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UEMO 2002/011

A Revised UEMO Contribution Key

The Malta UEMO plenum in May 2001 determined that an examination of the contribution key was necessary to try to address any unfairness in the current levels of contribution.

A paper was presented to the Naples plenum in October 2001 (UEMO 2001/110) which set out the principals which might be followed in determining a new contribution key and suggested that the population of an individual country was the fairest and most objective basis for a revised key.

The plenum accepted a proposal that the system of calculating contributions from UEMO members should be:

- Fair
- Transparent
- On the basis of independently produced or verifiable data
- Capable of application to all existing members and new applicants
- Introduced over a reasonable transition period

The Naples plenum also accepted that the population base was a sensible parameter on which to base calculation but, used unmodified, produced unacceptable variations from the current key and would be difficult to implement. It was suggested that further work be carried out to examine the impact of building in a weighting for GDP and other possible factors.

UEMO – PRESIDENCY

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This further work has been assisted by Jon Ford of the BMA's Health Economics and Policy Research Unit. He has suggested that including a weighting for GDP per head of population is sensible, and suggested a methodology for doing so. He has also suggested that incorporating further indices does not produce further significant change and serves only to complicate the issue and the calculation. GDP is adequately reflective of the other available indices.

There are clearly numerous ways of producing alternative calculations with many possible permutations and combinations. In order to produce a manageable number of alternatives for the May 2002 plenum in Sicily the meeting of the president and vice presidents of UEMO in Brussels in February 2002 suggested that the following should be considered:

1. That observer countries should contribute at one-third the full member rate
2. That in order to eliminate the most extreme variations in contribution there should be a cut-off at the level of the smallest of the biggest four countries, currently leaving Germany, France, Italy and the UK with the same contribution, and at the level of the largest of the four smallest countries, currently leaving San Marino, Iceland, Malta and Luxembourg with the same contribution.
3. That the plenum should consider the impact of introducing a common standing charge to all countries, distributing the excess amongst member states in proportion to population weighted by GDP. The logic behind this suggestion is that however large or small the member state there are certain key basic functions which must be fulfilled independently of the size of the member.

The attached tables (tables 1 - 4) illustrate the outcome of this work. Figures for population and GDP (\$ per head of population) are current OECD figures obtained by the BMA.

- Table 1 repeats a crude illustration of the impact of using the population base alone
- Table 2 represents the impact of using the population base but applying a standing charge of EUR1000 together with a cut-off for the largest and smallest members as described above
- Table 3 represents the impact of using the population base but weighting the figures for GDP and applying a cut-off as described above

- Table 4 represents the figures as described in table 3 but with the impact of applying a standing charge of EUR1000 for every member.

The next steps

The Sicily plenum needs to take a positive decision on the way forward. There are numerous further possible permutations and combinations of these figures but the results do not significantly differ from those presented in the accompanying tables and it is likely that further examination will merely serve to delay decision making on this difficult area with damage to the organisation.

The models presented in tables 2 and 4 meet the criteria agreed upon in Naples and both provide some limitation to the inevitable increase in contributions that will be required by some member states to fund the reduction in contribution sought by others to achieve fairness. Those member states that face a large percentage increase will find that this impact in cash terms is limited.

The plenum may take the view on examining these figures that if a standing charge were to be applied, as in Table 2, the addition of weighting for GDP merely serves to complicate the issue with little additional gain.

Decisions for the Sicily plenum

- Whether to adopt one of the models offered, and if so which one
- The process and time scale to enable delegations to secure consent from national medical organisations for the change in contribution key
- Subject to decisions on the above points, the date of introduction of the new key, possibly January 1st 2003 for

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