



**EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS**  
**UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS OMNIPRATICIENS**

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| <b>Document</b>             | <b>UEMO 2007/037</b>   |
| <b>Object</b>               | <b>Minutes from the UEMO General Assembly Meeting in Lisbon 20-21 April 2007</b> |
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| <b>Date of transmission</b> | <b>9 July 2007</b>   |

## **MINUTES FROM THE UEMO GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING IN LISBON 20 – 21 APRIL 2007**

**Opening Joint Ceremony together with the EFMA/WHO Forum with the participation of**

- J. M. Barroso, President of the EU Commission
- Francisco Ramos, Secretary of State representing the Portuguese Health Minister
- Maria de Belém Roseira, President of the Health Commission at the Portuguese Parliament
- Marc Danzon, Regional Director, WHO Regional Office for Europe
- René Salzberg, Secretary general of the EFMA/WHO
- Pedro Nunes, President of the Portuguese Medical Association
- Isabel Caixeiro, President of the UEMO

### **Opening by the President Dr. Isabel Caixeiro**

The President of UEMO, Dr Isabel Caixeiro, wished all delegates a warm welcome. She also highlighted the main points in the Agenda and reminded that this General Assembly is a special one for it is associated to the UEMO 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. Dr. Caixeiro apologised Vice-President Dr. Reiner Brettenthaler who could not attend the Assembly due to flight issues.

Dr. Caixeiro greeted the Italian delegation who was able to join us and the Head of the Bulgarian Delegation Dr. Kiril Elenski who attends the Assembly for the first time as a full member.

Dr. Caixeiro considered that the goal of having a joint ceremony together with the EFMA/WHO Forum was achieved, since the President of the EU Commission, Mr. José Manuel Barroso, publicly acknowledged the importance of the recognition of the speciality of General Practice/Family Medicine.

### **1. Roll-call for Members**

The Secretary General of the UEMO, Dr Luis Filipe Gomes, suggested each Head of Delegation to stand up and introduce him/herself, thus replacing the common roll call for members. This will become the normal procedure at the beginning of the General Assembly, from now on. The Assembly registered that Iceland and Lithuania were not able to attend.

Dr. Christina Fabian from Sweden and Dr. Francisco Toquero from Spain were elected as tellers.

### **2. Adoption of the Agenda (UEMO 2007/002)**

The draft agenda was approved.

Friday afternoon, the delegates participated in the working groups, and there was also a Meeting of Heads of Delegations.

### **3 Approval of the Minutes of the General Assembly in Uppsala October 2006 (UEMO 2007/001)**

The Portuguese Delegation proposed a change in the minutes in item 3 “Finances”. Thus, at the end of the second paragraph a sentence should be added saying “*subject to legal conditioning under Belgium law*” to comply with the future legal status of the organisation. No one objected.

The second proposed change concerns item 4 “UEMO as a Legal Body under Belgian Law”. The Portuguese Delegation suggested a sentence should be added at the end of the first paragraph saying “*and four Vice-Presidents*”, in order to reflect the future reality. No one objected

The General Assembly approved the minutes with these changes.

### **4 President’s Report (UEMO 2007/023)**

The report had been distributed to all delegates. Dr Isabel Caixeiro thanked the former Presidency for the warm welcome at the Uppsala Assembly. The transition meeting took place in a friendly smoothly way on February 17. The Swedish Presidency left a solid stable finance situation.

The UEMO Vice-Presidents meeting took place on February 19. During this meeting, it was confirmed that UEMO has no longer an agreement with Medical Futures. The planned common meeting between CPME and AOs was postponed to Spring 2009. On the Agenda of the meeting was also the debate about the Statutes, which still need small corrections. The recognition of the specialty is a major concern: Other than 2/5s of the countries, we need a majority and therefore lobby must continue at national and EU level, together with CPME and other medical organisations.

