

Minutes of the Meeting of the EuCheMS WP Ethics in Chemistry

in the frame of the 6th EuCheMS Chemistry Congress, on 13 Sep 2016,
FIBES – Sevilla Conference Centre, Avda. Alcalde Luis Uruñuela, 1; room Berlin.

Participants: Deirdre Black (RSC -UK), Luigi Campanella (IT), Hartmut Frank (DE), Anca Silvestru (RO), Brigitte van Tiggelen (BE), Hans-Georg Weinig (DE)

Guest: Hans Steisslinger (Terra Institute, DE)

Excused: Francesco de Angelis, Gerd Bringmann, Pavel Drasar, Karine Ndjoko, José Elguero, Pilar Goya, Wolfram Koch, Jan Mehlich, Frank Moser, Jan Reedijk, Panagiotis Siskos, Toby Underwood

1. Welcome

Hartmut Frank (HF) welcomes the other five members, addressing the fact that the number of WP members attending the meeting to be small, due to two main factors:

- First, when a survey between all WP members was conducted in March 2016 to determine the optimum date for the WP meeting in Seville, the majority voted for Tuesday, 13 Sep., apparently unaware of the fact that for the same time period a meeting of the Executive Committee of EuCheMS was scheduled; thus, a few days before the conference, four WP members had to retract their commitment for participation.

- Secondly, for those members who hold no other EuCheMS office the costs thereby incurred (travel, accommodation and conference fee) amounts to between several hundred and more than thousand Euros; this is a considerable obstacle for those who have to cover these expenses privately as they do not yet (postgraduate, post-doctorate colleagues) or not any more (retired colleagues) have access to institutional budgetary funds or other means of research funding. Not to mention countries with less resources...

2. Determination of moderator and minute taker

It is agreed that the minutes of the meeting are taken by HF, with Luigi Campanella (LC) and Brigitte van Tiggelen (BT) taking over when HF would have to leave early (13:50) for a session in which he is giving a lecture.

3. Presentation of the WP-Statutes drafted by Jan Mehlich (JM) & HF

3.1. Discussion

Anca Silvestru insists on the fact that the WP should not restrict its work and considerations to the chemical community but wants to address the ethical issue for the broader community, for a correct understanding of both the benefits and the dangers brought by chemistry in our daily life (*e.g.* pharmaceutical products, food, cosmetics, transportation, etc.). It is a matter of specific education of the whole community for a responsible and ethical behaviour with regard to resources economy, environment protection or even personal health. A correct or a wrong way in using chemical or chemical related products makes the difference between improving or degrading the present and the future life conditions.

BT notices that there is a standard procedure for electing board members of Divisions and WP's like Chair or Secretary. HF answers that the present statutes have been read and approved by members of the executive committee, like David Cole-Hamilton and Francesco de Angelis in particular.

3.2. Procedure of acceptance

The members attending the meeting voted unanimously in favour of the statutes in their present formulation.

It was decided that HF will contact electronically all other members who could not attend and give them another two weeks to cast their vote on the statutes by sending a mail with a deadline (no answer will mean blank vote).

4. Discussion on the mode and procedures of electing the (eventual) Steering Committee

When discussing the mode and procedures of electing the new Steering Committee, the members present came to the conclusion that within another four weeks after the final acceptance of the WP-Statutes, all members should be given the chance to nominate – or self-nominate – candidates for the Steering Committee elections, indicating if they wish to be candidate and also the kind of duty they are ready to carry inside the steering committee. After a further period of four weeks for the candidates to present themselves to the WP group, the voting will be initiated and conducted; BT and Hans-Georg Weinig (HW) kindly agreed to supervise the election process.

