



**EURETINA**  
European Society of Retina Specialists

# **ROADMAP 2025**

*Euretina: Preserving Sight Through  
Science and Education*

# Introduction

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**E**URETINA Roadmap 2025 seeks to define the goals and strategic plan of the EURETINA Society for the next five years. This will involve prioritising tasks and key activities, while addressing specific problems and challenges within the retina subspecialty in ophthalmology.

Competence and authority are essential, today more than ever, in the development of sustainable, effective and science-based diagnostic and therapeutic solutions for blinding retinal diseases. EURETINA must take an active role in shaping the future of the subspecialty.

The Society must also work to address the unmet needs of both ophthalmologists and their patients. The hope is that other intuitions may find the EURETINA Roadmap helpful to their own progression, and may be motivated to respond with their own inspiring ideas.

The members of the Society are asked to join in this collective effort to accomplish the goals as set out in the Roadmap.

## EURETINA Executive Committee

*On behalf of the Board*

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**Frank G. Holz**  
President,  
EURETINA



**Alistair Laidlaw**  
Incoming President,  
EURETINA



Anat Loewenstein

**Anat Loewenstein**  
General Secretary,  
EURETINA



**Sebastian Wolf**  
Past President,  
EURETINA



**Dara Conlon**  
Executive Vice President,  
EURETINA

# Improvement of EURETINA's Digital Profile

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**A**s the world is forced to make a rapid shift to online learning and exchange, the Society is committed to analysing and improving its digital offerings, in a bid to boost online formats for education.

Through the on-going engagement of professional consultants, EURETINA is currently undergoing a digital audit and overhaul. Having deployed wide-reaching surveys to engage the input of its following, EURETINA has undertaken a large-scale and urgent effort to ensure that this digital transformation is directly and effectively addressing the gaps identified by its own audience.

Building on and strengthening the value offered digitally to both members and non-members is the goal of the digital transformation. Part of the work will be to set up the systems and tools necessary, in robust ways that not only fulfil the needs of the Society today but also for the next 5-10 years. From the user's point of view, they will see expanded content, smoother access and overall user experience improvements. Changes will be unveiled throughout late 2020 and 2021.

## **eLearning**

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical role of virtual educational programs and forced us to revisit current, more traditional formats. This will involve expanding current programmes, while developing new initiatives with the help of professional support.

New media including curated webinars will facilitate learning 'on the go', as well as including more interactive formats to engage users. In some cases, these initiatives may be developed in collaboration with our industry partners.

## **Introduction of Interactive Bulletins**

EURETINA is currently investigating digital forum solutions, such as launching its own online bulletin or interactive newsletter, to actively bring curated collections of the Society's web content into the inboxes of its followers. Interactive bulletins to promote retina news, debates, Society updates and a wide range of useful educational resources would bolster the profile of EURETINA, elevating the Society to more than just its meeting at a critical time when virtual presence is key.

Expected content for such a forum might include a particular focus on European and Middle Eastern medicine, which is arguably less well represented currently than the US. Interactive contributions would be encouraged from followers. Options are being investigated at present and will respond directly to the feedback from EURETINA member surveys to ensure online content be tailored to exactly meet the needs identified by EURETINA's following.

# Scientific Meetings & Educational Programmes

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**T**he ultimate goal of the meetings and education programmes of the Society is the prevention of avoidable blindness, and improvement of patients' outcomes by way of educating ophthalmologists.

The aim of EURETINA is to become the leading source in ophthalmic education in the field of retina. It is essential to supercharge the educational work already underway on early detection and treatment of retinal disease.

## Annual Meeting

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**2**020 was to mark the tenth and final year of the combined EURETINA ESCRS Congress. Thereafter, this joint initiative would cease given the vast growth of both congresses over that time resulting in the logistical need to run them separately.

However, as the year has transpired neither the joint event nor any face-to-face congress has been possible, as we instead embark upon our first virtual EURETINA meeting. While in 2020 we replace the live meeting with a virtual alternative, we hope that in future years the digital format will be used to supplement a live, in-person event, allowing for a hybrid congress model.

In terms of the scientific programme for meetings, virtual or otherwise, we will embark on a drive to expand the current scope of the Main Sessions.

## Winter Meeting

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**T**he Winter Meeting will remain a smaller-scale meeting with a focus on clinical education and teaching. The geographic target of the Winter Meeting is Central and Eastern Europe Countries (CEEC), which it will continue to prioritise for the foreseeable future. In five years, this plan will be revisited with the potential to expand its interest as far as North Africa and the Middle East.

