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ЕВРОПЕЙСКА АСОЦИАЦИЯ НА СТАРШИТЕ БОЛНИЧНИ ЛЕКАРИ**

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President's Report – 2/2006

In my last written report I resumed the 2005 activities and made some projections on 2006, which I remind hereby in bullet points and take as frame for the activities of the past nine months.

- Collaboration CPME and involvement in subcommittees and working groups.
- Council of Europe
- Enlargement of the AEMH
- AEMH Conference
- Funding

Collaboration CPME and involvement in subcommittees and working groups.

Together with the CPME President and Secretary General I have been invited by a MEP to participate in a first meeting for the creation of the "European Life Science Circle" (ELSC), which ambitions to become the portal for an improvement of patient conditions, particularly when it comes to patients' right to be informed and make their own choices. The meeting was under the patronage of EPFIA and turned out to be a lobbying action of the pharmaceutical industry.

The follow-up of the patient safety issue has been taken up by a Commission funded project called SIMPATIE, in which the CPME has a leading position. The stakeholders held an invitational meeting in Luxembourg with 70 participants which I attended on behalf of the AEMH but also as national expert for patient safety of Luxembourg. This was again a very patient-oriented event where it was important to stand for the doctors. I had the opportunity to meet with the new director of the Public Health Department of DG SANCO, Dr Andrzej Rys. Dr Rys is a MD very interested in hospital affairs.

The CPME has established a working group which will be in charge to draft an input of doctors to the Health Service Directive. I was able to integrate the group, which met 14 September. The group was unanimous that patient mobility should be enhanced. The commission has launched a public consultation with eight questions to be answered. The WG will not content to only respond to these but will make further recommendations to the Commission.

Thomas Zilling is an important actor in the preparation of the CPD Conference organized by the CPME together with the European Commission and the Finnish Presidency and which will take place 14 december 2006 in Luxembourg. No doubt that he will keep the flag of the AEMH flying high !

Council of Europe

The Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee of the Plenary Assembly of the Council of Europe held a conference under the patronage of the French Senate on the

situation of elderly people in Europe. I had been invited to participate in the debate, According to the Parliamentary Assembly's rapporteur on the situation of elderly persons in Europe, Europe is likely to lose nearly 55 million economically active persons by 2050, making a ratio of one retired person for each worker. Most of the contributions concerned the consequences of the increased life expectancy.

I had the opportunity to draw the attention on the difficult situation of the elderly in hospitals, by evoking hospital budgets based on efficiency criteria. The average length of stay is an important factor in this evaluation, which can be harmful for the elderly. I also informed the audience of the fact that in some European countries the elderly are excluded from expensive treatments.

In conclusion of the meeting, the rapporteur proposed the setting up of an observatory for research into ageing in Europe, the launch of an information campaign linking the Council of Europe and the European Union and measures for guaranteeing every individual a decent and dignified existence. His report, which will contain recommendations on this subject to the governments of the 46 member states, will be presented at a forthcoming Assembly session and I trust that my comments will be included.

Enlargement of the AEMH

In 2006 we could welcome as new member the Bulgarian Medical Association. With Bulgaria joining the EU in 2007 this is a good timing. Nevertheless, it is insufficient and we have to make all efforts to gain new members.

AEMH Conference

Our AEMH Conference 2006 in Bratislava can be considered as a success in the process we have started. We want to enhance our image and become one of the inevitable stakeholders for hospital matters in the European scene. We could gain renowned speakers, such as MEP Dr Belohorska and Dr Montgomery, President of the biggest German Doctor's Trade Union. The latter joined the on-going strike of Slovakian doctors and could support them in their fight for better salaries and working conditions. For the conference this was a rather unfortunate timing as due to this strike we had a rather scarce audience.

Plenary Meeting

At the last meeting we had experienced a new working method with parallel sessions. In my opinion this first try was encouraging but can be improved. We must endeavour to make more time available for our working groups, because I attribute to a lack of time the poor outcome. The only paper for decision in this context was the statement the AEMH board drafted already last year on its views on the future of the European Medical Organisations. Does this mean that no consensus can be found on this issue?

Due to a lack of time the declaration with the conclusions of the conference, which Dr De Deus elaborated and put great efforts in, could not be adopted despite all his willingness to include the proposed amendments.

The delegations had committed to send their comments and amendments after the meeting to the secretariat on both documents, but none did.

But to end with a positive review, we could adopt a resolution on the situation in European hospitals. And the manner we revised the AEMH statutes and the elections showed great fairness and democratic attitude.

Funding

The DEXIA bank in Luxembourg confirmed a partnership with AEMH in different events in connection with the plenary assembly.

At the SIMPATIE conference I met Mrs Pickaert from EFPIA who told me that EFPIA considers a closer cooperation with the AEMH. She will come with some proposals.

The collaboration agreement with FEMS is a considerable contribution to cover office and employment costs of the secretariat and I hereby thank Brigitte Jencik to master this increased work load.

Prof. Nolte took the initiative to collaborate in the VLK journal and he and Brigitte Jencik have committed to supply every month a contribution for the “Europa”-page. This activity is not only profiling the AEMH but is furthermore remunerated with 100 € which is credited to the AEMH. I thank both Prof. Nolte and Brigitte Jencik for their efforts and we should all answer their call for editorial contributions.

Meetings

HOPE has initiated meetings with healthcare professionals. After a first meeting in March attended by SG Brigitte Jencik, I attended the September meeting and refer to the written report.