

Conference Report

Eurachem General Assembly and Scientific Workshop 2020

Ernst Halder*

*Correspondence: Dr. E. Halder, E-mail: e.halder@rhone.ch, Eurachem-CH

Abstract: The Eurachem Week 2020 was scheduled for May 25–29, 2020 in Bucharest, Romania. As topic for the two-day workshop ‘Quality Assurance Elements for Analytical Laboratories in the University Curriculum’ was selected by the organisers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the event had to be cancelled in March. In April the Executive Committee scheduled the General Assembly for May 27 and 28 and the Workshop for July 14 and 15, 2020 as electronic meetings. Both events were very well organized by Eurachem Romania.

Eurachem Events 2020 Go Online

The new Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 gave the organizers of the Eurachem Week 2020 a good shake-up. Instead of visiting Bucharest, the capital of Romania, the organizing committee headed by *Eugenia Eftimie Totu* of the University ‘Politehnica’ of Bucharest, switched to the Internet world. The Eurachem Week was split into two parts, the 36th General Assembly and the two-day workshop. At that time online events were a novel experience for the organizers and most participants.

36th General Assembly of Eurachem

The online General Assembly (GA) was scheduled for May 27 and 28 May, 2020.

The GA was headed by the Eurochem chairperson *Marina Patriarca* (Italy), supported by the secretary *Francesca Rolle* (Italy).

The election and voting by correspondence was moved to the run-up of the meeting. The results of the elections are: *Isabelle Verduyck* (Belgium) new vice-chair (incoming chair), *Michael Koch* (Germany) and *Riin Rebane* (Estonia) members of the Executive Committee, *Elena Sanchez* (UK) Secretary and Treasurer and *Hugh Fay* (Ireland) financial examiner.

Following the EU-exit on 31st January 2020, the UK was no longer a member of the EU or other categories of the Eurachem Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that qualify for full membership of Eurachem. This was a rather strange situation since Eurachem-UK was the driving force for the foundation of Eurachem. They were very active during all the years and many contributions to the activities of Eurachem came from Eurachem-UK. The MoU had already been modified at the General Assembly 2019 and based on that modification and on the application of Eurachem-UK, full membership was unanimously approved by the GA.

The usual agenda was followed with the update on revised Eurachem policies and Eurachem Guides.

The handover of chairpersonship from Marina Patriarca (Italy) to *Vicki Barwick* (UK), former vice-chair/incoming chair and secretariat from Francesca Rolle (Italy) to *Elena Sanchez* (UK) was officially implemented.

Despite the fact that the meeting was online, a discussion forum was realised. *Richard Mulders*, trainer with extensive experience in software validation was invited. He is an expert for the Dutch accreditation board on ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189. The speaker provided a very good introduction to the guide for

validation of automated systems in pharmaceutical manufacture GAMP 5, the guide which aims to achieve computerised systems that are fit for purpose. The GAMP 5 is applicable to GxP, ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189. The guide explains what needs to be done and includes annexes which explain how it needs to be done. The introduction was followed by a lively discussion. So far software validation is not among the topics to which Eurachem gives attention. In the future that might change.

Day 1 was concluded by the discussion about the evolution of the communication within Eurachem.

Day 2 started with the reports of the working groups, followed by the reports of the national Eurachem groups. Finally the reports of European and global stakeholder and liaison organizations concluded the 36th GA of Eurachem.

All participants thanked Eugenia Eftimie Totu for the very smooth running of the meeting. The online GA was a very successful premiere for Eurachem. Nevertheless all participants hope that we can meet next time again face-to-face.



Online Workshop on Quality Assurance Elements for Analytical Laboratories in the University Curriculum

The meeting included invited presentations, contributed oral presentations, and discussion and poster sessions. *Vicki Barwick*, Eurachem chairperson, introduced Eurachem and its mission.

In a second talk she emphasised the importance of a common language of measurement.

‘The importance of the laboratory quality management system in the academic curricula in developing appropriate student competences for our current societal needs’ was the topic of the contribution of *Cecilia Arsene* of the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania

Mirella Buzoianu, Director National Institute of Metrology, INM-RO, Romania gave an introduction on ‘The National Metrology Infrastructure – support for analytical laboratory activity’.

