



**INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE AGAINST EPILEPSY (ILAE)  
INTERNATIONAL BUREAU FOR EPILEPSY (IBE)**

# **Guidelines for the Management of International and Regional Epilepsy Congresses**

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International Director of Meetings, ILAE and IBE**

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## **Introduction**

This document provides guidelines for specific areas within the overall framework of the organisation and management of the International Epilepsy Congresses and regional congresses: European Congress on Epileptology (ECE), Asian & Oceanian Epilepsy Congress (AOEC), Latin American Congress on Epilepsy (LACE), African Epilepsy Congress (AEC), East Mediterranean Epilepsy Congress (EMEC), and European Conference on Epilepsy & Society (ECES).

There have been guidelines for the organisation and management of congresses for many years and several updates in the intervening time. As the congresses, and the procedures, systems and technologies associated with them, are constantly evolving, it is important that the guidelines are always up to date with current practice, ensuring the optimisation of the management of future international and regional ILAE and IBE congresses; therefore these guidelines will be reviewed every 2 years.

## **Objectives**

- Provide standardised procedures for ILAE and IBE to optimise their educational mission in organising congresses and related teaching activities, by ensuring the best possible quality and efficiency.
- Simplify decision-making processes and management activities for all congresses.
- Streamline the structure, administration and responsibilities of committees.
- Continue the centralisation of key decisions and decisions concerning financial matters with the Congress Finance Advisory Committee.
- Standardise operating procedures and reduce overall administrative load.
- Adhere to the policy of the associations with respect to financially responsible decisions.
- Maximise efficiencies in committee sizes, number of committee meetings, number of sessions and speakers.
- Take into account the differences in the regions and the regional congresses.

## **Topics**

### **1 Committees for the International and Regional Epilepsy Congresses**

- 1.1 Scientific and Organising Committee (SOC), International Epilepsy Congress (IEC)
- 1.2 Scientific and Organising Committee (SOC), regional congresses

### **2 Congress Budgets and Costs**

- 2.1 Location & Venue Selection
- 2.2 Registration Fees
- 2.3 Invited Speaker Support
- 2.4 Scientific and Organising Committee Member Support
- 2.5 Catering
- 2.6 Social and Cultural Events
- 2.7 VAT or Other Sales Tax
- 2.8 Budget Responsibility
- 2.9 Bursary Awards

### **3 Role of National ILAE Chapters and IBE Member Associations**

### **4 Appendix I: Congress Planning Timeline**

# **1. Committees for the International and Regional Epilepsy Congresses**

## **1.1 Scientific and Organising Committee (SOC), International Epilepsy Congress (IEC)**

The SOC oversees the scientific programme and the organisational aspects of the congress.

The SOC will consist of up to ten persons, including three Co-chairs, and will be structured as follows:

- 3 Co-chairs (ILAE President or nominee of the President, IBE President or nominee of the President, one further representing ILAE & IBE from host chapter)
- Nominee of the ILAE President from the Executive Committee
- Nominee of the IBE President from the Executive Committee
- An additional appointee of the ILAE President, with expertise relevant to the main topics. This could be the Chair of the Regional Commission.
- An additional appointee of the IBE President, chosen among members of the local IBE Association, with expertise relevant to the main topics
- Up to 2 additional nominees of the ILAE President with specific scientific expertise relevant to the main topics of the congress
- Up to 2 additional nominees of the IBE President with specific scientific expertise relevant to the main topics of the congress

The SOC will have the following responsibilities:

