



THE EUROPEAN POLIO UNION ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023

Once again greetings from the nine directors of the Board, all of us polio survivors coming from seven different countries within the Council of Europe. We are a co-ordinating and communicating body made up at present of 20 national polio groups from 17 countries. As with many volunteer groups worldwide we encounter problems with old age, health restrictions, mobility and financial worries limiting our work. Members (who can be individuals in countries where there are no national bodies) pay subscriptions based upon numbers and I thank all involved for their financial support. You can see over the years from our published accounts that we are very frugal in our spending. (The directors pay all their expenses). We have adopted a policy of subsidising members' attendance at the AGM and this resulted in us supporting 36 attendees at our 2023 AGM held in Nancy (Northern France) alongside the excellent Polio France Congress. In fact, 31 visitors joined us at our AGM mainly from Polio France delegates and we were happy to have them as our guests. Something which we hope to replicate this year (2024) at our AGM in Budapest.

What has happened in 2023? Sadly, we said goodbye to Robert Cordier (France) but welcomed his replacement, Pierre Parrot who has already taken over as Co-ordinator of the Medical Committee. Much hard work has been out on the reviewing and, where necessary, rewriting our Mems and Arts (Statutes). Huge thanks to Macrina Clancy and Patrick McGillion from Polio Survivors Ireland backed up by the effort and knowledge of Stefan Grajcar (Slovakia) our director Secretary. We were fortunate to be advised by several past directors and two excellent sets of Belgian notaries (solicitors) who advised us on a pro bono basis. (NB: our registered address is in Antwerp and any significant change must be published in the official Belgian Gazette). We bank with 'Belfius' and our accountants are 'Santaks Bu'. At this stage I must thank Eurordis for their continued financial support of our AGM. As well as Eurordis we also subscribe to EFNA (European Federation of Neurological Alliances), and to EDF (European Disability Forum). We are taking a growing interest in the international Post Polio Syndrome Advocacy Group another welcome voice in the fight to highlight post polio syndrome.

We have weekly polio figures from the World Health Organisation and their Global Polio Eradication Initiative. We also have regular contract with our medical advisors, most of whom are honorary members. Another growing link is with Polio Australia whose energetic management have embarked on a 'medical pathway'. This is very similar to research and conclusions from the British Polio Fellowship's 'pathway' and we hope for greater co-operation.

As previously mentioned, we are still working on our re-jigged website, a task which will not be costly but requires many hours of hard but interesting work. One bright spot continues to be our excellent newsletter of which we can be proud; over 30 pages of excellent news, articles and information. As always, we urge you, our members, whether group or individual, to send in your news ranging from new equipment to alternative therapy, to what your national health authorities are providing for us 'post polios'.



We only meet once a year in person at the AGM but about every five weeks via Zoom, again at no cost to us being provided by a Board member. We are still very aware of those polio survivors stuck in their homes in Ukraine. Eurordis plays a role in monitoring these unfortunate colleagues. With Covid now in retreat in Europe we hear news of research into 'long Covid' and talk of large sums of funding in many nations. Did we ever receive such largesse to look into PPS or LEOp (Late Effects of Polio)??

In closing this report, I have some happier news. In 2023 there were just 12 WPV1 polio cases reported worldwide compared with 30 in 2022 and 503 cVDPV2 (vaccine derived cases) reported in 2023 compared to 878 in 2022. Fortunately, the discovery of the live virus in sewage in eight London boroughs has not caused a single case of the disease.

I close by thanking my fellow directors for all their effort and hard work, to clinicians and our able-bodied supporters. The biggest thank you, however, goes to you, our members, for your interest and your support both financial and in person and for your friendship.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David G. Mitchell." The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light blue rectangular background.

David Mitchell
EPU President, on behalf of the Board

March 18, 2024