



President Report

Portoroz, 29 October 1999

In the months elapsed since June all our efforts were dedicated to the organisation of UEMO, to planning future activities and establishing relationship with the Scientific Association of General Practitioners in Europe.

At the end of Lisbon meeting in June several points stood high in the priorities of UEMO Agenda:

1. **Reform of the Statutes**
2. **The related item of settling the dispute over accounts of the past Portuguese Presidency expired April 1999**
3. **The UEMO proposed Secretariat in Brussels and the lobbying process that ensues**
4. **The reform of the functioning of UEMO with respect to Secretariat , the establishing of a European Info Centre , the Working Groups activity (with an emphases on specialisation and competence of Participants)**
5. **Revision of the information policy of UEMO with special regard to publications (including Reference Book)**
6. **A new distribution Key which enables equity in the distribution of economical burden.**
7. **A collaboration with the Scientific bodies of General Practice in Europe**
8. **The controversy over Vocational Training- Diploma / Academic - Specialisation in GP. This implies duration of VT also - Specific training or specialist training**

Point 1

Reform of the Statutes

In Lisbon we appointed three delegations to study a systematic revision of the Statutes. The work has been done and the results are very interesting. Other delegations have given their support and advice.

Three different solutions can be foreseen:

?? **Adjourning the statutes with modifications inside the traditional framework**

These have been proposed by the Special Commission which communicated its Proposals.

?? **A thorough revision of statutes on a sound juridical and legal bases**, identifying the legal Status of UEMO, registering UEMO as a legally recognised Association.

?? **New Statutes**, which enable UEMO to stand as an independent Association, whose members are the national Delegations, with a legally elected President who bears the legal responsibility for the Association, separately from the original Delegation.

In the uncertainty of the dispute the Presidency felt that a legal advice was needed and Professional experts were appointed. They are performing thorough analyses of the standing statutes. Although the analysis is not yet completely performed some observations were made:

?? It is an opinion that Uemo is not clearly and legally established along the European jurisdiction and fails to meet some clear requisites under many national rulings, juridical requirements and tribute obligations. Each Presidency has to adhere to National rules.

?? It is non-clearly stated the responsibility of the President, which under all circumstances should be and is required to be the legal representative of the Association even in front of a Court of Justice.

?? These legal attributions are apparently under the jurisdiction of national Delegation in opposition to the jurisprudence which clearly defines the General Assembly as composed by the Legal representative of National Delegations, who, as it stands are not identified as representative to the Plenum (all Delegates participate to the Plenum)

?? Under these circumstances it is not clearly stated that the President is the Legal representative of UEMO; he is subordinated to the National Delegations decisions. The Secretariat, also, is not under the jurisdiction of the Association UEMO; it is delegated to the National Member Delegation. The President is a Chairman.

?? Uemo is not an independent Association .

?? Even if major changes are proposed, these will not allow a solution of the problems encountered, and conflicts will ensue, due to the low definition of juridical rules .

The President proposes that a free discussion is developed in Portoroz, but that independent experts give their advice , which will be submitted to the National Delegations' jurists. A final decision should be taken in the year 2000 in Florence based on an official expertise.

Point 2

Recent events regarding the election of a new Presidency

The recent events regarding the election of a new Presidency and the subsequent controversy with the Portuguese delegation reflects the uncertainty deriving from the statutes with regards to two main issues:

The economical responsibility for the incoming Presidency , which has no clear status under the current statutes . President elect has no budget and nobody knows who holds the responsibility for the expenses he incurs .

They are not to be imputed to the Presidency accounts , until he enters full powers (he is not legally representing UEMO) and cannot be attributed to the standing Presidency because the standing President cannot be responsible for expenses incurred in by a different national delegation.

The President elect is subject to changes in the political equilibrium of the National Delegation. Under these circumstances a President can be changed at any moment if a change occurs in the National Delegation.

Such a contradiction has to be resolved . The President of the UEMO , once in charge , should be fully empowered responding to the General Assembly who elected him and not his National Delegation only.

We have to choose those solutions that assure that he cannot be refused or dismissed by his national delegation , because , once he is elected , he represents UEMO: and not the President's member country.

If we do not solve this contradiction , no true solutions are found.

Given the difficulty in solving the problems in the statutes , we tried to settle the economical controversy dispute with the Portuguese delegation , closing all the open accounts for 1999 , along with the mandate received by the Plenum in Lisbon and proposing to pay some expenses claimed for the President Elect. We proposed a negotiation , and we hope that a solution shortly ensues on pure economical bases. No legal settlement of the dispute is possible since no expenses can be claimed for a President elect under the current statutes

Point 3

The UEMO proposed a Secretariat in Brussels and the lobbying process that ensues

We are in favour of the proposal for several reasons that have already presented mainly by the Dutch Delegation.

