



A view from Park Güell, Barcelona - taken by Mona Dave (UK-FETP Cohort 2021) whilst in the city for the European Scientific Conference for Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (ESCAIDE) 2023

## Editorial

Dear EAN friends,

Happy New Year and best wishes for 2024! It was an epic end to 2023 for EAN, with all the plans for ESCAIDE and the side events hosted by EAN coming to fruition in November. The General Assembly marked the official end of the EAN year, when we took time to reflect on the achievements of the board in 2023, said thank you and goodbye to our outgoing board members and extended a warm welcome to our new volunteers.

We are delighted to bring you the first edition of the newsletter in 2024 in which we will:

- Introduce the **new EAN advisory board** and **report on our priorities and plans for 2024**.
- Reflect on **ESCAIDE 2023** and the **EAN activities**, including **Career Compass, Bar Camp, Photo Contest, Best Oral presentation**, and the **General assembly**.
- Introduce the new **UK Frontline FETP launch!**

### The EAN board

<b>President:</b>	Ioannis Karagiannis
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Jane Whelan
<b>Treasurers:</b>	Maximilian Riess Soledad Colombe
<b>Secretaries:</b>	Bojana Mahmutovic Camille Jacqueline
<b>General Member:</b>	Alicia Barrasa
<b>Co-opted Members:</b>	Mona Dave Stine Nielsen Charlotte Hammer

## Word from the president: Ioannis Karagiannis

Dear EAN friends,

Happy new year! I am honoured to introduce myself as the incoming president of EAN. It was incredible to see many of you at ESCAIDE last November after a couple of years that I wasn't able to join in person, either due to the pandemic or due to other commitments. And it fills me with joy to know that I will have more to do with many of you again over the next couple of years, as well as reconnect with new cohorts.

The EAN board had its annual face-to-face meeting a couple of weeks ago and agreed on a few priority areas for 2024. We looked at our ways of working both within the team, as well as with the whole of EAN and the world out there. As well as planning for great events and new content for 2024, we also want to be as efficient as possible, and explore new ways of engaging with our members. We will be working on a communications strategy, but we've already decided on a few things after carefully considering some metrics. The newsletter will continue to be published, albeit monthly; it will be more concise, and fewer topics will be covered in each issue. This will also provide a sneak peek into what keeps the EAN busy and will hopefully reduce the distance with our members and the rest of the world. Bulletins will continue to be posted to our active members on a weekly basis.

The EAN makes a significant contribution to the ECDC fellowship programme through actively participating in the selection process, working groups, the Training Site Forum, as well as the ESCAIDE scientific committee, and we will continue our fruitful collaboration on these topics.

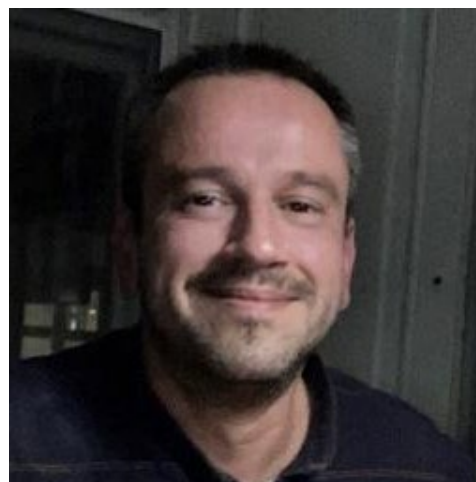
We will also continue to rely on EAN members for guidance on any important issues. At the same time, EAN is in the unique position of being able to call on some of the most experienced people in field epidemiology and public health microbiology training, namely former EPIET and EUPHEM coordinators: our members. We intend

to seek separate ways of reconnecting with this group of people for the benefit of our members.

I would also like to mention separately the issue of some job adverts that have been circulated that referred to fraudulent job offers. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused and would like to reassure you that we are going to review our processes for sharing job offers with the network. If you have any doubts or concerns, we encourage you to reach out to us at [eanboard@gmail.com](mailto:eanboard@gmail.com). Your security is our priority, and we are here to assist you in verifying the authenticity of any communication.

Again, it is my pleasure to reconnect with you all and I am looking forward to lots of fruitful discussions in the near future!