Dr. Caixeiro also detailed the plans to celebrate UEMO’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Invitations were sent to all previous Presidents of the UEMO. Dr. Alan Rowe, Dr. Ole Jensen and Dr. Christina Fabian accepted and are present. Late Dr. Joop van Rijn is to be represented by her daughter Willemijn van Rijn and Dr. Willy Andre has kindly accepted to represent Dr. Fussen. Mary Macnamara unfortunately was not able to join the celebration, however did send her best wishes.

A settlement plan was drafted to allow Greece to pay their arrears for a period of 4 years, together with their annual shares, thus helping them to re-join UEMO. Romenia showed an interest in joining CPME and therefore it is reasonable to expect their application to UEMO membership. There have been some contacts with the President of the Polish Chamber, who is a GP/FP.

## **5 Finances (UEMO 2007/021 and 2007/022)**

Treasurer Dr. Manuela Santos reported on the status of the finances and introduced both the figures as at December 31, 2006 and the current figures for this year's budget. Lithuania did not settle the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual share payment for year 2006. Some delegations had not also settled their first payment for 2007. This is the case of Spain, Germany, UK, Italy, Austria, Croatia, Luxembourg and Lithuania again. In spite of this, the economic situation is very stable. Both reports had been distributed to all delegates. Germany, UK and Austria informed they were convinced their first half-payments were settled.

Dr. Willy Andre reported for the Auditors: the accounts are well known of everyone and they should be kept well filed according to the different items in the budget for ease of identification. He also recalled that the Auditors team had previously suggested that half the accumulated capital should be kept in a fund. Dr. Lynch reported that the UEMO Finances are once more in excellent hands. By the Autumn meeting, the accounts of the Swedish presidency will be completely closed and we will have a substantial surplus. Dr. Lynch asked that a legal framework should be drafted for the next meeting on the basis of the new statutes, in order to decide what to do of this surplus.

The President thanked the Treasurer and the Auditors for their excellent work.

## **6 UEMO as Legal Body under Belgian Law**

The President reminded that the last General Assembly had decided to have only two decision levels: the General Assembly and the Board, which would include the Presidency and the four Vice-Presidents. Thus, a new draft by Marie Christine Bonnamour was circulated and valuable contributions were received from the Austrian and Spanish delegations. A Working Group will be specifically created to deal with the weighted vote, and Italy offered to join in.

The President Dr. Isabel Caixeiro then detailed the changes that should be included in order for the statutes to reflect the actual reality of the organisation:

- a) As a consequence of the lobbying for the recognition of the specialty of General Practice/Family Medicine, it is advisable to include the full expression in the name of the organisation. Thus, after the short name UEMO, the expression European Union of General Practitioners / Family Physicians should be added. The expressions General Practice/Family Medicine, and General Practitioner/Family Physicians should be used on each and every paper, document and policy. The Assembly agreed.
- b) Clarification of observer status and of associate members (Article 4). The President recalled that the Assembly has long been composed exclusively of full members and observers, and therefore there is no need to keep the status of associate member. Sweden and United Kingdom supported the proposal to delete all references to associate member in the Statutes. An explanation followed on the historical reasons of the status and vivid debate was raised with Ireland, Portugal, United Kingdom expressing different point of views. Finally, President Dr. Isabel Caixeiro thanked the

delegates for a clarifying discussion and put forward a proposal to delete the expression “associate member” from the statutes, which was unanimously approved by the Assembly.

- c) The expressions Presidency and President, should be replaced by “Board”, according to the two decision levels structure that was decided during the last meeting.
- d) References to the Secretariat as a Body should be amended. The Secretariat is attached to the Presidency and not a body in itself.
- e) Adjustments are needed to the election mechanisms of the Board, which includes the President, Secretary General, Treasurer and the four Vice-Presidents. The Board does no longer operate on a rotation basis, thus article 12.2 should not include such a reference. President Dr. Caixeiro suggested the Presidency should be elected as a Team. Vice-Presidents would be elected according to the usual procedure. Sweden supported the proposal. After some debate, the Assembly agreed that the legal group would re-write the article allowing the President to come before the Assembly with a new name in case one of the Presidency Team members would be unable to continue in office. The Assembly agreed.
- f) Board members’ right to vote should also be clarified. The President reminded that under the Belgium Law each and every one of the Board members are held responsible for any decisions taken by the organisation and thus they should all be entitled to vote. Dr. Caixeiro recalled that all decisions are taken at General Assembly level. The Assembly clearly understood that all Board Members will be entitled to vote.
- g) Repeated rules such as the procedures of voting in the General Assembly should be deleted.
- h) Financial responsibilities associated to Vice-Presidents (Article 12.2) should be clarified. UEMO’s budget includes an item for the Vice-Presidents’ meetings. Yet, the Statutes determine that UEMO will not support any of the Vice-Presidents expenses. The Assembly approved Portugal’s suggestion of moving this issue into the Internal Rules.