Anyway, apart from the economical problems , which can be faced by increasing the UEMO contribution of one half (94 thousands euros) , many problems arise.

It must be clearly defined that the complexity in the managing of UEMO is increasing . The basic budget is a good financial base for the organisation , but expenses will be steadily increasing. We are endorsing the Vice President Expenses , which means that unless we find external support , the burden for a Brussels Secretariat, even on the basis of time and space sharing has to be born by the delegation.

Moreover it is still to be defined who holds the political responsibility for the political activities which should be done in Brussels . It is the Presidency responsibility or do we think of a Professional Secretary , Brussels based , who can lobby continuously the EU Commission and DG.

If the choice is to have a non political Presidency , and a managing Secretary General all the structure of UEMO has to be changed .

In the events that the President still holds its full political role , then one quarter of its professional life must be spent working for UEMO .

Changing the role implies changes in the structure and the very nature of UEMO ?

Point 4 - Point 5

The reform of the functioning of UEMO with respect to Secretariat, the establishing of a European Info Centre, the Working Groups activity (with an emphases on specialisation and competence of Participants)

Revision of the information policy of UEMO with special regard to publications (including Reference Book)

In the Lisbon Report, the Presidency stated that he felt uncomfortable about the very poor outcomes of UEMO intrinsic structure and working groups.

This is partly due to a weak organization model and partly to the discontinuous activity of UEMO .

Continuity in the activity of Working Groups is urgent and their work needs deep and urgent reforms . Teleconferencing and electronic mail may be of great help . Documents have to be produced as drafts before the meetings , in separate meeting (virtual and real ones), and presented to the Plenum for discussion. We envisage a two days Plenum , partly devoted to the political matters that should be dealt by the Heads of Delegations and partly dedicated to the in depth discussion and approval of Documents , Proposals and Projects.

Projects are one of our Goals in the future . Projects relative to Education , Research , Telecommunication , Information and technology. We must be lobbying the EC in order to be recognized and appointed as those capable to realize and coordinate International European Activities.

Moreover in each member country either specialised or non-specialised (non-medical) media are interested in the European countries Health Systems and medical realities.

Although it is composed by the leading Medical Associations in Europe , UEMO is unable to stand as the Information Centre for those willing to acquire knowledge of the many complex processes in the various member countries.

National reports are very synthetic and often fail to express the innovations ongoing in general practice in the National Health Systems.

In order to establish herself as the leading political Association in European General Practice, UEMO has to realise a real Information Centre, where specialised information regarding General Practice in Europe can be found.

The Reference Book is an extraordinary information Resource. But in a recent meeting with Kensington was criticised because of very scarce diffusion (less than half of the copies are really distributed all over Europe). It was suggested that at least 100 thousand copies be printed and diffuse in the member countries to at least one fourth of all European General Practitioners in Europe.

The paper information, though, is very slowly produced and disseminated, whilst major changes rapidly occurs.

An integrated information system (electronic and paper) has been envisaged, and UEMO has been requested to ask the individual Member Organisation to give their members' file in order to diffuse information on true European basis.

The possibility that a Newsletter is printed and diffused has been also questioned, and the sponsor's interest seems to increase as the number of contacted doctors increases.

An Agency has probably to be appointed for this purpose. As the external visibility of UEMO increases, its power as a comprehensive political institution rises also.

A Press Agent has been already appointed. We will have a chance to meet him next time, defining a joint information strategy for the Press in our country. He will be active contacting all the Heads of the delegation for a continuous flow of informations.

In order to increase professionalism the National Delegation to Uemo should be composed by specialised people devoting a reasonable part of their time to the activities of UEMO , including permanent Working Group Activities.

Relevant issues, including Research Policies in General Practice and Drug Registration, Research and Prescription Policies in Europe, must be included in the current activities of UEMO, alongside with the traditional interest in VT and CME.

The traditional WG must be transformed into Steering Committees and Groups of expert, with National Delegations contributing with their most renowned and competent members.

Point 6

Resource rising and appropriate allocation

A new distribution Key which enables equity in the distribution of economical burden.

We asked the Plenum to approve the new balance sheet **that implied a considerable increase in contribution**. If these resources are barely finalized to maintain an unproductive Association, we are not properly using our members' money.

It may well be worthy spending a **little more to increase the political productivity of UEMO** than saving a little money without any definite results. We have a chance to exploiting the hidden economical and professional resources that lay hidden in the EU, and by using all the opportunities that can be available to a large and strong organization of General Practitioners in Europe.