All the very best,  
Ioannis



## Meet the new EAN Advisory Board 2023-2024

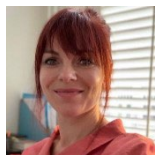
This year, we said goodbye to six of our board and co-opted members. It is with enormous gratitude that we thank **Iro Evlampidou** (outgoing president), **Charlotte Hammer** (outgoing treasurer), **Laura Bubba** and **Dorothee Obach** (outgoing secretaries), **Justine Schaeffer** (outgoing general board member)

and co-opted member, **Alma Tostmann**. You guys have been an inspiration to us in all you achieved! We're very happy that we've retained the support of Stine and Charlotte as co-opted members and we would like to welcome our new members. So, introducing the new Advisory Board for the coming years, 2023-2024:



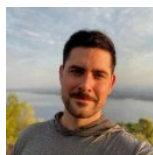
**Newly Elected!**  
**President**  
**Ioannis Karagiannis**  
2023-2025

From Greece (EPIET C2006), Ioannis is an independent consultant, currently with WHO, living in Athens.



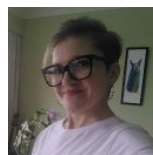
**Vice President**  
**Jane Whelan**  
2022-2024

Jane is from Ireland, (EPIET C2009) and is working as an independent consultant, based near Lisbon.



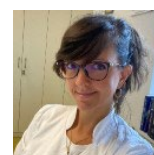
**Treasurer**  
**Maximilian Riess**  
2022-2024

Max is from Germany (EUPHEM C2018), as is a public health microbiologist at based at ECDC in Stockholm.



**Newly Elected!**  
**Treasurer**  
**Soledad Colombe**  
2023-2024

From France, Soledad (EPIET C2018) works at the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp, Belgium



**Newly Elected!**  
**Secretary**  
**Bojana Mahmutovic**  
2023-2024.

Bojana is from Croatia (EPIET MS C2020), based at the Institute of Public Health in Krapina-Zagorje County, Croatia.



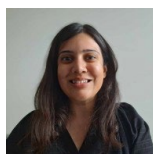
**Newly Elected!**  
**Secretary**  
**Camille Jacqueline**  
2023-2025

From France, Camille (EPIET C2021) will soon start working at the national reference centre for Legionella in Hospices Civils of Lyon.



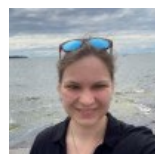
**Newly Elected!**  
**General Member**  
**Alicia Barrasa**  
2023-2025

Alicia is from Spain, an alumna of the Spanish FETP (PEAC, C2000). She is a scientific coordinator for the UKFETP since 2020.



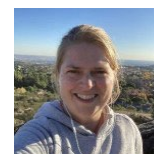
**Newly Elected!**  
**Co-opted Member**  
**Mona Dave**  
2023-2024

From the UK (UKFETP C2021), Mona is a Senior Scientist at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).



**Co-opted Member**  
**Charlotte Hammer**  
2023-2024

From Germany, Charlotte (EPIET C2018), has been a board member for many years. She is currently based at the University of Cambridge in the UK.



**Co-opted Member**  
**Stine Nielsen**  
2023-2024

Also a veteran board member, Stine hails from Denmark (EPIET C2008) and is currently working at SSI in Copenhagen.

### EAN Advisory Board 2023-2024 face-to-face meeting in Lisbon: Our plans for the year ahead

The members of the EAN Board met in Lisbon in January 2024 for their bi-annual face-to-face (F2F) meeting. We had a packed agenda reviewing core and supplementary activities of the board for the year ahead. Key areas for discussion were:

- Our work plan for 2024, including new opportunities for our members' professional development, social events, training and more. Keep an eye on the newsletter as our plans evolve!
- New ways to make our communications with our membership more proactive, dynamic, and engaging.
- A priority for us this year is to improve communication and connectivity across cohorts (EPIET, EUPHEM, MediPIET, PAE and UK FETP) and to foster our relationship with other field epidemiology programmes internationally. You will see some of these changes starting next month. As always, we welcome your feedback as things progress!



The EAN advisory board 2023-2024 at the face-to-face meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, January 27, 2024.



## EAN Events & Activities in Q4, 2023

### PRE-ESCAIDE 2023 Mini Module on Molecular Epidemiology

By Justine Schaffer

In 2023, the traditional pre-ESCAIDE mini-module organised by EAN focused on Molecular Epidemiology. This mini-module was designed for public health professionals with little knowledge of sequencing techniques and who would like to better understand how these data are produced and how to interpret them.