Thus the process agreed upon is the following:

- when the statutes are accepted, HF sends a circular mail to all, asking for nominations and self nominations
- within four weeks from that mail, everyone has the opportunity to nominate, self nominate or answer to nominations (saying he or she accepts the nomination or not, and in which duty for instance); we would prefer the discussion including all on the mail list, but in any event, HF, HW and BT should be put in cc: of all your exchanges (otherwise we can not keep track)
- at the end of these four weeks, BT and HW draw a list of all candidates for the Steering Committee, and ask all the WP members to send their votes back to them ONLY (BT and HW) within a week or two
- BT and HW gather all the votes and provide the results to all, and personally to those elected
- within one or two weeks, the elected members distribute the duties in between themselves and the new chair announces the Steering Committee to all of us

5. Ethics and Open Science

LC outlined a discussion on the important topic of Open sciences that he believes should be developed inside the WP.

In the age of the circular economy, knowledge must be considered as an essential part of this process. Knowledge indeed means participation and supposes availability of the

research developments to all. This virtuous program suffers from the contrasting interests among different categories of stakeholders: editors, publishers, readers, researchers, consumers of scientific knowledge ...etc. Full open access journals mean cost on one side and saving on the other. In this debate that will be crucial to the progress of knowledge in the future, ethics can become a guide in finding a balanced solution and a moral behaviour that meets and respects the expectations of all actors involved.

Such a reflection on "Ethics and Open Science" could be developed further, in the frame of coming meetings in which more members are present.

6. Next Activities/Meetings

It was agreed that from 2017 onward the WP should hold annual workshops or symposia during which we can meet and discuss further the issues pertaining to the Ethics in Chemistry.

6.1. Proposal for Berlin 2017

This meeting would be held in conjunction with the 150th Anniversary of the GDCh, the German Chemical Society, to be celebrated September 10-14. The GDCh Science Forum will be held on September 12-13 at the Freie Universität FU Berlin. HW will find out about the details and hopes to avoid the conference fee for the participants of our working party, though the decision will not be in his hands. He will investigate how to integrate this meeting inside the general GDCh meeting, and the opportunity to be integrated in the general programme, which should provide a forum for our discussion and projects. An alternative would be to hold the meeting immediately before or after.

6.2. Proposal for Roma 2018

LC is kindly offering to host the WP in Rome some time in the Spring. While any month is fine with LC, he suggests June.

6.3. Presence at the EuCheMS conference in Liverpool 2018

The restricted number of attendees to this business meeting reflects the difficulty of gathering those interested in Ethics in Chemistry during a large EuCheMS Conference. On the other hand, it is important for the WP to have some kind of presence in these big meetings.

In a round of mail discussion with other Divisions and WPs, BT has come up with two umbrella themes that will be celebrated in 2018 (mere discussion proposals at this stage):

- 200 years of the publication of the Frankenstein novel, that touches upon the uses of scientific knowledge and the limits of life. DB and many others have noted that this is a double-edged theme that might reinforce the prejudices we want to address...

- European Year for Cultural Heritage, an opportunity to make clear that chemistry is an integrant part of this cultural heritage, not to mention an essential tool to preserve it.

Deirdre Black (DB) emphasises the constraints faced by the local organizers of the ECC7, especially in terms of lecture rooms, hence in the limited number of available slots

for sessions. Since this WP, as others divisions like History of Chemistry or Education, touches upon transversal questions, we need to think outside of the box, in other terms than traditional sessions. Among the ideas mentioned:

- a well-prepared debate that includes ethical questions (for instance on open science?)
- practical training during short intermediary sessions, on how to face a very specific ethical dilemma
- science café...

There will be a call later this year or early next to all EuCheMS and local stakeholders for suggestions for special activities beyond the more traditional scientific programme.

7. Miscellaneous

7.1. Organisation for the prohibition of chemical weapons (OPCW)

HW informs he has been elected as a member of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach of the OPCW, and wishes to create strong ties between this organisation and our WP on the long term. For the time being, HW will take the input from the WP as well as and the "Seville Declarations" on chemistry and use of chlorine to the next meeting of the OPCW Advisory Board on Education and Outreach to be held in October 4-6 in The Hague.

