



**UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES
EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS**

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Annual Report of the Secretary-General

For 2007

**UEMS Council Meeting
Brussels, 19th April 2008**

1. Introduction

The document on the Future Strategy of the UEMS, written by our President was discussed at the different bodies of the UEMS and will now be finalized at the April 2008-meeting of the Council in Brussels. This meeting is a particular one as it celebrates the 50 years existence of the Organization. A lot of energy has been put by the Staff in the preparation and all the issues in relation to this important milestone of the UEMS. We also have the chance to welcome important players in health care as well as in all the fields where UEMS is playing an important role and they will contribute to the success of this event.

The visibility of UEMS in different areas of interest was intensified and resulted in a broader efficacy and cooperation with other partners.

Also in the field of the EACCME, improvements were realized and this mainly by starting the operations of the online application form with also the evaluation of the quality of the events through this electronic system. The work in preparing the launch of this website done in 2007 by the UEMS-Staff on this issue is tremendous.

We continued the close contacts and presence at the meetings of the different UEMS Sections and Boards and this also led to some important documents such as the "White Book on Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine".

2. New Members

Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union on January 1st 2007 and so the Bulgarian Association of Medical Specialties as well as the Romanian College of Physicians became Full Members of the UEMS Council from the March 2007 Meeting on.

In Bratislava, UEMS Council welcomed as a Full Member Country Lithuania with the application of the Lithuanian Medical Association as a Member of the UEMS.

Contacts are under way with Serbia, Russia and Armenia. In some of the UEMS Sections and Boards representatives of these countries are already participating as observers to the activities and this is to be encouraged. No formal request for membership from those countries have been received yet.

3. European issues

3.1. Health Services Directive

After the EP and Council's decision to exclude health services from the scope of the proposal for a Services Directive, the Commission announced its wish to put forward a specific initiative on health services.

The UEMS contributed to the European Commission's consultation on patient mobility and cross-border care and this was lead by Dr. Edwin Borman who produced from the contributions from the different member organizations a very clear and comprehensive contribution (UEMS 2007/03) illustrating our viewpoint on this issue.

The Health Service Directive on itself was scheduled to be issued in the autumn of 2007 but is still not finalized and this reflects the difficulty to come to a consensus on the topic all over the European Union.

3.2. Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications (2005/36/EC)

The Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications was adopted in 2005 and became fully in working on October 27th 2007.

The importance of the issue was highlighted at all meetings in view of getting greater support from the national member organizations as well as from the UEMS Sections and Boards to update the provisions of the Directive on specialist training.

It is obvious that in this respect the update of the Chapter VI's for the different specialties is of utmost importance and this to update the provisions of the Directive on recognition of specialist training.

UEMS has been called by the European Commission to assist them in a consultative position as has been recently the case for Medical Oncology and Genetics.

3.3. Proposal for a Directive amending the organisation of working time (COM(2004)607)

The Finnish Presidency of the EU proposed a compromise on this issue but this was rejected during the EU Council meeting in November 2006 by a blocking minority of 5 countries.

This proposal proposed following items :

The possibility to opt-out up to 60 hours while the reference period would be reduced to 3 months only

A regular report to Council and Committee.

Inactive part of on-call time would be recognized as working time.

Infringement procedures should theoretically be launched by the Commission against the Member States who do not comply with the regulation (25 out of the 27). The German presidency was not willing to take over the issue.

Some suggestions were looked at to have a revision of the Directive but discussions have to be continued on this issue. Priority on this issue was given on lobbying at the national level and some delegations were in favour of a revision of the UEMS policy on working time.

3.4. European Health Policy Forum

UEMS participated in the Health Policy Forum held on 5th April 2007 (Dr. Frars (*President*) and Mr. Destrebecq) and 28th November 2007 (Dr. Maillet and Mr. Destrebecq).

Issues discussed included patient safety and transparency in EU consultation processes as well as the European Commission's action on health strategy and health services. The meetings were also an excellent occasion to have exchanges of information and informal contacts with the European Commission as well as other stakeholders.