It was held face-to-face in Barcelona thanks to the amazing support of the Public Health Agency of Catalunya (ASPCAT) on November 20-21, 2023. Around 30 fellows and alumni gathered to understand what molecular epidemiology is and how to interpret such data.

The first day started with a series of lectures to set the basic principles of molecular epidemiology. It included:

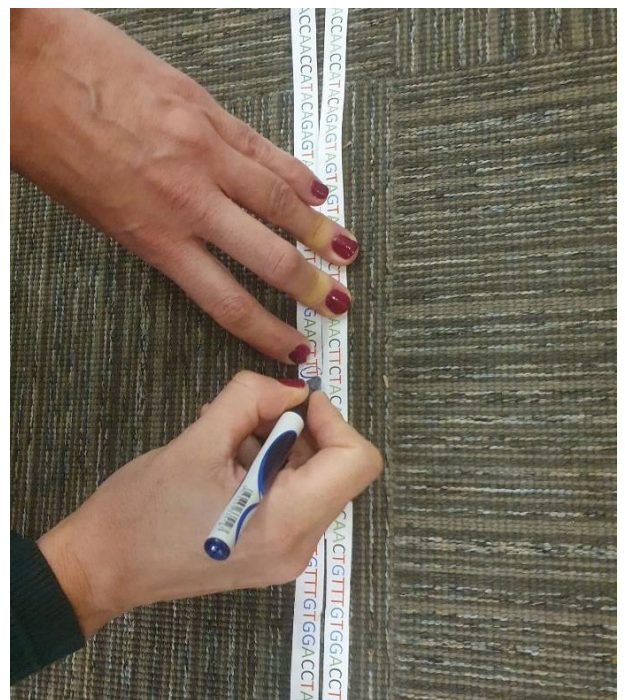
- an overview of molecular typing methods with their strength and weaknesses
- a dive into the technics of sequencing and how it impacts data interpretation
- real life examples of how useful sequencing can be for various areas of public health (outbreak investigation, surveillance, and emerging infectious diseases)

To stretch out in between these rich presentations, participants got to align some SARS-CoV-2 sequencing reads and search for mutations of the Alpha, Beta and Delta variants. The rest of the day was dedicated to the use of sequencing in the investigation of foodborne bacteria outbreaks, with two examples from the UK. The second day focused on the use of sequencing to monitor antimicrobial resistance, with two interactive lectures: a carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae outbreak and the transmission of cephalosporin resistance between animals and humans.

As always, this mini-module would not have existed without the amazing ideas and hard work of volunteers from our network. They developed the programme and created all the content, and we owe them the great success of this mini-module! Let's not forget EAN board members who did the much less gratifying work of organising the logistics and making sure everyone got information, a spot and food. We also thank all participants for their enthusiasm and energy through the mini-module!



Mini-module on Molecular Epidemiology: Starting with the basics



Mini-module on Molecular Epidemiology: Finding mutations

### EUPHEM 15 Celebration

By Alma Tostmann

Last year marked the 15-year anniversary of the EUPHEM fellowship programme! To celebrate, EAN hosted an Online Career Compass session for the EPIET Alumni Network members and friend with a dedicated 'EUPHEM-only' panel on Friday 17

November 2023. Here we share some of the insights of the panellists. I think you'll agree that they expressed universally held perspectives, whatever fellowship programme you may have followed!

The panel consisted of five EUPHEM alumni from our network: **Amrish Baidjoe** (EUPHEM Cohort 2015, former EAN President, currently working as Director of MSF LuxOR), **Heli Harvala** (EUPHEM cohort 2014. Consultant Medical Virologist for NHS Blood and Transplant), **Rolf Kramer** (EUPHEM Cohort 2016, currently working at Sanofi), **Francesca Latronico** (EUPHEM Cohort 2014, currently working as Global AMR Laboratory Coordinator at FAO), **Lorenzo Subissi** (EUPHEM Cohort 2017, currently working as Scientist at WHO in Geneva). The session was moderated by **Zsofia Igloi** (EUPHEM Cohort 2016) and **Alma Tostmann** (EPIET Cohort 2009; EAN co-opted board member).

The EUPHEM program impacted on panellists' careers in many ways, including bringing together different perspectives, and encouraging an open-minded approach to setting up research networks and future collaboration. Panellists described different motivations in making career choices as their careers progressed, for example, including a focus on the location of the job, so as to live in (or be close to) the countryside and nature. Others said that the content of the job was always the main priority. Another panellist commented that the phase of his life also played a large role in choosing a new step. For example, when they had children, it meant that he had less *ad hoc* flexibility (e.g. in terms of business travel) and he did not want to compromise on family time, but that he is luckily in a position to master his time as well.

