

Letter from the President

Freiburg, 7 March 2022

Dear EEBA Member

It is a great pleasure for me to serve as the President of the *European Eye Bank Association* for the next three years. First, I would like to thank all of you who gave me your trust and support. I also express my gratitude to Prof Iva Dekaris, who is now the Immediate Past President of the EEBA, for all her work and efforts during her Presidency. Moreover, I am extremely glad to have Diego Ponzin, with all his experience, to support me as the EEBA Vice President before starting his second Presidency in 2025.

The last two years have been perhaps the most difficult years in EEBA history due to the Corona virus pandemic. In 2020, many eye banks in Europe reduced corneal procurement dramatically or even stopped completely, resulting in a significant decline in the number of corneas distributed for transplant. Thankfully, most eye banks have recovered and returned to their normal activities and processes. On the other hand, the pandemic is still not over yet and it remains to be seen how the events of the last two years will influence eye banking in the future.

Besides the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, I would like to address together with all of you the following key topics during the three years of my Presidency:

1.) Further development and improvement of the EEBA Directory

Like the two previous Presidents, I would like to continue the work on the EEBA Directory. In my eyes, EEBA has collected an amazing amount of data regarding the activities of European eye banks over the last 30 years. The transformation to a web based Directory tool should be planned and finalised, so that the required core data can be easily submitted by the individual eye banks and, correspondingly, made accessible to all Members. In addition, in order to make our amalgamated data available to the wider public, we should draft a scientific publication. Subsequently we might continue with the publication in a scientific journal as a kind of annual report on the activities of the European eye banks.

2.) Overcome the problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen how fast our daily work can be compromised and how fast a significant shortage of corneal grafts can develop. For the next years, we should improve the national and international exchange of information on how to deal with legal restrictions, with new donor testing requirements and problems in donor recruitment to avoid problems like the ones experienced during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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3.) Implementation of an EEBA certificate

As national and international regulations become increasingly significant for eye banks in Europe, an international “recognition” certification might be a helpful tool for better cooperation between eye banks and enhanced acceptance by official authorities. The aim of this project would be to develop a certification programme within the EEBA that might also include European competent and regulatory authorities.

4.) Survey about the needs and demands of EEBA members

During the past two years, the participation of EEBA members in EEBA specific activities and projects has decreased, in all probability due to cancellation of the face-to-face Annual EEBA Meetings. In this regard, I feel that it is important for the EEBA Committee to have a clear understanding of what EEBA Members expect and want from their Association. As a result, a survey on the needs and demands of EEBA Members shall be performed in 2022/2023.

5.) Support of international scientific projects

Besides the significant problems caused by the pandemic, we witnessed an improvement in the scientific cooperation between Members that resulted in a peer-reviewed publication in the British Journal of Ophthalmology. As this kind of cooperation can be very fruitful and very productive, EEBA will look to support further specific scientific projects organisationally and maybe also financially.

The above-mentioned topics and goals cannot be realised by the EEBA Committee or myself without assistance. Therefore, I ask for the support and input from all EEBA Members to progress our association a few steps further forward in the coming years.

I thank you once more for giving me your trust and I look forward to serving EEBA, in unison with the Committee and all of you, during the three years of my Presidency.

Yours sincerely



Prof. Dr. Philip Maier
EEBA President

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