



# UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

*Association internationale sans but lucratif*

*International non-profit organisation*

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## UEMS 2018/07

### UEMS COUNCIL MEETING

**MARRAKESH, 27-28 APRIL 2018**

### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

#### **1. Introduction – The UEMS today**

The writing of the report of the Secretary General has evolved into a daunting task for the most important and most pleasing reason that our organisation and our activities are constantly expanding. As it is our established practice over the last 2 ½ years, the Secretary General Report is circulated with the CEO report and offers the analysis of the facts presented in the CEO report and of course all other documents circulated for the Council meeting.

Reviewing of the minutes of the Council meeting that took place in Brussels in October of 2017 and reflecting on the developments of the last six months allow us to make the following observations:

- The successful establishment of the Advisory Board has enhanced the collaboration between the National Medical Associations, the formal members of the UEMS, and our Sections and has made our decision-making process more robust and inclusive without changing the character of our organisation.
- We have successfully overcome the financial challenges of the recent years due to the massive task of the building (practically from the foundations) of the Domus Medica Europaea, our organisation is financially sound, and we are allowed, without ever being complacent, to look to the future of our financial status with confidence.

# UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

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However, the size and the complexity of our organisation and our activities demand professionalism and efficiency of the highest order in the governance of our finances. Great progress has been made in this domain over the last few years and plans are in place to take us to the next level of financial planning, handling and accountability.

- We are clearly the leading force at a European level (with influence much beyond Europe) in the field of development of comprehensive as well as educationally and professionally meaningful training guidelines for medical specialties and competences.
- We continue to establish new and active forums of collaboration (Multidisciplinary Joint Committees, Thematic Federations, Divisions, Boards) that facilitate and advance our work in various areas of specialist practice and allow us to engage and collaborate with a broad spectrum of professional, scientific and educational organisations in Europe who have certain common areas of interest with the UEMS.
- Since the very successful second meeting we had in Brussels with the European Scientific Societies, our collaboration with them has been part of our strategic plans and is reflected in our flagship activities such the development of our training guidelines and of course the work of EACCME.
- EACCME continues to evolve and makes our organisation one of the leading authorities internationally in the fields of accreditation of continuous medical education and professional development. The implementation of EACCME 2.0 has been a great success and we continue to explore and develop new ways to further expand the width, depth and quality of the EACCME portfolio.
- We are most grateful and most proud for all Colleagues who work with great commitment and enthusiasm for all the causes of the UEMS. We are particularly proud for the UEMS Team at the Domus Medica Europaea in Brussels. Their hard work, professionalism and efficiency are second to none. The UEMS Extended Executive Committee works very closely with the UEMS CEO and all the members of our Team in Brussels to ensure their work is supported and organised efficiently and their professional development is planned in a way that is rewarding for them and further advances the work of the UEMS.
- The UEMS celebrates this year its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday! The formal celebration will take place at the Council meeting in Brussels in October of 2018 where we will also

present and discuss our plans for the future. It is one element though which is an integral ingredient of the character of our organisation and will not wait for October 2018 to celebrate it; it is something with which we live and practice every single day in the UEMS: being inclusive, bring Doctors together, break down walls and build bridges. The fact that the Council meeting is taking place in Morocco, states most emphatically the importance we give to the work and commitment of our Associate and Observing Countries/ Organisations as well as to the work and aspirations of all doctors who wish to embrace European ideas and ideals.

## **2. The Extended Executive Committee**

The spirit of democracy, transparency and inclusiveness as well as continuous communication and dealing with all issues in real time and efficiently that has been the hallmark of the modus operandi of the UEMS President Romuald Krajewski over the past 6 ½ years, makes the work of the UEMS Extended Executive Committee effective, productive and, allow me to say, enjoyable. It is a legacy that has to be treasured and practiced by all Colleagues who will have the enormous responsibility of running our organisation in the future.

Furthermore, it was a real pleasure and honour to have on board the three elected Chairs of the Groupings of the UEMS Sections who are also the committee that runs the Advisory Board. Professor Rijk Gans (first Chair of the Advisory Board), Mr Patrick Magennis and Professor Paolo Ricci enriched our work with their dynamic presence and innovative ideas and always ensured that the voice of all Colleagues working hard for the UEMS through our Sections is heard. They have our grateful thanks. The launching of the work of the Advisory Board in October of 2017 in Brussels was very successful; as time goes by, we also identify areas where things can be refined and improved. It is a most important evolution for the UEMS which we will continue to monitor and support every step of the way.