## Awards & Lectures

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**E**URETINA currently hosts four keynote lecture awards at its annual Congress; The EURETINA Lecture, The Gisbert Richard Lecture, The Kreissig Lecture and the Ophthalmologica Lecture (in association with YOURS). These successful awards, which cover a broad remit of criteria, will be continued.

Additionally, the following awards will be introduced in the future:

1. A EURETINA Humanitarian Award
2. An award to a non-ophthalmologist (e.g. patient organization representatives, eminent industry individuals etc.)
3. A Patent-(Innovation) Award, which would aim to attract a private sponsor for a highly ranked award (similar to Helen-Keller-Award in the US)

## Young Retina Specialists (YOURS)

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In recent years the Board of EURETINA embarked on an active drive to engage young ophthalmologists with an interest in retina, so as to ensure that this demographic was appropriately represented in the activities of the Society. The EURETINA Young Retina Specialists (YOURS) group has been integral in delivering this goal. YOURS focuses on the sustained promotion of young people in the field of retina, and promotes interest in clinician-scientist and vision research careers.

In the coming months and years new courses, formats and skill labs specifically targeted at young ophthalmologists with an interest in retina will be established. These programs will prioritise a focus on science communication across the following topics:

- How to write a paper
- How to present at meetings
- How to prepare to submit an EU grant
- Tips for successful networking
- Advice for careers in ophthalmology

New media including webinars will play a role in attending to the needs and lifestyles of this younger 'on the move' audience. Content will be curated to address the above headline topics and may be extended further to cover advice on blogging, patient education, and developing and using resources.

To foster impactful networking amongst this demographic, a regular 'clubbing' event will be scheduled to take place at the annual EURETINA (live) congresses, following the President's dinner. This will provide valuable, informal networking opportunities to young ophthalmologists keen to engage with the global network of esteemed retina specialists present at the live Congress.

An expansion of the existing programmes targeting young retina specialists will be implemented. Existing opportunities include the EURETINA Observership Programme and the recently introduced travel grant programme, made available to support candidates who may otherwise be unable to travel to the annual face-to-face Congress. Finally, the latest initiative to be introduced for the benefit of younger members will be the EURETINA Mentorship Programme, to be launched in the coming months.

## EBO Subspecialty Exam (FEBOS-Retina)

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The Fellow of the European Board of Ophthalmology Subspecialty Retina (FEBOS-R) exam is to be established with the goal of improving knowledge in diagnostics and therapy of retinal diseases, and aims to attract a high number of participants. EURETINA will pioneer this retina subspecialty exam, in collaboration with EBO, to encompass both medical and surgical retina.

Furthermore, courses will be devised for inclusion in the Congress programme, to be specially aimed at candidates preparing for the FEBOS-Retina exam.

## Mentorship Programme

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**E**URETINA will soon launch its Mentorship Programme established to educate the wider ophthalmic community by supporting the professional development of promising retina specialists and mentoring them early in their careers.

It is anticipated that each year six young retina specialists from academically developed and developing countries will be selected to take part in the mentorship programme. As part of this initiative mentors will be assigned to candidates to conduct virtual monthly sessions, facilitate mentee networking, and act as a source of advice for mentees' professional challenges. Full criteria and timelines will be announced in late 2020.

## Women in Retina

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**E**URETINA is proud to embark on a new initiative developed to support women in ophthalmology, and fulfil the Society's mission to promote diversity in leadership in retina at all levels. This initiative is envisaged to comprise a 12-month mentoring programme to include the development of long-term fellowships for women in retina, as well as annual grants for under-40s females.

It will introduce a much-needed platform to prioritise gender-related conversation, and include organised talks on career development, leadership training and mentoring for women.

## Guidelines, Recommendations & Surveys

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**E**URETINA continues to generate published guidelines and recommendations, which have become a source of great interest to its community.

As a means of increasing engagement with our community, and ensuring that we are appropriately representing the voices that matter most, the Society will perform regular surveys. The results of these will be presented during the annual meeting.

The Society will form a new Survey Committee for the upcoming years with the primary focus of compiling surveys on surgical topics, best practice and so on.

EURETINA will collect reports on safety issues of pharmaceutical and medicinal device products.

The Society will also establish a Safety Committee in order to evaluate these reports and make them publicly available.

# Research Funding Grant Programme

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An ongoing priority for the Society is to embark on the development of efficacious therapeutics in areas of unmet needs for blinding retinal diseases.

EURETINA will focus its efforts on supporting focused research activities for projects and topics which are typically not addressed by other funding sources including the pharmaceutical and medicinal product industry.

