Helsinki, 24 June 2004

Professional recognition directive – political agreement on the council’s common position

Dear colleagues,

In an earlier report, under UEMS News, I reported on the developments of the directive on the recognition of professional qualifications. It was dealt with at the Council of Ministers meeting on 17th and 18th of May with a promising outcome for medical specialists.

The General Secretariat of the Council has now sent a report of the political agreement reached by the Council on this issue. It also contains the list of specialities in all 25 current EU-member states.

Already earlier it was reported that the council agreed on a “2/5 principle”. This means that automatic recognition would prevail for the medical specialities common to 2/5 of member states.

Comparison of the specialities in the 25 countries, there are 17 specialities common to all countries and another 26 which are common to 2/5 or more member states. This means that a total of 43 specialities would be covered by this ruling.

These specialities are listed in Annex V which is titled Recognition on the basis of coordination of the minimum training conditions.

In addition to this there is a further Annex VI, titled “Established rights applicable to the professions subject to recognition on the basis of coordination of the minimum training conditions”. This contains another 9 specialities and free movement would be possible at least to the doctors having these specialities as of now.

Although this is a very positive result at this time, UEMS still lobbies for the “2 or more countries” principle. The 2/5 principle, although being quite promising and very beneficial, has a potential of putting specialities at 2 levels.

An important issue to still lobby for is how the medical profession will have a role in the updating of specialities and their training requirements. Naturally, the UEMS and its sections would be the best expert to assist the Commission in this.
The proposal for the directive will be dealt with by the new European Parliament probably in October. Although nothing is known yet of the position the new EP will take on this matter, it seems that a political agreement can be possible between the 3 parties: Commission having made the original proposal, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers which is the deciding body on this matter.

Thanking again all the colleagues that have lobbied at European and national level for this directive.

Wishes for a good and relaxing summer to all European specialist doctors and their families!

Dr. Hannu Halila
President of UEMS