

eular

National Scientific Societies Meeting

16-17 March 2026
Athens, Greece

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE OF ASSOCIATIONS FOR RHEUMATOLOGY



NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES MEETING 2026

This year's meeting had a special focus on what National Societies could do at national level to address two issues: first, to continue to improve the state of rheumatology and build the case for the discipline, including both its professionals and patients. Secondly, to strengthen their own capabilities to operate more effectively and secure their future sustainability.

The 2-day workshop focused on finding solutions rather than debating problems. Thanks to the regular calls between EULAR and the National Societies, the key challenges to address had been identified ahead of the meeting.

Attendees were prompted to collaborate, be imaginative, exchange experiences, and compare perspectives to suggest actions and solutions that National Societies could launch.

The meeting aimed to highlight the need for strategic thinking, prioritisation, and foresight. The hands-on activities allowed the participants to experience how solution-based and anticipatory management works and its positive outcomes.

Participants were able to discuss their national realities, finding out commonalities and how diverse perspectives can enrich decisions and solutions. This emphasises the value of EULAR as a professional association and a network that can boost efforts at national level.

The meeting was also an opportunity to debate and clarify how EULAR Office's activities and services could continue to bring value to National Societies and support as well as complement their work. **This report summarises the key insights following South 180's analysis. It does not entail any action commitment by EULAR.**



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Session 1 – Governance

Session 1 | Governance

As a result of the monthly calls between EULAR and the National Societies, South 180 identified and presented the 7 main governance issues affecting most National Societies.

Participants selected the 4 most urgent issues for their own National Society and discussed how to tackle them.

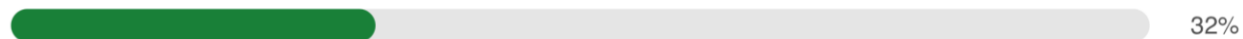


What are the 4 MOST URGENT governance issues for your National Society?

Multiple Choice Poll 50 votes 50 participants

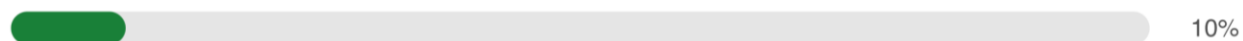
1

Revenue generation & financial sustainability - 16 votes



4

Securing professional staff to run the national society - 5 votes



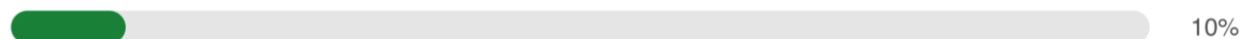
3

Difficulties to build a solid basis of volunteers - 7 votes



2

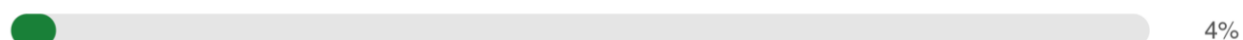
Leadership continuity/succession - 5 votes



Reaching out and involving young professionals - 10 votes



Collaboration with HPR and PARE - 2 votes



Managing relations/conflicts of interest with industry players - 5 votes



Session 1 | Governance

Issue #1: Revenue generation and financial sustainability

- Several countries reported a strong dependence on resources from the pharmaceutical industry. New possibilities for revenue streams could be explored. This may require looking beyond traditional boundaries and reaching out to new industries and partners.
- As national congresses can be an important source of income (sponsorship), they could be assessed and reformatted to increase revenue generation.
- It is essential to be able to explain what the positive impact of rheumatology is. Donors and investors want to be associated with clear achievements and a positive impact. This requires investing in obtaining data about outcomes and achievements as well as building a compelling narrative. EULAR can support by providing dedicated reports and analyses (RheumaFacts, EULAR Advocacy)
- Overall, National Societies could consider investing more resources into generating revenue. Having someone with expertise in fundraising and donor management can make a difference.
- Additionally, it would be good for National Societies to review their costs and expenses, assessing how money and resources are allocated and what impact/results they generate. This could increase their efficiency.