Dr. Eirik Bø Larsen then addressed the floor and exposed his thoughts on how the Internal Rules should deal with the issue of admission of full members subsequent to exclusion. At the end of the discussion, the Assembly agreed that the situation of France, Greece and Poland should be dealt on an individual basis. Further to the approval of the new Statutes, which will occur at the October meeting, rules on readmission will be included in the Internal Rules by the Legal Team.

The Presidency was mandated to negotiate the membership of France, Greece and Poland and then report on the negotiation status upon the next meeting.

Dr. Caixeiro asked the legal group to draft the final version of the new Statutes. These will be sent to all delegations for ratification and this final version incorporating the delegations comments will be submitted to Marie-Christine Bonnamour. The reviewed version will then be sent to all delegates for approval upon the next meeting.

Dr. Christine Fabian congratulated the Presidency for the good discussion on this issue.

## **7 Communication Strategy**

President Dr. Caixeiro confirmed that the previous agreement with Medical Futures is now terminated. The Board has been discussing how to communicate at internal and external level. Vice-President Dr. Henry Finnegan shared with the Assembly some initial thoughts on this matter, which will be collected in a paper drafted by the Board.

Dr. Finnegan highlighted the importance of establishing a lobbying and communication strategy, considering UEMO represents half a million General Practitioners all over Europe. Implementation of policies needs to be more efficient. Internal communication should be the starting point and thus, UEMO needs to review all policy documents in order to evaluate their importance, priority and update them when necessary.

Next, UEMO is to reinforce communication channels between the organisation and the delegations and then re-establish communication flows among the different delegations. A strategy on how to deal with the national authorities, departments of health and regulatory authorities also needs to be defined.

Further more, the UEMO needs to communicate at European level, with the European Commission, the MIPs and the Council of Ministers – this will include reacting to orientations coming from the European Commission but also pro-active actions on European health policy trends.

Other stakeholders like patients associations and pharmacists should also be included as communication targets.

Finally, it is important to deliver our messages to the general public through print media and television, if we are to be taken seriously and if we are to be relevant. This communication should focus on softer topics, so people would recognise UEMO as the group representing GPs/FPs in Europe.

All these ideas are to be collected in a overall communication strategy paper that will allow each delegate to know what is expected from us.

Dr. Caixeiro thanked Dr. Finnegan and asked for comments from the floor. Some debate followed and the Assembly agreed the website is a privileged mean to release the result of the Organisation' work. Access by political bodies and the press was also an issue on the table. Cooperation with the other sister organisations should be seek. The importance of identifying an English speaking editor for the website was noted, as well as the need to translate UEMO papers into the different national languages, to avoid any misunderstood.

Vice-President Dr. Henry Finnegan reminded that AOs have long decided to look towards the establishment of a Domus Medica and of a common webportal. These should be included in the Strategy Communication. Belgium noted that the Domus Medica denomination would not be acceptable for their country.

President Dr. Isabel Caixeiro recognised consensus within the Assembly concerning internal and external communication. On one side, we have to strengthen internal communication between each other of us and between us and all General Practitioners/Family Physicians accross Europe. On the other side, we have to reinforce external communication so political deciders know what we think about our specialty.

