

Congress Council

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J. Helen Cross (UK)



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Mission Statement

To provide a high quality scientific and educational meeting and career-development opportunities for the global epilepsy community

An initial needs assessment was conducted with regard to the International Congress. This along with congress evaluation has formed the basis of determining requirements from future congresses. Awareness was raised of a similar process to be reviewed regarding regional congresses.

In 2020, the transfer took place of the Congress Office to ILAE Secretariat Ltd, under full responsibility of the ILAE, although joint working with the IBE in Congress organisation continues. The COVID-19 pandemic has also seen the postponement/cancellation of all but one of the four planned congresses and the need to transfer to a virtual delivery. There has been an ongoing review of minimising the financial consequences of 2020, and optimising finances for the future.

Pivot to Virtual

As charged by the Congress Council, all ILAE staff members came together in July 2020 to work in several stages on planning for virtual congresses and virtual attendance at face-to-face (F2F) congresses. An action plan was prepared and discussed with the Council to form a basis for planning all future congresses with the appropriate changes.

- Optimal programme and content of congresses meeting the constituent needs in future congresses
- Optimal platform for virtual use (review of virtual symposia and NAEC congress) meeting adjusted requirements – 2020 into first half 2021 used to experiment with different providers
- Needs met for future hybrid congresses and optimal way of conducting these
- Tailoring of registration fees to suit mix of virtual, F2F and hybrid along with stratification fees to reflect differences in purchasing power by country
- Optimisation of industry support and engagement

First Virtual Congress

The inaugural North American Epilepsy Congress was held virtually in September 2020 with >550 delegates and very positive overall feedback. This provides us enhanced opportunities for consideration in the future. Not least to facilitate wider global reach. Financially, the congress performed better as a virtual meeting when compared to its forecast F2F performance. Industry support, though from a small pool of companies, was largely maintained at expected levels.

Overview of Upcoming Congresses

The current overview with regard to future congresses is as follows:

LAEC	2021	virtual in February
AOEC	2021	virtual in June
IEC	2021	fully virtual meeting in August, to be announced shortly
EEC	2022	postponed to 2022 in Geneva, European Epilepsy Forum to be held in 2021
NAEC	2022	likely to happen F2F in 2022 in Caribbean

*Africa and Eastern Mediterranean – planning hasn't begun since these will not happen until late 2021 or 2022 but discussions have focused on the possibilities of virtual lectures and/or holding the meeting in conjunction with another general neurology meeting

Definition and Scheduling of ILAE Events

The Congress Council has agreed the following classification of ILAE event types:

Event type	Definition
Congress	Large, biennial, formal events with multiple already well-defined elements
Symposia 4 (to 6) per year with a winter, spring, summer and autumn program	Cutting-edge, virtual session on new area of best practice ideally linked to publication of guidelines or paper with new information of high relevance to clinical practice. Three elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-work linked to the publication and possibly in case study form • Interactive, dialogue and presentation mix during a live two to three-hour session • Post reinforcement/refresher exercises • CME
Virtual Lectures (previously called webinars)	Educational events aligned with Academy curriculum on topics not already covered by Congress/Symposia and/or focused on a specific context/regional need/language. Key elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on one educational topic • Short (1-2 hours) • Pre-recorded presentation and live Q&A • ILAE endorsed and organized

Chapter Conventions & Virtual Townhalls	Meeting of Chapters to enhance networking and peer to peer support and ILAE business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention linked to a Congress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regional ○ International • Townhall – virtual and any time
Forum	Gathering of stakeholders with aim of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness about epilepsy • Sharing information and best practice • Advocacy for policy change • Fundraising to support activities and research

The oversight of scheduling of all ILAE events has been taken up by the Congress Council to avoid overlapping of educational content and conflicting scheduling. This will reduce cannibalization of our audiences for all events and ensure planned events are deliverable within the available resources.

Registration Fees

In line with the move to virtual congresses, registration fees have been lowered to reflect the expectation of our delegates. Fees for LAEC 2021 were cut by an average of 35% with the patient advocate fees for members dropping by 58%. This has been continued for AOEC and IEC, where discounts for virtual average 30%.

For AOEC and IEC 2021, the entire fees structure has been further amended to reflect the variety of delegates we cater for and the level of resources available to them. Categories now cover:

Physician	Attendees who have a medical degree and have completed training.
Scientist	Researchers without a medical degree. Physicians may not register for this category.
Allied Healthcare Provider	Professionals who care for patients, such as nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, psychologists, physician assistants, and technologists. Physicians may not register for this category.
Patient Advocate	Staff of non-profits in epilepsy, person with epilepsy, family member, or caregiver. Physicians and Healthcare Providers may not register for this category.
Trainee	Residents, fellows or postdocs.
Student	Undergraduate, graduate, or medical school student.

In addition, the registration fees will be separated into three tiers to reflect the World Bank classification of countries by Gross National Income. The tiers are:

High Income	Normal registration fees
Upper Middle Income	Discount of 30%
Low & Lower Middle Income	Discount of 50%

As we move forward into 2021, decisions will need to be made as to whether immediate congresses will be virtual, face to face or hybrid, and specific thought will need to go into how we deliver congresses in the future. Although this will involve a very different way of working, and we will need to adapt to the need of the community, virtual working will allow a much greater geographical reach.

Submitted by Helen Cross