The annual EURETINA Retinal Medicine Research Funding Call, now in its second year, has successfully seen a high number of high-quality submissions for funding. The Roadmap aims to expand the level of funding made available, so as to support an increased number of projects in the future.

Meanwhile, larger scale clinical research grants should be funded from time to time, such as the ongoing EURETINA Submacular Hemorrhage Trial, which is currently underway. In terms of supporting grants of this scale, the Board will identify predefined research topics and projects, which present an outlook for fast achievement and pressing need.

Meanwhile, large-scale funding should also be sought from EU research grant schemes already in place. This would allow for the funding of projects reaching beyond the financial scope of EURETINA.

As part of this effort, support and guidance should be put in place for young researchers in the field of retina wishing to submit EU grants (including, and not limited to, the webinar/podcast formats mentioned in the 'Young Retina Specialist' section above).

Current and future programmes to foster retinal research in Europe and beyond will be established while clinician-scientist positions in academic centres will be promoted.

EURETINA will also strive to establish clinical databases of rare retinal diseases. Such databases present an easy way to collect large scale data on a Europe-wide and beyond standardised format. The objective would be to collect a large number of cases by a EURETINA based research group in a short period of time.

Finally, the establishment of a data repository for safe (EU GDPR) and easy data sharing should be put in place, promoting standardized reporting and making metanalyses easier.

## Public Relations

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**T**he Society will expand activities in the field of public relations in order to strengthen the visibility of EURETINA. This will help to improve and strengthen the brand identity of the Society.

It is also important to target not only those in the area of ophthalmology but also the general media, in order to expand the general medical knowledge of the wider world.

If necessary, a professional PR firm will be engaged to help achieve these goals. This will provide the opportunity to delegate the generation and circulation of regular press releases by EURETINA on hot retina topics.

This will also allow the Society to establish a Press Conference at the annual EURETINA meeting; at such a press conference it would be possible to select topics and presenters based on the submitted work with high impact/relevance both in and outside the world of retina.

## Advocacy

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**E**URETINA advocacy aims to position ophthalmology in a central role for preventing blindness activities. With this in mind, it is essential that the Society increases political awareness for vision science and ophthalmology at EU level. This will clarify the importance and address the success stories of vision research and related clinical endeavours.

The Society must also foster technology transfer and innovation in vision science and ophthalmology, as well as promoting vision research and fostering collaboration with the European Vision Institute (EVI).

## International Co-operation

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The Society seeks to expand existing activities in the field of international co-operation. This will include venturing into other regions, such as South America and Africa. The Society aims to establish a committee that will oversee such issues, under leadership and supervision from Board members.

## Membership

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**E**URETINA is the leading international society for the retina subspecialty globally. Although a European Society, its geographic reach is firmly international. In terms of professional scope, its membership and followers encompass residents, fellowship participants, and junior as well as senior retina specialists across the globe.

The Society has recently undertaken a drive to increase its membership, to help to widen the reputation and profile of the Society beyond its hosting of successful international meetings. Part of its aim is to attract and engage PhD and medical students who work on doctoral theses in vision research. While members and those who attend meetings are predominantly clinicians and clinician-scientists, basic scientists are also most welcome.

In order to increase membership, the Society has identified a number of important measures for immediate implementation.

The first of these is to develop the website to make it a first choice 'go-to' source of information and education for its followers in the field of retina. Members will be alerted with proactive notifications as new content becomes available online. Some of the popular existing benefits include free access to e-Learning programs (EURETINA inSight), On Demand congress playback content, and subscription to 'Ophthalmologica', the official journal of EURETINA. Content on these platforms will be developed further, while its output will be accelerated. Meanwhile, new initiatives and resources will also be introduced including new, topical EURETINA Guidelines.

The membership process and online experience itself is also under current and critical review. The Board is focussed on ensuring a premium and rewarding experience to all EURETINA followers, in particular those who prove most loyal to the Society through subscribing as members.

## Governance

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**A** priority for the Society is to define and manage its own internal governance, including the role of the Board and its members. These roles may be enhanced and expanded upon where appropriate, to facilitate the implementation of the goals of the Roadmap in a practical and timely manner.

This governance review will be an on-going project, seeking input from professional advisers as required, including recommendations on interaction with industry.

Additionally, committees will be established to take responsibility for each of the areas of activity outlined in the Roadmap. These committees will be chaired by senior Board members appointed by the President, and they will feed back developments through reports, including 'either/or' options for board decisions. The President and the Executive Board will define each committee's remit, which will focus on the goal of progressing the tasks outlined in the Roadmap.

The structure of the Society and its legal will also reviewed as part of the governance assessment and adapted as necessary.