PLENARY MEETING

OF THE

UEMS SPECIALIST SECTIONS

&

EUROPEAN BOARDS

REPORT

Meetings held at the Maison des Associations Internationales

Rue Washington 40 – 1050 Brussels (Belgium)

Friday 8th April 2011

13.00-15.00
MEETINGS of the 3 GROUPINGS of UEMS SPECIALIST SECTIONS & EUROPEAN BOARDS

Friday 8th April 2011 – 11.00-12.15

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1. Approval of the agenda and approval of the minutes of the last Meeting held in Prague on 7.10.2010  
UEMS 2010/49

The agenda of the meeting and the minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Financial matters UEMS registration to Belgian VAT  
UEMS 2011/11

**Background:**
Further to the expansion of its activities, particularly the development of the EACCME®, the UEMS was confronted with the need to clarify its situation in relation to tax authorities in Belgium where it is established.

The UEMS Executive therefore commissioned a study looking into the UEMS current and potential future situation. A report about the findings of this expertise (See UEMS 2011/11) was presented to the UEMS Board.

For the purpose of this item, the legal and tax expert whom the UEMS Executive consulted, Mr René Verdict, was present at the Board Meeting. He notably informed the UEMS Sections &
Boards that, according to the Belgian Law, the UEMS was to register to the tax authorities as a tax payer. The UEMS would therefore become a VAT tax payer but exempted from paying VAT on its general activities except all what relates to accreditation. Concerns were raised as regards the consequences of registration to tax authorities. Should the UEMS enquire about the application of VAT on its activities, tax authorities could decide that VAT applies to accreditation and thus claim from 3 to 7 years of unpaid taxes. Mr Verdickt will hence continue exploring possible solutions to clarify the situation.

3. UEMS Sections & Boards bank accounts

*Background:*

*The UEMS is committed to improve its financial transparency. By law, the UEMS has to create sub-accounts for each of its Specialists Sections. Further to the decision taken in Prague to start with some Sections, the Secretariat contacted the bank and created sub-accounts for several Sections.*

Mr Destrebecq presented the key features of the UEMS Executive’s proposal on the management of the UEMS S&B bank accounts. Further to this presentation, several members remained sceptical with regard to the options proposed.

Dr Frases explained that the current situation did not comply with the Belgian Law on Non-profit organisation. The current accounts of Sections and Boards were opened on an individual basis and the UEMS could not be held responsible for their financial management and the legal responsibility implied. He added that, since the creation of the UEMS, Sections and Boards were essential components of the organisation and had no distinct existence outside of UEMS remit. As the organisation was now a medium-sized non profit organisation, stricter rules and greater transparency and efficiency were urgently needed. Consequently and with an aim to ensure such clarity, the UEMS Executive was proposing the creation of accounts to be managed by the President, the Secretary and/or the Treasurer of the Section, and facilitated by the UEMS Brussels Office.

This solution would also enable the UEMS to avoid paying VAT for EACCME® Reviews should it become applicable to accreditation activities.

Concerns were raised as regards what was felt as potential confiscation of Sections and Boards’ assets by the UEMS Executive. Some delegates also feared that the involvement of the Secretariat in the finances of the Section would jeopardise significantly the financial management within the Sections. Moreover, the contact between the Secretariat and the Sections with regard to reimbursement should be improved so as to facilitate the communication and the management of information.

A document presenting the rules and protocol of management should be elaborated in order to provide Sections and Boards with clear arguments in favour of this solution.

According to some, the main issue remained the EACCME® activities. Under the Belgian Law, this could indeed potentially be considered as commercial activity and therefore be subject to VAT. Suggestions to create a separate entity dealing with accreditation were put forward as
possible means to address the issue. Nonetheless, this could undermine the credibility of the EACCME®.

Dr Fras insisted on the fact that the decision regarding sub accounts would be taken bearing in mind the different opinions and viewpoints of the Council. In any case, a consensus will be sought prior to taking any action for all S&B. However, some “pilot Sections” have already opened their own accounts under the aegis of the UEMS Secretariat.

He therefore required to meet the representatives of the Groupings in the following weeks and hoped to be able to provide the Council with additional information at the next meeting.

4. **Specialist issues**

4.1 **Report from the UEMS S&B Meeting and the 3 S&B Groupings held on the day before**

*Background:*
The UEMS Sections & Boards are represented by means of 3 Groupings as well as within a plenary meeting.

**Group I**

Report was given on the discussions within Group I.

- **European Examination**
  Dr O'Donnell pointed to the lack of resources to draft the European curricula which are of particular importance in view of the ECAMSQ®. He also explained that the specialist examinations currently organised too required a huge amount of work and dedication. He therefore pleaded for stronger collaboration between Sections and CESMA (Council for European Specialist Medical Assessment).

- **EACCME®**
  Some Sections had developed their own website in order to facilitate the exchange of information between the UEMS-EACCME® and the evaluation within the Section. He also pleaded to reschedule the meeting of the Advisory Council on CME in order to combine them with the Council meeting.

Several delegates stressed the need for increased transparency in the reimbursement process further to the evaluation of CME events in the framework of the EACCME. They notably called for detailed information to be given to evaluators alongside the reimbursement in order to facilitate the monitoring of income.

