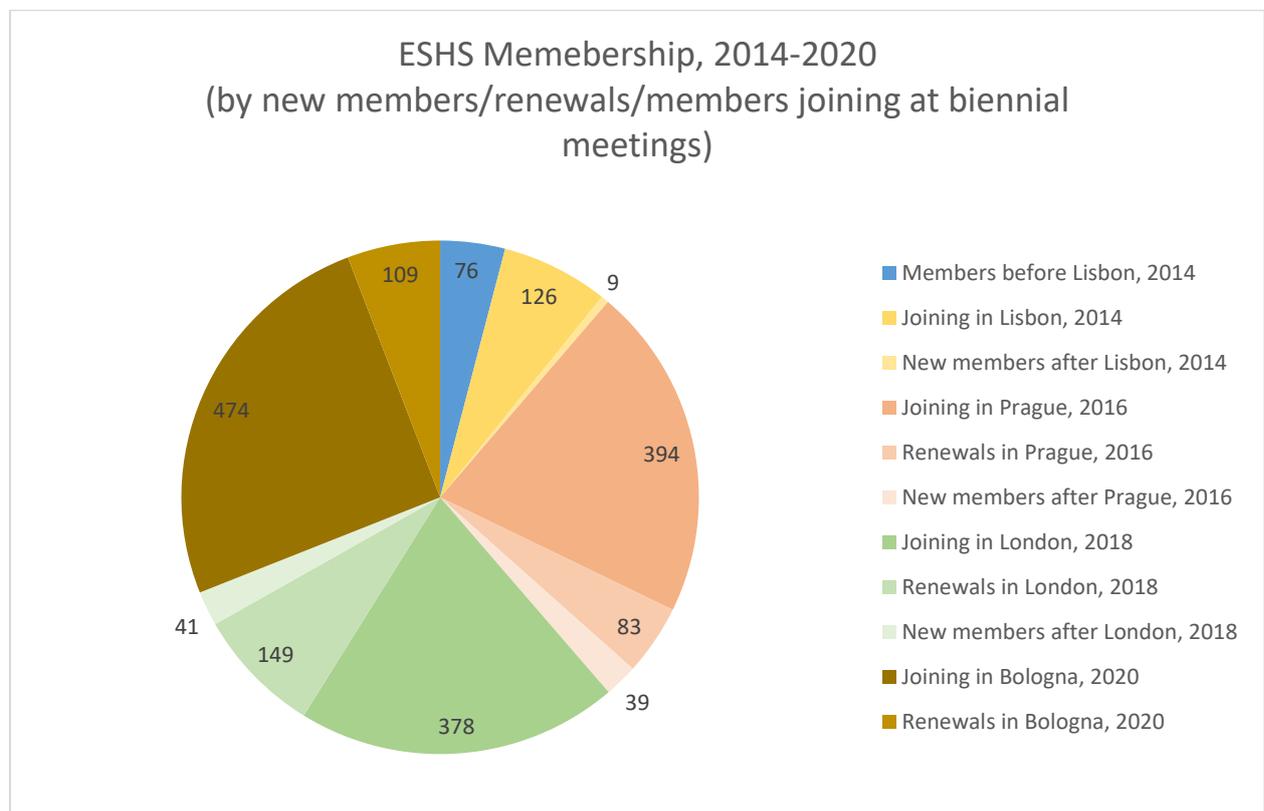


## The Secretary Report for the ESHS General Assembly, 3/9/2020

I was elected as Secretary in 2018 at the last ESHS biennial meeting in London, so my first two years in this role have been somewhat challenging, especially in terms of learning about the relevant tasks and executing them appropriately. I would like therefore to start this report by thanking my predecessor, Erika Luciano, for passing over the responsibilities in the best possible way. I would also like to thank the current ESHS President, Ana Simões for her understanding and patience in waiting for me to familiarize with the tasks ahead; in particular, with the management of membership and communication to ESHS members.

