

President's Message

In with the new!

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and EMWA Members

When I joined EMWA in 2010, I never imagined that 13 years later I would attend the The 55th EMWA Conference as President and be part of the Executive Committee (EC), a body which for a few years I had watched timidly and ... with admiration. I still remember my first conference – it was Nice in Autumn 2010, and Laurence Auffret, the EMWA President then, was on the same flight going back home. We chatted and she told me a lot about EMWA and answered my never-ending questions, and I became more and more fascinated.

Yet, here I am – sitting in front of my computer writing my first President's message, having taken over the presidency from Satyen Shenoy at the May conference.

I would like to start by thanking people who made my EMWA journey possible:

- John Carpenter, who encouraged me to join EMWA and assured me that I would be able to pass all post-workshop assignments. Thank you, John, for your trust in me, your support of our Polish initiatives, and the wonderful time we spent all together in Warsaw. At the same time – congratulations on being conferred the Nick Thompson Fellowship – very well deserved!

- Laura Collada Ali, who introduced me to my first volunteering job – as LinkedIn Discussion Group Administrator. Thank you, Laura, for making me feel welcome during my first EMWA conferences
- Raquel Billiones, who brought me to the Expert Seminar Series (ESS) Organising Committee. Thank you, Raquel, for encouraging me to take another big step in my EMWA journey
- Sam Hamilton, who was brave enough to leave the leadership of the ESS Organising Committee in my hands. Thank you, Sam, for being such a wonderful teacher in ESS organisation
- Phil Leventhal, who accepted me as a section editor for Medical Writing and then offered me the opportunity to write an article and also to be a guest editor. Thank you, Phil, for making the writing side of myself come through.
- Barbara Grossman, who spent endless hours suggesting edits to my English and telling me over and over again that she “loves to read my writing”. Thank you, Barbara, for your unwavering support and encouragement not only in my writing....

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EMWA President 2023-24

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And thank you, to many others who make my interactions with EMWA a real pleasure.

As you know, the structure of EMWA EC is very smart: the President-Elect (previously Vice President) becomes the President after a one-year term. For me, the one-year run-up was very useful; I learned a bit how things work, familiarised myself with the EC and Head Office environment, and tried to understand the types of issues and matters that one needs to handle and resolve as President. I must say, it is not an easy task, and Satyen managed very well ...

Additionally, I took part in a number of activities, such as updating the EMWA policy on *Promoting Products or Services in its Activities and Events*, writing a recommendation for setting up a new Special Interest Group (SIG), and initiating transition from Regulatory Public Disclosure SIG to a general Regulatory SIG that will cover the whole spectrum of regulatory matters. However, my most important contribution, I would say, was restructuring the ESS Organising Committee and optimising the way it works. It was, of course, a team effort. This wouldn't have happened without the support and hard work of Tiziana von Bruchhausen, Bente Riis, and Eva-Maria Damsgaard Nielsen, with whom I worked closely when I led the ESS. We thoroughly reviewed the existing process, had a lively discussion, and finally came up with the proposal for a “two-chamber committee” consisting of an ESS Steering Committee and the ESS Session Organisers (see below).

The ESS Steering Committee is a fixed “core” committee that:

- Consists of permanent members
- Holds institutional memory of ESS processes, policies, and history
- Is responsible for reviewing all topic





EMWA's newly elected President Maria Kołtowska-Hägström, addresses the 55th EMWA Conference in Prague in May.

proposals, allocates them to an ESS session or sub-session, and finalises a proposal for EC endorsement

- Provides support for ESS planning throughout the year (i.e., for the Spring and Autumn conferences).

The ESS Session Organisers:

- Lead the organisation of an ESS session or sub-session

- Act as contacts for the ESS Steering Committee
- Report at regular ESS meetings (1–2 'ESS session organisers' per ESS session).

A SIG that organises an ESS session or sub-session nominates a member to act as the ESS Session Organiser.

Tiziana, Bente, and Eva-Maria kindly agreed to serve on the ESS Steering Committee. I am

sure that they will continue to deliver more and more valuable and interesting sessions during our fantastic conferences that are always so well-organised by Slavka Baronikova and the Head Office Team. Talking about conferences, we must not forget the outstanding education programme carefully prepared by our Education Officers – Laura Collada Ali and Jules Kovacevic, and the entire EMWA Professional Development Committee (EPDC). Obviously, thank-you goes to all Workshop Leaders.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the previous EC who welcomed me, patiently explained all routines, and made me feel at home. In particular, I would like to name those who left the EC:

- Satyen Shenoy, who during his presidency brought new initiatives that I am sure EMWA members will find beneficial and inspirational – thank you, Satyen for your hard work and engagement.
- Sarah Choudhury, who is stepping down as Treasurer and whose tight and thoughtful steering of EMWA finance made the economic shape of our association very stable and sound. Thank you, Sarah, for your professionalism and care.
- Maria João Almeida, who has also decided to leave her position as Public Relations Officer. Maria made our voice heard and our messages read – thank you, Maria, for making EMWA visible in the public space.

My thanks also go to Lenka Roper, Emma Halloran, and Claire Whittingham at Head Office – your help cannot be overestimated.

At the same time, I would like to welcome the new members of the EC – Sarah Tilly as President-Elect, John Dixon as Treasurer, and Diana Ribeiro as Public Relations Officer. I look forward to working with you, together with the "old" EC members and with the entire EMWA community. I hope as a strong team with diverse skills and competencies, we will continue to grow the association for the benefit and the professional development of EMWA members.