

President's Message

From EMWA President 2018–2019

Our association has been growing at a steady pace, facing the challenges of a fast-moving professional and regulatory environment. I am delighted to provide below an overview of some of the major achievements during my term on the Executive Committee (EC).

A healthy, dynamic organisation run by members, for members

Thanks to the excellent work and high commitment of our volunteers, EC members, and Head Office, we have been able to run successful conferences in Cascais, Barcelona, and Warsaw, to broaden the offer to members of different degree of experience, to improve governance, and to maintain healthy finances.

- We have increased the number of workshops offered by the EMWA Professional Development Programme (EPDP) and the number of webinars, with the ambitious goal of at least 10 webinars per year.
- We have been able to impressively broaden the programme of our conferences beyond the EPDP, including various opportunities for our members to network and share expertise.
- Our social media team has established effective communication to our members and outside of EMWA.
- The newsblast has been streamlined and improved.
- The journal has maintained its high quality and excellent contents, while offering, in addition, the opportunity for volunteers to serve as guest editors.

Besides offering **52 EPDP workshops at the Vienna conference** (30 at the foundation and 22 at the advanced level), we are addressing various hot topics through other conference events outside of the EPDP, such as the **EMWA Symposium**, the **Expert Seminar Series** (ESS), and **Lunch Seminars**, offering a valuable platform for discussion with stakeholders and regulators. These initiatives strengthen the role of EMWA in public discussions and have a great potential to further our members in their profession.

The volunteers of the **Special Interest Groups** (SIG) on pharmacovigilance, regulatory public disclosure, and medical devices have been actively contributing to expand the EPDP offer and plan ESS sessions. Their commitment reflects the interest in new areas of medical

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writing and shows how our members can actively tailor EMWA to their need. An example: following a webinar on veterinary medical writing, there has been growing interest in addressing this area at EMWA over the last few months. The March issue of *Medical Writing* now hosts a dedicated section on veterinary medical writing; together with some members working as veterinary writers and communicators, we have established a first network within EMWA. A new SIG dedicated to this writing area was launched in Vienna. This new group will have the opportunity to explore how to expand the training offer in their field and to open the dialogue with stakeholders and regulators through EMWA.

Networking and sharing

At the beginning of my term, I focussed on the unique value that the **Nick Thompson Fellows** (NTFs) and the past Presidents represent for EMWA. Due to their expertise, their long-lasting commitment at EMWA, and their knowledge of topics and structures of our association, these volunteers represent a valuable resource for the EC in terms of providing advice and suggestions related to conference initiatives and to EMWA in general. Particularly, the EC has requested the NTFs to explore the needs of more experienced writers and to suggest ways to provide advance opportunities, as well as to retain experienced members. In addition, the NTFs have recently proposed to share their overall “couple of hundred years of experience” by providing informal brainstorming or networking sessions at conferences – a unique opportunity to discuss medical writing problems and advance in the



profession, thanks to the sharing spirit of EMWA.

With the aim to support people interested in a career in medical writing, EMWA have reshaped this year the **Internship Forum** (IF) to further develop its potential. The experience with the IF so far and valuable considerations of the IF's volunteers have led to a new format which aims, starting in Vienna and upon further development, to offer a comprehensive career-focussed day (“**Getting into Medical Writing**”, GIMW). At the GIMW, interested people will have a unique opportunity to attend excellent lectures, participate in open discussions, network, and benefit from the exchange with experienced medical writers.

External activities

The **Ambassador's Programme**, recently created to raise awareness on the medical writing career and EMWA, has held, as of today, 20 presentations at career events, professional academies, and universities in various locations in Europe. Thanks to this initiative, EMWA has gained insight into the current training needs and trends in medical writing, with the potential for further development and cooperation. In addition, the Ambassador's Programme has started collaborating with the GIMW to provide speakers for future events and advertise these within universities close to the conference locations.