Dr. Isabel Caixeiro thanked the floor for such a useful discussion and agreed that a website editor should be appointed. The editor together with the Board should then decide which documents are to be accessible to the public. President Dr. Caixeiro thanked Dr. Henry Finnegan for his work

## **8 CPME and its Associated Organisations**

Dr. Caixeiro welcomed Mrs. Lisette Tiddens to the meeting. Dr. Caixeiro also drew the Assembly's attention to the important papers on Modernising Labour Law, Working Time Directive (on which she congratulated PWG for their excellent work) and Consultation on Community Action on Health Services. EMSA was congratulated on their document on Health Strategy.

CPME' Secretary General Mrs. Lisette Tiddens congratulated UEMO for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and agreed that Dr. Caixeiro reported perfectly on the discussion at the Presidents Committee' Meeting. She also congratulated the organisation of the EFMA/WHO Forum which is going on at the same time of this Assembly and highlighted the importance of the presence of Mr. José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission who stated the European Commission is on the right path as far as Health Services are concerned.

Mrs. Tiddens informed the Assembly that the President of the CPME was currently chairing a session at the Forum so he was not able to attend this meeting.

## **9 Reports from the Working groups**

### **9.1 CME/CPD ( UEMO 2007/030)**

Dr. Mateja Bulc reported from the working group, who began their meeting by discussing accreditation. It had been agreed to keep contacts both with UEMS and with WONCA and proceed slowly. The working group is trying to establish a board for accreditation of all General Practitioners/Family Physicians who wish to practice across their borders.

Dr. Bernard Maillet, Secretary General of the UEMS, attended the working session and shortly explained the procedures launched by UEMS and the financial scale of the project. After some debate it was decided that UEMO should proceed with the accreditation strategy and that no suggestions related to this matter should be supported that had not been discussed in the working group. UEMO is to go on observing what is happening in the different member countries which will allow learning from third parties experience.

The group also debated the Conference on CPD which took place on December 2006 in Luxembourg. The final statement of the conference was sent to all UEMO Delegates and the Working group recommended the consensus statement to be noted by the General Assembly. Dr. Caixeiro requested all the delegates to go through the CPD Conference consensus statement in order to decide whether UEMO should proceed in any way on the basis of such document

Dr. Finnegan, Chair of the Working Group, stressed that the regulation of the profession is one that affects every delegation and country. It is important to obtain the advice of national medical associations in relation to what is happening or has happened so that we can learn from each other. Also alerted that UEMO needs to act and react faster, since national regulatory authorities often move forward in a very short notice. Dr. Caixeiro congratulated the Working Group on their efforts.

## 9.2 Preventive Activities (UEMO 2007/028)

Dr Iona Heath reported from the working group, who again had a very productive session which resulted on five papers being put forward for approval:

-“UEMO Policy Document on Screening Tests in General Medical Practice” (UEMO 2006/005 rev 4). Dr. Caixeiro proposed the Assembly to adopt the document, and it was adopted unanimously.

-“UEMO Statement on violence in the general practice/family medicine workplace” (UEMO 2006/069 rev 1), amended on the basis of several lectures presented yesterday during the opening ceremony. Dr. Caixeiro put the document through to approval by the Assembly. The document was adopted by unanimity. Dr. Heath thanked Dr. Melek for her work.

-“UEMO Policy Statement on violence in young men” (UEMO 2006/075 rev 1), which was subject to minor amendments. Dr. Finnegan corrected a typing error and “*meet the*” on the second line was changed into “*mee them*”. Dr. Caixeiro proposed the Assembly to adopt the document with such amendment, and it was adopted unanimously.

-“UEMO Statement on Men’s Health” (UEMO 2006/074 rev 1) was subject to minor amendments. Dr. Finnegan suggested that a reference to the previous document should be included under the section of “Young single men”. Dr. Heath agreed and under the paragraph “Young Single Men”, at the bottom, it was included the sentence “*We also refer readers to document UEMO 2006/075 on “Violence in young men”*”. Dr. Mateja Bulc proposed the document should include related data across the Europe. Portugal agreed and added that it would be of interest to have on it a number of other issues such as alcohol, loneliness and psychological problems. The Working Group agreed in receiving further

comments and data from the delegations until the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, so it can be redrafted and put before the Assembly during the next meeting.

