



EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

Alment Praktiserende Lægers Europæiske Organisation – UEMO
European Union of General Practitioners – UEMO
Europäische Vereinigung der Allgemeinärzte – UEMO
Union Européenne des Médecins Omnipraticiens – UEMO
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UEMO 2000/097

Florence 15 May 2000

Mr. Enrique BARÓN CRESPO
President of the Party of European Socialists

Rue Wiertz
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Brussels

Sir ,

I am writing you as the President of the European Union of General Practitioners (UEMO) representing the National Association of General Practitioners in Europe.

One of the main goals of UEMO is giving support to the training of General Practitioners in Europe.

The qualification of general medical practitioners is a primary goal for all Member Countries and the EU .

In this respect the approval of Directive 93/16 represents a milestone , inasmuch it gave all European GPs a common European System of Vocational Training .

Directive 93/16 was the confirmation that it is the interest of all Member Countries , of European Citizens that European General Practitioners share a common curriculum , defining the duration of Vocational Training and the basic rules of the qualification of General Medical Practitioners.

It is the UEMO position that the quality of care delivered to the European Citizens can only be granted if all European General Medical Practitioners share common qualification procedures .

UEMO – PRESIDENCY

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Since the approval of the Directive 93/16 there have been many changes in the process of qualification of Doctors . In particular it has been increasingly clear that the minimum duration period for Vocational Training does not any longer meet the criteria for a satisfactory qualification of GP . The great majority of the European Member Countries in fact provided an extension “ De Facto “ of the minimum period of vocational training to three years .

We are well aware that this extension is now strongly needed by all the European Countries. A better qualification of doctors is expected in order to achieve better patients' care in Europe .

Moreover the gap between those countries applying for the minimum duration period (2 years) and those introducing a longer duration (3 years and more) is increasing .

Within a very short period we envisage that **substantial differences in the qualification of doctor in different countries may ensue** , thus reintroducing differences in the quality of care in different member countries , and also “de facto” nullifying the primary goal of Directive 93/16 .

We are now asking all European Representatives ,including the EU Commission , European National Ministers of Health , and in particular European Parliamentaries and Medical Associations , to strongly support our action in favour of strenghtening the rules on the training of General medical Practitioners in Europe .

In fact the Legal Affairs and Internal Market Committee is expected to consider in second reading SLIM Directive on mutual recognition of professional qualifications in May and June.

The SLIM DirectiveCOD97345 attempts to simplify and to update the sectoral Directives dealing with mutual recognition of the qualifications of Doctors , nurse , dentists ,midwives , pharmacists and architects.

When Parliament considered this Directive at First Reading, in July 1998, it adopted six amendments (Amendments 15,16, 17, 19, 20 and 21 in A4-0232/98) on general practice medicine. The European Union of General Practitioners (UEMO), the EU level body representing general medical practitioners (GPs), would like Parliament to re-table these amendments at Second Reading.

All of the above amendments are important but we regard amendment 17 , extending the minimum length of training for doctors wishing to qualify as GPs to three years¹, as being of particular importance. It is a long standing policy of the UEMO that the minimum length of

¹ The current minimum length of training as laid down in Article 31 of Directive 93/16/EEC is two years.

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GP training should be increased to three years to reflect the demanding nature of general medical practice and the high standards of competence expected by patients. This view has been endorsed by the Commission's own Advisory Committee on Medical Training and indeed in many EU Member States, including the UK, the training course to qualify as a GP has already been set as three years. It was therefore a profound disappointment to us that the Council of Ministers refused to accept Parliament's Amendment 17 and adopt three years as the EU wide norm.

The UEMO does not accept the Council of Ministers' reason for rejecting Parliament's amendments: namely, that discussion of minimum requirements for general practice training should be deferred until after publication of the Commission's report on the General System for Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Directive. There is already a clear consensus in the medical profession that the requirements relating to GP training should be strengthened now. Creating a linkage with the review of the General System Directive will set back any change for several years.

We urge You to seriously consider this problem and support the UEMO Position in the Committee for Legal Affairs and in the EU Parliament to use the opportunity presented by the SLIM Directive to address these issues now.

We would very much appreciate if you could promote the diffusion of this Letter to all the Members of your Group.

UEMO representatives have already contacted Parliament's *rapporteur*, Mr. Rainer Wieland on this Matter .

We ask You , in your quality of President of the Group of European Socialist in the European Parliament, to urgently discuss this matters with UEMO . In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact our Deputy Secretary , Miss Giovanna Lucherini at the Florence offices of UEMO office (tel:+ 39 055 284030) for further information about our position.

Yours sincerely,

Claudio Cricelli
President UEMO

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