

**14th Adriatic Congress of Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research with the focus on CEE Countries:
UNLOCKING ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH VALUE-DRIVEN INVESTMENT IN HEALTHCARE INNOVATION IN CEE**

THURSDAY (23 April 2026)

**Congress Educational Workshop organized by Syreon Research Institute and European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA):
STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF PATIENTS IN CEE COUNTRIES**

09:00 - 12:00 (Conference room Verige)

Faculty: Zoltan Kalo, Oana Scarlatescu, Matteo Scarabelli, Réka Pozsár

Current value frameworks in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries have limited focus on patient centric value elements and patient representatives are rarely engaged in HTA processes. Significant changes are expected in the implementation of HTA in CEE countries in the forthcoming years. This session provides an overview on why HTA processes matter to patient communities in CEE countries, which have more limited patient access to new health technologies compared to Western European countries. It highlights current barriers, expected challenges, and opportunities for considering patient centric value elements and improved patient involvement in HTA in the CEE region. The voice of CEE patients in the HTA process should be strengthened.

12:00 Lunch for Pre-congress Workshop participants

CONGRESS OPENING CEREMONY

(Conference room Kastrum)

13:00 Welcome address by **Zoltan Kalo**, Congress Partner
Welcome address by **Matteo Scarabelli**, on behalf of EFPIA
Welcome address by **Maciej Niewada**, on behalf of ISPOR Chapter CEE
Welcome address by **Giuseppe Maduri**, on behalf of EFPIA CEE TF
Welcome address and Congress opening by **Dinko Vitezic**, Congress Chair

Healthcare investments and outcomes in Central and Eastern Europe

Chairmen: Herbert Altmann, Dinko Vitezic

13:30 **Malina Müller, Germany:** Healthy returns: A Catalyst for Economic Growth and Resilience
13:50 **Arkadi Sharkov, Bulgaria:** Crossfire Economics: Healthcare Innovation Investment in Central and Eastern Europe
14:10 **Sime Smolic, Croatia:** The value of innovations in relation to outcomes, the real impact of political decisions
14:30 **Slaveyko Djambazov, Bulgaria:** From Spending to Impact: Rethinking Healthcare Investments in CEE
14:50 **Luka Voncina, Croatia:** Healthcare investment and outcomes in Central and Eastern Europe - country case studies

Panel discussion:

Healthcare investments and outcomes in Central and Eastern Europe

15:10 **Moderator:** Herbert Altmann (Germany)
Participants: Arkadi Sharkov (Bulgaria), Davor Katavic (Croatia), Giuseppe Maduri (Italy), Luka Voncina (Croatia), Maciej Niewada (Poland), Malina Müller (Germany), Sime Smolic (Croatia), Slaveyko Djambazov (Bulgaria)
15:55 Roundtable conclusion

16:00 Coffee & Connect

Critical Reflections and Lessons Learned from the Implementation of the European Union Health Technology Assessment (EU HTA) Regulation

Chairmen: Zoltan Kalo, Guenka Petrova

16:30 **Roisin Adams Ireland:** Reflections and key learning during 15 months of EU HTAR implementation
16:50 **Matteo Scarabelli, Belgium:** Update on companies' experience with the JCA.
17:10 **Katarina Beravs Bervar, Slovenia:** Slovenia's Experience in Joint Clinical Assessments (JCA) and the Broader Implementation of the HTA Regulation (HTAR)
17:30 **Maciej Niewada, Poland:** HTA Evolution in Poland: Achievements, Challenges and the Future (personal insights of an eyewitness)
17:50 **Viktorija Erdeljic Turk, Croatia:** Readiness of the Croatian Healthcare System to Integrate Joint Clinical Assessments into Reimbursement Decision-Making for New Medicines

Panel discussion:

Critical Reflections and Lessons Learned from the Implementation of the European Union Health Technology Assessment (EU HTA) Regulation

18:10 **Moderator:** Zoltan Kalo (Hungary)
Participants: Bertalan Nemeth (Hungary), Guenka Petrova (Bulgaria), Herbert Altmann (Germany), Katarina Beravs Bervar (Slovenia), Maciej Niewada (Poland), Matteo Scarabelli (Belgium), Viktorija Erdeljic Turk (Croatia)
18:55 Roundtable conclusion