- “UEMO Statement on Prevention of burn-out in General Practitioners (UEMO 2007/009 rev 1). The floor debated the wording of the document. Portugal finally suggested the document should be sent back to the Working Group to be corrected before it is put for approval. The Working group agreed to receive new comments and suggestions until July 31, 2007. The document will be reviewed again at the Toledo Meeting.

### 9.3 - Ad Hoc Working Group (UEMO 2007/033)

The report on the Working Group activities was delivered by Dr Liam Lynch, since Dr. Papp was not able to attend the Lisbon meeting. The draft results of the questionnaire “The Patient view about their General Practitioner and General Practice” were presented. It will now be finalised and hopefully adopted by the Plenum at the Autumn meeting, with recommendations for its further use regarding trend analysis and future applications (e.g. in migrant patient populations).

The Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Ireland shared with the floor several documents and experiences that were developed at national level. Dr. Caixeiro congratulated them and highlighted the importance of this kind of exchanging.

### 9.4 - The Specialist Training Working Group (UEMO 2007/029)

Dr Volker requested the word and asked the delegations to cooperate and reply to the questionnaire that had been sent by the German delegation. President Dr. Caixeiro encouraged all the delegations to provide the necessary replies.

Dr. Terry John reported on the activities of the Working Group, particularly focused on the campaign for the specialty recognition. A questionnaire was set-up to analyse what has been going on in each country at this level. At the time, six countries (Austria, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Turkey and the UK) did not move yet from Title IV to Title III.

Ms. Laura Rius Mendez produced a paper which clarifies that a new specialty can be introduced in the Annexes subject to the agreement of at least 2/5 of the Member-States and if these agree on a minimum training period according to the rules of qualified majority voting. The paper concludes that the best way to proceed is through direct approach to National Governments to encourage them to make their case at the European Union level.

The United Kingdom reported on the difficulties that they have met as to the move to Title III: an agreement was reached between the BMA and the College of General Practitioners as to the need of reaching specialty recognition and discussions with members of the Government are expected to start soon.

The Working Group will draft three documents within the next months, as follows:

- a) A short letter allowing national associations to approach their national authorities and make sure the issue is put on the EU Agenda – this will be sent to those countries that already have made the move forward for specialist recognition.
- b) A letter for those countries which are still on the Title IV Group requesting the national associations to approach their Governments.
- c) A letter to be forwarded to the CPME and other organisations detailing UEMO's plans and making sure their support is firm.

The Equal Opportunities Working Group brought the floor's attention to the document on Community Health Care Issues which contain arguments that may be useful to underline this case. Dr. Caixeiro congratulated the Working Group and thanked Ms. Laura Rius Mendez for the her high quality paper.

#### 9.5 - Future GP Workforce (UEMO 2007/032)

Dr. Luiz Santiago is the new rapporteur. Chairperson Dr. Hilde Roels informed that the group would welcome inputs both from PWG and the Italian delegation. Netherlands agreed to draft a paper comparing the importance of General Practitioners/Family Physicians with home-assistance and nursing. Dr. Santiago added that the group had been reflecting upon some of the previous papers and agreed to establish a e-working group to draft a paper on Team Work. This document will define the functions and responsibilities of General Practitioners/Family Physicians and will be put forward to the next General Assembly.

#### 9.6 - The Equal Opportunities (UEMO 2007/031)

Ms Charlotte May reported that the group discussed the questionnaire on Doctor Mobility. (UEMO 2006/066). Input was collected from eleven countries and is yet expected until the end of June from other countries. From the available replies, the group concluded that register of General Practitioners is different across Europe. The Group also analysed and compared different re-accreditation and re-validation and competence assurance systems.

A paper by Dr. Lynda Hamilton was also discussed which suggests that competence assurance is a means to guarantee a European norm or Standard of care.

Dr. Hamilton put the document for adoption by the Plenum and went thoroughly through it. Dr. Caixeiro highlighted the importance of this paper, for it proves that Equal Opportunities does not relate to gender only. The document was therefore accepted for discussion and adoption at the next Assembly – any comments will be welcomed until the end of June.

