

Draft Minutes of the ESCAP General Assembly
held on Thursday 10 October 2024
online and at the Palais de la Musique et des Congrès in Strasbourg

Present:

ESCAP Board:

- Jörg Fegert, President (Germany)
- Dimitris Anagnostopoulos, Past President (Greece)
- Paul Klauser, Treasurer (Switzerland)
- Stephan Eliez (Switzerland)
- Manon Hillegers, Chair of the Academic Division (The Netherlands)
- Enikő Kiss, Co-Chair of the Clinical Division (Hungary)
- Konstantinos Kotsis, Chair of the Early Career Committee and ESCAP Communications Editor to ECAP (Greece)
- Anne-Marie Råberg Christensen, Co-Chair of the Clinical Division (Denmark)
- Maja Drobnič Radobuljac, Chair of the Policy Division (Slovenia)
- Carmen Schröder, ESCAP2025 Congress President (France)

ESCAP Member Societies:

- Biljana Arizankoska Eftimova, North Macedonia
- Patricia Byrne, Ireland
- Carl Magnus Forslund, Sweden
- Christine Freitag, Germany
- Sarah Hohmann, Germany
- Andreas Karwautz, Austria
- Elaine Lockhart, UK
- Dmytro Martsenkovskyi, Ukraine
- Eva Möhler, Germany
- Marcel Romanos, Germany
- Manos Tsalamaniotis, Greece
- Laia Villalta, Spain
- Ben Vitiello, Italy

1) Welcome to the 2024 ESCAP General Assembly

Jörg Fegert welcomed all to the General Assembly. The ESCAP Board had been meeting in person in Strasbourg since yesterday. Thanks were noted to Carmen Schröder, president of the 2025 ESCAP Congress for hosting the Board.

- 2) **Minutes from the last General Assembly held on 30 June 2023** in Copenhagen were approved.

3) Presidential Report

Jörg Fegert presented the Board activities since the last General Assembly which had been held during the 2023 Congress in Copenhagen.

Together with 15 other international organisations, ESCAP had endorsed the correspondence “WHO Model Lists of Essential Medicines: methylphenidate for ADHD in children and adolescents” by Samuele Cortese et al, which had been published in The Lancet Psychiatry in September 2023. Following on from this, we published an ESCAP Communication in ECAP on the endorsement of the [inclusion of methylphenidate](#) in the WHO model lists of essential medicines and in the Union list of critical medicines in April 2024.

This was a very important issue, possibly not so much for high-income countries, but there were countries who relied on these lists for access to these medications. There was a bias in these lists on somatic medicines, where the evidence-base seemed accepted, but we also have long term evidence based and outcome measures for methylphenidate. This was an issue of justice concerning children.

In October 2024, ESCAP responded to the [EU Consultation on integrated child protection issues](#). In the run up to the EU Parliamentary elections, ESCAP signed the EU4Health Civil Society Alliance 2024 Election Manifesto with the overarching goal of securing health on the EU political agenda (February 2024) and also published our own positions on mental health policy (March 2024) which were disseminated to the members of parliament.

This week on Monday 7th October we remembered the attack of Hamas on Israel. Last year, the ESCAP [Board issued a statement](#) on children taken as hostages in the context of the terrorist attacks in Israel. Following the developments, we then published another statement “[Stop the humanitarian crisis in Gaza – Ensuring the basic needs of children](#)”.

Jörg emphasized that ESCAP is always open to debates that followed scientific, ethical and professional standards. We will make this clear for the upcoming congress, too, which will be a place for scientific debates but not a battlefield for personal attacks.

Jörg had published his first presidential column in our ECAP journal on “[Times marked by consecutive crises](#)” in January 2024 where he had looked back over the developments of the last decade. Following the statements on mental health by the EU Commission, EU Council and EU Parliament in 2023, the ESCAP Board and Policy Division published an ESCAP Communication on “[Sustainable action is needed more than ever](#)”. The diagnosis of the current situation was clear, not the therapy – i.e. concrete action needed to follow.

The ESCAP Policy Division also published a statement on [the care for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria: an urgent need for safeguarding clinical, scientific, and ethical standards](#) for which we had received a lot of positive feedback. We would continue the discussion at our congress.