Panellists reflected on how skills required today are very different than those that were needed 15 years ago. Reflections included that skills are important, but that it is also helpful and important to acknowledge your own personality. The panel members all highlighted that you work in a team, so complementary skills and team skills are important for all professionals in public health. A specific recommendation to the audience was to make sure you are good in collaboration.

This recommendation reminded me of the proverb: *"If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together."*

In the final part of the session, we asked panel members to share recommendations with the audience. this can be summarised as: be brave, enjoy yourself, believe in yourself, explore the world, find your passion, go for it, keep an open mind, and go for group successes.

- **Be brave.** If you want to apply (for fellowship or job): do apply. We need all these kinds of backgrounds. And also, when you are in (fellowship or job): **enjoy yourself**.
- **Believe in yourself**, follow your heart and dreams, and keep doing it.
- If you have a possibility of **going outside your own country**: do it, it will broaden your mind. And if possible, go to a country that is very different than your own country.
- Main driver for career is **passion** for what you are doing; because you will spend a lot of time and energy on it, so without that it is maybe time to change your path. Without passion it may be hard to do a good job.
- If things are worth fighting for, they are worth fighting for.
- **Keep an open mind/eye/horizon** for opportunities. And allow yourself to take into account how your circumstances may change and make choices based on that.
- Not focus on individual success, but **keep an eye on group efforts**, networks, and collaboration.



The session was recorded and if you are still interested in watching, you can do so here: <https://epietalumni.net/euphem-15-years-career-compass/>. If you have any questions on the session, please don't hesitate to contact us ([eanboard@gmail.com](mailto:eanboard@gmail.com)).

And lastly, a highly recommended read on career choices at <https://waitbutwhy.com/2018/04/picking-career.html>.

## ESCAIDE 2023



ESCAIDE 2023 was a hybrid event both online and in-person and took place in Barcelona, Spain and between 22-24 November 2023.

Public health professionals and epidemiologists from 29 EU/EEA countries and 98 countries outside EU/EEA participated. The agenda was jam-packed and included 5 Plenaries, 11 Fireside sessions, 24 Poster tours, a myriad of side events, info stands and many other activities. Topics covered ranged from COVID-19 vaccination, surveillance-in-action, emerging diseases, and healthcare-associated infections, to modelling, biostatistics and health informatics, across both oral and poster presentations.



*The EAN information desk at ESCAIDE 2023 with board members Charlotte Hammer and Laura Bubba.*

Four plenary sessions covered:

1. Broadening the horizon: Revisiting the concept of 'prevention' for communicable diseases
2. Digital transformation and Artificial Intelligence
3. Wastewater surveillance: a magic bullet or just one piece of the puzzle?
4. One Health: Tackling global health challenges



The EAN information stand was buzzing with activity and conversation. As one of the members of the ESCAIDE Scientific Committee, EAN participated in and organized different activities and events that you can read more about in the pages that follow.

*Justine Schaeffer and Laura Bubba at the EAN information desk, ESCAIDE 2023.*

If any EAN members have thoughts or suggestions for topics and speakers which they would like to see at the plenary sessions for ESCAIDE 2024 then please get in touch with the EAN board - send us an email at [eanboard@gmail.com](mailto:eanboard@gmail.com) – with the subject “ESCAIDE suggestions”. As well as side sessions, fireside sessions, poster tours, networking events and ‘refresh and recharge’ sessions, all ideas are very welcome.

The live recordings of ESCAIDE 2023 sessions can be found in ECDC’s YouTube channel [here](#).

## Career Compass

By Alma Tostmann

The Career Compass is a Q&A session about the different career paths of established public health professionals. Since 2017, it has taken place as an evening session at ESCAIDE. This event provides the ideal platform to help junior public health professionals connect with senior professionals and discover future career opportunities.

The speakers of the 2023 edition were:

- Nadine Zeitlmann (Epidemiologist, Robert Koch Institute, Germany)
- Michael Edelstein (Associate Professor in Epidemiology Bar-Ilan University, Israel)
- Giovanna Jaramillo-Gutierrez (Co-Founder Milan and Associates, Spain)



- Patrick Keating (Epidemiology Advisor, Médecins Sans Frontières)
- Sabine Dittrich (Professor for Global Health Deggendorf Institute of Technology, Germany).