The organization of "General Practice Two Thousand " the UEMO European Conference next year in Florence aroused an extraordinary interest in the political and industrial environment. Resource are already being gathered for what can be seen as the first political consensus on the comprehensive problems of General Practice in Europe

Still the problem of national contribution is a high priority in our agenda, with all member countries complaining for the steady and continuous rise in cost and accounts.

The treasurer was appointed to deal with an apparently unresolvable dilemma. In what seems to be an antinomic problem we identified several problems:

Lack of information on the capacity to pay

Lack of information on several basic Items:

?? N. of doctors in the country

?? N. of doctors in the National Delegation to UEMO

?? Doctor salaries

?? Doctor contribution to the National Member association,etc.

?? Actual capacity to pay

From the point of view of the contribution, the structure of Uemo appears to be regressive i.e.. The countries with more doctors pay a smaller per capita contribution.

From the point of view of the utilisation of services, on the contrary it stands as a progressive model, i.e. those paying less are using the same resource as those paying more.

We asked the delegations to send detailed but simple basic data.

At the end of the analysis it may well turn out that very little must be changed in the contribution key, with those countries with many doctors contributing more in order to allow the smaller countries to participate to the European Environment.

This complies with the equity and solidarity principle of a strong European Organisation

Point 7

A collaboration with the scientific bodies of General Practice in Europe

Since the very foundation of UEMO we have been leading the process of defining the basic issues of the Profession in Europe. That means having a high political profile and this is our pride.

In the last fifteen years, European Scientific Bodies were also created, in order to define the technical and professional content of the profession of General Practice.

Time has come to let these two resources meet and define a sound collaboration programme. No one shall ever renounce to its role, as this process shall not imply competition or conflict.

Collaborating can be simple but difficult though, as it seems that political and scientific bodies often conflict in Member Countries.

We started a confrontation with Wonca Esqp and the European networks (Equip , Euract, and ERWGP) which was extremely fruitful . It is up to the Plenum to back up this decision. The Joint Spring Conference in problem will offer a chance to clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and differences. Most of all we must stress the points of interest, in an attempt to lobby the Health and Political authority in Europe with common aims and common projects.

Point 8

Vocational Training- Diploma / Academic - Specialisation in GP

When the Vocational Training Directive was approved and issued, all member countries agreed that General Practice should be considered a specific profession in the Health Care Systems, based on a medical discipline, inside the National Health Systems.

A specialisation in General Practice although present in some countries did not affect this point of view. Along with the Directive, Vocational Training started in all European countries with Diplomas issued by the Health Authority.

In the meantime Departments of General Practice were increasing in number all over Europe and Academical General Practice is now well established in most countries .

In some countries a specialisation in General Practice /General Medicine is present and somewhere the distance between General Medicine and Internal Medicine is very slight. In some countries it is possible to practice using either the GP Diploma or the Specialist Title issued by the University.

In several occasions the problem of transforming the Vocational Training Diploma into a Specialisation has been discussed. During the Consensus on Vocational Training in Copenhagen, for example there was such a debate, ma it was agreed not to propose GP as a specialist profession.

To be a specialist and to practice as a GP seems in some way an open contradiction, being Gpractice specific in the terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, but not specialistic in the meaning that is being given to the term " To specialise " : that is to study and to practice a special part of medicine with the exclusion of others.

Some delegates seem to be willing to ask for vocational training to be transformed into a specialisation or to accept both.

It is our opinion that the true problems of VT are:

- ?? Duration: derives from what are considered to be the professional requirements to be met and learnt. Derives also from the content of VT
- ?? Place of teaching: in some countries only one fourth of all the teaching is done in a GP office. The length of the training should be at least one half of all the period.
- ?? Responsibility: it should be the responsibility of the GP Trainer to be in charge for all the VT period. Even during Hospital training he should be the unique co-ordinator of the process.
- ?? Specialisation in GP can be discussed in the sense of accepting both solutions if necessary. That implies a long process that cannot be solved on pure European basis but after a consultation with all the member countries . In particular might be opposing this request those countries who have not established University Department of General Practice.

In this very moment anyway the problem of the revised Directive is in the Agenda of the European Parliament. In the next week the Presidency and those Delegations who already offered their collaboration will be busy lobbying the EU on the basis of a UEMO Policy Document on VT.

CME, research policies in General practice and all those matters relevant to General Practice, will also be our discussion issues with the EC and the DGs involved.

This is our immediate task for the future

Claudio Cricelli
President of UEMO