Issue #2: Reaching out and involving young professionals

- Survey and analyse young professionals' needs to avoid working on suppositions.
- Make the National Society visible, interesting, and useful to them by improving communication. This means including information about understanding the discipline, career path, grants, education resources, etc.
- Create/strengthen a national committee for young professionals.
- Promote EMEUNET and ensure that your National Society has an engaged representative in this network.
- Develop a process to identify promising talent among young professionals and offer mentoring and role-model programmes.
- Provide free/affordable training, including non-medical skills (leadership, career building, etc.).
- Create young professional awards or incentive programs.
- Invite young professionals to participate in task forces and other bodies.
- Make it easier and more affordable for young professionals to attend the National Congress and give them visibility when attending.

Session 1 | Governance

Issue #3: Difficulties to build a solid base of volunteers

- More focus is needed: define needs, tasks, and expected outcomes better.
- Make benefits for volunteers clearer and more appealing.
- Offer recognition and rewards to the volunteers.
- Promote the impact of the National Society and the opportunities to get involved more effectively.
- Negotiate with employers to make it easier for volunteers to get involved in the activities of the National Society. As such, identifying and promoting what the benefits for employers are could support this effort.
- Target young professionals and make volunteering part of their career path. Focus on promoting how volunteering helps make them better professionals.
- Provide access to EULAR network and participation in international meetings as an incentive.

Issue #4: Securing professional staff to run the National Society

- Review and refine the needs and priorities of National Societies to ensure that resources are invested in the right positions, skills and tasks.
- Review internal processes to reduce administrative burden and allocate resources on higher-value tasks.
- Collaborate with other national medical associations to pool resources and solutions (e.g., shared staff for admin tasks).
- Consider outsourcing of lower-value tasks, non-core activities/tasks, and skills that are not needed on a rolling basis to become more efficient and effective.
- Provide adequate onboarding to staff and board members to ensure effectiveness.



Session 2 – Education



Session 2 | Education

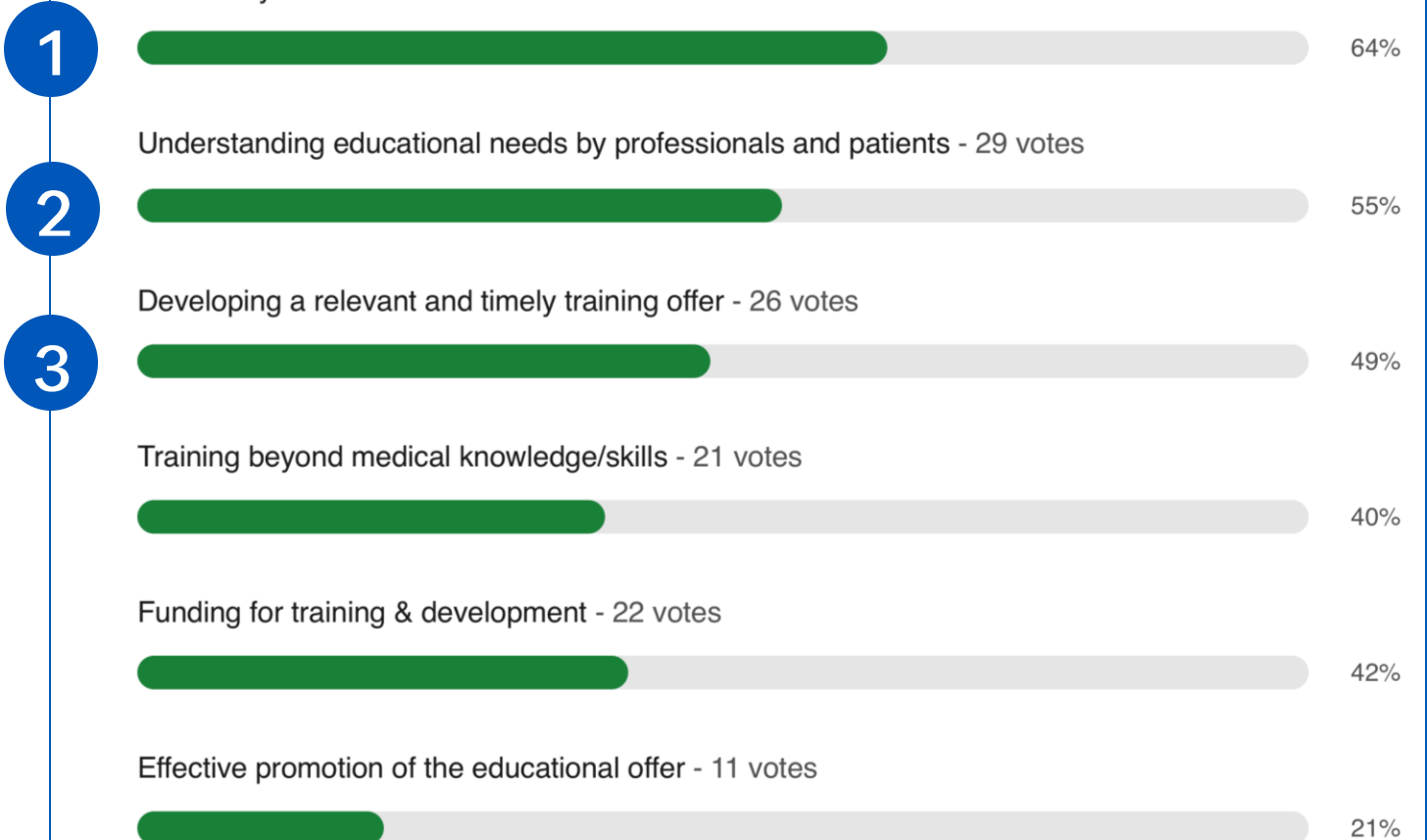
South 180 presented the 6 main challenges related to education resulting from the monthly calls between EULAR and the National Societies.

