

UEMS Section of Rheumatology

Minutes of the Spring Meeting

8–9 May 2025

Hotel Riu Plaza España
Gran Vía 84, Madrid, Spain

Meeting format	In person
President	Prof. Kaushik Chaudhuri
Local host	Prof. Isabel Castrejón
Meeting days	Thursday 8 May and Friday 9 May 2025

FINAL MINUTES

1. Participants

The following participants and contributors were recorded in the meeting documentation:

Name	Country	Role
Prof. Kaushik Chaudhuri	United Kingdom	President
Prof. Isabel Castrejón	Spain	Local host
Prof. Jean Dudler	Switzerland	Past President / session chair
Prof. Jürgen Wollenhaupt	Germany	Secretary / session chair
Prof. João Dias	Portugal	Treasurer / session chair
Dr Eva Rath	Austria	Presenter
Dr Francisca Sivera	Spain	Presenter; Chair-elect, EULAR Education Committee
Prof. Marta Olejárová	Czech Republic	Delegate
Prof. Philipp Remans	Belgium	Delegate
Prof. Şebnem Ataman	Türkiye	Delegate
Dr Laura Muntean	Romania	Delegate
Prof. Cătălin Codreanu	Romania	Delegate
Dr Alexandre Dumusc	Switzerland	Delegate
Prof. Géraldine Falgarone	France	Delegate
Prof. Fabrizio Conti	Italy	Delegate
Dr Johanna Pälttä	Finland	Delegate
Dr Christian Olsen	Denmark	Delegate
Dr Silje Reiserter	Norway	Delegate
Dr Gkikas Katsifis	Greece	Delegate
Prof. Marta Dzhus	Ukraine	Delegate

2. Thursday, 8 May 2025

2.1 Welcome and opening

Prof. Kaushik Chaudhuri opened the meeting and welcomed delegates. Prof. Isabel Castrejón, local host, welcomed participants to Madrid and gave an introductory presentation on Spain. Prof. Jean Dudler also welcomed attendees, after which participants introduced themselves.

The President thanked the UEMS Secretariat and Executive Board and acknowledged the support of Bertrand, Vassilios and colleagues involved in the relationship with EULAR. He emphasised the importance of cooperation with CESMA and offered particular thanks to members of the European Certificate of Rheumatology core question-writing group.

The current leadership of the Section was introduced: Prof. Jean Dudler as Past President, Prof. Jürgen Wollenhaupt as Secretary, Prof. João Dias as Treasurer and Prof. Kaushik Chaudhuri as President.

2.2 President's report

Prof. Chaudhuri presented the Section's report for 2024–2025 and reviewed the role of UEMS and the Section of Rheumatology. He referred to the Section's expanding educational work, including the Training the Trainers initiative, and encouraged involvement in relevant congress activities planned for 2026.

2.3 Secretary's report

Prof. Wollenhaupt outlined the principles and structure of UEMS. Founded in 1958, UEMS brings together 41 countries, approximately 100 specialist bodies and around 1.7 million medical specialists. Its membership comprises 30 full members, seven associate members and four observers.

UEMS promotes cooperation among medical specialists in Europe and defines standards for specialist education, training and professional practice. The Section of Rheumatology comprises 57 delegates. Delegates must be practising medical specialists, be nominated through their National Medical Association and have sufficient proficiency in English. Each participating country may appoint two national delegates.

The Section's overarching aim is to support optimal patient care by advancing rheumatology training to the highest possible standard across Europe.

2.4 Treasurer's report

Prof. Dias presented the overall financial position for 2024. The Section had sufficient funds from national contribution fees. The calculation of these contributions was explained as being based on the number of rheumatologists in each country.

2.5 European Certificate of Rheumatology and collaboration with EULAR

Prof. Chaudhuri, Prof. Dudler and Prof. Dias reported on the collaboration between UEMS Rheumatology and EULAR to develop the European Certificate of Rheumatology. The certificate is intended to complement national specialist training and to provide a European demonstration of applied knowledge.

The proposed examination model included:

- a remotely proctored online examination;
- 90 single-best-answer multiple-choice questions, each with five options;
- a duration of 120 minutes;
- a formal blueprint, question-writing guidance and workshops; and
- structured submission and review of examination items.