A new “[News](#)” page had been established on the ESCAP website sharing both Society and European CAP news and we launched the “[ESCAP on air](#)” podcast. Plans for the future included working with existing podcast in our member countries to reach a broader audience. Jörg had also written a [commentary on the Lancet Psychiatry Commission on Youth Mental Health](#).

Collaboration with WHO Europe continued and ESCAP had joined the pan-European Mental Health Coalition earlier this year. At their upcoming first Autumn School on Quality of Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Mental Health Week, ESCAP would be represented as well as at the Mental Health Week event, both taking place this November. A joint session was also in the planning for the Strasbourg congress. From a political point of view, it was very important for ESCAP have a valued partner in WHO Europe.

Since taking on the ESCAP presidency, Jörg had attended several congresses of national societies in Greece, Turkey, Switzerland and Germany. He invited the members to share congress information as early as possible. Both himself and the whole Board were open to visit the member societies.

Jörg was also in close contact with the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers' Coordination Centre for Mental Health and had been invited to attend the Ukrainian-German Conference on Mental Health, Psychosocial Support and Rehabilitation (Feb 2024) and spoke at the Online School of Leadership in Mental Health, a joint capacity building event by UNICEF, the Cabinet of Ministers' Coordination Centre for Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS), and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

In June, Jörg had attended the "Safeguarding and disability" conference in Rome, organized by the Institute of Anthropology (IADC) of the Pontifical Gregorian University. Carmen had given an ESCAP sponsored talk at the EFPT Forum in Riga in July 2024. And on 15 October Jörg would be speaking in a panel at the World Health Summit in Berlin on "Accessible Support in mental health: Facing the Silent Epidemic". *Postscript:* [The recording is now available on YouTube.](#)

In September, the ESCAP webinar series for Ukrainian healthcare professionals had started with more than 370 online and the recordings available for those who were not able to join on the day. Special thanks were noted to all the involved speakers:

- Professor Jörg M. Fegert, ESCAP President & University Hospital Ulm/Germany
- Professor Dennis Ougrin, King's College London/UK
- Professor Andrea Danese, ESCAP General Secretary & King's College London/UK
- Professor Paul Plener, Medical University Vienna/Austria
- Dr. Anne Marie Råberg Christensen, ESCAP Board Member & Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Center, Glostrup, Denmark and Dr. Anna Kovalova, Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Center, Glostrup, Denmark
- Professor Sven Bølte, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm/Sweden
- Professor Tobias Banaschewski, Zentralinstitut für seelische Gesundheit (Central Institute for Mental Health), Mannheim/Germany
- Professor Christoph Correll, Charité Berlin/Germany

At the recent congress of the German CAP Society (DGKJP), 20 child and adolescent psychiatrists and their translator had joined. Thanks were noted to the DGKJP for making this possible. An official Thank you letter had been sent from the Ukrainian ministry. Like in Copenhagen, ESCAP would continue this at the Strasbourg congress. Thanks were noted to Carmen and the French CAP Society.

The Horizon EU project FAMILY had completed the first reporting period successful and ESCAP was involved as a dissemination and ethical discussion partner in the Consortium. In January a successful Stakeholder Dialogue event had taken place online on ethical implications of the prediction of the transmission of severe mental health disorders.

In the last Horizon Europe project call, ESCAP had partnered on four proposals, of which one had gone to the second stage, where it had sadly not been accepted. ESCAP was very interested in partnering on future projects. Core condition for partnership was the representation of a child and adolescent psychiatry partner in the consortium. Focus of the ESCAP contributions were dissemination, for example via our communication channels, congresses and journal as well as ethical considerations. As a general guideline, ESCAP would expect 0.5% of the overall funding sum. Enquiries about possible collaborations should be sent as early as possible to the Communications Editor (editor@escap.eu).

The financial situation for ESCAP was overall more problematic than in the past, with ESCAP heavily relying on income from the congresses. In addition to more involvement in research projects like Horizon Europe, the Board had discussed the possibility of establishing a foundation in Switzerland to have a means to generate donation to fund ESCAP projects, such as educational projects which could

run even on relatively small grants. ESCAP would keep the General Assembly updated on any developments.

