



EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

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UEMO 2001/107

Minutes of the UEMO Working Group on General Medical Services Crowne Plaza, Malta 15th June 2001

Chair: Dr Christina Fabian, Sweden
Rapporteur : Dr Isabel Caixeiro, Portugal

Present: Members from the National delegations

1. Opening by Dr Christina Fabian.
2. The minutes of the last meeting were approved (2000/192).
3. The GMS Working Group then proceeded to the point on the agenda, which included national reports. Two presentations were given:

On the basis of document UEMO 2001/065 Spain gave a presentation on the relations between doctors and pharmacists. Little by little Spain has encountered problems with respect to pharmacists as the pharmacists in recent years have encroached upon the field of competence belonging to the GPs. The reasons for this can be found in developments such as an increase and liberalisation of OTC-medicines, advertising of pharmaceuticals, social changes etc. The Spanish delegation stressed that the GP education is a long one, and that the competence vested within the profession cannot be replaced by the knowledge that pharmacists have. Pharmacists dispense drugs whereas GPs prescribe them. In their presentation Spain stressed that it is now time for UEMO to define the competences of the GP in this area. When doing this, one should take into account not only the UEMO Statutes that lay down the obligation of UEMO to defend the role of GPs, but also the recent judgement of the European Court of Justice (C-108/96 of 1 February 2001), which defines the relationship between opticians and ophthalmologists.

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UEMO – PRESIDENCY

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Also, the World Medical Association has agreed on a number of statements with regard to the relationship between physicians and pharmacists, which need to be taken into account. Finally, the Spanish delegation urged the UEMO to become more active in this area.

Germany also gave a presentation on the same subject. In Germany there are conflicts not only with pharmacists but also with other healthcare professionals, including those dealing with complementary medicine. The German delegation explained that in Germany there are also conflicts with regard to ophthalmologists. Similarly with the Spanish delegation the German delegation stressed the urgent need to try to define the role of GPs, otherwise there was a risk that much of the GP field of competence was lost. This is not an easy task but the work needs to be done. GPs need to define their role before others do it.

In the debate that followed it was mentioned that it is also important that GPs defined themselves internally within the profession, as there are not always static and distinct lines between GPs and other medical specialties. When defining the GP role externally, it is also important to keep in mind that there are also national and geographical differences that need to be taken into account.

When concluding the matter Dr Christina Fabian stated that there seems to exist a need to define the matter at UEMO-level and that Germany and Spain should prepare a memorandum to be presented to and discussed at the next UEMO Plenary in Venice, October 2001.

4. Finally, Dr Fabian thanked everybody for attending the meeting.