Participants selected the top-3 issues for National Societies considering their own national context and discussed how to address them.



What are the 3 MOST CRUCIAL educational issues for your National Society?

Multiple Choice Poll 53 votes 53 participants



Session 2 | Education

Issue #1: Availability and harmonisation of education

- Provide governments with data and evidence that support the National Society's requests and interests.
- Complement data with a clear narrative focused on benefits and positive impact.
- Use cases and best practices from other countries to illustrate potential achievements. Present routes to solutions and explain how they can be implemented instead of demanding public bodies to do the job.
- Involve all the required stakeholders. Apply stakeholder mapping, analysis, and management tools.
- Promote EULAR's European Rheumatology Exam as an effort to harmonise education and enable cross-border mobility.

Issue #2: Understanding educational needs of professionals and patients

- Run surveys or conduct research to identify educational needs.
- Go beyond medical skills and assess the need for other types of knowledge (non-medical skills).
- Collaborate and coordinate with PARE and HPR.
- Collaborate with universities and other educational institutions to avoid overlap, redundancy, and also to pool resources.



Session 2 | Education

Issue #3: Developing a timely and relevant educational offer

- Develop a clear understanding of needs before launching any education development project.
- Be aware of EULAR's educational offer and promote it among your members.
- Translate relevant material into national languages.
- Develop e-learning for patients.
- Develop training and information on rheumatology for primary care professionals and promote it among them.
- Make use of EULAR's course endorsements or ECONS programme for enhanced visibility.



Session 3 – Advocacy and communications



Session 3 | Advocacy and communications

South 180 presented 7 issues related to advocacy and communications that had been identified as key challenges during the monthly calls between EULAR and the National Societies.

Participants selected the top three problems and then discussed priorities and actions.



What are the TOP 3 advocacy & comms PRIORITIES for your National society?