It is not possible of course to include in this report all the activities of the members of the Extended Executive Committee over that last six months; I would like to focus on three of the most important ones:

- We had an excellent and close collaboration since September of 2017 with the Spanish Medical Association developing the project of giving EACCME accreditation to the national events taking place in Spain.

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- In March of 2018, there was a most productive meeting between the UEMS Executive and the Bulgarian Medical Association to sign the agreement of mutual recognition of credits between the Bulgarian Medical Association and EACCME. This was combined with high level discussions, including a really well organised meeting with the Minister of Health of Bulgaria, to discuss the prospects of collaboration between Bulgaria and the UEMS.
- In April of 2018, SPIFA, organised in Berlin a very successful European Symposium where we had the opportunity to present the whole portfolio of the UEMS to the leading figures of the German specialist professional organisations that operate under the umbrella of SPIFA and also to learn a lot about the achievements, challenges and aspirations of German Colleagues in their day to day professional life. It was impressive to see the quantity and quality of work that SPIFA has done since its establishment and discuss with German Colleagues the prospects of our future collaboration.

It is of paramount importance to emphasize that the door of the UEMS Extended Executive Committee is always open to all our National Medical Associations and UEMS Bodies and we are ready to work with them and support them for anything they need. This constructive communication and collaboration also feeds into our overall strategic planning for the years ahead of us.

### **3. The UEMS Office in Brussels**

In 2018, we have 10 Colleagues working at the UEMS Office in Brussels, a total of 8.1 whole time equivalents; in 2017 we had 8 Colleagues working for the Office, a total of 7.1 whole time equivalents.

The development of the Office continuous following the same measured approach that we have adopted of the last few years with emphasis on:

1. Identifying and prioritising the actual needs of our organisation.
2. Professional and transparent process for advertising, selecting and hiring.

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3. Combine experience and achievement with talent and ambition in the Team.
4. Clear and specific portfolios for the members of the Team.
5. Annual professional appraisal and plan for professional development for all the members of the Team.

In his exemplary report, our CEO has given all the details regarding the current work of our Team. I will encourage you to read it carefully because you will be able to see the width and depth of their portfolio and identify the ones who can help you with your work; they are always keen and ready to do so. Furthermore, the CEO has added in his report the pictures of his Colleagues. It is so important to link the real person with the name, which is the only thing that we usually see at the end of an e-mail or a document; it ensures a more professional and productive collaboration. I would also like to encourage you to visit them in Brussels if you can; I am sure that their professional expertise will impress you and will certainly support your aspirations within the UEMS.

Investing in people is the greatest investment of all and as you will see in the CEO's report we have invested in hiring Colleagues that will support the following main domains of our activity:

- Projecting and advancing our great work at a European level.
- Sound financial governance.
- Advancing the portfolio of EACCME.
- Support the work of the UEMS Bodies.

As I have highlighted in my previous report, the last element of the work of the Office (supporting the UEMS Bodies) is still not as developed as we would like it to be. We strongly recommend to all UEMS Bodies to consider transferring their administration to our Office in

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Brussels. You can contact our CEO and he will prove to you with clear cut facts and figures that it is to your benefit; he is always ready to facilitate this for you expeditiously.

## **4. The Domus Medica Europaea**

It is not that long ago when reporting on the Domus was a major challenge. I am delighted to say: not anymore! The Domus has found its place in the hearts and the every day professional life of all Colleagues working for the UEMS and much beyond. There is a culture of networking and collaboration developing around the Domus which now starts to shape the way we develop our work.

Those observations are supported by the cold and clear “language” of the numbers:

- There were 33% more meetings that took place in the Domus in 2017 compared to 2016.
- The overall income generated by the Domus (meetings, tenants, services and parking) was 60% higher in 2017 compared to 2016. We need to highlight that the parking spaces were being refurbished in 2017 and therefore did not generate income for the UEMS in 2017; otherwise this increase in income would be even higher. The parking spaces will be available this year and will generate the relevant income.

The Domus turns to be a clear success story but there is a lot of room for improvement. It has certainly not reached its capacity when it comes to meetings organised and services offered at the Domus. The UEMS Extended Executive Committee and the UEMS Office work non-stop to promote this task but we do need the active engagement and support of all our National Medical Associations and UEMS Bodies. It is OUR Domus Medical Europaea, it was established to serve us, and we need to use it and support its functions.

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## 5. Finances

The UEMS Treasurer has submitted to the Board and Council all the details related to our financial status. The facts that I would like to highlight in this report are as follows:

- Our end of year position in 2015 was negative, in 2016 was 517,000 Euros in surplus and in 2017 that was further improved with an end of year financial position of 860,000 Euros in surplus.
  