A new proposal to hold hybrid Board meetings had been raised. Before Covid the Board had visited national members where a Board meeting was combined with discussions on national CAP issues. During Covid, the meetings move online, which also reduced costs. The Board will now meet in person at the congresses as well as at the next congress location to facilitate preparations. Feedback had been received that we had somewhat lost contact to our members. As a member society our links with the national societies are crucial. If one of our member societies would like to invite a delegation from the board to discuss local/national issues and for example support meetings with their politicians, we would like to hear from them. The idea would then be to hold a hybrid Board meeting, with some meeting in person and others joining online.

Policy Division

Maja Drobnič Radobuljac, chair of the Policy Division presented the report. Since the last General Assembly, two statements had been published (as mentioned by the President in his report): one on EU mental health policy and the other on care for children with gender dysphoria. The latter especially had generated a lot of media interest in several countries and Maja had also been invited to present the statement at the Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine (SEGM) conference this October in Athens. A track on the topic was in planning for the Strasbourg congress.

For the past year, the Policy Division was having regular calls with WHO Europe, as mentioned by Jörg and a joint session was planned for the congress. ESCAP will also be represented at their first Autumn School on Quality of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Care (2-6 November 2024) and the Mental Health Week event.

Current projects

A European survey on seclusion and restraint had been sent out. Thanks were noted to the 18 societies who had already completed it. There was still a bit time to fill it out. Everyone who completed the survey would be invited to co-author the resulting manuscript. The project was led by Rittakerttu Kaltiala, Maja and Robert and three PhD students.

A number of symposia were planned at the Strasbourg congress:

- Rise of violence
- Coercion and restraint
- Gender and identity
- Euthanasia

Academic Division

Manon Hillegers presented on behalf of the Academic Division and her co-chairs Andrea Danese and Pieter Hoekstra. In the past few months, the Academic Division had aligned with Research Academy, a very successful ESCAP initiative hosting young clinician scientists to come two days prior to the ESCAP congress. It had been very successful in Maastricht and Copenhagen, and the call for Strasbourg was about to go out.

The Academic Division was also in talks with the organizers of the Residential Course, which had taken place for the 4th time this year and was endorsed by the Research Academy, with view to extending the collaboration, joint projects, and communication.

Another project was supporting UEMS-CAP in building up a repository of exam questions. Future projects included setting up a space for sharing research training possibilities, for example run by IACAPAP, ACAMH or ECNP, on the ESCAP website which would help members to find info more easily and in one place. Together with early career clinician scientists a project was run on providing an overview of preferred outcome measurements and instruments. Furthermore, collaborations with UK and other online learning environment would be explored.

Clinical Division

Enikő Kiss presented on behalf of the Clinical Division which she chaired together with Anne Marie Råberg Christensen. The Division was looking for new members and anyone interested to join could reach out to editor@escap.eu.

The main objective of the division was to facilitate the publication of guidances, which were not written by the division itself, but instead research or clinician group were invited to write them.

Current projects

A guidance on transition was in progress to which the Milestone Research Group had been invited. The literature review had already been completed and a final draft of the guidance was expected in early 2025. Plans included to also take the feedback of young patients into consideration. The guidance would then be presented at the Strasbourg congress.

Contact was made with the European ADHD guideline group. Together with the Research Academy, a survey on possible topics which could be discussed as guidance would be launched shortly.

A joint project with UEMS and EFPT was planned on a guidance paper on national psychotherapy training which differed widely across countries.

During Covid the use of online treatment and diagnosis had become compulsory for many people, and some were still using it. It is growing in importance and therefore a telepsychiatry guidance paper was in the planning. Anyone interested or motivated to join was very welcome and should contact editor@escap.eu.

Plans for the Strasbourg congress included Ask the expert sessions and trainee case presentations, which were being planned together with the Early Career Committee.

Financial report

Paul Klauser, treasurer, presented an overview of the developments of the accounts (current and savings) from 2017 until now. Since 2019, no transfer was needed from the savings to the current account. In 2023, a significant increase could be seen thanks to the income generated by the Copenhagen congress. In 2024, we have seen a lot of unexpected expenses.