Dr. Caixeiro thanked all the Working Groups their excellent work.

## **10 Reports from other Organisations**

### CPME

The secretary general of CPME, Ms Lisette Tiddens, informed that the next meeting of the CPME will take place in June. At the EFMA/WHO Forum there has been a very fruitful discussion on e-health and this can also be an input for the discussions on this theme at the CPME. Dr. Caixeiro thanked Ms Lisette Tiddens.

### PWG

The Organisation thanked the opportunity of joining the UEMO General Assembly as observer and their interest in working together, in particular within the Specialist Training Working Group, since this will allow PWG to cooperate on the definition of some key issues such as duration of training. Dr. Caixeiro welcomed PWG's will to cooperate and join efforts in view of the recognition and the future of the specialty.

### UEMS

Liaison Officer to the UEMS Dr. Willy André made an exposition on his report (UEMO 2007/25). UEMS Vice-President Dr. Gunilla Brenning reported about the recent works of the UEMS, which Council acts as an umbrella for the different sections. Dr. Brenning reminded that the 48 hours Time Directive. The UEMS believes it is possible to train any specialists within the defined timeframe.

Dr. Brenning then explained that EACCME has grown immensely and became a significant workload for the UEMS. The Working Groups, on the other hand, have been very productive. Finally, the Council meets regularly twice a year, in March and October. Besides these, another meeting is held in May with all the secretaries and presidents of the sections. Because these meetings gather many new participants, communication has been an important issue. Thus, a Working Group was created to review the structure, composed of members coming from the Council as well as the Boards and Sections. UEMS also answered to the EU Consultation on Health Services and released a paper of their own on this subject. Next meeting will be held in May with the Sections and Boards. Dr. Caixeiro congratulated Dr. Brenning on the thorough report on the UEMS activities.

### EANA

EANA held two meetings recently: in December 2006, the organisation debated the definition of patient care and prevention. On the table of the April meeting, there were two main points: e-health and the liberal profession. The next meeting will take place at the end of November in Switzerland. Dr. Caixeiro thanked for the accurate report.

### WONCA

Representative of the President of Wonca Europe, Dr. Mateja Bulc, informed that Wonca Europe looks forward to start cooperating with the UEMO especially in the fields of specialist training and CME/CPD activities.

## **11 Membership Issues**

President Dr. Caixeiro apologised for the mistake of the Secretariat. Romania showed an interest in joining the CPME but not the UEMO.

## **12 Future Meetings**

26 – 27 October 2007, Toledo in Spain.

6 – 7 June 2008, Bergen in Norway.

## **13 Any other Business**

Dr. Caixeiro proposed the creation of a Task Force to review all UEMO policy papers and update them when necessary. This Task Force will be composed of the four Vice-Presidents, the Secretary General and two Heads of Delegation from Spain and Switzerland. The updated policies will be published upon the website. The Assembly was happy with the proposition.

The Italian delegation then presented a national issue related to the teaching of general medicine and internal medicine. According to the latest legislation, any doctor with 10 years of practice in internal medicine can now teach general medicine. The Italian delegation requested the Assembly's support to defend that Specialists in Family Medicine or General Practitioners who have been in practice for at least the last 10 years have the competence to teach General Practice Medicine. UK and Portugal suggested this matter should be brought to the Specialist Training Working group before being dealt by the Working Group. Bulgaria and Netherlands supported the Italian request, since their national situation is similar, however they suggested the problem should be subject to further analysis.

Dr. Mateja Bulc, as co-Chair of the Specialist Training Working group requested the motion to be sent to it so they can study the consequences of such motion. She suggested that a letter should be written to the Italian delegation officially supporting their position. The Italian delegation accepted to be addressed a letter of support from the Presidency.

Dr. Finnegan asked the Assembly to allow a Portuguese television channel to join the meeting and collect some images from it.

## **14 Closure of the Meeting**

The President, Dr Isabel Caixeiro thanked the interpreters and the Secretariat and congratulated the delegates and guests on a very fruitful meeting.

Luis Filipe Gomes  
Secretary General