- Our overall assets have further increased and reached almost 9.5 million Euros. This comes with enormous responsibility to ensure that the governance of our finances is of the highest standards. A few years ago, the task of complete accountability for all the elements of our finances seemed next to impossible. This was not due to lack of willingness of any UEMS Body to be part of the process of harmonisation of the handling of our finances and comply with Belgian law and tight financial regulations but due to the different ways UEMS Bodies develop over the years and the complexity of their activities with financial transactions in Europe and around the world. We have gone a long way to achieve the goal of harmonisation, robustness and transparency of our financial governance:
  - 2012: relocation of all UEMS bank accounts within the same bank in Brussels (BNP PARIBAS).
  - 2013: provision of a guideline (*Internal Memorandum 2013/15*).
  - 2015: first appointment of Callens External Auditors for the review of 2014 annual account.
  - 2015: service of administrative support in Brussels on request.
  - 2016: creation of the Financial Committee.
  - 2017: outsourcing of our accounting management for higher quality and professional service.
  - 2018: implementation of a central platform (*UEMS Admin Platform*) to get a clear picture of all UEMS financial activities.

# UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

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However, we have still some way to go to be where is mandatory to be. For the financial authorities, even one unaccountable transaction could be enough to impose to the UEMS penalties that would be beyond our financial means to handle. The proposal for the cover of the administrative and accounting costs for the handling of our finances that is up for discussion at this Council meeting aims to take our organisation to the required level of watertight financial governance and do so in a fair and affordable way for the UEMS Bodies.

- In 2017, we met our financial obligations towards our Sections and National Accreditation Authorities for their reviews for EACCME and we will continue to do so in 2018; this element of our financial practice has also gone back to normal business.

Better financial times are clearly a source of relief and a big reward for all the hard work of the last few years. We will not stop saying though that there is no room for complacency. Furthermore, our increasing activities and the surplus generated over the last years poses two important questions:

- What needs to be done to ensure that we will not lose our “non-for profit” status as an organisation.
- What is the best way to invest any available resources to ensure that we will further advance the portfolio of the UEMS for the benefit of doctors and, ultimately and most importantly, patients.

These are massively important issues that have been addressed also in the report of the Internal Auditors and will be discusses thoroughly at the Council meeting and in the months ahead of us.

## **6. EACCME**

2017, was the year of implementation of EACCME 2.0 that took place in three stages:

- Launch of EACCME platform for live educational events on the 6th March 2017.
- Launch of EACCME platform for e-learning materials on the 9th June 2017.
- Launch of EACCME platform for recognition of CPD/CME activities on the 7th August 2017.

We are delighted that, despite the anticipated teething problems, all functions of EACCME 2.0 are successfully up and running and the feedback that we get is that that whole EACCME portfolio has gone to the next level.

The EACCME activity is presented in detail in the CEO's report and I would like to highlight some important positive developments:

- We had excellent applications for all the new forms of accreditation we have introduced; e-platforms, apps, e-libraries and recognition of professional qualifications.
- The number of applications for e-learning material in 2017 was 140, an increase of almost 65% compared to 2016 and the highest number over the last 8 years. We sincerely hope that the new forms of accreditation that we have introduced, are more appealing to providers that develop state of the art e-learning material.
- Our appeal for back up reviewers in October of 2017 was met with enthusiasm and we have now a good number of very experienced back reviewers both from our Sections and the National Accreditation Authorities that have helped us to meet the timelines of our review process. The delay of some reviews was a chronic weakness of our system that I believe that has been now addressed satisfactorily.

# UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

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Over the last six months we had some other important developments for EACCME:

