



UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES
EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

Association internationale sans but lucratif

International non-profit organisation

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UEMS 2015 / 26

REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY GENERAL

UEMS COUNCIL MEETING

Warsaw, POLAND

Friday 16th October 2015

Saturday 17th October 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report comes at the end of the current Presidency; four years passes extraordinarily quickly when it is so filled with events!

The past six months, since the last Council meeting, in many ways have been a time of working to overcome challenges, in order to achieve a new stability and maintain the course that the UEMS Council and Board have set.

Central to these challenges, and to the consolidation of the position of the UEMS, has been Domus Medica Europaea (DME). Our building in Brussels is fully operational – with tenants, visitors, meetings, examinations – hence is as much a home as an office. This is what was intended when the project was initiated: for DME to be the centre for the representation of all Medical Organisations in Europe. While more needs to be done in DME – expanding its commercial and political tenancy – stability has been achieved following the completion of all building works.

As was detailed at the last Council meeting, the key challenge that the UEMS faces currently, and will have for the next year, is to ensure financial stability. Despite the UEMS family's considerable reserves in its accounts, the loans required for the building and alterations works of DME have caused an increase in expenditure that is at the limit of what can be covered by the UEMS Council's current income alone.

The EACCME Governance Board has set a precedent within the UEMS by becoming the first part of the new structure to become constitutionally active. It is anticipated that other areas will follow, with a more confederate organisation developing as a result. That should provide greater stability within other areas of expertise - such as examinations policy, or the assurance of quality of specialist practice - and also provides the potential for more rapid development in these areas.

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At this meeting, elections will be held for the office-holders who will lead the next four years of the UEMS's development. This is an opportunity for renewal but also should serve as an opportunity for the organisation as a whole to recognise that it is not just the office-holders who contribute to the success of the UEMS.

The UEMS has many strengths:

- our history combined with our ability to develop;
- the commitment of our representatives;
- the commitment of our Secretariat;
- our considerable structural assets: DME and its infrastructure;
- our intellectual assets: our policies, knowledge and expertise;
- our dedication to achieving the best standards of care for patients throughout our continent, through promoting the highest achievable standards of education and practice.

Ours is an organisation of its members, for its members; quite an achievement given the number of countries represented, the many active representatives, and the many colleagues for whom we provide their voice in Europe.

Please be more than “only” a voice; please give your expertise, energy and time to our organisation.

Domus Medica Europaea

Seven years ago the UEMS was faced with an unusual challenge; the organisation's reserves were sufficiently large to require our active intervention, in order to maintain our status as an AISBL registered under Belgian law. Detailed discussions were held by the Board and it was decided that these reserves should be invested in the purchase of a building that would serve as the home for European Medical Organisations (EMOs).

This long-desired concept had been described as the second step towards greater, incremental integration of the bodies representing doctors in Europe. The first has already been accomplished, namely the establishment of greater co-operation between EMOs, many of which have membership from the same National Medical Associations (NMAs) on their Councils.

Domus Medica Europaea (DME) has, therefore, been the result of Board decisions to support this project – the purchase of a building – then, within this Presidency, the overcoming of considerable challenges to obtain planning permission and to complete extensive building works. All these have been achieved and colleagues will have had the opportunity, at the last Council meeting, and since then, to enjoy the facilities of DME. More importantly, this is an achievement that future generations of medical specialists will be able to enjoy and, with political will, should provide the next evolutionary step towards the integration of the EMOs.

Further work is being done within DME, in order to provide purpose-built office space for our own staff, and for our tenants. This has included the introduction of modern information and communications technology systems, reception and intercom facilities, and a reliable printing service. All of these are part of the development of a Business Centre, designed to attract both long-term and ad-hoc tenants, involved in a wide a range of health and care lobbying activities.

As a result, DME has become increasingly busy, with:

- regular tenants and temporary tenants
- postal address tenancies
- meeting rooms made available to all parts of the UEMS family, and to other EMOs
- rooms adapted for the delivery of European examinations
- areas used for receptions and political lobbying
- even some of our parking spaces being rented.

The UEMS has been pleased to welcome to DME the Surgical Sections and Divisions, twelve of which collectively have moved their office to our building in Brussels. This provides excellent opportunity for co-operative working amongst specialities and with the UEMS office, and already has supported co-operation with accounting requirements. It is hoped that this excellent example will be followed by other specialities in the UEMS family.

