valued at purchase cost, less any depreciation required by generally accepted accounting principles. Depreciation is charged on a straight line basis over the useful life of the fixed asset. The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at the end of each reporting period.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount and are recognised in the income statement.

#### The useful lives of assets have been determined as follows:

Type of assets	Useful life
Building	30 years
Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment	10 years
Computer & Hardware	3 years
Intangible Assets	3 years

#### **Foreign currencies**

Items included in the financial statements were measured using the currency of the primary economic environment in which the Association operates ("the functional currency"), which is Euro ("EUR").

Monetary and non-monetary items in Swiss Francs are translated into Euros at the following exchange rates:

Foreign currency		Profit and loss statement	Balance sheet
2021	EUR/CHF	1.0824	0.0810
2020	EUR/CHF	1.0824	1.0816
2019	EUR/CHF	1.1276	1.0870

The exchange rates used for balance sheet items are the rates prevailing on December 31; the exchange rates used for transactions conducted during the course of the year and for items in the profit and loss statement are average rates for the financial year.

For reasons of simplification, from 2019 onwards and in accordance with Swiss law, the Financial Statements are reflected in EUR only.

#### Details, analyses, and explanations to the financial statements

The European Association for the Study of the Liver ("EASL") is an Association registered in Geneva (2018), previously in Zurich (2017), Switzerland. The number of full-time equivalents did not exceed 50 on an annual average basis.

The presentation has been slightly changed versus previous version and comparative numbers have been modified in accordance.

#### **Receivables and liabilities**

Receivables and liabilities towards direct or indirect participants and management bodies and entities in which there is a direct or indirect participation must in each case be shown separately on the balance sheet or in the notes to the financial statements (art. 959a para. 4 CO). This only applies if these items are not presented in the balance sheet as suggested.

#### Mortgage schedules

Commitments on the building - Rue Daubin 7:

- n° 10527 of 30.09.2008 for CHF 2,100,000 – First Row

- n° 10527 of 30.09.2008 for CHF 1,500,000 - Second Row

- n° 2013-752 of 30.12.2012 for CHF 200,000 – Third Row

#### **Pension liabilities**

On 31 December 2021, none, as payments were done on time without issues On 31 December 2020, it amounted to EUR 134,163 (CHF 145,104) On 31 December 2019, it amounted to EUR 77,459 (CHF 84,194)

#### **Collateral for third-party liabilities**

	2021 EUR	2020 EUR	2019 EUR
Guarantee obligations	69,000	69,000	79,560

## Total amount resulting from the dissolution of replacement reserves and the material dissolution of excess hidden reserves

No hidden reserves were released in the year under review.

#### Significant events occurring after the balance sheet date

VAT issue for the past 3 years will be solved in S1 (the first semester of) 2022.

#### Significant events occurring during the reporting year

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the year's result. The main income-generating event (ILC 2021) had to be converted to a digital event thus resulting in a decreased income of around EUR 4,500K. Other planned events had to be converted as well to a digital event. However, a second year of COVID-19 has been foreseen and the risk mitigated within the 2021 budget resulting of lower loss vs. 2020 of EUR -500K (vs. EUR -2,200K in 2020).

#### Fees paid and accrued to the auditor

	2021 EUR	2020 EUR	2019 EUR
Audit services	23,420	23,023	22,533

# THANKING OUR COMMUNITY AND UNITING HEPATOLOGY

Through this second year of the pandemic, EASL leadership and office staff strove to keep serving our community, uniting hepatology.

Thank you for helping us make 2022 another successful year. We are deeply grateful to, and admiring of you, our community, for your dedication to serving patients, and your commitment to EASL activities. We look forward to forging new paths in hepatology with you.







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