- Selection of the main topics for the congress. It is recommended that at least one of these is a basic science topic and at least one other a social science topic, or that preferably each topic combines clinical, basic and social science. Each of the main topics should have a corresponding Main Session (plenary) of 90 minutes.
- Creation of the programme structure and template. The total number of Parallel and Platform Sessions may depend on the size of the venue, the location and the size of the budget available for invited speakers.  
Notwithstanding this, the committee may find it appropriate to consider an alternative format for the scientific programme and reserves the right to do so.
- The SOC Co-chairs (ILAE and IBE Presidents) will select the topic and programme of the Presidential Symposium.
- Completion of the programme schedule with the sessions: Main Sessions, Parallel Sessions, Platform Sessions, Teaching Sessions/Courses, satellite symposia, and any other special sessions.
- Selection/creation of Parallel Sessions, taking into consideration, but not bound by, suggestions put forward by ILAE Chapters, IBE Members Associations, IBE Regional Committees, ILAE Commissions and individuals.
- Selection of speakers, taking into account expertise, gender balance and geographical distribution.
- Leading the abstract review process and selecting abstracts for presentation as posters and for Platform Sessions.
- Following the abstract review process, grouping of papers for oral presentation into Platform Sessions.

One formal preparatory meeting will take place, usually after suggestions for topics have been received. Conference calls or virtual meetings will be held when required and informal meetings with the Co-chairs can also take place when the opportunity arises throughout the planning process. If a second formal meeting is deemed necessary, approval must be obtained from the Management Committees.

### **Educational Programme and Education Committee**

The SOC nominates a sub-committee, the Education Committee (up to 4 members), to create and administer the programme of Teaching Courses and Sessions as part of the official programme (usually early morning sessions), subject to the approval of the SOC.

Education Committee members' names appear in the Final Programme to acknowledge their service to the congress.

Speakers for the educational programme should be selected from among those appearing in the main programme. Additional speakers may only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

### **Abstract Review and Abstract Review Committee (ARC)**

Abstracts will be reviewed online by the SOC without the need to meet. The selection of abstracts for Platform Sessions and poster presentation will be carried out by e-mail or virtual meeting.

The SOC may draw upon additional members to create a sub-committee, the Abstract Review Committee. ARC members will be chosen because of their expertise in one or more of the abstract categories and their ability to work to deadlines. ARC members' names appear in the Final Programme to acknowledge their service to the congress. No financial assistance is offered to members to attend the congress.

ARC members will be allocated abstract categories for review based on their areas of expertise. Each abstract category or part of a category will be assigned 2 reviewers, so that each abstract is reviewed twice and an average score is obtained.

Abstracts are circulated to members of the ARC electronically, with instructions on the online procedure and deadlines.

ARC members will recommend abstracts for Platform presentation and for reserve. Each abstract will be scored using an 'abstract review format' which may be formulated by the ARC. The ARC will aim for inclusivity in its review and acceptance of the abstracts submitted for the congress.

## **1.2 Scientific and Organising Committee (SOC), Regional Congresses**

A committee, the SOC, will be chosen for each of the regional congresses. The committee will oversee both the organisational aspects and scientific programme for the relevant congress.

#### LACE, AEC, EMEC:

The principal structure for the SOC for the LACE, the AEC and the EMEC is as follows:

- Co Chairs: ILAE Regional Commission Chair, IBE Regional Executive Committee Chair and a Nominee from the ILAE host Chapter (primarily responsible for the scientific aspects of the programme)
- Nominee of the ILAE President from the Executive Committee, with specific scientific expertise relevant to the main topics of the congress
- Nominee of the IBE President from the International Executive Committee, with specific scientific expertise relevant to the main topics of the congress
- An additional appointee of the ILAE President, chosen among members of the local ILAE Chapter, with expertise relevant to the main topics
- An additional appointee of the IBE President, chosen among members of the local IBE Association, with expertise relevant to the main topics
- Chair(s) of the most recent congress

#### AOEC:

Due to the regional structure of the IBE, the AOEC SOC is structured as follows:

