

-Minutes for Board Meeting – July 7 2025

-Online Meeting-

Present:

Stephanie Heux, Karen Polizzi, Paola Branduardi, Diethard Mattanovich, John Morrissey, Kjeld Olesen, Pau Ferrer, Ralf Takors, Verena Siewers

1. Welcome, and adoption of the agenda

The meeting started with a welcome and the adoption of the agenda.

2. Apologies for absence

Jäntti Jussi, Ton van Maris, Pascale Daran-Lapujade. Jan Maarten van Dijk, Jean Marie Francois, Pablo Iván Nikel

3. Report on EFB ExBo and General assembly

- Recruitment of new members: the strategic importance of this task for EFB is illustrated, together with possible issues and solutions regarding big Institutions/Universities. Membership benefits flyer is added to our shared folder for consideration and for promoting the initiative;
- New statutes was sent to lawyer after implementing all received comments. Acting on advice received, the Board registered in Belgium will consist of the President, Vice Presidents, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary (Article 9.1). However, the Executive Board retains its previous authority with respect to deciding on the activities and operations of the Federation (Article 9.2). The GA approved unanimously.
- Finances: i) Final accounts for 2024 close with a surplus of around €10K. ii) Income and expenditure for 2025, compared with the budget at the end of May 2024, show that cashflow is secure: the Finance and Strategy Group will consider ways by which some cash assets could be invested to generate interest.
- A range of communication tools including websites, social media and online meeting infrastructure is being developed. Any information for inclusion in these platforms can

be sent to the office. Divisions will have the ability to edit meeting planning schedules on a live meeting calendar. This should enable avoidance of clashes with ECB and other meetings.

- Several meetings are being organised between July and October. Policy regarding speaker reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs for EFB meetings where EFB has shared financial responsibility for meetings, invited speakers are customarily offered free registration and tickets for social events but are asked to cover their own travel and accommodation costs. Where this is not possible, a clear policy regarding reimbursement of expenses is required. Agreed that business class travel should not be supported. However, some Board members were concerned that the suggested maximum contribution of €250 for speakers from Europe and €1,500 for intercontinental speakers might be too restrictive. Noted that some flexibility can be allowed within meeting contracts, on a case by case basis, provided that anticipated costs are included in the meeting budget.
- The New Biotechnology Journal is also very critical to EFB and economic sustainability. A report on numbers and perspectives has been given, but the Board asked for revising the pictures as they were not fully clear. It remains the indication to consider this journal for publications and TI.

4. Report on ECB 2026

- The ExBo was hosted by VIB, in Ghent, as they will be partner of the Conference (TFI Lodestar will be again the agency incharged of the organization). Managing Director Jérôme Van Biervliet presented an overview of VIB, its structure and activities. The underlying theme of 'science to industry' will be well represented in the ECB2026 programme.
- Report from the Congress Organising Committee: key deadlines have been set but they will be redifened, as early bird was set too late for abstract approval and programme definition. Budget is being constructed based on 500 paying delegates. Increased registration fees are regarded as realistic. To minimise costs, the current plan is to use the main auditorium for plenary lectures only on Sunday and Wednesday, but the onsite visit evidenced some issues. Sponsorship is optimistically set at €200K, which will be challenging.

- Report from the Scientific Programme Committee: Working titles for the four streams are: 'Innovations for healthy living', 'Solutions for sustainable Planet', 'Manufacturing with microbes' and 'Feeding the planet'. We are defining keynote speakers (six per stream, 24 in total). VIB will propose one speaker per stream. Three potential plenary lecturers: Claus Crone Fuglsang (CSO, Novonesis), Filip Meysman (University of Antwerp), Sarah O'Connor (Max Planck Institute). The fourth plenary lecturer will be nominated by AFOB.
 - All Divisions and Executive Board members should take every opportunity to contribute to and promote the Congress.
5. **Update on next conferences:** RPP12, PYFF9 and Microbial Stress, and on MBD collaborations (ASBE, ICYGMB).

RPP 12 (October 7-9 in Ulm in Germany 2025): Ralf reported on the conference's registration (103 registrations) and abstract submission status (50 to 60 submissions for oral and poster), mentioning an increase in participants in the last few days before the "early bird", and a decision to extend the deadline to August 15th was taken. He also shared details on sponsorship (15.000 to 20.000 €), financial support, and plans to offer bursaries for students. The conference is shaping up well with 2 keynotes and 6 invited speakers from various regions.

Paola and Pau discussed the process of managing bursaries for an event, including the budget allocation, application procedure, and tax considerations. They agreed to adjust the application process to avoid confusion, such as not mentioning the exact bursary amount initially. Pau shared past experiences with bursary management, highlighting challenges with tax regulations in Spain and the need for careful budgeting. Ralf inquired about previous procedures.

PYFF9 (2026): John discuss the rescheduling of the PYFF to September 8-11, 2026. They agreed to align on the contract terms between EFB and the organizers, with John and Pau taking the lead on communication. It was decided to send an email to all the organizer to see how things are moving.

ASBE8 (2026): Verena reported on the next EFB conference in Manchester in early November 2026, including the preliminary scientific program and speaker suggestions. Verena mentioned that they went with the original contract with share risk because it was easier. EUSynbioS will organize again an event during the conference.

Microbial Stress: Paola has to discuss with Mathias to move the date cause it would collapse with PYFF, after this was reallocated. A mail to the chair, Sofia Pauleta, will be then sent.

ICYGMB: The board also discussed the upcoming ICYGMB conference, where EFB will sponsor a keynote lecture. John will participate to this conference and present shortly the EFB and the division.

DECHEMA Event: Ralf submitted a renewed request for the organization of the next EFB/MBD keynote lecture at this event, which the division has agreed to sponsor with a contribution of €1.350.

(For more details see:

<https://dechema.de/en/About+DECHEMA/Roll+of+Honour/DECHEMA+Industrial+Bio+process+Award/Rising+Star+Competition+2026-preview-1-t-1763377673419.html>)

6. Past activities:

- Update on the website:

Stephanie explains the changes that have been made to the website and informs people that they can update personal information and pictures on the division website through her.

7. Next activities for the following years:

- *vademecum* for organizing a congress

Paola requested help in creating a *vademecum* for organizing conferences, with Ralf and Pau offering to assist. She informs that by now a “Term of Reference” document for the case in which the EFB is not sharing risks/surplus have been prepared.

- involving ESR in MBD/EFB activities:

The Board discussed how to better involve young researchers in their organization. Paola expressed the need to provide a clear framework for young members who want to collaborate, while Stephanie suggested connecting with existing organized groups. Ralf proposed hiring young people for social networking and podcasting roles, suggesting they could better promote the organization through platforms like social media. The group agreed that involving young researchers should be a two-way learning process, where they can learn from the organization while also contributing their skills and perspectives. The group discussed the need to update the mission statement of the Board to better include and engage young people, with Kjeld suggesting the creation of a pull factor rather than pushing them into separate groups. They agreed to work on this initiative with Marjan De Mey, who also wants to involve young people in EFB.

8. Report of the Treasurer:

The financial status of the division is about € 82.200, allowing for initiatives and conference support.

9. Late items

No further points to be discussed

10. Next meeting of the Board

The suggestion is to have another meeting by the end of the year