The group noted that examination development is complex and labour-intensive. It requires an appropriate provider, shared standards of competence, sustained time commitment, mutual trust and reliable logistical support. Work was continuing towards a planned launch in November.

The examination was described as distinct from existing EULAR assessments and as an additional opportunity to demonstrate knowledge. Participants discussed the difficulty of writing high-quality clinical questions. Artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT, may assist with drafting, but their output and proposed answers require expert scrutiny and judgement, particularly for specialist-level material.

The intended standard is that of a senior trainee, although access would not be restricted to trainees or to candidates based in Europe. The examination would initially be offered in English; translation into other languages may be considered later. Fees should cover the costs of administration and quality assurance rather than serve primarily as a source of profit. The question bank is expected to be renewed annually, with an eventual target of approximately 500 items.

2.6 European rheumatology workforce survey

Dr Eva Rath presented the final results of the European rheumatology workforce survey. The project began in 2021 and was updated in 2023. Responses were received from 25 of the Section's 57 delegates, representing 17 of 30 member countries.

The questionnaire examined:

- institutions caring for patients with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases;
- time allocated to first and follow-up consultations;
- the number of follow-up visits per year;
- practice setting and the number of patients seen each week; and
- the composition of the rheumatology workforce.

The results showed substantial variation between countries. In some countries rheumatologists practise rheumatology exclusively, whereas in others specialists combine rheumatology with another discipline. Care is delivered through both hospital outpatient departments and private practice. Patient volumes also vary considerably. The proportion of women in the specialty was reported to be increasing over time.

Discussion focused on interpretation of the data and on the difficulty of defining a single optimal rheumatologist-to-population ratio, since workforce requirements depend on national circumstances and models of care. It was suggested that UEMS and EULAR should work together to increase the policy impact of the findings, including possible engagement at European Union level.

2.7 Awareness of the Section

Delegates held an open discussion on improving awareness and visibility of the UEMS Section of Rheumatology.

2.8 Close of day one

Prof. Chaudhuri closed the first day of the meeting.

3. Friday, 9 May 2025

3.1 Country updates

Delegates shared country-specific developments and challenges relevant to rheumatology and to the work of the Section. Contributions were recorded from representatives of the Czech Republic, Belgium, Türkiye, Romania, Switzerland, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Finland, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Greece and Ukraine.

3.2 Revision of the European Training Requirements

The meeting considered the revision of the European Training Requirements (ETR) for Rheumatology and the need to define a common framework for specialist competence and training across Europe. The discussion included current training practices, core competences for trainers and the role of an ePortfolio in supporting learning and assessment.

3.3 Education and training: the EULAR perspective

Dr Francisca Sivera, Chair-elect of the EULAR Education Committee, presented EULAR's perspective on education and training. She described rheumatology education as a lifelong endeavour and outlined the EULAR Strategy 2024–2028. Its educational direction combines leadership, scientific guidance and innovation with professional and personal development, strong communities and financially sustainable activity.

EULAR's approach encompasses both educational products and support that enables rheumatologists and trainees to achieve their full potential. Collaboration between EULAR and UEMS is founded on shared standards for training, a common reference point for national systems and the European demonstration of applied knowledge. This remains an evolving process, with relevance both within Europe and beyond, including Africa.

Participants emphasised that each competence should be accompanied by practical guidance on the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours expected of a rheumatologist. Prof. Isabel Castrejón contributed to the discussion of current European training practice, while Prof. Jean Dudler and Prof. Kaushik Chaudhuri led exchanges on trainer competences and the ePortfolio.

4. Conclusions and follow-up

Area	Follow-up	Status / timing
European Certificate	Continue operational and logistical preparations with EULAR and the examination provider.	Planned launch: November
Question bank	Continue expert question writing, review and annual renewal; maintain careful expert oversight of any AI-assisted drafting.	Ongoing
Workforce survey	Explore coordinated UEMS–EULAR communication and policy engagement based on the findings.	For further consideration
European Training Requirements	Continue work on the revised ETR, trainer competences and the ePortfolio.	Ongoing
Section visibility	Continue discussion on measures to improve awareness of the Section and its work.	Ongoing

5. Next meeting

The next Spring Meeting was announced for 8–9 May 2026 in Prague, Czech Republic.

6. Closing

Prof. Chaudhuri thanked the local host, speakers and delegates for their contributions and closed the meeting.