- Co-chairs: Chair of ILAE Commission on Asian & Oceanian Affairs (CAOA), Chair of IBE Western Pacific Regional Executive Committee or IBE South East Asia Regional Executive Committee (dependent on geographical location of congress) and a Nominee from the ILAE host Chapter (primarily responsible for the scientific aspects of the programme)
- Nominee of the ILAE President from the Executive Committee, with specific scientific expertise relevant to the main topics of the congress
- Member of the ILAE CAO, appointed by the ILAE President in consultation with the CAO
- Chair (Vice President), IBE Western Pacific Regional Executive Committee (member of the IBE International Executive Committee) or Chair (Vice President), IBE South East Asia Regional Executive Committee (member of the IBE International Executive Committee) dependent on geographical location and who is consequently Co-Chair above
- Chair of ASEPA
- An additional appointee of the IBE President, chosen among members of the IBE regional committee, with expertise relevant to the main topics
- Chair(s) of the most recent congress

#### ECE:

The principal structure for the SOC for ECE is as follows:

- 2 Co-chairs: Chair of the ILAE Commission on European Affairs (CEA, primarily responsible for the organisational aspects) and Nominee from the ILAE host Chapter (primarily responsible for the scientific aspects of the programme)
- Treasurer of the CEA
- An additional appointee of the ILAE President, chosen among members of the local ILAE Chapter, with expertise relevant to the main topics
- Up to 3 additional topic chairs, as needed to fill any gap in range of scientific expertise;
- Local Co-chair of the SOC from the preceding ECE

- Local Co-chair of the SOC from the next ECE

The SOC for Regional Congresses will have the following responsibilities:

- Selection of the main topics for the congress. It is recommended that at least one of these is a basic science topic and at least one other a social science topic, or that alternatively each topic combines clinical, basic and social science. Each of the main topics should have a corresponding Main Session (plenary).
- Creation of the programme structure and template. The total number of Parallel and Platform Sessions may depend on the size of the venue, the location and the size of the budget available for invited speakers.  
Notwithstanding this, the committee may find it appropriate to consider an alternative format for the scientific programme and reserves the right to do so. The structure of the scientific programme for the regional congresses and the number of Main Sessions, Parallel Sessions and other sessions varies between regions, and from congress to congress.
- The SOC Co-chairs will select the topic and programme of the Chairs' Symposium, if there is to be one in the programme.
- Completion of the programme schedule with the sessions: Main Sessions, Parallel Sessions, Platform Sessions, Teaching Sessions/Courses, satellite symposia, and any other special sessions.
- Selection/creation of Parallel Sessions, taking into consideration, but not bound by, suggestions put forward by ILAE Chapters, IBE Member Associations, IBE Regional Committees, ILAE Commissions and individuals.
- Selection of speakers, taking into account expertise, gender balance and geographical distribution.
- Leading the abstract review process and selecting abstracts for presentation as posters and for Platform Sessions.
- Following the abstract review process, grouping of papers for oral presentation into Platform Sessions.

One formal preparatory meeting will take place, usually after suggestions for topics and sessions have been received. Conference calls or virtual meetings will be held when required and informal meetings with the Co-chairs can also take place when the opportunity arises throughout the planning process. If a second formal meeting is deemed necessary, approval must be obtained from the Management Committee(s).

### **Educational Programme and Education Committee**

The SOC nominates a sub-committee, the Education Committee (up to 4 members), to create and administer the programme of Teaching Courses and Sessions as part of the official programme subject to the approval of the SOC.

Education Committee members' names appear in the Final Programme to acknowledge their service to the congress.

Speakers for the educational programme should be selected from among those appearing in the main programme. Additional speakers may only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

### **Abstract Review and Abstract Review Committee**

Abstracts will be reviewed online by the SOC without the need to meet. The selection of abstracts for Platform Sessions and poster presentation will be carried out by e-mail or virtual meeting.

The SOC may draw upon additional members to create a sub-committee, the Abstract Review Committee. ARC members will be chosen because of their expertise in one or more of the abstract categories and their ability to work to deadlines. ARC members' names appear in the Final Programme to acknowledge their service to the congress. No financial assistance is offered to members to attend the congress.

ARC members will be allocated abstract categories for review based on their areas of expertise. Each abstract will be assigned 2 reviewers, so that each abstract is reviewed twice and an average score is obtained.