The session was moderated by EAN Board members Alma Tostmann (Hospital epidemiologist and Deputy Head IPC Unit, Radboudumc, Netherlands) and Jane Whelan (Specialist in Public Health Medicine, Independent).

We had a wonderful session with a full room of participants and many attendees online. For some panellists, career choices were dependent on the content of the job and the opportunities it afforded were guiding; Others said that (besides the content) the location of the job was most important. All panellists mentioned that joy and collaboration were key elements in their previous and current career roles. We look back on yet another great Career Compass session. The Career Session can be watched back on the online ESCAIDE platform Swapcard under 'side events



*Career Compass 2023 speakers and moderators. The sunglasses were to protect the panellists' eyes from the bright stage lights.*

## Bar Camp

**By Florian Burckhardt and Stine Nielsen**

BarCamp, hosted annually by EAN, is an in-person discussion forum for ESCAIDE participants to reflect on and share their thoughts and ideas in relation to a range of topics.

Topics for discussion are submitted to the virtual ESCAIDE platform and voted for. Topics are then discussed in order of most votes!

The session was run after the daily wrap-up on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

Topics raised for discussion at BarCamp 2023 were:

- What is being done and what can we do to ensure access to training opportunities like EPIET, EUPHEM and MEDIPIET for people with less privilege?
- Have the public and media attention on infectious disease epidemiology during the COVID-19 pandemic actually, increased understanding about public health?
- There is a lot of attention and funding for "pandemic preparedness". But what does it mean? Is it "something fancy" or just "investing in the basics"?

Is 'trauma' too strong a word for what we went through as a profession during the pandemic? And if not – are we dealing with its consequences effectively?

There was also the following 'hands-up' question:

- "Hands up if you know of at least one colleague who got a burnout because of Covid-19 work related stress"
  - 90% of hands went up

The audience went on to discuss what would have prevented burnout and some of the points mentioned included:

- Good leadership skills
- Asking colleagues how they are and not expecting a "yes, I'm fine"
- Caring for yourself and having breaks

At the end of BarCamp 2023, board member Stine Nielsen invited everyone to the Friday morning session on post-pandemic workforce, where mental exhaustion and recovering were on the agenda (link valid until March 2024):

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/888059205?h=0ec1152c35>

Some useful resources related to Leading in Disaster Recovery can be found here: <https://preparecenter.org/resource/leading-in-disaster-recovery-a-companion-through-the-chaos/>



Participants at BarCamp, ESCAIDE 2023

## EAN General Assembly 2023

Last year, it was again a pleasure for the board to host the EAN general assembly during a busy lunchtime at ESCAIDE. We reflected on all the activities completed during the year, those planned and still in progress during 2023. Gladly, we achieved a lot through the support of our members. A huge thank you to everyone that

contributed this year, sharing ideas, energy, and time! A special characteristic of the fellowship that alumni always highlight as a benefit of membership is the social nature of the network and proactive information exchange from which we all benefit. Long may this continue, with many new plans coming in 2024!

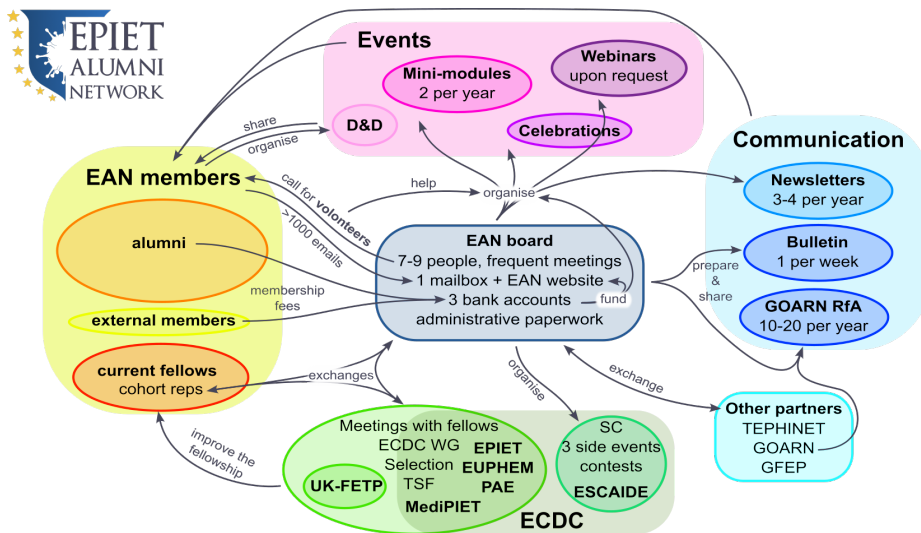


Figure. What does EAN do? An illustration of all the activities and events that happened with the collaboration of our members in 2023.