- **Collaboration with scientific societies**
  Dr O'Donnell eventually pointed to the collaboration and interaction between Sections and Boards and Scientific Societies which in his view needed to be carefully examined, particularly in order to prevent any influence and maintain a clear separation of activities.
- **New terms of office**

New terms of office for elected positions within the UEMS were introduced at the last Council Meeting held in Prague on October 2010 and will last 4 years renewable once. Despite the technical difficulties in implementing this new rule, it was well received.

**Group II**

Report was given on the discussions within Group II

- **Relation between S& Bs and Council**

Prof. Molea reported on the concerns which were raised as regards the possible opposition in the views expressed between the Sections & Board Meeting and the Council meeting since some indicative vote from S& Bs were said not to be always properly taken into consideration by the Council.

- **Spine Surgery**

The request to create a Section in Spine Surgery was also examined. It was rather recommended creating a MJC seeing the multidisciplinary nature of the field. The opinion of the Section of Neurosurgery was also to be sought before any decision is made.

- **ECAMSQ®**

Further to the clarifications from the Executive with regard to the recent development of the ECAM SQ®, the delegates expressed their concern as to the recognition of this initiative by National authorities in charge of training which could be potentially problematic.

- **FACCME®**

Prof. Molea emphasised the need for more regular updates in order to alleviate a possible lack of information.

With respect to the representation of Group II to Council, a new Chair and a new rapporteur will have to be elected on the next meeting of the UEMS Sections and Boards to be held in Napoli.

Dr Fras commented on the improved collaboration between Council and Sections & Boards and particularly pointed to the recent actions in this sense (i.e. the organisation of a common meeting) which demonstrated the commitment from the UEMS Executive to improve significantly the internal communication and collaboration. He also came back on the ECAM SQ®: the Pilot tests in several Sections were expected to provide the UEMS with the opportunity to discuss further the different steps to take in the future.

**Group III**

Report was given on the discussions within Group III. Dr Letho first congratulated the UEMS Executive about the new premises.

- **Specialist Training**
The UEMS contribution to the consultation on Professional Qualifications was welcomed by the Sections & Boards represented within Group III. It was seen as an insightful document which shed light on the key challenges at stake and the specific needs and concerns from the medical profession: length of training, lifelong learning, title of specialties...

The creation of the ECAMSQ® is good news but it was feared that National Competent Authorities would not embrace it with enthusiasm as Post Graduate Training still remains a national competence.

Dr Letho reported on the lack of communication with the UEMS Brussels Office with regard to accreditation and was concerned that this would jeopardise the smooth running of the EACCME®.

Dr Fras commented further on some of the items raised adding in particular that the UEMS was advocating on a political level for introducing the notion of “competence-based training” within the Directive on Professional Qualifications.

### 4.2 Sexual Medicine

**Background:**
The European Board of Urology asked for the creation of a Multidisciplinary Joint Committee on Sexual Medicine. This proposal was supported by the UEMS Section of Psychiatry and the European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (EBCOG).

Presentation was made by Prof. Ian Eardley (EBU)

**Discussion**
Whereas a potential overlap in the work done by the MJC of Paediatric Urology was pointed out, the creation of this MJC was seen of interest particularly for the Sections of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine and Dermato-Venerology.

Further to an indicative vote, this proposal was supported.

### 4.3 Request to change the name of the UEMS Section of Medical Biopathology into “UEMS Section of Laboratory Medicine / Medical Biopathology”

**Background:**
The UEMS Section of Medical Biopathology requested to have its name changed into “UEMS Section of Laboratory Medicine / Medical Biopathology”.
The aim of this proposal was to reflect the current scope of practice of this discipline which is actually said to be broader as well as to better define the profession and improve the understanding of this Specialty.

Further to an indicative vote, this proposal was supported.

### 4.4 Phlebology

**Background:**
Interest was shown from the European Venous Forum (EVF), the European Society of Vascular Surgery (ESVS) and the International Union of Phlebology (UIP) to establish a Multidisciplinary Joint Committee on Phlebology within the UEMS. Further to the Council’s request, additional information was to be provided by Prof. Davies during the meeting.

Further to the absence of Prof. Davies to present this item, it was postponed to a next meeting of the UEMS Council.

### 4.5 Division of Spine Surgery

**Background:**
The UEMS Section of Orthopaedics asked for the creation of a Division on Spine Surgery within the UEMS Section of Orthopaedics.

Further to the presentation made by Prof. Gunzburg, the Sections & Boards recommended creating a MJC rather than a Division as it was said to be more appropriate given the interdisciplinary nature of this medical field of practice. The scope of this MJC was also discussed and was to be defined once the work of MJC started.
The Sections & Boards supported the creation of a MJC in Spine Surgery.

### 4.6 Section of Haematology

**Background:**
The Slovenian Medical Chamber requested that the creation of a Section on Haematology should be considered by the UEMS Council. A presentation of the opportunity for doing so will be given by representatives of the European Haematology Association. Seeing the tight deadline, the decision upon this topic will be postponed to the next Council Meeting.

This item was postponed to a next meeting of the UEMS Council.