Membership fees 2023

For 2023, most societies had paid with a few still outstanding. Fees had been waived for Turkey following the earthquake, Russia who are unable to access the banking system, and Ukraine.

Membership fees 2024

Most societies had also paid for 2024, with the outstanding fees being followed up on. Fees had again been waived for Russia and Ukraine.

A reminder was issued that societies who did not pay their fees were not eligible to vote at the General Assembly. As previously decided, countries who had not paid for two consecutive years could be excluded from ESCAP. Attendees were asked to go back to their societies to remind them of the payment.

The main sources of income were the Copenhagen and the Horizon EU project FAMILY. The unexpected expenses in 2024 were related to the ESCAP Communications Editor. According to a ruling in Germany which ESCAP had received in February 2024, the role was not classed as self-employment. ESCAP therefore had to cover the social security and taxes retrospectively. Starting from May 2024, the annual costs for the Communications Editor were 25K€.

The second unexpected costs were in relation to the accounting company in Belgium where in 2024 we also paid for the 2023 expenses.

The Research Academy was organized at a cost of 5778€.

Further expenses were for tax advice consulting relating to our status in Belgium.

As well as costs for the website, email provider and the podcast.

Despite the unexpected increase in expenses in 2024, the finances remained well balanced.

The financial report was unanimously approved.

Communications Editor Report

Karen Schlaegel asked everyone to send any updates, whether contact details or information for the member pages on the ESCAP website to her on editor@escap.eu. The newsletter, website, X and LinkedIn Account were used to share information and shares/reposts were very welcome and helped to further disseminate information. For now, the Board had decided to keep the account on X but this would be kept under review.

The LinkedIn account had been growing the fastest over the last two years and it was hoped to grow it further.

Early Career Committee and ESCAP Communications Editor to ECAP

Konstantinos Kotsis reported that the early career committee would again be participating in the ESCAP congress with trainee case symposia and “Ask the expert” sessions which had been very well received at the Copenhagen congress. They were already working on this together with the French CAP society. Any early career colleagues were invited to submit abstracts for this.

For the ESCAP Communications submitted to the ECAP journal, at least one additional peer reviewer was needed in addition to the review by Kostas.

In 2024 the following ESCAP Communications had been published:

- [Mental health provision for children affected by war and armed conflicts](#)
Panos Vostanis

- [Updates from the third residential course on child and adolescent psychiatry endorsed by ESCAP](#)
Assia Riccioni, Martina Siracusano, Chiara Davico, Paul Klauser, Carmen Morcillo, Dennis Ougrin, Benedetto Vitiello, Kerstin J. Plessen, Marco Armando, Luigi Mazzone & Samuele Cortese
- [Climate crisis and youth mental health in Greece: an interdisciplinary approach](#)
Konstantina Magklara, Efstathia Kapsimalli, Georgia Liarakou, Chloe Vlassopoulos & Eleni Lazaratou
- [ESCAP statement on the care for children and adolescents with gender dysphoria: an urgent need for safeguarding clinical, scientific, and ethical standards](#)
Maja Drobnič Radobuljac, Urh Grošelj, Riittakerttu Kaltiala, the ESCAP Policy Division, the ESCAP Board,
Robert Vermeiren, Sofie Crommen, Konstantinos Kotsis, Andrea Danese, Pieter J. Hoekstra & Jörg M. Fegert
- [Sustainable action is needed more than ever: the European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry welcomes the efforts of the European Commission and the decisions of the European Parliament on mental health care for children, adolescents and young people and calls on the Member States to act quickly](#)
Maja Drobnič Radobuljac & Jörg M. Fegert on behalf of the ESCAP Policy Division & the ESCAP Board
- [ESCAP endorses the inclusion of methylphenidate in the WHO model lists of essential medicines and in the Union list of critical medicines](#)
Samuele Cortese, David Coghill, Joerg M. Fegert, Gregory W. Mattingly, Luis A. Rohde, Ian C.K. Wong & Stephen V. Faraone
- [The impact of abduction and hostage-taking on the mental health of children and adolescents: a scoping review](#) by Emily Gossmann, Katrin Erlewein, Therese Hiller, Patricia Mayer, Cedric Sachser, Vera Clemens & Jörg M. Fegert
- [Times marked by consecutive crises](#) - Presidential Column by Jörg M. Fegert

There had also been a change in the submission system: first select the relevant type of manuscript, and then select collection ESCAP Communications and then proceed as usual.

