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To the EFORT National Delegates, the Presidents of the EFORT National Member Societies and European Specialty Societies, the Members of the EFORT Executive Committee and all Committee Members

Rolle, 23 February 2024

RE: EFORT's current situation

Dear National Delegates, dear Presidents, dear Colleagues,

We write to update you on the financial situation of EFORT, which we had identified as perilous at last year's General Assembly, particularly since the financial model on which we are founded produces almost all income from a single event. As you will be aware, the Congress had to be cancelled for two consecutive years during the Covid pandemic, depleting our reserves.

A budget had been set for this year anticipating lean times through the winter. But unfortunately the effect of inflation and hugely increased energy costs meant that the net result from the Vienna 2023 congress was substantially diminished, forcing us to take difficult decisions.

Our priority is to put on a successful congress this year, but to achieve this we have had to make structural changes to the organisation and review the services we can offer to you, the O&T Community, in the short term:

- Head Office staff have been reduced by 30% (phase I)
- We will be moving into smaller premises
- Some offerings we fund cannot stop and start, so the EBOT exam and EFORT open reviews, our journal, will be unaffected
- Webinars, fora programmes and fellowships that are not funded will be paused
- We have a financial recovery programme including further cost savings and a renegotiated PCO contract

Nevertheless, we also feel it is essential to maintain our ability to respond to political issues as EFORT is the umbrella organisation representing O&T in Europe, working within the Biomedical Alliance.

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This does cast a spotlight on the issues discussed at last year's strategy meeting when we talked about the services EFORT should provide and how we should fund the future. We do need to look at the long-standing financial model as Congress sponsorship is falling for almost everyone and the impact on EFORT is disproportionately large, since membership fees are EUR 6 per member of National Associations.

To function effectively we need to review income sources and we will be discussing options at the General Assembly – increasing membership fees has not been done for a decade but there are other options to consider, such as subspecialty society membership or premium individual membership.

We will update you and further the discussions started at last year's General Assembly as well as during the evening Zoom calls to the National Delegates during early March, to which also the President of each National Association is invited.

We are optimistic that restructuring will lead to a stronger, sustainable future.

Kind regards,

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