3.5. eHealth Stakeholders Group

We organized during the Council meeting in Bratislava a Discussion Forum on e-Health under the initiative of the Slovakian organizers and the discussions there have led to the proposal of a “Bratislava declaration” on e-Medicine that was adopted unanimously.

Some Sections are very active in this field and of course the Radiology Section has some initiatives on the issue but also the Section of Pathology as well as Nuclear Medicine are strongly involved in the activities on this topic.

There was a meeting of the eHealth Stakeholder Group in Rome and the Declaration of this Group was unanimously endorsed in Bratislava.

The UEMS started a close collaboration with EHTEL (European Health Telematics Association) and this resulted in the participation of different members of the UEMS and its Sections and Boards in the organization and presentations at two important meetings held in May and October of 2007. The common aim is to raise awareness among doctors, notably thanks to accrediting such meetings, and, if appropriate, determine common policy objectives.

UEMS participated also actively in the “World of Health IT” Conference in Geneva.

4. Procedural matters – Statutes and Rules of Procedure

As the Statutes and Rules and Procedures have been revised recently no major amendments were proposed in 2007.

The issue of the voting rights of the Sections and Boards representatives was discussed largely in all the meetings of the UEMS in 2007 and it was agreed to postpone the decision on this issue to the next meeting in April 2008.

There was also a proposal for the Procedure of the Elections of the Vice-Presidents.

See also item 6.

5. European Organisations

5.1. *European Medical Organisations*

The relations with the other European Medical Organisations were pursued in a constructive manner. Several topics were more specifically developed:

- The UEMS took part actively in several joint working groups set up by the CPME together with the other EMO's on issues such as CPD and health services.
- The collaboration with the PWG on medical training within the UEMS Boards is already really efficient and should be expanded into other topics in the near future. Collaboration was hence launched in the framework of the survey on the European Working Time Directive.

PWG from its side also improved the information towards their delegates in the UEMS Sections and Boards and more regular exchange of information about meetings and delegates is going on.

- Contacts were in force with the UEMO with regard to their possible involvement in the EACCME. As no decision has been taken by them so far, the discussion remains open.

5.2. *European Health Professionals Organisations*

On the initiative of HOPE (European Hospital and Healthcare Federation), several European organisations representing health professionals (Hospitals – Doctors – Nurses – Hospital Pharmacists), which includes the UEMS, were invited to a informal roundtables to exchange information and views on various issues at stake. Such meetings were held on 7^h February, 11th June and 28th September 2007.

The major topics were the position of the Health Care Professionals on the future Health Care Directive.

5.3. *Other European Organisations*

Thanks to its Secretariat in Brussels, the UEMS was able to make and maintain informal contacts with different stakeholders and associations as well as with Commission officials and MEPs.

Participation to activities organized by other European Organizations such as the European Platform of Patient Organizations, Science and Industry (EPPOSI) as well as by Scientific Societies increased the visibility of UEMS in these areas.

Recent activities have contributed to improve the UEMS image and influence and this aim remains at the centre of the Brussels Office Staff's objectives.

6. UEMS Sections & Boards

6.1. *Activities of the UEMS Sections and Boards.*

- In the Federation of Surgical Disciplines, the Working Time issue remains an important topic.
- The request of the Division of Microbiology of the Section of Medical Biopathology to become a Section on its own was discussed in the three meetings in 2007 and it was agreed that a Section of Microbiology would be created and the Council will have to make the final decision on this in the April 2008 Meeting in Brussels.
- The request of the Section of ENT to add Head and Neck Surgery to the name of the Section was rejected.
- In the Section of Radiology, a Division of Neuroradiology was established at the Bratislava meeting.
- The request to create a Division of Angiology within the Section of Internal Medicine was approved also in the Bratislava meeting.
- Some documents presented by UEMS Sections and Boards were endorsed by Council such as the document on "Epilepsy and Driving" proposed by the Section of Neurology and also the "Alliance for MRI" proposed by the Section of Radiology, both at the Bratislava meeting.
- The Chapter 6 proposed by the MJC on Sports Medicine was also endorsed in Bratislava.
- The MJC in Hand Surgery that was created some years ago was not active yet and in 2007 a first meeting of the MJC was organized with delegates from the Sections that showed interest in this field.