19:00 Welcome & Networking Reception (Lobby)

FRIDAY (24 April 2026)

(Conference room Kastrum)

From Evidence to Access: Policy, Value, and Decision-Making in Health Technologies

Chairmen: Jelena Matuzovic, Goran Bencina

08:30 **Bertalan Jászcuti, Hungary:** Strategic decision frameworks and funding strategies of investigational health technologies in the early development phase
08:45 **Zoltán Kaló, Hungary:** Principles of selecting cost-effectiveness thresholds in price-taker countries
09:00 **Guenka Petrova, Bulgaria:** Shared decision-making including the cost of therapy: lessons learned from Central and Eastern and Western European countries
09:15 **Natalija Kronic, Croatia:** Access to innovative medicines as a prerequisite for achieving better treatment outcomes from Croatian Health Insurance Fund perspective
09:30 **Dalma Hosszú, Zoltán Kaló, Hungary:** Policy recommendations to facilitate drug repurposing in the European Union
09:45 **Bertalan Németh, Hungary:** Barriers and facilitators of utilising real-world evidence to support policy decisions in Central and Eastern Europe

10:00 Coffee & Connect

Health-Economic Evaluations and Outcomes Research in Rare Diseases: Access, Equity, and Value

Chairmen: Dinko Vitezic, Jurij Furst

10:20 **Patrick Jordan, Greece:** Orphan Drugs in the Global Spotlight: Trends, Trade-offs, and Tough Choices
10:40 **Sandra Rose, Austria:** Driving Equity in Rare Disease Treatment: Insights from Central & Eastern Europe
11:00 **Rok Hren, Slovenia:** Optimizing Patient Access to Orphan Medicinal Products: Lessons from Central and Eastern Europe
11:20 **Srecko Marusic, Croatia:** The Economic Burden and Value of Optimized Care in Rare Bone Diseases: Insights from Adult X-Linked Hypophosphatemia (XLH).
11:40 **Robert Babela, Slovakia:** Cardiovascular hospitalisation costs and cost-effectiveness of Transthyretin Stabilizers in the Slovak healthcare system: a Markov model analysis.

Panel discussion:

Health-Economic Evaluations and Outcomes Research in Rare Diseases: Access, Equity, and Value

12:00 Moderator: [Patrick Jordan](#) (Greece)

Participants: [Dinko Vitezic](#) (Croatia), [Jurij Furst](#) (Slovenia), [Robert Babela](#) (Slovakia), [Rok Hren](#) (Slovenia), [Sandra Rose](#) (Austria), [Srecko Marusic](#) (Croatia), [Tea Strbad](#) (Croatia), [Zoran Sterjev](#) (North Macedonia)

12:25 Roundtable Conclusion

12:30 Lunch break

From Burden to Breakthroughs: Optimizing Cancer Care Through Policy and Personalized Therapies

Chairmen: [Viktorija Erdeljic Turk](#), [Svetoslav Tsenov](#)

13:15 [Thomas Hofmarcher](#), Sweden: Beating Cancer Inequalities in Croatia: Are we investing enough in cancer care – and does it pay off?

13:35 [Goran Bencina](#), Croatia: Premature mortality and economic impact of lung and pancreatic cancer in Central and Eastern Europe, 2010 - 2021

13:55 [Robert Babela](#), Slovakia: Multiple myeloma as a cross-sectoral fiscal burden in Slovakia: a whole-of-government analysis from 2009 to 2030

14:15 [Drazen Huic](#), Croatia: Radioligand therapy - a new chapter in personalized cancer care

14:35 [Réka Pozsár](#), Hungary: Policy approach to optimize multiple myeloma treatment sequencing practices

14:55 [Dinko Vitezic](#), Croatia: From single agents to regimens: redefining patient access in the era of combination therapies

Panel discussion:

From Burden to Breakthroughs: Optimizing Cancer Care Through Policy and Personalized Therapies