7.2. Letter of interest to the other chairs of EuCheMS divisions and WP

After discussion, it is agreed that such a letter of interest should be written by the first elected president of the new steering committee, maybe co-signed by our president David Cole-Hamilton, and circulated together with the final version of the collective paper that Jan Mehlich is putting together (see hereafter)

7.3. The collective paper drafted by JM

We all are grateful for JM drafting such a paper where everyone is invited to add his or her comment. On top of being circulated among our group and sent to other Divisions, it would be nice to put it on the website. Other useful tools signalled by JM might also be put on the website. But this shall be the work of the next Steering committee.

The meeting closes at 15.30/45.

Seville, 16 Sep. 2016

Comments (sent by email)

Jan Reedijk (25 Sep. 16):

I am pleased with the minutes and the statutes.
I would suggest to give the statutes a date on the first or last page, and a status.
Like e.g. "Approved at the meeting of Sept 13, 2016"
For steering committee membership I have no interest, and would suggest you
try to find younger colleagues than me.

Pavel Drasar (25 Sep. 16):

I agree with both papers and wish to suggest minor changes:

in the Statutes,
par. 3.4, ... other EuCheMS Working Parties and Divisions. I suggest to add
... other EuCheMS Working Parties, Divisions, and ECTN.
The reason is that ECTN acts *inter alia* in assessment of HEI educational programmes and is
ready to implement the ethics education into its requirements.
I am sure that in 9.1. the EuCheMS General Assembly has the power to dissolve the WP.

As for the Minutes

It has been discussed recently that the booth of EuCheMS in Liverpool shall be larger
than in Seville and that shall include also the WPs and WGs to show better the EuCheMS
activities. Here will be an excellent opportunity to show ethics policies and
distribute handouts etc.

Luigi Campanella (25 Sep. 2016):

Completely in agreement with Drasar

Jan Mehlich (26 Sep. 2016):

I vote for "accepting" the Statutes in the current form. From my point of view, we
should not name particular "institutions" or "organisations" (of whatever kind they
might be) in these statutes (like, for example, the ECTN as suggested by Pavel
Drasar), but of course indicate our willingness to collaborate and form ties with
such groups that share our mission. Naming particular groups makes it to "exclusive"
and requires a constant "update". The statutes are probably not the right place for
that, in my humble opinion.

Thanks for the detailed Minutes of the Sevilla meeting! You had some great ideas
for future activities, e.g. the presence at the GDCh meeting in Berlin next year, or
presenting the WP in Liverpool in form of discussion rounds, etc.! I wish I could be
more active, but as long as I reside in Taiwan (for another 5-6 years, I expect), it
is a little difficult.

Thanks also for talking about the draft for a WP publication that I compiled. I am not
sure if I understand the points you mention in the minutes correctly: You suggest to send it to
other EuCheMS WPs and divisions AFTER finishing and publishing it, or before in order to give
them a chance to contribute anything? Let's not make it too complicated, otherwise it risks to
lose track of the "central theme" in it. If the current scope is too far exceeded, we might think
of writing more essays instead of pressing all ideas and topics into one. The current draft
includes passages written by Frank Moser and Luigi Campanella (in parts revised by me), as
well as substantial input from Henning Hopf. Brigitte van Tiggelen announced a contribution.

More ideas are welcome, but there are two limitations: scope and time. No essay is ever really "finished", but a decision must be made when it can count as "round", and when the time has come to send it out.

Brigitte Van Tiggelen (26 Sep. 2016)

I completely agree about NOT mentioning any third parties in the statutes, this is not the place. Don't take me wrong, I'm all for collaboration but each partner should keep its identity, independance and self determination. Would ETCN (for instance) change their statutes to include the name of a new partner? I guess no, and I wouldn't even ask for it. Furthermore, we will have more power by acting together as independant partners collaborating on focused actions.

Jan, about the collective text you initiated and other contributions you compiled, we only discussed the best moment to CIRCULATE those during the Sevilla meeting. The management of this initiative of course lies in your hands. Perhaps you should send a close deadline for input, so that we can proceed to publication very soon.

Modest Gertsiuk (4 Oct. 2016)

I fully support all the regulations of the Statutes, they are excellent, and in my view do not require any adjustments.