



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 2003/186

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Dr Christina Fabian, President

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At the last UEMO meeting held in Cavtat, Croatia, 3-4 October 2003, we had serious discussions about the importance of every country paying its contributions. On account of the financial difficulties we were not able to decide to have a spring meeting 2004 as planned before. I am very happy to inform you that all our members now have fulfilled their economic duties to the UEMO, so we will have our meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, the 11-12 of June, 2004.

The economic situation is on the agenda for all the European medical organizations. In most European countries the national medical organization is paying the contribution fees to all these organizations. This is one reason why we are now discussing having a closer cooperation between the organizations, to be able to save money, avoid double work and work for a common office.

At the meeting in Cavtat we decided to have a short term (UEMO 2003/150) and a long term financial (UEMO 2003-151) discussion in the UEMO. The short term discussion concerns the size of the contributions from each country including the incoming European countries. The long term discussion is about how to start a closer cooperation between our organizations. The UEMO will start the process in sharing an office – and competence - with the CPME next year, 2004. We are looking forward to have its competence and lobbying knowledge within our organization. An office in Brussels has been one of the goals for the Swedish Presidency.

Concerning the ten new member countries of the European Union the UEMO decided to let them be treated individually and not differently from the member countries. This view seems to be quite right, since it was obvious at the CPME meeting in November 2003, where some special measures were rejected, that the countries wished to be treated individually.

The second important item discussed in Cavtat was the process of obtaining a specialty in Family Medicine/General Practice. The documents UEMO 2002/160 and UEMO 2003/179 were presented at the CPME meeting in November 2003. The document 2002/160 was endorsed, which I think is a great success! The document 2003-179 was introduced as

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information to hopefully be endorsed at the next CPME meeting in March 2004. I believe that some changes in the wording of the document is necessary and we are working on that now.

As you know that we want to avoid having two levels of General Practitioners in the future. The only level we want to have is the specialty level, Family Medicine/General Practice equal to all other specialties in Title III of the Directive. We do not want Title IV of the Directive any longer. To be a doctor in General Practice today has greater demands than yesterday, the structure of health care is changing and Family doctors/General practitioners need to be recognized as specialists. This is also a fact for recruiting young doctors.

The Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications

A vote was held in the Legal Committee of the European Parliament on the 27th November 2003. Before this vote a reminder was sent out from the CPME and its independent Associated Organizations to all Members of Parliament about the views of the medical profession.

The results of the vote are striking and positive for the CPME and its associated organizations. A clear separation of the general and sectoral system is maintained; the sectoral professions get a stricter regime for the free provision of services and the scope of the medical specialties that are automatically recognized is enlarged. The CPME document CPME 2003-188 enonly.pdf has been sent out.

However the rapporteur Mrs Gebhardt announced that the amendments voted by the Legal Committee would not make the system easier for the citizens/professionals, but would rather complicate it more. So the socialist MEPs will submit amendments for the next plenary on the 17th of December 2003. We now know that this plenary has been postponed until January 2004.

Because of the slow process handling the proposal for a new directive, we have written to Mr Stoodley, Internal Market DG, European Commission, asking about his opinion starting a process of having the specialty in Family Medicine/General Practice already in this proposal for a Directive. His answer is no, and this is perhaps an expected answer from him, thinking about the problems already there, and definitely not making it easier if we start the discussion of Title IV. But we will continue the discussions in close cooperation with the CPME and WONCA-Europe.

The most important way to implement the specialist policy of the UEMO is to discuss it in every country. Here the process starts and if we all agree nationally it is of course easier to change it at a European level.

The Pharmaceutical Directive

The Environment Committee adopted on the 27th of November 2003 recommendations by Françoise Grossetête on community codes relating to medicinal products. A number of key first reading amendments were retabled and adopted; activities connected with pharmacovigilance, the functioning of communication networks and market surveillance should receive public funding; information and market canvassing should be excluded from the definition of advertising; a clearer line should be drawn between information and publicity on medicinal products. The Commission was asked to present a report on current practice with regard to information provision- particularly on the internet- and its risks and benefits for patients. They will consult the proper stakeholders to do this report, and set out an information strategy to ensure sound, objective, reliable and non-promotional

information. The information sources liability should also be addressed. The Commission also recommended setting up a databank nationally independent of pharmaceutical companies, accessible to the public, containing updated leaflets for all pharmaceutical products, in such a way to make a comparison possible of the information available for all medicinal products. See CPME 196-2003.

UEMO Representation

The 5th of November 2003 I was invited by The European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products Communications and Networking (EMA), to participate at a meeting called Pan regulatory Forum on Pharmaceuticals-Users Conference (PERF) in Prague. I had a speech in a seminar called Public Product Information including safety information, and talked about The Role of Medical Professionals (doctors and nurses) in Product Information.

The Secretary General Carl-Eric Thors has participated in a conference in Spain talking about Preventive Activities nationally and from a European perspective. He also participated in the Expert Group on Safe Medication Practices organized by the Council of Europe.

Mateja Bulc has represented the UEMO at the Turkish Association of General Practitioners' eighth congress in October.

Jörg Pruckner has represented the UEMO at a meeting in Budapest 1-2 December 2003 called Preventive activities in Primary Health care- Regional collaboration project.

CPME/AO

The 6th-8th of November I attended the CPME meeting and AO meeting in Vienna, Austria. This was the last CPME General Assembly chaired by Dr Reiner Brettenthaler. We have had a very good support from the CPME and have started the process of cooperation. I am sure this process and the good cooperation will continue during Dr Bernhard Grewin, the incoming President of the CPME. The next CPME-AO meeting will be held the 14th of January 2004.

The future conference about prevention, a cooperation between the CPME and UEMO, has not been organized yet.

The UEMO has written to Mr Sauers asking to participate in the European Health Policy Forum. This will be decided in January 2004.

UEMO New Reference Book

We hope to sign a contract with our new publisher soon. The UEMS has already started their journal with the same publisher.

European Men's Health Forum (EMHF)

To spread the message and to start actions on improving men's health in the different European countries, the Board of EMHF wants to get in contact with persons responsible in each country, and the UEMO will be helping them with it.