'Teaching Metrology and Examinology in Chemistry at the University' was the subject of **Ricardo Bettencourt da Silva** of the University of Lisbon, Portugal. He defines the main goal of universities as

1. Carrying out scientific research studies
2. Producing solutions to the problems of humanity and a country
3. Training the human force which a country needs

The curriculum of a university has to support these goals.

Wolfhard Wegscheider of the Montan-Universität Leoben, Austria reflected on the subject 'Uncertainty in the classroom'.

'Quality and reliability in Analytical Chemistry' was the content of the contribution of **Raluca-Ioana Stefan-van Staden**, Head of Laboratory of Electrochemistry, National Institute of Research for Electrochemistry and Condensed Matter, Romania.

'The pros and cons for the laboratory quality management system in the academic environment' were discussed by **David Milde**, Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. He reflected about the impact of an accreditation of a laboratory at a university as service laboratory for the industry. This presentation concluded the first day of the workshop.

The second day was started with 'Good laboratory practice in analytical chemistry' by **Jacobus Frederick van Staden** – Director PATLAB, Romania. **Bertil Magnusson**, SP Technical Research Institute of Sweden, explained the internal quality control in an analytical laboratory based on the Nordic Trollbook.

Based on his long lasting experience, **Kyriacos Tsimillis**, Division of Quality Assurance, Pancyprian Union of Chemists talked about 'Basic elements of quality assurance for university graduates – practical needs after a 30-year experience'. He proposed a framework of basic elements on quality assurance to be included in the curriculum of chemistry departments of universities.

'Quality assurance of analytical measurements – a vital element in safety performance in nuclear field' was the subject of **Elena Neacsu**, Management of Radioactive Waste Department, Horia Hulubei National Institute for R&D in Physics and Nuclear Engineering, Romania. Her clear and undisputed statement was, that no quality assurance system means no accurate results and therefore the results are not fit for purpose.

'From characterisation to validation, a journey through MSc applied analytical chemistry' was the subject of **Victoria Hilborne**, Department of Chemistry, University College London, UK. The aim of the curriculum is to train the next generation of analytical scientists in state-of-the-art methods. It is designed to provide comprehensive training in analytical chemistry and its implementation. A thorough understanding of error analysis,

data processing and data presentation is at the foundation of the programme.

Stephen Ellison, LGC Limited, UK, talked about 'Measurement uncertainty and conformity assessment in analytical measurement – considerations for the university curriculum'. His conclusion was that a conformity assessment with measurement uncertainty can be a complex topic. A basic understanding of limits, decision rules and measurement uncertainty (as an interval) is essential. A comprehensive understanding is likely to require extended statistical training or qualifications. 'Quality Assurance in Higher Education' was the topic of **Delia-Laura Popescu**, University of Bucharest, Romania

'Open Educational Resources for Teaching Environmental Analysis' was discussed by **Camelia Draghici**, University Transylvania of Brasov, Romania. There are three accepted meanings for the term 'open learning':

1. Open Education in Open Universities
2. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
3. Open Educational Resources (OERs)

The development of MOOCs and OERs started in Europe more than ten years ago. COVID-19 pandemic gave a unexpected and heavy push to the interest and the development of open educational resources.

The last contribution came from **Richard Mulders**, Principal Consultant RESCOP B.V. Netherlands about 'Computerized Systems Validation'. The speaker provided a very good introduction to the guide for validation of automated systems in pharmaceutical manufacture GAMP 5, the guide which aims to achieve computerised systems that are fit for purpose. The GAMP 5 is applicable to GxP, ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189. The guide explains what needs to be done and includes annexes which explain how it needs to be done. For participants of the GA the presentation was a highly valued repetition.

Scheduled Eurachem Events

Eurachem Week 2021 is planned for May 17–21 in Prague, Czech Republic. As topic for the workshop 'Trends & Challenges in ensuring quality in analytical measurements' has been selected. More details are available on www.eurachem2021.cz. However, if travel restrictions due to COVID-19 remain in place during 2021, contingency plans are in place to run both the scientific workshop and General Assembly as virtual events on the same dates.

The 10th Eurachem Workshop on Proficiency Testing in Analytical Chemistry, Microbiology and Laboratory Medicine was originally scheduled for October 2020. It has been rescheduled to September 27–30, 2021. More details at <https://eurachem-pt2021.org/>.