- Our Spanish Colleagues declared last year an interest to develop a process of accreditation of their national events that will follow EACCME principles and will also be recognised by EACCME. Basically, it meant an extension of our agreement from the international events to also include the national events taking place in Spain. The Spanish Medical Association, dedicated a very significant amount of human and financial resources to translate all EACCME documents in Spanish and create a new e-portal in Spanish (which was based on the EACCME portal) for the submission for review of the applications of national events taking place in Spain. The EACCME Team and our Spanish Colleagues worked very closely since September of 2017 to develop this new process and I am delighted that we have now reached an agreement that will be signed at the Council meeting in Marrakesh. This represents a breakthrough for the accreditation of educational events in Europe that allows Colleagues across Europe to get EACCME recognition of the credits awarded for attending national events. It is also a breakthrough for EACCME since it brings for the first time under its umbrella national events. I wish to express our most grateful thanks to our Spanish Colleagues for their remarkable work and commitment to their collaboration with EACCME. The model we have developed and the agreement that we will sign in Marrakesh, could serve as a model for other National Accreditation Authorities if they wish to follow the same path.
- In March of 2017, we signed an agreement with the Bulgarian National Medical Association and Bulgaria is now formally a member of the EACCME constituency. The signing of the agreement took place at the time of an excellent symposium organised by the Bulgarian Medical Association addressing current challenges and future aspirations for continuing medical education and professional development in Bulgaria and in Europe. The discussions (including a very well-structured meeting with the Minister of Health of Bulgaria) were excellent and pave the way for further advancing the collaboration between the Bulgarian National Medical Association and the UEMS. We were truly impressed by the willingness of our Bulgarian Colleagues to engage with UEMS projects and were also overwhelmed by their warm hospitality.
- Thanks to the good offices of the Spanish Medical Association, in mid-May, we will have a first meeting in Toledo with CONFEMEL, the Confederation of National Medical Associations in Central and South America, to explore avenues of future

# UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

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collaboration in the field of accreditation of specialist education and continuous medical education and professional development.

- We have a lot of requests for expanding the field of recognition of professional qualifications. We are working in upgrading the EACCME e-portal to accommodate those requests; if this is successful it will constitute another breakthrough for EACCME.

The meeting of the EACCME Advisory Council meeting took place in Brussels in January of 2018. It was very well attended and focused on the presentations made by the 4 working groups paving the way for the principles that will guide the development of EACCME 3.0.

The 4 EACME working groups and their Chairs are follows:

- Group 1: Expansion of recognition of professional qualifications (Chairman: Prof. Hans Perrild).
- Group 2: Development of a training module for reviewers (Chairman: Prof. Wolfgang Grisold).
- Group 3: Collaboration with other healthcare professionals (Chairman: Prof. Augusto Machado).
- Group 4: Conflict of interest disclosure forms and accredited programmes and the involvement of industry (Chairman: Dr Kristiina Patja).

There was a most productive discussion of the work of the 4 groups followed by one more round of consultation with the broader UEMS constituency. The comments offered were carefully considered by the groups in forming the latest version of the documents with their recommendations. Those documents have been circulated to the Council. We will discuss them in Marrakesh so that we can proceed with producing their final form. I want to

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express my sincere gratitude to all Colleagues who offered their professional expertise and enthusiastically participated in the work of the groups.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you to the EACCME Team in our Office in Brussels for their top-class work and our excellent collaboration. Without compromising in any way whatsoever in matters of sound governance and principle, they will always go the extra mile to support, if needed, providers with their applications so they are judged on educational merit.

I would like to most kindly remind all UEMS Colleagues, that we are all ambassadors for EACCME (along with all UEMS projects) and it is massively important to promote its activities in Europe and across the world.

I will close the EACCME section of the report with another reminder for our upcoming EACCME Conference that will take place in Brussels on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2018. The link for registrations is available and open and the programme will have the following elements:

- A series of meetings with current and potential future EACCME partners to discuss how to further advance our collaboration.
- Practical sessions as to how EACCME 2.0 works, including special sessions for our reviewers.
- Presentations for our future aspirations in the world of accreditation and continuing medical education and professional development.
- Presentations from providers as to what is in the pipeline when it comes to state of the art medical education and training and a constructive dialogue as to how EACCME can respond to this challenge and include those new forms of education in the EACCME accreditation portfolio.

We aim for a very interactive Conference with palpable outcomes. We had an open consultation for the elements of the programme but if you have innovative ideas as what else you would like us to include in the sessions of the Conference, you have one more chance to offer them during the EACCME session of the Council meeting.

# UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

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## **7. European Training Requirements and collaboration with European Scientific Societies**

The productivity of the UEMS Bodies in producing excellent training guidelines continuous and we will be delighted to review in Marrakesh 5 European Training Requirements and 3 Syllabi of sub-specialty competences.

Over that last 6 months, we had an important development when it comes to the way our training guidelines are developed. This was led by the Section of Gastroenterology and was followed by the Sections of Nephrology and Endocrinology. The new model is based on the development of a pan European partnership led by our Section and including well known and most credible organisations with masses of experience. All Sections have done a superb job, but for this specific model, we would particularly like to praise the work done by the Section of Gastroenterology; the quality of the work and the fact that represents the consensus opus of many very well respected organisations along with our Section, led recently to the recognition of the European Curriculum in Gastroenterology by the General Medical Council in the UK. We hope that this will be the prelude of more similar recognitions of the UEMS training curricula and guidelines by national authorities.

