

UEMO 2000/173

Draft

UEMO Presence in Brussels

Proposal from the President

For some time UEMO has been actively considering the question of a formal presence in Brussels. Discussions have focused on the purpose of such a presence, the form it might take and its cost. It is not possible easily to resolve all such questions but the Presidency has identified a way of making progress on this issue, leaving matters which require more detailed consideration and information on costing, until a later date. Papers from the Dutch and UK delegations (UEMO 2000/59 and 2000/104) outlined the options and gave an indication as to possible costs.

There are two priority areas:

1. The question of a physical presence in Brussels, be it through a dedicated UEMO office or a joint presence with other organisations. A recent approach has suggested that a Domus Medica in partnership with the CP and its other associated organisations could be one such possibility.

This development would require an increase in baseline funding for all national medical organisations and there is as yet insufficient information on which to estimate such a funding requirement. The Presidency requires no decision on this at the present time other than a mandate to continue discussions with the other organisations and to return to the issue at a future UEMO Plenum with a report on feasibility and progress.

2. The urgent need for a lobbying presence in Brussels to maintain contact with the European governmental and medical organisations, to further the interest of general practice in Europe and to feedback to national member organisations information and guidance regarding their own activities.

It is to this urgent priority that this proposal is addressed.

A lobbying presence in Brussels

The value of a lobbying presence in Brussels has been demonstrated by the impact on the recent vote in the European parliament on the duration of training. The support of a number of national organisations, and their own Brussels personnel, has been invaluable in this but cannot continue indefinitely on the current informal basis. It has shown the need for UEMO to have its own dedicated lobbyist

The LVH (Dutch Association of GPs) has retained the services of M. Rob Vierhout, a Brussels based lobbyist, for this purpose to good effect.

Financial considerations

Whilst this year's budget is already fully allocated, UEMO is about to receive significant funding from Kensington Publications in return for sponsorship in the UEMO Reference Book. This should be recurring funding, for as long as publication of the Reference Book continues on the current basis. There are a number of areas of activity which this funding might support, but primarily it certainly provides an opportunity of developing work in Brussels and enhancing the effectiveness, profile and standing of UEMO as the medico-political body representing all GPs in Europe, without increasing the contributions of individual member organisations.

Proposal:

The President proposes, in view of the urgent need for a presence in Brussels and subject to the availability of finance from Kensington Publications, that:

1. UEMO enters, as soon as possible, into a short-term contract, or a series of short term contracts, with M. Vierhout for the continuation of his lobbying work on behalf of UEMO
2. When it is possible for long term funds to be committed a proposal should be considered on appointing a lobbyist on the basis of advertisement and open competition for the best candidate
3. Discussions continue with all other interested parties on the whole question of a physical presence for UEMO in Brussels

Dr. Claudio Cricelli/UEMO President
Zurich 13th October 2000