If you've not yet held a meeting at DME, why don't you? It'll be an enjoyable meeting environment for you and your colleagues, and you'll be contributing to the success of our organisational family's project, both financially and by promoting the excellent facilities we have available.

My thanks for work in this area, and indeed all others, goes to Bertrand Daval, who, should you have further queries regarding DME, can be contacted at ceo@uems.eu Bertrand has provided leadership and focus for the Secretariat in a manner that has allowed the UEMS to take big steps forward despite considerable challenges.

Financial matters

While the finances of the UEMS are intimately linked to those of Domus Medica Europaea, there is much more to the UEMS's finances than just DME! During the last six months, indeed, throughout this term, much has been achieved in enhancing the UEMS's financial accountability systems, complying with ever more stringent accountancy and tax requirements, all in keeping with our status as a large AISBL (not for profit organisation) registered under Belgian law.

These requirements mean that all parts of the UEMS family must ensure that all funds are kept in accounts within the UEMS family of accounts, that we maintain high standards of accountability, with all transactions clearly identifiable, and that timescales and documentation for invoices and receipts are meticulously kept.

Much progress has been made in these areas, and there now are 71 accounts in the UEMS family account, 64 of which are for Sections and Boards. This provides an opportunity to provide another important reminder to the very small number of colleagues who may not yet have opened such an account for your speciality that our legal advice indicates that you may be held personally liable by the Belgian authorities for any actions regarding these funds.

Both as a means of ensuring transparency within the UEMS family, and in order to comply with Belgian tax and accounting law, the UEMS office has considerably developed its financial functions. These now include the preparation and analysis of:

- profit and loss accounts - related to our rental income
- cash flow forecasts, to ensure financial stability
- accounting policy and procedures prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Belgian authorities
- our balance sheets and financial projections, to support decision-making by the Executive and the Board.

While much progress already has been made, the UEMS Executive has made plans for further developments, in order that the UEMS can function effectively in a very challenging financial environment.

That "very challenging environment" continues to require considerable attention from the UEMS Executive and has meant that difficult decisions have had to be taken, with delays in payments from the UEMS and requests for advanced payments of subscriptions to the UEMS. These steps, that were part of a range of interventions explained at the last Council meeting, have helped to hold, but have not yet solved the financial challenge that we all face. It seems strange that in a "reserves rich yet cash poor organisation" we should have these continuing challenges. One of the core European principles is that of solidarity; this is the time for that to be provided within our organisation.

Despite these challenges, the UEMS now has three well-developed income streams: from NMA membership subscriptions, from the EACCME, and now from DME. With the completion of building work in DME and the near-completion of its infrastructure, expenditure soon also will be stabilised. One final area of risk is that of ongoing arbitration regarding the fees demanded by the architect responsible for DME redevelopment.

My thanks for work in this area goes to Benedicte Reychler and Thierry Kalala, who, should you have further queries regarding financial matters, can be contacted at director@uems.eu and thierry@uems.eu

The UEMS Family

The UEMS Family continues to grow and, in addition to the 34 countries that are members of the Council, we now have 43 Sections and Boards, 12 Multidisciplinary Joint Committees and 3 Thematic Federations. Some of these have taken shared office space at Domus Medica Europaea; it is hoped that soon all will have done!

Not only are the numbers impressive, so is the output of work produced by these colleagues. This Council meeting sees a further 8 sets of European Training Requirements being proposed for adoption. While politicians may be unwilling to develop greater harmonisation of education standards through legislation, the profession already is achieving this through agreeing these in our specialities and implementing them in each of our countries.

The UEMS not only acts on its responsibility to set standards in postgraduate specialist education, we also ensure that these standards are being achieved. Most specialities now run examinations that incorporate modern concepts in summative assessment. The high standard of these examinations has meant that more countries and specialities are opting to use the European examination instead of running a separate national examination.

The high quality of these examinations is assured through CESMA, whose guidelines on assessment, adopted at our last Council meeting, are being put into effect widely throughout Europe. The work of colleagues in this part of the UEMS Family increasingly is being recognised for its high academic and educational achievement.

The successful completion of European examinations certainly is recognised as a marker of academic quality in countries throughout Europe, and increasingly in countries beyond.

It must be emphasised however that, other than in those countries that have adopted European examinations into their legally mandated assessments, these examinations do not have formal legal effect but, rather, are confirmations of academic achievement. For colleagues who need confirmation of this, the UEMS does provide a service – for a reasonable fee – that allows for the signature and notarisation of the European examination diploma.