We are delighted to say that over the last few months, we are being approached by European Scientific Societies that have not worked before with the UEMS and they now wish to engage with our Sections in producing European training curricula and guidelines. We explore each request on a case by case basis proceeding carefully and always involving from day one our relevant Section.

I would also like to draw your attention to the very credible proposal that has been put forward for discussion at the Council meeting regarding the possible “renaming” of the European Training Requirements and the further advancement of the work of the relevant UEMS Committee. I am sure it will generate a lot of interesting discussion. In that context, I would also like to announce that with the unanimous approval of the UEMS Extended Executive Committee, we have appointed Mr Arthur Felice (representing the Section of Surgery) as Vice Chair of the European Training Requirements Committee. This was in recognition of his absolutely superb and efficient work for the Committee and his great expertise in the field of training requirements.

**8. Reports from National Medical Associations and UEMS Bodies**

The UEMS Office has developed a template for reports submitted every 6 months by our National Medical Associations and UEMS Bodies. This standardised format allows for a sound review of achievements, challenges and aspirations and paves the way for our future work.

I am delighted that the number of reports (although far from the number we would like to have) was very good with 14 reports from National Medical Associations and 19 reports by UEMS Bodies. I would kindly suggest you to go through them. They constitute most interesting reading and give you a good idea of what is happening in our profession at the moment across Europe and in our organisation in particular; this certainly enriches our Council discussions, decision making process and future plans.

**9. Statement of the European Medical Organisations for the central role of medical doctors in the provision of modern multidisciplinary care**

The consensus document of the European Medical Organisations that will be discussed at the Council meeting in Marrakesh, is of utmost importance. The issue of non-medical practitioners gaining authority and providing autonomous care bypassing partly or in total medical doctors has been raised by a few UEMS Sections, the Section of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine being one characteristic example. The UEMS Executive raised the issue with the other European Medical Organisations and the document that has been circulated to the Council is the consensus product of this consultation. It is important to emphasize that the UEMS respects the knowledge and skills of all healthcare professionals and supports their harmonious collaboration in the context of providing modern multi-disciplinary care. However, it is crucial to emphasize that the UEMS also believes and supports the concept that the “conductor” of this multi-disciplinary “orchestra” must be a medical doctor who has the right training, skills and expertise to make decisions and is accountable for those decisions. The moment the medical doctor is removed from the scene, provision of healthcare is clearly becoming inappropriate and unsafe. This short statement sets the framework for the future of our practice and deserves our full attention and support.

**10. UEMS Council of European Specialist Medical Assessments (UEMS-CESMA)**

The UEMS Executive met in January of 2018 with the newly elected CESMA Executive to discuss the future work of CESMA. CESMA has a very central role in our overall training guidelines, assessments and quality assurance portfolio and we were delighted to see that the new Executive is planning to build on the successes of the founders of CESMA and pave the way for the content and format of the European training guidelines and assessments in the years ahead of us. We are very much looking forward to seeing soon their plans in action; they will have the full support of the UEMS Executive and they need the support of the whole of the UEMS constituency since their dealing with projects which are central to the character of the UEMS.

**11. The UEMS turns 60!**

In October of 2018, we will celebrate in Brussels 60 years of great history and achievements of our organisation. Those achievements would never be possible without the commitment of thousands of Colleagues who over six decades worked very hard and dedicated with enthusiasm and on a volunteer basis their experience and expertise to the great causes of the UEMS. The proposal for the establishment of formal recognition on behalf of the UEMS of exceptional contributions of Colleagues in all aspects of our work reflects, we believe, a moral obligation which is well overdue.

The UEMS is united, strong, ever developing and, without being complacent even for a second, faces the future with optimism and confidence. When during this celebratory year, we will look for a compass that will guide us for the next 60 years, I believe that we need to look at the basic moral principles that the founders of the UEMS put in place when they started their enormous effort: reject selfishness, hatred, divisions and building of barriers and walls and embrace inclusiveness, togetherness, mutual appreciation, joining hands and building bridges. If to this, we add embracing the new generation and give them the support and opportunities that they deserve, then the limit of what we can achieve is only the sky.

Our Colleagues in Morocco have put together a great effort for what I am sure will be a successful, productive and enjoyable meeting!

See you in Marrakesh!

**Professor Vassilios Papalois, UEMS Secretary General**

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