15:15 Moderator: [Svetoslav Tsenov](#) (Bulgaria)

Participants: [Dinko Vitezic](#), (Croatia), [Drazen Huic](#) (Croatia), [Goran Bencina](#) (Croatia), [Malina Müller](#) (Germany), [Réka Pozsár](#) (Hungary), [Robert Babela](#) (Slovakia), [Thomas Hofmarcher](#) (Sweden), [Viktorija Erdeljic Turk](#) (Croatia)

15:55 Roundtable Conclusion

16:00 Coffee & Connect

Economic and Societal Impact of Vision and Neurological Diseases

Chairmen: [Slaveyko Djambazov](#), [Romana Rupcic](#)

16:15 [Mojca Urbančič](#), Slovenia: Diabetic retinopathy screening and treatment in Slovenia

16:35 [Ivica Belina](#), Croatia: Transforming care in AMD and DR: a call-to-action to preserve vision. White paper of patient organizations from CEE Countries

16:55 [Guenka Petrova](#), Bulgaria: The Economic Burden of AMD and DME: Insights from Cost-of-Illness Studies

17:15 [Joze Sambt](#), [Gregor Brecl Jakob](#), Slovenia: Lifetime economic and societal impact of multiple sclerosis treatment

17:35 [Aleksandra Kapedanovska Nestorovska](#), North Macedonia: Implementation of pharmacoeconomic in healthcare - North Macedonian case study cost-effectiveness and reimbursement assessment of siponi

Panel discussion:

Economic and Societal Impact of Vision and Neurological Diseases

17:50 Moderator: [Slaveyko Djambazov](#) (Bulgaria)

Participants: [Aleksandra Kapedanovska Nestorovska](#) (North Macedonia), [Bertalan Németh](#) (Hungary), [Guenka Petrova](#) (Bulgaria), [Igor Rubinic](#) (Croatia), [Ivica Belina](#) (Croatia), [Joze Sambt](#) (Slovenia), [Mojca Urbančič](#) (Slovenia)

18:20 Roundtable Conclusion

SHORT PODIUM PRESENTATIONS

Selected topics in the field of health economics and outcomes research

Chairmen: [Suzana Mimica](#), [Sandra Knezevic](#)

18:30 [Kornélia Lovas](#), Hungary: Cost-effectiveness of radiofrequency renal denervation for resistant hypertension in Hungary

18:35 [Marta Kucan](#), Croatia: 25 years of statin use in Croatia: have we reduced cardiovascular mortality?

18:40 [Slaveyko Djambazov](#), Bulgaria: Societal and economic burden of migraine in Bulgaria

18:45 [Darja Krzhovska](#), North Macedonia: Perspectives on value based healthcare implementation in North Macedonia

18:50 [Eugenija Mihajoska](#), North Macedonia: Health system challenges in North Macedonia: fragmented data systems, cancer screening gaps, and demographic ageing implications for value-based healthcare

18:55 [Iva Mikulic](#), Croatia: Assessing the Cost-Effectiveness of Universal HPV Vaccination in Croatia

20:00 Congress networking dinner for all registered Congress participants (hotel restaurant, ground floor)

SATURDAY (25 April 2026)

(Conference room Kastrum)

Educational Workshop organized by ICHOM, The Swedish Institute of Health Economics and the HTA Ltd.:

FROM OUTCOMES TO INVESTMENT: HOW ICHOM SETS STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC EVALUATION AND SOCIAL VALUE ASSESSMENT

Faculty: [Slaveyko Djambazov](#), [Spencer Connell](#), [Urska Kosir](#)

08:30 - 10:15

Workshop overview:

As patient-centered health systems increasingly become the norm, health technology assessment (HTA), regulatory decision-making, and investment strategies are evolving in parallel. Recent policy developments, including the European Medicines Agency's 2025 position emphasizing the expanded role of patient-reported outcomes (PROs), highlight the growing expectation that outcomes meaningful to patients must be systematically integrated beyond clinical care and into value assessment, reimbursement, and innovation incentives. This shift sits at the core of Value-Based Healthcare (VBHC).