A major challenge for me was to ensure that I could appropriately communicate with 500+ ESHS members. I thus had to instruct setting up a mailing list on our university server to make it possible to send emails to each member of the society (including the right letterhead!). I am still learning how to make full use of the mailing list system, but I would say that its availability has made it much easier for me to communicate with members.

Over the two years, I have also become more familiar with the ballot tasks the secretary is responsible for to ensure transparency and the involvement of members in the life of the society. I was responsible for setting two ballots, one for the Scientific Board to vote members of a committee responsible for selecting Early Career Scholar lectures. The committee, comprising the ESHS members Pietro Omodeo, Marianne Klemun, Staffan Muller-Wille and Ksenia Tatarchenko, has selected three candidates: Paolo Savoia, Clara Florensa and Sietske Fransen, whose online lectures will be delivered at the Bologna meeting. The second ballot I organized was needed for the Scientific Board to vote the recipient of the Neuenschwander Prize, which as you know was awarded to Kostas Gavroglu.



In carrying out my duties as ESHS secretary, I also familiarized with the membership patterns of our society which I decided to study on the occasion of the 2019 “in between” meeting in Lisbon (see attached graph) and further explore for the next GA meeting. It seems clear to me that the society has developed substantially since its creation, increasing the overall number of scholars affiliated to the society to its current 580+ members. For this growth, the admirable work of past officials and board members should be acknowledged as they have been responsible for what is a resounding success; namely the setting up of a society that is deliberately outlined in its constitutive elements as supra-national, and seeking to unite scholars from across the whole European continent and beyond. The ESHS President has also made available in her report data on the society’s diversity in terms of national affiliation looking at the current subscribers to the Bologna meeting. There are reasons to be satisfied with the last 10 years of life for this young society!

But the data on this growth can be deceiving too. Most members join the society on the occasion of a biennial meeting, but far less frequently renew their memberships if they don’t attend one of its meetings (see the fluctuating data on renewals). Indeed, while the current number of members is a great achievement, it could have been higher if previous members had all renewed their membership. Thus finding ways for members to renew their subscriptions is an important task for the society as a whole, and his secretary more specifically. This is actually something that I wish to work on if re-elected as secretary for the period 2020-2022. It would be important that even those who did not attend Bologna, renew their membership and we need to find ways to encourage and facilitate it. Other societies do not have this problem as renewal is often automatic; set through a direct debit payment. Existing members have thus to deliberately ‘opt-out’ not to renew. The ESHS instead administers renewals as, in essence, tied to the participation to the next biennial meeting. To sum up, one of the big challenges for the ESHS is to find ways to secure a larger core of members who contribute more to the life of the society beyond the participation to its biennial meeting.

One starting point for this would be to simplify the procedure for enrolling new members, for instance by making it possible for them to register automatically via the website and for the society to automatically process membership renewals. Part of the problem lies in the procedures regarding subscriptions which have been recently improved but are still in need of amelioration. We realized for instance after the in-between meeting that membership applications filed through the website did not reach me so that I could not pursue them further. Thanks to the ESHS webmaster, however, the problem was addressed and since then I could deal directly with applicants via email, which has resulted in more subscriptions. If re-elected as secretary, I would consider ways to increase memberships and participation by facilitating the subscription process. For instance, I would work towards making sure that the society can move into a system of membership directly processed with automatic payments (unfortunately the current problems with the bank account currently makes it impossible). I would also consider ways to facilitate members access to Centaurus, for instance through the introduction of a routine membership/password mechanism which changes regularly so that is communicated by the secretary to members regularly.

I would like to conclude by stressing that in the last few months my role as ESHS secretary has changed dramatically partly because of the unexpected consequences of the pandemic crisis. I had thus to contribute to discussions about moving the Bologna meeting online liaising with the organizing team in Bologna (who I wish to thank for their fantastic work in the present emergency). One of the most challenging tasks has been to arrange the elections for the new Scientific Board as an online voting procedure. As I write this report, the new procedure is set out. However, its effectiveness has yet to be tested at the General Assembly. I hope it will withstand that test!

Simone Turchetti, 26/8/2020