Abstracts are circulated to members of the ARC electronically, with instructions on the online procedure and deadlines.

ARC members will recommend abstracts for Platform presentation and for reserve. Each abstract is scored, with scores indicating: acceptance for Platform presentation or reserve for Platform presentation, acceptance for poster presentation, return to author for correction or clarification, rejection. The ARC will aim for inclusivity in its review and acceptance of the abstracts submitted for the congress.

## **2. Congress Budgets and Costs**

### **2.1 Location & Venue Selection**

The cost of the congress venue is a key component of any congress. Typically the venue and AV costs make up 40%-45% of the total congress expenditure. Negotiations with prospective congress centres need to be co-ordinated closely with the timing of the selection of the destination so that they can be maximised to their fullest extent to the benefit of the congress budget, allowing the Congress Secretariat to secure discounts on venue charges.

Venue costs vary greatly from region to region and from one venue to another and will be affected by a number of factors including accessibility, overall suitability and adaptability. However it is also appreciated that Regional views are important in the decision making process. The Congress Secretariat will liaise with the Regional Chairs of ILAE and IBE, assess all the factors and present findings to the Congress Finance Advisory Committee who should make the final decision of the congress venue for ratification by the ILAE and the IBE.

The selection of the destination for congress should ideally be decided four years in advance. It is important that the economics, tax implications and visa requirements associated with potential destination cities be strongly considered.

## 2.2 Registration Fees

The Congress Finance Advisory Committee will consider registration fees when reviewing a congress preliminary budget. A lower registration fee is currently available for delegates from certain countries based on the World Bank classification of low income countries and for junior delegates.

## 2.3 Invited Speaker Support

Invited speakers are encouraged to seek sponsorship to fund their registration, travel and accommodation to attend the congress. In general, speakers will not be reimbursed for travel. However, the Congress Finance Advisory Committee may authorise exceptions to this rule based on budget considerations.

The maximum support that will be considered for registration and accommodation is as follows:

- IEC: Registration, plus 5 nights' accommodation or 3 nights' accommodation if travel support is also authorised
- ECE: Registration, plus 5 nights' accommodation or 3 nights' accommodation if travel support is also authorised
- AOEC: Registration, plus 3 nights' accommodation or 2 nights' accommodation if travel support is also authorised
- LACE: Registration, plus 3 nights' accommodation
- AEC: Registration, plus 3 nights' accommodation
- EMEC: Registration, plus 3 nights' accommodation

Speakers from the host city for any congress will be supported at a maximum with registration only.

## 2.4 Scientific and Organising Committee Member Support

SOC members will receive support for registration, accommodation for 4/5 nights and/or economy flight as permitted by the congress budget, to travel to and attend the congress, provided that they do not have support to attend the congress from another source. It is strongly encouraged that committee members also appear in the congress programme as speakers.

One formal preparatory meeting will take place. For this meeting of the SOC, members will receive accommodation for up to 2 nights and economy flight. In exceptional circumstances, such as a long-haul flight, a third night's accommodation may be considered with the approval of the central ILAE and IBE Treasurers.

In the case of flight costs for both the formal preparatory meeting and the congress, the Congress Secretariat will research the costs from the relevant cities and present them to the Treasurers in order to set a cap on the amounts to be reimbursed. Requests for exceptions may be handled on a case-by-case basis.

The financial support which committee members may draw on for a congress should not be cumulative from different sources or for different activities/participation.

## **2.5 Catering**

Upon reviewing all of the congress costs, the congress committee and/or the Congress Finance Advisory Committee and /or the Management Committees may consider limiting the catering offered to delegates, for example, no catering, coffee breaks only (no lunch), morning coffee break and lunch only.

## **2.6 Welcome ceremony**

The costs of cultural events associated with the Welcome ceremony will not be covered by the congress budget. The regional SOC determines the optimal timing of both the Welcoming Ceremony and Awards presentations

## **2.7 VAT or Other Sales Tax**

Some congress jurisdictions require that VAT be applied to registration fees. The additional administrative requirements add heavily to the organisational demands of the congress. VAT and government restrictions should be factored into the selection of the congress location to the extent that they apply at that time.