This interactive, hands-on workshop explores how ICHOM Standard Sets, grounded in robust clinical and outcomes theory, can be translated from concept to real-world implementation, and ultimately used to strengthen economic evaluation, social value assessment, and investment decision-making.

10:15 Coffee & Connect

Pharmacoeconomics of Obesity: Burden, Costs, and Value-Based Treatment Choices

Chairmen: [Natalija Krunić](#), [Bertalan Németh](#)

10:30 [Dinko Vitezic](#), Croatia: The Cost of Weight: A Pharmacoeconomic Perspective of Obesity Management

10:50 [Slaveyko Djambazov](#), Bulgaria: Obesity in Bulgaria: Health Burden, Economic Impact, and the Need for Integrated Care

11:10 [Andrej Belancic](#), Croatia: Cost-effectiveness of pharmacotherapy for weight management: comparative evidence and future directions

11:25 [Said Wani](#), Oman: Cost-effectiveness of metabolic bariatric surgeries, incretin-based therapies, and lifestyle modifications for obesity in Oman

11:40 [Spencer Connell](#), USA: Standardizing Outcomes in Obesity to Drive Prevention, Value, and Long-Term System Sustainability

Panel discussion:

12:00 **Pharmacoeconomics of Obesity: Burden, Costs, and Value-Based Treatment Choices**

Moderator: [Bertalan Németh](#) (Hungary)

Participants: [Dinko Vitezic](#) (Croatia), [Ivica Belina](#) (Croatia), [Jelena Matuzovic](#) (Croatia), [Jurij Furst](#) (Slovenia), [Said Wani](#) (Oman), [Slaveyko Djambazov](#) (Bulgaria), [Spencer Connell](#) (USA),

12:25 Roundtable Conclusion

SHORT PODIUM PRESENTATIONS

Selected topics in the field of health economics and outcomes research

Chairmen: Aleksandar Knezevic, Iva Mikulic

- 12:30 [Slaveyko Djambazov, Bulgaria](#): Melanoma Patient Health Literacy, Perceived Care Quality, and Access to Psychosocial Support: A Cross-Sectional Survey from a Bulgarian Patient Community
- 12:35 [Slaveyko Djambazov, Bulgaria](#): Assessment of Health-Related Quality of Life in Patients with Melanoma Using the EQ-5D-5L: A Pilot Observational Study
- 12:40 [Igor Rubinic, Croatia](#): Alternative Pembrolizumab Dosing in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer: A Pharmacoeconomic Analysis
- 12:45 [Ivana Stevic, Serbia](#): Economic Evaluation of the Treatment of Non-Chemotherapy Drug-Induced Cytopenias
- 12:50 [Sandra Knezevic, Croatia](#): Economic burden and clinical value of bermegane geperpavec in dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa: implications for health systems
- 12:55 [Dominik Strikic, Croatia](#): Drug Exists — But Can the Patient Get It? Knowledge of Pharmacoeconomics and Drug Regulation Among Young Physicians in Croatia
- 13:00 [Karolina Majstorović Barać, Croatia](#): Folic acid supplementation as a low-cost adjunctive intervention for negative symptoms in Schizophrenia: a pharmacoeconomic perspective for Central and Eastern Euro
- 13:05 [Marija Kurtov, Croatia](#): From Brain Energy to Budget Savings: Evaluating the Societal Returns of Creatine Supplementation for Depression in Women
- 13:10 [Maja Ilijanić Samoščanec, Croatia](#): Online queries on medication safety during breastfeeding as an indicator of informational uncertainty costs

Congress Closing and Farewell

(Conference room Kastrum)

- 13:15 Closing remarks by [Slaveyko Djambazov](#), Congress Partner
Closing remarks and invitation to the next year congress by [Dinko Vitezic](#), Congress Chair

13:30 Farewell snack

Collaborative Associations' Meeting

- 14:30 Feedback from the 14th Adriatic Congress on Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research
- 15:30 Proposal for venue, topics and committees for the 15th Adriatic Congress on Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research
- 16:15 Collaborative regional research opportunities