Multiple Choice Poll 52 votes 52 participants

1

Raise awareness about rheumatology - 33 votes



Competition/visibility vs other health disciplines - 19 votes



Launching an advocacy or communication campaign - 15 votes

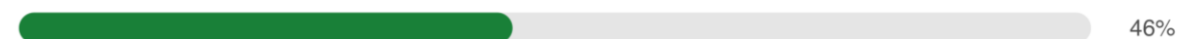


Developing advocacy/communication skills and practices - 12 votes

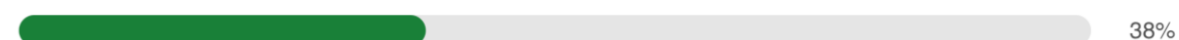


2

Access to professionals/partners with the adequate skills - 24 votes

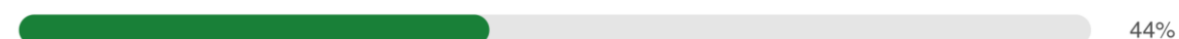


Funding of advocacy/communication work - 20 votes



3

Collaboration with HPR and PARE - 23 votes



Session 3 | Advocacy and communications

- Open an internal discussion to define the importance of advocacy and communication in achieving key objectives: raising awareness, increasing funding, strengthening influence, improving volunteers' engagement, etc.
- Define priorities and allocate resources, investing in people or engaging external partners with the right expertise.
- Work on communication campaigns focused not only on awareness but also on impact and value, creating strong and engaging narrative.
- Reinforce collaboration with HPR and PARE to build a stronger, more compelling, and inclusive narrative.
- Work on stakeholder mapping and engagement.
- Build on existing resources from EULAR (Manifesto, awareness day campaigns).
- Identify Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) to help spread the message. EULAR could provide support.



Session 4 – Foresight



Session 4 | Foresight

- In this session, participants were redistributed into country/National Society groups. The goal was to take a deeper look at what each National Society could do to tackle the 10 key challenges identified in the previous sessions.
- South 180 created a scenario for rheumatology in 2030, which aimed to stimulate the participants to think about the future.
- First, participants were asked to rank the 10 key challenges according to the needs and urgencies of their own National Society. Following that, and considering the plenary discussion of the ranking, they chose one priority to focus on.
- The third step involved identifying the risks for the National Society resulting from not addressing the selected issue on time. Besides, they also pointed out the potential opportunities and benefits of timely action. Next, they chose whether focusing on mitigating risks or going for opportunities.
- Finally, they focused on what National Societies could do and how EULAR could support them. As a result, each National Society created its own TO-DO list and identified insights to bring back home.

Prioritisation of challenges for National Societies in 2030

- 1 Raise awareness about rheumatology
- 2 Reaching out and involving young professionals
- 3 Revenue generation and financial sustainability
- 4 Access to professionals/partners with the adequate skills
- 5 Understanding educational needs by professionals and patients
- 6 Availability and harmonisation of education
- 7 Collaboration with HPR and PARE on advocacy
- 8 Securing professional staff to run the national society
- 9 Difficulties to build a solid basis of volunteers
- 10 Developing a relevant and timely educational offer



Key Insights and next steps

Key Insights and next steps

The main goal of this year's meeting was for participants to take home insights and practical ideas to review and strengthen the activities of their own National Societies.

Consequently, each participant had the opportunity to create its own list of actions using a customised diary.

The meeting also showed clearly that EULAR Office and its services are crucial to support and complement efforts at national level.

The EULAR team attending the meeting also obtained several key insights that will shape its strategic direction informed by the shared feedback.

EULAR extends its sincere appreciation to all participants for their active engagement in the workshop and will continue to evaluate key insights and implications for future actions.

#1

CONTINUE TO ENSURE THE TRANSFER OF VALUE

EULAR recognises the various and diverse needs of the National Societies. The ideas and suggestions gathered in this workshop will be carefully reviewed and certain measures will be taken to address the members' needs and support their efforts (e.g. enhanced communication and information sharing, specialised workshops or toolkits, etc.).

#3

DOUBLE DOWN ON FACTS AND NARRATIVE

EULAR will continue to make data and information available to help National Societies build their own narratives (RheumaFacts, other advocacy and research resources, Awareness Day campaigns, etc.)

#2

CAPITALISE ON EULAR'S NETWORK POWER

EULAR aims to bring National Societies closer together, enabling peer exchanges and sharing of information, best practices, etc.

myEULAR to be promoted and become the key platform for members to gather information and knowledge.

#4

ENABLE THE NEXT GENERATION

EULAR's international network, and particularly the EMEUNET Country Liaison network, should be the platform to engage the next generation of professionals and encourage volunteering.