EMWA has continued playing an active role in the medical writing community to further our profession. We have maintained our collaboration with the MedComm Network, and the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELs) offered again the BELs exam in Vienna.

The **AMWA-EMWA CORE reference** has been widely used within the industry, with over 14,500 downloads since its launch in 2016, and its relevance has been acknowledged by pharmaceutical companies and contract research organisations.

The **AMWA-EMWA-ISMPP Joint Position Statement (JPS)** on the role of medical writers in the preparation of manuscripts for publication has been translated by our volunteers in further languages, and 11 translations are currently available on the EMWA website.

Following a suggestion made by one of our experienced members, **EMWA is addressing the issue of predatory publishing** through the MedComm SIG, which was launched in Vienna. The members of this group are supporting internal and external activities, such as the planning of conference events, trainings, research, and preparation of a new AMWA-EMWA-ISMPP JPS. EMWA have raised the discussion on this issue with AMWA and ISMPP and are leading this initiative. I am proud to have had the opportunity to support this project on behalf of EMWA as the staff liaison for the subject matter experts of the involved professional associations.

As a last point, I would like to mention our relationship with The Organisation of Professionals in Regulatory Affairs (TOPRA), which I could strengthen during my term on the EC. Thanks to this cooperation, we have obtained valuable contacts from the TOPRA network for symposium speakers and authors of articles. This type of collaboration has the potential to expand our network in specific areas, as well as to complement the offer to our members – another way to grow through sharing and cooperating.

I would like to thank EMWA for the great opportunity to serve as President and commit to these exciting projects. I have learnt a lot for my professional and personal growth, and hope to have adequately represented and supported our association. Many thanks to the EC members and the Head Office team for their great support and the constructive atmosphere – it was a great pleasure and an enriching experience for me to work with all of them! –, and to all volunteers for making EMWA a unique association. I wish Barbara, Bea, and the next year's EC members all the best!

Tiziana von Bruchhausen
EMWA President 2018–2019



No idea is too small ... just look what happened when a few people met informally back in 1986 ...

To reiterate the message from Tiziana, EMWA's President for the past year, thank you to all EMWA volunteers, from those with a visible role such as the workshop leaders and webinar presenters to the countless people working quietly in the background, making EMWA the well-respected organisation it is today; for example: members of the Editorial Board supporting Phil Leventhal as the journal is produced each quarter, those on the Public Relations Team and in the SIGs, and the Website Team.

In particular, I would like to thank:

- James Visanji, who stepped down as Treasurer at the May 2019 conference after 6 years. During this time, he and the Finance Committee carefully examined the finances to ensure that EMWA's money is spent as effectively as possible for the benefit of members. Although he will be missed, James has handed over the baton to Sarah Choudhury with EMWA's finances in a very healthy position.
- Tiziana for leading and guiding the EC over the last year, for her enthusiasm, and for patiently steering me in the right direction. It's been a pleasure to work with her and the EC.
- Everyone involved in building EMWA's backbone: our professional development activities. These include not only the education committee, led by Marian Hodges, which maintains and grows the workshop and

webinar programme, but also everyone who has been involved in planning and presenting the expert seminars and symposia. Thanks also go to those providing additional support and resources for freelancers and people considering a move to medical writing as a career.

- And last but not most definitely not least, my thanks to Lynne Fletcher, Claire Whittingham, and their team at the EMWA Head Office.

I look forward to working with Bea (the new Vice President) and the new EC, and most importantly with YOU – EMWA's members. My aims are to respond to YOUR needs, to maintain the progress we've made and keep EMWA moving forward, and to represent EMWA as we continue to forge links with other associations. If you have any suggestions, for the running of EMWA or improving our links with the wider medical writing and communications community, please do contact me. No idea is too small ... just look what happened when a few people met informally back in 1986: <https://www.emwa.org/about-us/about-emwa/history-of-emwa-1992-2008/>

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