It is essential that the UEMS office maintains a valid database of representatives in all parts of the UEMS Family. Given that there are more than 1000 of us, please help to ensure that your contact details, and those of colleagues in your area are kept up-to-date.

My thanks for work in this area goes to Lise Carratala, who, should you have further queries regarding the work of the many parts of the UEMS Family, can be contacted at lise@uems.eu

Lobbying activities

The UEMS has continued to be active in its lobbying efforts, working with other EMOs where appropriate, and working with National Medical Associations when specific national issues have arisen.

In anticipation of the next opportunity to present amendments, the UEMS has responded to the Commission's questionnaire on the Professional Qualifications Directive.

Our organisation has also kept a close watch on the state of negotiations on TTIP, has co-operated with the Smoke Free Partnership (who "live" in DME with us) and has participated in the Commission's Joint Action Health Workforce initiative and the EU Health Policy Forum.

The EACCME

The EACCME provides the most developed form of quality assurance for continuing medical education and professional development at an international European level. In addition, the EACCME, through its links with more than 20 countries has provided considerable stimulus to the achievement of higher standards at national and regional CME and CPD.

In keeping with the EACCME's policy of continuing improvement and achievement, the EACCME has commenced a review of its function. A key goal of this review is to achieve streamlining in the accreditation process while maintaining high standards of accreditation.

This initiative, known as EACCME 2.0, will be discussed during this Council meeting and at the EACCME Advisory Council meeting at the end of November, prior to policy being developed by the UEMS-EACCME Governance Board and the UEMS Executive.

An analysis of accreditation activity shows that applications have been maintained, with a slight increase in the success rate. As ever, my thanks, and those of the UEMS Family as a whole, to colleagues who serve as reviewers for applications.

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Live Educational Events

1st January – 12th October 2015

	2014/2015 applications	2015 applications Only	% (2015 applications only)
New		1309	
Still on-going		213	16 %
Accredited	1319	1044	79 %
Rejected	32	22	2 %
Suspended	66	30	3 %

Live Educational Events

Comparison of 2014 with 2015 (as at 12th October*)

	2014*	2015	Difference	%
New	1348	1309	- 39	- 3 %
Accredited	1038	1044	+ 6	+ 0,5 %
Rejected	57	22	- 35	- 62 %
Suspended	57	30	- 27	- 48 %
Still on-going	206	213	+ 7	+ 3,5 %

* 31st October for 2014 applications

During this year the UEMS has introduced a small increase in the “standing fee” for EACCME applications that ensures that the actual cost of applications, within the UEMS office, is covered.

My thanks for their work in ensuring that applications for accreditation are dealt with in a timely and consistent manner – despite the challenges! – goes to Nathalie Paulus and Patricia Demeulemeester, who, should you have further queries can be contacted at nathalie@uems.eu and patricia@uems.eu

Our Secretariat

Given the small size of our Secretariat – I’ve mentioned each of them in the sections above – the UEMS achieves remarkable results. To each of them I extend my own thanks, and the appreciation of the organisation as a whole. Our collective successes could not be achieved without the considerable dedication of these colleagues.

This dedication is epitomised by no-one more than Benedicte Reychler who, during this month celebrates having worked for the UEMS for 30 years! While I anticipate that Benedicte will be characteristically reluctant to be the focus of attention, I trust that her contribution to the UEMS will be suitably honoured.

And finally

This is my last report as Secretary General and, as I am not standing for election, also may be my last official communication on behalf of the UEMS.

I have explained to colleagues on the Executive that the unceasing demands of my hospital and managerial work mean that that I am unable to discharge my responsibilities to the UEMS as fully as I want. In this regard I record my considerable thanks to Romuald Krajewski, with whom I have “shared” leadership over the last four years; I say “shared” because Romuald has dedicated himself to the UEMS in a way that is truly impressive, allowing me to contribute when work permitted that.

That has been a particularly painful recognition because I have been active in the UEMS for more than 20 years: initially as a representative of Junior Doctors, and in many posts since.

I’ve been able to contribute to many aspects of our organisation and have seen the UEMS grow to be the largest, most capable, most effective European Medical Organisation. Yet, I know that, at this extraordinary stage in its development – when, with all colleagues contributing, there is such a remarkable opportunity to achieve even more – it is time for others to take our organisation, our UEMS Family further forward.

Edwin Borman
Secretary General
October 2015