6.2. *European Examinations – Glasgow Declaration.*

In February 2007 some Sections who are organizing European Examinations met in Glasgow in order to try to harmonize their views and procedures. The delegates present in Glasgow proposed a document that is now called the "Glasgow Declaration".

The Group met afterwards in June and November.

The Glasgow Declaration has also been discussed at the Meeting of the Sections and Boards in May as well at the Council meeting in Bratislava.

The issue of Assessment of the Post Graduate Training can be seen as an important field for UEMS and the creation of a kind of Advisory Council for European Specialist Training Assessment could be envisaged.

6.3. Alliance for MRI.

Directive 2004/40/EC on physical agents (electromagnetic field) will enter into force in April 2008 and was intended to protect workers from potential adverse effects of electromagnetic fields but will have dramatic consequences for clinical magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as it will make the practice of MRI scans nearly impossible to apply.

Together with the European Association for Radiology, the UEMS Section of Radiology started a lobbying campaign in order to review this Directive and make it more realistic and applicable.

In this lobbying activities UEMS actively participated and for instance the Secretary-General, attended some Workshops organized at the European Parliament in order to support the initiatives of the UEMS Section of Radiology.

The result of this campaign was very fruitful as the implementation of the Directive has been suspended for a 4 years period.

The improvement of relations with our S&B continued as a priority for the Executive in 2006. The presence of the Executive in S&B meetings demonstrated this commitment and was also an occasion to increasingly involve S&B in EACCME.

7. Executive

The Executive met in January, February, March, April, May, October and November 2007.

Issues discussed notably included the future of the UEMS, its structure and organisation in the framework of the Strategy Document, the forthcoming 50th Anniversary as well as the continuing improvements to EACCME.

8. EACCME

A lot of improvements were realized in the process and the preparation of the webbased application form was one of the main issues in 2007. Also some problems that have been highlighted by some Sections have been solved and the Task Force on CME has finally met in November in Brussels and discussed some important issues that were implemented in the system.

European Accreditation through UEMS-EACCME was gaining success with 1030 approved events in 2007 and even more are expected in the following years thanks to an increased visibility of the UEMS-EACCME at the level of Organizing Committees of events as well as at the level of the Scientific Societies, working together with the UEMS Sections and Board in the evaluation of events.

9. UEMS website

In line with the new EACCME web-based system, the UEMS website will be refreshed and renewed with some additional improvements.

Documents will be more easily downloadable and the pages devoted to the UEMS Sections and Boards will be developed.

.eu Domains were obtained and will be made available soon. These are www.uems.eu and www.eaccme.eu.

The first objective is to have a working webbased application program and then the webmaster can start to concentrate on the main website of the UEMS.

10. Newsletter

The Newsletters remain a useful and important tool of diffusion of information and propagation of the UEMS image and are actively requested by DGs and MEPs and their staff.

As this newsletter provides various and broad information on EU news but above all on UEMS and its activities, it is asked to all recipients to distribute it as widely as possible. From different sources, it appeared that this initiative has been greatly appreciated both inside and outside of our organisation. For recall, this newsletter is open to any input of common interest or remarks from UEMS member associations and S&B.

Unfortunately, the editing of these NewsLetters has been reduced due to the increasing work on issues such as the 50 Years Anniversary Meeting in April 2008 as well as the starting of the webbased application form for CME events.

The Administrative Staff of the UEMS is limited and the workload for them increasing. Some solutions have been found and these will have effects in the future.

Dr. Bernard Maillet
Secretary-General