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President's Report – 1/2006

Resume 2005

Patient Safety

Looking back on the past year I retain as the most important event the Patient Safety Conference and I thank the CPME, the past-president Dr Grewin, the secretary general Lisette Tiddens-Engwirda and Dr Poulsen for the involvement of the AEMH and myself, which had a very positive impact on the activities of our organisation.

Although the problem of patient safety has been approached with a focus on the patient as a victim suffering from doctors' neglects and errors or other adverse events occurring particularly in hospitals, we have to recognize that the main objective has been reached, i.e. to rise awareness and open the debate with all parties involved. Since the conference in Luxembourg the stakeholders meet regularly and work on a position paper. We have to use this opportunity to show the problem from the perspective of hospital doctors. Although the "blame and shame" attitude is unanimously abandoned, the focus has to be communication, as an informed patient is an empowered patient.

AEMH Conference

The AEMH Conference on CPD has been a real success thanks to the commitment of Thomas Zilling, who could gather competent international speakers. This showed that with some goodwill and a lot of dedication we are able by our own internal means to organize an event, which attracts interest not only from AEMH delegations but also externally.

The Declaration on CPD elaborated at that occasion could again, despite all our diplomatic efforts, not pass the CPME Board, and thus has not been endorsed. This is very disappointing and frustrating.

Future of European Medical Organisations

Another important milestone has been the Conference on the Future of the European Medical Organisations organized by the CPME. The lengthy and controversial discussions and documents issued on the subject by many of those concerned by the debate needed to be structured and publicly announced. I think that this could be achieved and the conference arose awareness that nobody can stay out of the debate and simply refuse all changes.

The AEMH has to process in a consensual manner in the respect of all different tendencies within its own organization in order to find a common position, to which all AEMH delegations can subscribe. The often quoted “one-voice” of the medical profession is certainly one of the questions where a consensus can be reached.

But the real stake is whether this “one voice” is expressed by one single organization uniting all different branches of the profession, and whether this organization should be a newly created one or the existing CPME, is a more embarrassing question. We can congratulate the CPME for having taken the lead in the debate and for the neutrality of the questionnaire issued in the follow-up of the conference, which finally is even challenging for the CPME itself.

Election for President 2007-2009

From the personal point of view I look back to my re-election at the last plenary meeting and I am proud of the confidence the AEMH delegations unanimously have reconfirmed. The election procedure more than 1 ½ year ahead the term gave subject to lively discussions and initiated a revision of the AEMH statutes. This demonstrates the open-mindedness and modernity of our organisation.

Prevision 2006

My ambition is to lead the AEMH in this difficult phase of interrogation on the future of the European medical organizations in a satisfactory way for all.

Our involvement in three CPME working groups is a good step forward to closer collaboration with the CPME and the other European medical organizations.

Especially “The Social Dialogue in the hospital sector” is a field where the AEMH together with FEMS should be present and even take a leading position, as the CPME in this particular matter does itself not feel competent.

We have also applied to work on the management of documents submitted by the AOs to the CPME.

Thomas Zilling is active in the CPME working group in charge to prepare the conference on CPD, where he will chair one of the workshops. This shows his recognized competence on the topic and I trust that this event will be as beneficial as has been the Patient Safety Conference.

It goes without saying, that we will pursue and possibly enhance our good collaboration with FEMS via the secretariat and working groups.

Council of Europe

Since we have obtained participatory status with the Council of Europe we have not been active. The SG of the European Forum of Nurses has been elected President of the Health Grouping and I intend to follow-up more closely the works of this grouping.

AEMH Enlargement

Although the situation is not favorable to attract new members, we have to pursue our efforts and enlarge the AEMH as much as possible in order to gain a true European representation status. To the upcoming AEMH Conference and plenary meeting we will invite the Royal College of Physicians of the UK and Ireland, all “new” member states, candidate countries and more.

AEMH Conference

The encouraging experience of 2005 should not only be continued but even further enhanced and become a real focus for all of us to develop and expose our works in an international and public way. I would even say that the AEMH Conferences, where professional problems are developed, should become the main yearly event by reflecting the progress of the working groups. The new sequence of the plenary meeting, which we will experiment this year, is meant to free time for the working groups by keeping the internal procedural discussions, which remain of course essential, strictly to the legally necessary functions.

Funding

The AEMH Conferences should next to our hospital expertise complete our added value in a professional manner and consolidate our position as an indispensable stakeholder. If we reach this objective, the Conference can even become a way of financing other AEMH activities and our participation in other events by attracting either private partners, other European organizations or even the European Commission.