



The Intensive Connection

Executive Committee (2021-2022)

M Cecconi (Milan, Italy) President
E Azoulay (Paris, France) President elect
A Vieillard-Baron (Paris, France) Secretary
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Brussels, 18 October 2022

The European Parliament welcomed the second meeting of its Intensive Care Interest Group

On October 13th, a second meeting of the [European Parliament Intensive Care Interest Group \(EPIC-IG\)](#) was hosted on the premises of the European Parliament to continue discussions on the role and importance of intensive care medicine within the European Health Union. This first face-to-face meeting since the pandemic witnessed joint efforts of MEPs and the representatives of the [European Society of Intensive Care Medicine \(ESICM\)](#) to raise awareness about the impressive efforts Intensive Care Units (ICU) teams do every day to care for their patients outside of a pandemic scenario.

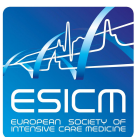
The Interest Group builds upon the solid commitment of policymakers and healthcare workers to create a social and inclusive platform aiming at facilitating the exchange of ideas, strengthening cooperation and working together towards the common goal of coherently facing future health challenges for Intensive Care Medicine (ICM).

Intensive Care Units and the profession got in the spotlight in a very dramatic way during the pandemic. While the fight of Intensive Care healthcare workers against COVID-19 cannot be praised enough, it is very important to be aware of pre-existing challenges and be ready to find a new way forward.

A new leadership, emerging from the [NEXT group](#) of intensivists, is now taking the reins of ESICM and stirring its work towards a new approach to training, support for healthcare workers, patients and families but also to hospital management, decision making and ICU capacity.

Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has left many healthcare systems drained of their resources. The number of ICU beds varies greatly across Europe, but its demand is going to increase everywhere due to an ageing population, new therapeutic options and new healthcare threats. More and more European citizens will be affected by this problem, either as a patient or as a relative of a patient.

Furthermore, even if the COVID-19 pandemic seems to be under control now, severe infections (Sepsis) remain a reality for a lot of European patients and can lead survivors to very long-term consequences, similar to the ones seen with long COVID. To care for those so severely affected, we need a healthcare workforce that is properly trained but also has an adequate quality of life at work, not only to keep the standards of care high but also for the retention of workforce. *“An ICU bed is an interdisciplinary team of competent people working together. It’s all about the team, the patient and the family”* says Prof.



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Maurizio Cecconi, President of ESICM and Chair of the Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Department at Humanitas Research Hospital in Milan.

The EPIC-IG, therefore, aims to be a regular forum of dialogue for policymakers and healthcare workers that goes way beyond the contexts of pandemics. There is a recognised need to create a new pan-European approach to Intensive Care, creating a framework for free movement of intensivists, focusing on a proper system to exchange crucial and life-saving data and preparing for the new era of a much more important place for ICUs in hospitals outside of a crisis. Support is also needed to raise awareness and promote all the efforts made through research and Quality Improvement (QI) programs to improve not only survival but also Health Related Quality of Life (HRQOL).

“It is necessary to raise awareness about the amazing work and research that is done in our ICUs on a daily basis. At the EPIC-IG we all agree that Intensive Care challenges are a concern of us all and we are very committed to finding solutions and building a stronger and more resilient European Health Union together” says one of the co-chairs of the Interest Group MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP, Finland), whose expertise and experience represent a strong asset to the Intensive Care community.

“At ESICM we are committed to working relentlessly for our community to bring our healthcare workers, our patients and their families the best possible conditions to work and to be treated. Indeed, we hope it will never happen but we need to be ready for the next pandemic. That’s why this dialogue with high-level policymakers is so important and we are very happy to have this opportunity to exchange and push the agenda forward“ says Prof. Elie Azoulay, President-Elect of ESICM and Head of the critical care department of the Saint-Louis hospital in Paris.

About the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM)

ESICM, founded in 1982, is the leading association representing intensivists, bringing together close to 10 000 practitioners across the EU. ESICM supports and promotes the advancement of knowledge in intensive care medicine, in particular the promotion of the highest standards of multidisciplinary care of critically ill patients and their families through education, research and professional development. As the main association of intensivists, ESICM represents the first line of workers who stand against the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Contact us

For any questions regarding the Interest Group or any media enquiries, please send an email to the Interest Group Secretariat at epic-ig@esicm.org or call the [+32 471 74 65 99](tel:+32471746599).