



Congress Interview

EMJ is delighted to introduce Branka Marinović, President of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress 2025, as she shares insights into groundbreaking developments in dermatology and her vision for the future of the EADV.



Branka Marinović

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Q1 In your welcome letter, you highlight the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV)'s significant step towards sustainability at the 2025 Congress. What specific initiatives are you most proud of, and how do you envision this focus influencing other medical associations and the wider field of dermatology?

Sustainability is a very important topic in our work, outside of the scientific part of the Congress. It was started as a project by my predecessor, the Immediate Past-President, Martin Röcken. But, of course, it wasn't just him; it was also our internal Congress organisers and our office that started thinking about sustainability, because this is a truly hot topic for everybody, as it should be.

What we are doing is being very careful when choosing venues. When we select a location, one of the key points is gaining insights into the sustainability of the venue, their way of working, and the hotels we use. We try to find those who are as sustainable as possible. Of course, it's not possible to do everything today.

We have stopped printing, we have stopped producing Congress bags, and we try to be without papers as much as possible, though it's not always entirely feasible.

We also have an agency to measure our food carbon footprint. We have the data for the Congress in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and after the current Congress, we will present those data at our board meeting in Athens, Greece, at our spring symposium. We will compare how much we've improved and what more we can do.

We also have the Climate Working Group, which issued guidance or guidelines for our members on how to improve sustainability in their offices and in their everyday work. So, we believe that we are doing some things for sustainability. Of course, you cannot change everything in one day.

The delegates' passes also include travel, which encourages people to use public transport. We try to encourage people to travel by train. Of course, I cannot travel by train from Croatia because the trains there are not the

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best; I would need a few days! But realistically, the biggest carbon footprint comes from travelling. On the other hand, during COVID-19, we thought we might move much more into the cloud and be much more online. But then we realised that we are humans, and that we like to meet each other. Maybe the high number of participants we have now is a direct result of that fundamental human need to meet with other people.

Q2 As the EADV president, what goals did you start with for the EADV's advocacy efforts, particularly considering the geopolitical and economic diversity across Europe?

When we speak about our advocacy programme, of course, we always compare ourselves with the USA, with the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD). There is a big difference, because that is one country. We involve many different countries within Europe, with truly different economic statuses, different opportunities, and different laws.

We mostly conduct our advocacy efforts in Brussels, Belgium, but we are completely aware that Brussels is the centre for only 27 countries, and there are many other European countries that are not covered. However, when we do our advocacy, we try to go with topics that can be used by our board members and representatives in their own countries, so that they can spread the message and take it to their own parliament. We don't want to just be EU-oriented.

At the moment, we are focused on banning sunbeds for those younger than 18. This still hasn't been done in many European countries, and we are seeing an increase in melanomas. Then there was a WHO resolution about the importance of skin diseases and the burden of skin diseases, so we are also working on that.

One of the actions we are still considering how to approach is the issue of disparity. Some drugs are available in some countries, and in others, they are not. We would certainly like to address

that, but I think this is above our remit, which is trying to teach people, guide them, and put together therapeutic guidelines. Of course, it's dependent on which country will accept these.

Q3 Your clinical expertise includes the difficult management of autoimmune bullous diseases during pregnancy. How does your experience with such sensitive and complex cases inform and influence your approach to leading the EADV, such as aiming to address a wide range of diseases and public health challenges?

My main expertise is in autoimmune bullous diseases, and I really love that field of dermatology. I'm also active in our task force within the EADV dealing with autoimmune bullous diseases, and we are producing a lot of guidance and guidelines for our members. These are rare diseases, but they are very severe.



Of course, my special interest cannot entirely influence the whole EADV because the EADV programme is done by the Scientific Programming Committee. They try to cover all fields of our speciality so that everybody who comes here is satisfied, and that everybody who comes here can find something for themselves.

