Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The end of the year is approaching and so the time is there to look back at what happened in 2011 and what were the most important achievements within the UEMS house of the last twelve months.

Let us start with some important organizational despite seemingly a housekeeping note. Undoubtedly, the most important in 2011, and indeed a historical step for the organization, while at the same time also a symbolic issue happened on Wednesday, June 29, 2011, when the UEMS President, Dr. Zlatko Fras and the Secretary-General, Dr. Bernard Maillet, officially signed on behalf of the UEMS Council (& its Board) the contract that finally made the house located at 24 Rue de l’Industrie in Brussels the property of the UEMS. By doing so, the UEMS finally reached its longstanding wish and desire to be settled in its own House, namely its home, that will hopefully become a real Domus Medica Europea – as well the ongoing wish of many National Medical Organizations, being at the same time constitutive members of many European Medical Organizations (EMOs).

Here, within this new Brussels home for the medical profession in Europe, we sincerely hope we’ll finally have the opportunity to host many or even better all of the other EMOs under the same roof. By doing so, we will be able to daily share not only information, but also probably some valuable resources and potentially functions to the outside world - what will undoubtedly also significantly improve the ongoing collaboration between the different EMOs.

After the building became legally the property of the UEMS, we’ve immediately started many activities related to its substantial refreshment, and actually rebuilding – all the necessary architectural plans were already presented to the UEMS Board & Council, and immediately afterwards also to the Brussels authorities to get as soon as possible the permission for works to be performed. What we can say at the end of 2011 is that we sincerely hope it is not unrealistic we can expect the house will be accommodated at least in the last quarter of 2012.

Looking back to 2011...

Dr Zlatko Fras
UEMS President
2006-2011

Dr Bernard Maillet
UEMS Secretary-General
2003-2011
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Mentioning our medico-political areas of work first we should obviously point to the CME-CPD. The UEMS-EACCME is growing constantly and its visibility and recognition is continuously expanding. In May 2011 the UEMS-EACCME signed an agreement on mutual recognition of CME Credits with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, actually as a pilot project for one year, only including for the time being accreditation of live events. Normally, in 2012 this agreement will be evaluated thoroughly and eventually extended for three years for live educational events too, as it is the case since 2010 with the American Medical Association. In Europe, we also signed an agreement with the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians in London.

During 2011, both the criteria for evaluation and accreditation of CME Live Educational Events as well as the e-Learning materials were revised and finally approved by the UEMS Council (respectively documents UEMS 2011/30 and UEMS 2011/20) and this thanks in its greatest part to the work done by the UEMS Executive appointed Taskforce for CME of the UEMS-EACCME.

In November 2011, the UEMS organized in Brussels its first international Conference on CME / CPD that created by itself an important success, both concerning the attendance as well as the contents, at least as it comes out of the comments and letters received after the event from the attendees (mainly our CME reviewers from Sections and Boards as well as the providers applying for CME through EACCME). There was a large opportunity to exchange information and communicate concerns from all the stakeholders.

Touching the second large area of the UEMS’s professional and medico-political interest, Postgraduate Specialist Medical Training, we should mention the continuation with the pilot project related to the potential introduction of the common e-platform supporting the three tier system of assessments of medico-professional competence (featuring knowledge, skills and professionalism) – being the central and vital part of the ambitious UEMS project called ECAMSQ (as it stands for the European Council for Accreditation of Medical Specialist Qualifications). This year we dealt mainly with the harmonization of knowledge assessments, where the test of the feasibility of organizing the knowledge assessment for trainees via internet – with same MCQs, at the same time, at different places in Europe (and wider) – proved successful. We can proudly confirm the pilot project based on the agreement between the UEMS and the Swedish IT company Orzone (started in 2010 for two years, and including three specialties) was finalized and knowledge assessments were organized in Intensive Care Medicine, Anesthesiology and Cardiology.

On this issue we do not have to forget the tremendous work produced by the Council for European Specialist Medical Assessment (CESMA) and their achievements in getting more and more of those European Boards Examinations accepted by a larger number of European Authorities.

As part of the realization of the UEMS Strategy from 2008, the Steering Committees will be put in place soon for the Standing Committees for CME-CPD (running the EACCME), as well as for Postgraduate Specialist Medical Training (running the ECAMSQ). These committees will potentially evolved into the UEMS Executive appointed governance bodies of the two Standing Committees.

Obviously, also this year the UEMS was very much involved in its “political” work towards the European Institutions (mainly EU Commission and EU Parliament), such as in organizing the internal discussions and creating the reply to the Green Paper issued by the EU Commission on the revision of the Directive on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications, the evolution of the Directive on Electro Magnetic Fields (concerning mainly, but not only the Radiologists) and the follow-up of the Conference organized by the Belgian Presidency of the European Union on the Workforce in Healthcare in La Hulpe in September 2010.

Just the most intriguing and time consuming part should be emphasized more, namely the dissemination and active lobbying of the idea of “competence – based” training, assessments and qualifications recognition to be introduced also at the legislative level in EU in the future. This will need a commitment of all UEMS Members, both the representatives of the National Medical Associations as well as the delegates to our UEMS Sections, Boards and Multidisciplinary Joint Committees as there will be issues to look for and give input to.

The UEMS is also strongly involved with very prominent experts such as Dr. Cillian Twomey and Prof. Peter Patrynama in issues concerning e-Health. Their contribution to projects such as Calliope and Renewing Health is very much appreciated.

Clearly the involvement of the UEMS and its constituency (both the National Medical Associations and the UEMS Sections, Boards and MJCs)’s to activities organized by the European institutions have been extended during the last years and the increase in visibility and credibility of the UEMS strongly improved.

Finally, in October, there was the UEMS Council in Naples, where elections were organized and the Executive Committee was renewed. The good thing is that there is a continuity with some members who were already active in the actual Executive on the one hand, while on the other hand, there is some “fresh blood” inside with colleagues who will be in the New Executive for the coming 4 years.

On behalf of the UEMS Executive and the Staff of our Brussels Office, we wish you all, your families and friends as well as all your beloved ones a peaceful, healthy, happy, and successful 2012 and nice festive moments for Christmas and New Year.

Zlatko Fras
Bernard Maillet