## EAN Photo Contest at ESCAIDE 2023

Each year, EAN organises a photo contest in which conference attendees can participate and vote for the best photo that transmits the spirit of field epidemiology and public health microbiology. This year, the submissions were a joy to behold. Diverse in theme, sentiment and the atmosphere evoked, they were never short on beauty and creativity. We would particularly like to congratulate **Nathalie Fischer**, our winner this year, **Justine Schaeffer**, in second place, and **Rossan Balisto**, in third place. Most of all, thanks to all those who submitted a photo and to all ESCAIDE participants who voted in the contest.



Our winner! First place: "Colours of community" by Natalie Fischer





**Second place:** *“The 10 steps of a perfect evening”* by Justine Schaeffer



**Third place:** *“A River with a Heart that flows among us”* by Rossan Balisto

### Best oral presentation, ESCAIDE 2023

On behalf of our volunteer judges, who generously donated their time and expertise to decide on this year’s winner of the best oral presentation, we would like to congratulate **Victoria Hall** on her presentation titled:

*“Effectiveness of second BNT162b2 mRNA booster doses in protecting against SARS-CoV-2 infection during the Omicron sub-variant waves; the UK SIREN study June 2022 to March 2023”.*



Victoria receiving her award, ESCAIDE 2023

## News from the Network

### UK Frontline FETP launch

Early January 2024 saw the launch of the Frontline Field Epidemiology Training Programme (Frontline FETP) as a pilot by the UK FETP. This is a 12-week in-service training programme specifically aimed at strengthening epidemiological capacity among those for whom field epidemiology is part of a bigger role or remit or those who might have to detect, decide, and respond to incidents or signals in the first instance. The goal is to provide a

firm foundation from which staff can detect, investigate, and respond to diseases and events of public health importance or international concern. The Frontline FETP consists of three face-to-face workshops on surveillance, outbreak investigation and effective communication, respectively. In the field intervals between the workshops, participants are expected to complete several deliverables at their sites (e.g., surveillance reports, surveillance evaluation, case investigations).



UK-FETP Scientific Co-ordinators & Frontline-FETP Alicia Barrasa Blanco and Alison Syke.



Frontline-FETP participants taking part in an information flow exercise.

## Fellowship news

Since our last newsletter, fellows from EPIET, EUPHEM, and associated programmes including the Postgraduate Training for Applied Epidemiology (PAE) in Germany and MediPIET, have had the opportunity to participate in the time-series analysis (TSA) 2023 module that took place on 11 - 15 of December, hosted by Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) in Rome. A packed programme of activities also awaits both fellows and supervisors in the first quarter of 2024, including

- 'R' Course for Supervisors taking place in during Q1.
- MVA – Multivariable Analysis module, taking place in Berlin in February, in collaboration with RKI and the PAE programme.
- The Finish fellows are hosting and organising a 'Nordic Mini Project Review module' at THL in Helsinki in end of February.
- Vaccinology module taking place virtually in March.

## Join today or update your Membership!

- The annual membership fee is **€30 / £28\***.  
There is a 10-year membership available at **€250 / £230**.
- The membership year runs from **01 November to 31 October** each year.
- **Make a payment now and have your membership extended until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 (or 2034)!**
- **Pay online here:**

*\*As always, fellows in their first and second year of training are exempt from paying membership fees!*

### EURO ACCOUNT (€30 per annum)

**Bank:** TransferWise Europe SA

**Address:** Rue du Trône 100, 3rd floor, Brussels, 1050, Belgium.

**Account holder:** E.A.N. (EPIET Alumni Network)

**IBAN:** BE88 9670 3610 1241

**BIC/Swift:** TRWIBEB1XXX

### GBP ACCOUNT (£28 per annum)

**Bank:** TransferWise

**Address:** 56 Shoreditch High Street, London E16JJ, UK

**Account holder:** E.A.N. (EPIET Alumni Network)

**IBAN:** GB22 TRWI 2314 7095 5404 40

**Account Number:** 95540440

**Sort code:** 23-14-70