Q4 With the Congress offering a wide range of topics, how does the EADV ensure that emerging fields, such as the latest breakthroughs in autoimmune blistering diseases, receive the attention they deserve among a broad audience?

There is a main programme that is set by the Scientific Programming Committee with core topics each year. There are a few topics that may be highlighted a bit more, but almost all main topics are covered.

Regarding what you call 'breaking news', we have a few sessions that are designated as 'late-breaking abstracts'. These are mostly abstracts submitted by researchers, not just industry,

but researchers working on new drugs, and this is truly very new information. It's usually done in our biggest halls, and they're always completely full because people are very interested in what is coming next and what is on the horizon.

Q5 The EADV Games are a new and exciting format for residents. What was the inspiration behind this initiative, and how do you believe it contributes to both education and fostering a sense of community among the next generation of dermatologists?

The primary inspiration was our young members. We've seen a huge increase in young members, residents, and dermatologists. In the last 5 years, we've actually doubled the number of EADV members, and we're now at 13,300. A lot of these are young people, and we try to engage them, not only to make them colleagues but also to introduce a little bit of competition.

The concept of the EADV Games came from seeing similar formats at some French meetings and

in other countries. Then, our Scientific Committee, along with a few colleagues, started to work on the project. The Games were such a great success last year, with people standing in the corridor trying to see what was happening since it was so much fun, that this year they had to be moved to a much bigger hall!

In the interest of keeping people engaged, we have to change. I can say that we have a really excellent programme with excellent speakers, but there is always a need for some changes to attract people.

Q6 As a leader in dermatology, what do you consider to be the most pressing global challenge, or biggest unmet need, facing the speciality at the moment?

First, as a medical dermatologist, we have a lot of pressure from cosmetic dermatology. We have many dermatologists who have moved into that field. For example, in some countries, you have a high number of dermatologists, but a small percentage who are



truly interested in pure medical dermatology. I feel that we have to keep young people connected with medical dermatology, because somebody will have to treat patients. Of course, being in corrective cosmetic dermatology brings money in faster and more easily, and I can understand that people need money. But we still need to maintain interest in medical dermatology. That is one of the goals of a congress like this: to highlight the beauty of this speciality.

The second problem concerns some diseases for which we still don't have drugs, or some diseases, like certain genetic conditions, for which we only recently got drugs. They are so expensive that they will not be available in most countries because the therapy can cost somewhere between 600,000–1,000,000 EUR per year. There are not many countries that will be able to afford that. This ties into the topic of disparities, and I think this will be the issue going forward. In some countries, there are many dermatologists but not enough medical dermatologists. In other countries, there are fewer dermatologists overall.

Of course, we also have to work on the public perception of our speciality. Dermatology is not just about putting on creams. We have seen huge advances with new drugs and discoveries that have truly changed our patients' lives. I remember when I started my residency, we had a massive number of patients with psoriasis going to phototherapy and putting on various topical treatments. Today, they have biologicals; they feel much better and have a much better quality of life. But for some diseases, there is still no therapy. So, there is a lot of work to do in the future.

Q7 Looking back at your time as EADV president so far, what is the one moment, whether it's a scientific breakthrough presented at a congress or a key policy win for patients, that you are/believe you will be most proud of?

Well, let's wait a year! But I have to say that I'm truly very happy today because we have reached more than 20,000 participants, and this is something that we were dreaming of. For example, for this year, I was almost sure that we wouldn't reach that number.

The Academy was founded 38 years ago with only 21 members, so we started with very low numbers. As I mentioned previously, we are now at 13,300 members and we're still growing, with many members from all over the world, like the USA, Canada, Mexico, South America, and Asia. We have members from about 150 countries. Of course, a majority

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of members are in Europe, but we have a lot of contacts and opportunities for networking.

This is something that makes me happy. I don't have some big plan to change something huge, but I think stability and steady growth are what usually ensure that an organisation will last a little bit longer. I don't trust big changes that happen in a short time.

