

EULAR Member Organisation

Kilchberg, 27 March 2020

EULAR Congress 2020 Update - Message from the EULAR President

Dear EULAR members,

Dear friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken hold of the world and changed our lives substantially as a result. EULAR must be responsive and empathetic to this new reality. After careful consideration and evaluation of the risks and alternatives, we have decided to cancel the physical annual congress in Frankfurt in June this year. As a scientific medical society, it is our duty to ensure that our medical and health professional participants are available at the forefront of patient care. We are also concerned that bringing our RMD patient delegates into a large meeting venue would be extremely unwise at this time.

We remain committed to meeting our scientific, education and training obligations. For this reason, we are delighted to offer a virtual congress experience. This will be available online, starting from the regular congress date and will be accessible on demand over a timeframe of several months. We will also be able to enrich the content with new findings/releases on current topics, for example, via EULAR TV, press conferences or podcasts.

We are fully aware that our face-to-face meeting is and will remain the ideal format to share knowledge and promote optimal solutions for clinical practice, research and patient care. However, in the light of the pandemic, we see the virtual congress as the best alternative to keep the spirit of our global rheumatology community alive and to address urgent questions with immediate relevance for patient care. We will also publish abstracts/posters online and provide registered delegates with the one-year access to our journal, the Annals of Rheumatic Diseases.

Rest assured that this will be an exciting, exceptional experience. We will offer a scientific programme of the highest level, put together by global experts. Our volunteers and staff in the EULAR Office are currently working hard to develop the best possible solutions for this new scenario.

The pandemic will also have an impact on our General Assembly, GA, scheduled on 3rd June in Frankfurt, where an important decision regarding the new statutes will be on the agenda (please block your agenda for a virtual meeting on Wednesday 3rd June, from 10:30 – 12:30). According to Swiss law, decisions of a virtual GA are not valid. However, we plan to hold this as a virtual pre-meeting, where we can discuss and draw conclusions, which will then be turned into decisions to be taken at a physical meeting later (e.g. in September) at which you could attend or mandate one of our proposed delegates to vote on your behalf as directly instructed by your person. We will come up with a detailed proposal in due time.

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I thank you for your understanding and hope to welcome as many of you as possible to our e-Congress as of June 2020. Rest assured that this will be an exciting, exceptional experience. We will offer a scientific programme of the highest level, put together by our top experts from all over the world, enriched with many additional options, including interactive opportunities. Needless to say, we will miss the personal encounter with you in 2020 but look forward to meeting you in Paris in 2021!

Stay healthy.

With very best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iain McInnes', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Prof. Iain McInnes
EULAR President