4. Update on ESCAP 2025 congress in Strasbourg

The Research Academy would take place on Friday and Saturday 27 and 28 June 2025. On Saturday 28 June, a day for early career delegates was planned together with the EFPT and other national early career CAP organisations. Other interested organisations were invited to join. The main congress would then take place from Sunday 29 June to Tuesday 1 July 2025.

The [congress website](#), which was available in English and French, was now online and abstract submission was open. All details on the various submission categories could be found on the website which also included the list of themes.

Welcome videos from Bruno Falissard, president of the French CAP Society, Jörg and Carmen were available. In his video Jörg explained the congress theme of “Beyond Nature & Nurture”. Carmen gave a tour of Strasbourg, showing what the city had to offer in addition to the congress’ scientific programme.

We were also proud to confirmed outstanding Keynote speakers:

- Tom Osborn, Shamiri Health, Nairobi/Kenya:
Can we provide affordable, personalized and community-driven mental health to youth in low-income settings? A lesson from Africa
- Edmund Sonuga-Barke, King's College, London/UK:
Paradigm switching and creativity in translational science: a framework for NDD from a neurodiversity perspective
- Carmen Moreno, Complutense University School of Medicine, Madrid/Spain:
A first psychotic episode: a combined family and expert perspective
- Andrés Martin, Yale Child Study Centre/USA:
Patient perspective around (de)prescriptions – intervention with a patient-expert
- Samuele Cortese, University of Southampton/UK:
Meta or umbrella? The opportunities & limits of evidence-based CAP and its role in society

And State-of-the-Art speakers:

- Laelia Benoît, Yale Child Study Centre/USA:
Climate change and children mental health
- Charlotte Cecil, Erasmus University, Rotterdam/The Netherlands:
Epigenetics applied to child and adolescent mental health: progress, challenges and opportunities
- Christophe Gauld, Université de Lyon/France:
Philosophy and computational sciences: key drivers to revolutionize future classifications of CAP disorders?
- Loes Keijsers, Erasmus University, Rotterdam/The Netherlands:
The risks and promise of technology for youth mental health
- David Mataix-Cols, Karolinska Institute/Sweden:
Title TBC
- Antonio Persico, Modena University/Italy:
Beyond the genetics of autism spectrum disorder: an update for 2025
- Diane Purper-Ouakil, Université de Montpellier/ France:
Family interventions for ADHD
- Neeltje Van Haren, Erasmus University, Rotterdam/The Netherlands:
Running in the family - understanding the intergenerational transmission of mental illnesses

So far Neurim and Medice were confirmed as sponsors. Further information was available on the [congress website](#) and the PCO, Organizers, could be contacted to discuss options.

Strasbourg had a small airport with flights to Amsterdam and connected to the city with a direct train. The congress would take place at the Palais de la Musique et des Congrès, which offered a modern setting with big auditoria as well as a smaller rooms.

All member societies were invited to share the information and the call for abstracts with their members and networks.

5. Call for host for ESCAP 2031 congress

The 2027 congress would take place in Athens and in 2029, ESCAP would be heading to Budapest. The call for the 2031 congress was also already open. Bids needed to be submitted by the end of April 2025. The Board had discussed a possible move from a biannual to an annual meeting. Not only would this be a lot of work for a society like ESCAP with limited resources, but the biannual frequency also

prevents or minimises clashes with national congresses, like the German and Swiss congresses, which were alternating with the ESCAP congress. But ESCAP was open to feedback on this.

6. Any other business

Thanks were noted for all the work ESCAP was doing.

7. Final comments and closure of meeting

Jörg thanked everyone for attending the General Assembly and highlighted that our members were the raison d'être of ESCAP and it was our objective to bring everyone together on a European level.

8. Next meeting

The next General Assembly would take place on Monday, 30 June 2025 during the ESCAP congress in Strasbourg. Further information and the exact timing would be shared in due course.