## **2.8 Budget Responsibility**

The Congress Finance Advisory Committee has ultimate responsibility for the congress budget and has overall control of all income and expenditure. The committee comprises the President, Treasurer and Secretary General of the organisations involved. For the purpose of Regional Congresses this will also include the Chairs of the Regional Commissions/Committees of the ILAE and IBE. Ultimate responsibility for any loss from the congress is consequently taken by both ILAE and IBE.

Any changes to the congress budget must have the approval of the Treasurer(s) and when necessary, the President(s).

## **2.9 Bursary Awards**

The procedure for bursary awards will vary from congress to congress, depending on budgetary considerations, and is at the discretion of ILAE and IBE.

### **3. Role of the National ILAE Chapters and IBE Member Associations**

The national ILAE Chapters and IBE Member Associations should act as advisors to the Congress Secretariat and congress committees for the following aspects of the congress:

- Representatives of the national ILAE Chapter or IBE Member Association may be invited to assist in identifying suitable locations or entertainment for social and cultural events associated with the congress programme.
- Representatives of the national ILAE Chapter or IBE Member Association may be consulted with regard to which local dignitaries should be invited to the Welcome Ceremony.
- Representatives of the national ILAE Chapter or IBE Member Association can assist in the public relations aspects of the congress providing media services to promote and raise the awareness of the congress to the media.
- Representatives of the national ILAE Chapter or IBE Member Association may assist the Congress Secretariat in the identification and procurement of national and/or government grants where available.
- Representatives of the national ILAE Chapter or IBE Member Association may assist the Congress Secretariat in the initial identification of the main industry partners in the region, as they might be aware of those who are most active.

## **APPENDIX I: Congress Planning Timeline**

4 years prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selection of congress destination and venue</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
2 years prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appointment of SOC</li> <li>- Material prepared for promotion of congress (e.g. postcard with welcome message and invitation)</li> </ul>
18 months prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Call for Parallel Session proposals</li> <li>- SOC formal preparatory meeting</li> <li>- SOC determines main topics and creates Main Sessions</li> <li>- SOC reviews session proposals and finalises Parallel Sessions</li> <li>- SOC begins process of creation of teaching programme</li> <li>- Education Committee appointed by SOC</li> </ul>
12 months prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching programme finalised</li> <li>- Confirmation of registration fees</li> <li>- Scientific Programme finalised</li> <li>- Speakers invited</li> <li>- Congress Announcement (print &amp; electronic) published</li> <li>- Abstract categories finalised</li> <li>- Abstract Review Committee appointed by SOC</li> </ul>
9 months prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registration opens</li> <li>- Bursary criteria defined</li> <li>- Bursary subcommittee appointed, if necessary</li> <li>- Abstract submission opens</li> <li>- Bursary applications invited</li> </ul>
6 months prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chairs selected and invited</li> <li>- Abstract submission deadline</li> <li>- Bursary application deadline</li> <li>- Abstracts review process commences</li> </ul>
5 months prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bursary review process commences, incorporating abstract results</li> <li>- Abstracts selected for Platform Sessions and poster presentation</li> <li>- Platform Session Chairs invited</li> </ul>
4 months prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poster tours planned and poster tour leaders invited (if applicable)</li> <li>- Final Programme design commences</li> </ul>
3 months prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awards information and arrangements completed</li> <li>- Call for late breaking abstracts</li> </ul>
2 months prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abstracts reviewed for publication (if applicable)</li> </ul>
1 month prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Final Programme completed and printed</li> <li>- Running order for Welcome Ceremony and/or Awards Ceremony finalised</li> <li>- Evaluation survey finalised</li> </ul>
1 week post congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluation survey circulated</li> </ul>