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UEG's prospects for the future Strategic plan 2023-2026

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UEG's prospects for the future

Strategic plan 2023–2026

Every 4 years, UEG develops an updated Strategic Plan for the federation that guides the association's actions in subsequent years. Based on the previous Strategic Plan,¹ we developed a draft for the Strategic Plan 2023–2026. This draft was thoroughly discussed within the UEG Executive Committee, the Council and all UEG Committees, then after revisions which took into account the comments received, was finalised by the UEG Council. The Strategic Plan describes UEG's core values and organisational vitality and identifies six strategic drivers (Figure 1). Here, we would like to briefly summarise the key points for our colleagues in the specialist and national member societies and other stakeholder organisations that are part of the myUEG Community.

A main strategic focus is UEG Week, which in 2022 again was a stunning success, with a vibrant atmosphere, allowing for education and scientific exchange at the highest quality. Clearly, UEG Week is at the heart of our activities,^{2,3} and our wide array of other offerings have also become increasingly important. After two completely virtual UEG Week meetings, this year's hybrid congress was attended by nearly 11,000 participants, 8000 of which attended in-person in Vienna, Austria, and actively engaged onsite. We plan to continue with the concept of the hybrid UEG Week and will again make the recorded sessions (600 in 2022) available to our international myUEG Community via our vast UEG Library.⁴ Preparations are already underway for next year's UEG Week meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The next strategic driver shown in Figure 1 is education. From the very beginning of UEG, this was also one of the key pillars contributing to the success of our federation.⁵ Besides face-to-face courses such as the UEG Summer School and seminars, UEG's Online Education offerings such as webinars, Online Courses and our Career Development initiative have become increasingly popular and well attended, with a marked boost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The support of research in digestive health is pivotal,^{6,7} especially since the burden of digestive diseases is projected to increase in the years to come, as outlined in the 'White Book 2', commissioned by UEG.^{8,9} Here, UEG can play out to its fullest potential. Many digestive diseases relate to life-style factors,¹⁰ with the burden spreading from obesity and related diseases such as diabetes mellitus and fatty liver, via alcohol-related diseases including chronic pancreatitis, all the way

to malignant diseases. Therefore, UEG considers prevention and screening for detection of early disease stages an important priority that will represent an even larger part of its future research engagement.¹¹ Supporting clinical studies is also considered to be of key importance for advancing medical practice.¹² In addition to offering courses and webinars on research topics, UEG plans to actively participate in EU-funded research projects by offering the dissemination part to such consortia, and eventually wishes to take a step further and lead the application process for some collaborative research projects in the future. We continue to offer support for constituting consortia that apply for European grants.

Our UEG journal¹³ is another important piece in the overall strategy to further disseminating knowledge. Since its inception in 2013, it has become a huge success and has found its place amongst the finest periodicals in the field of digestive health. Our journal is venturing in new directions, amongst which is the concept of relying in our young generation as trainee editors. UEG has additionally created workshops on how to write publications and how to best review them.¹⁴

UEG Quality of Care, while working side-by-side with UEG Education, has focused on the support for the development of guidelines¹⁵ Since the publication of the first guideline developed in association with UEG in 2017,¹⁶ a total of 14 such evidence-based guidelines have been developed. It is important to note that these are driven by the member and national societies, whilst UEG supports the process by providing methodological assistance,¹⁷ financial support and a platform for distribution, for example, with the extremely popular GI Guidelines App as the one place where digestive health guidelines can be freely accessed. We consider the GI Guidelines App an important way to facilitate the access to reliable and evidence-based information for all healthcare professionals in the digestive health space, including members of the national and subspecialty societies as well as other digestive health-related disciplines.

Our public affairs activities build upon education, quality of care and particularly research, or the lack thereof. Here, lobbying in Brussels is pivotal to raise the awareness for digestive health, by engaging with all stakeholders including patient organisations, and publishing position papers on timely issues.¹⁸ Speaking with one

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FIGURE 1 The strategic plan of UEG for the years 2023–2026.

united voice to policy makers, either in the EU or at national levels, is of utmost importance to reach the priority and importance for Digestive Health that it requires in the interest of people's well-being. These activities suffered badly during the past 2 years of the pandemic when face-to-face meetings could not be held. We shall continue forward in making digestive health heard as one singular, aligned voice across Europe.

Last, but not least, the core values of UEG reinforce the importance of Equality and Diversity amongst the members of our committees, as well as among the members of our different national societies and specialist member societies. This is very much considered in our Strategic Plan 2023–2026. A position paper outlining concrete actions on UEG's objectives of striving for equality of opportunity and inclusion is soon to be published. We are also committed to investing in the future of GI by fostering young talent, listening to their needs, and supporting their professional development. Hybrid events and connections through the myUEG Community platform and its networking feature, My Connect appear to be particularly popular amongst our younger colleagues. Keeping the future in mind, we are both aware of and committed to the journey towards further sustainability in the form of reducing our environmental footprint as an organisation and inspiring our members to do the same.

The full UEG Strategic Plan 2023–2026 can be accessed on the UEG website: ueg.eu/strategic-plan.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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