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The EBMT Education and Events Department, over the year of 2020, was completely uprooted and challenged in new ways, which has brought about never imagined forms of delivering education and scientific exchange to our members and wider community.

We now look back at the 2nd edition of the EBMT-EHA European CAR T-Cell Meeting which took place just over one year ago at the end of January 2020, in Sitges, Spain, and reflect on the fact that none of us expected it to be our last face-to-face

meeting. At that time, COVID-19 was first being identified as a mounting issue, but still seemed relatively far away from us. It was indeed not long after that when COVID-19 was officially labelled by the WHO as being a “pandemic”.

The beginning of March represented a time of continuous investigation of the news, recommendations from the health authorities and discussing the fate of our 46th Annual Meeting, which was meant to take place in Madrid, Spain from 22-25 March, 2020.

On March 4th, it was concluded that a meeting in the next few weeks would not only be irresponsible, but quite impossible – EBMT decided to postpone the Meeting until the end of August. It was hoped that the situation would deescalate and the infections would come under control over the summer months.

On April 2nd 2020, reported global COVID-19 infections reached one million. On May 6th, EBMT announced that it’s Annual Meeting would be going fully virtual for the first time, ever.

In 2020, the Education and Events Department had to organize and re-organize the Annual Meeting a total of three times. But the Annual Meeting was not the only challenge of course; there were also two mid-size events – The Midterm Focus Meeting on Non-Malignant Diseases and the International Transplant Course – to convert to the virtual format. The Midterm Focus Meeting was in fact our first virtual event, taking place in July 2020, in which there were many learnings to be taken away and applied in the near future.

Additional to the Annual Meeting and mid-size events, were all of the already planned Working Party Educational Meetings. Some meetings were postponed to 2021, while the majority decided to also transition to the virtual format. Despite the ongoing pandemic, the objective of EBMT with regards to education remained unchanged – to share leading cutting-edge science and to provide the highest quality of education in the field of stem cell transplantation and cellular therapy.

Another important development in EBMT Education in 2020 was the launch of the e-learning platform. The e-learning unit at EBMT was in its early days at the beginning of the year, with some activities started and an e-learning taskforce laying out the strategy for the advancement of online education. The pandemic proved to swiftly propel the activities of the e-learning unit, with plentiful COVID-19 webinars in the Spring, followed by an increased demand for all types of online learning. Now the e-

learning department has a multitude of resources which are available for free to all EBMT Members, such as webinars, e-courses, forums, exams and more.

Over the past year EBMT has adroitly adapted to the changing global demands and circumstances produced by an unexpected pandemic, while still building on the robust foundation of one of our Society’s main pillars – Education.