



The Newsletter of European Medical Specialists

8 June 2005

UEMS News 2005 / 08 en

Summary:

- UEMS to take over the work of ACMT
- EU Council adopted the Directive on the recognition of qualifications
- Progress on the "Services Directive"
- Debate on the organisation of working time transferred to Coreper
- eHealth Conference

In this issue:

"Recognition Directive" adopted by EU Council

p.2

"Services Directive" discussed in EP and Council

p.2

Working Time examined in EU Council

p.3

European Conference on eHealth

p.3

Update to European medical specialties

As the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications is now adopted by the European Parliament and EU Council (See p.2), the Executive of UEMS considered appropriate to take over the work laid down by the Advisory Committee on Medical Training (ACMT) and update the list of recognised medical specialties throughout Europe.

In N-0507 (26 May 2005), the intention of UEMS Executive to start updating the list of European specialties was unveiled. This project is justified by the further involvement of UEMS in the consultation process to be set up in the framework of the future Recognition Directive being implemented. For this purpose, the Commission would call on European professional organisations to provide their expert-knowledge with regard to the harmonisation and equivalence of training conditions.

UEMS already advised the Commission after the entry into force of the first "Medical Directive" in 1975 in the framework of the ACMT. This committee gathered national representa-

tives from the medical profession, universities and governments and was chaired by the President of UEMS. The Presidencies of **Dr. Leonard Harvey** and **Dr. Cilian Twomey** led to the Third and Fourth Reports on medical training, which notably updated specialty designations and suggested changes in minimum duration of specialist training. **Dr. Hannu Halila**, current President of UEMS, also took part in drafting ACMT Fifth Report from 1996 to 2000.

The Executive of UEMS thought it would be suitable to pursue this work as ten new Member States recently joined the EU and the last update to the list of specialties was carried out in 2001. Therefore, the Executive would soon call on all Member Associations and Specialist Sections to provide the Secretariat of UEMS with extensive details with respect to the recognition of medical specialties at national and European levels. The Executive is also currently liaising with the European Commission (DG Markt) in order to set up an efficient collaboration and examine which proceedings would be the most appropriate.

“Recognition Directive” adopted by EU Council

The Competitiveness Council, held in Luxembourg on 6 June 2005, adopted by qualified majority the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications. This adoption was made possible due to the agreement found between Council and Parliament in second reading (co-decision). After the publication in the Official Journal, Member States would have 2 years to transpose this Directive into national law. (See N-0507 of 26 May 2005, N-0506 of 29 April 2005 and N-0503 of 25 March 2005)



Source: www.eu2005.lu

“Services Directive”

EP draft report and Council’s conclusions

The draft report by Evelyne Gebhardt on services in the internal market was presented in full to European Parliament's Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection on 24 May last.

At the same time, the EU Council on Competitiveness pursues its work on the text.

New principles and new scope

On 19 April last, Ms. Gebhardt presented the first part of her report, which proposed changes to two key points of the Commission's text: its scope and the country of origin principle (See N-0506 of 29 April 2005). Ms. Gebhardt proposed replacing the country of origin principle with the principle of mutual recognition together with the principle of the “country of destination”. Moreover, for some services the report recommends harmonisation of national legislation. According to the rapporteur, services of general interest should also be excluded from the scope of the directive and be included in another framework directive.

The deadline for tabling amendments to Mrs Gebhardt's report is 10 June.

This would enable EP to vote at first reading at the plenary session in October.

Improvements by EU Council

The EU Council on Competitiveness convened on 6 June in Luxembourg and examined the proposal in question according to the guidelines set by the European Council held on 22&23 March. Mr. Jeannot Krecké, Luxembourg's Minister for Economy and Foreign Trade, said the Presidency would continue its work, which focussed on 3 major points: the freedom of establishment, the quality of services and administrative cooperation. Other aspects, such as the scope of the Directive or the country of origin principle would be dealt with after EP opinion in October 2005.

In accordance with the conclusions of the Spring European Council, the Ministers agreed on the importance of developing the services market “while avoiding undesirable effects such as social dumping”. The Luxembourg Presidency also made clear that the text would not be passed without improvements.

*“We have tried to
make progress
while listening
closely to our
citizens and social
partners”*

Jeannot KRECKÉ

*Luxembourg's
Minister for
Economy and
Foreign Trade*

“Working Time Directive” in EU Council

The Employment and Social Affairs Council, held in Luxembourg on 2 June 2005, examined the proposal amending the directive on the organisation of working time, notably following EP opinion of 11 May 2005.

On 2 June last, the EU Ministers on Employment and Social Affairs convened in Luxembourg and discussed the outcome of the EP decisions taken on 11 May. (See N0507 of 26 May 2005)

At the end of the day, Mr. François Biltgen, Luxembourg’s Minister for Labour and Employment who chaired of the meeting, presented the Council’s conclusions.

The Council first recalled that *“solutions must be found urgently, particularly to the legal uncertainty resulting from the Simap/Jaeger judgments”* of the European Court of Justice. For recap, these judgments notably confirmed that, according to Directive 93/104/EC of 23 November 1993, on-call duties must be regarded in totality as working time, and where appropriate, as overtime.

The Council also regretted that no decision was found due to the lack of time.

As regards the main item of discussion, i.e. the “opt-out” possibility, two views are shared within Council: On one hand, countries recommend the opt-out be maintained *“to support freedom of choice and economic growth”*. On the other hand, other countries do not believe that an opt-out is justified anymore as *“this proposal, particularly the dispositions on annualisation of working time, offers such flexibility”*.

The Luxembourg’s Presidency was however pleased to see that a desire for compromise was shared by all, including the Commission. It also reminded the need to solve the specific problem in the healthcare sector resulting from the Simap/ Jaeger cases.

The Presidency gave mandate to the committee of permanent representatives (“Coreper”) to pursue discussions on the basis of the Commission’s proposal.

The Executive of UEMS continues to follow the developments with regard to this issue and will keep you informed of the next progress.

*Ongoing
discussions on
the organisation
of working time
in Employment
and Social
Affairs Council*

European Conference on eHealth

EU Health Ministers and IT experts from across Europe together with European Commissioners Markos Kyprianou (Health & Consumer Protection) and Viviane Reding (Information Society & Media) met in Tromso (Norway) on 23 & 24 May last to debate on how the potential of eHealth can be realised. This third European ministerial Conference on eHealth was jointly organised by the European Commission, Luxembourg Presidency and the Norwegian government. The event

also encompassed an exhibition of best practices in healthcare from across Europe.

Prior to the Conference, M. Kyprianou declared that *“eHealth can empower patients and improve healthcare. Even more importantly, by reducing the scope for medical errors, it can save lives. We need a partnership between health ministers, technology providers, patient groups and health NGOs to release the full potential of eHealth in Europe. The Tromso conference is a »*



**European Union of
Medical Specialists -
Union Européenne
des Médecins
Spécialistes**

Avenue de la Couronne 20
Kroonlaan 20
BE-1050 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 649 51 64
Fax: +32 2 640 37 30
E-mail: secretariat@uems.net
asg@uems.net

UEMS ON THE WEB:

WWW.UEMS.NET

« *step towards achieving that.*” Ms. Reding also stated that eHealth would help doctors practice more efficiently and accurately and would thus reduce medical errors.

According to the Commission, eHealth would empower patients and give them easy access to quality health information. In the framework of its action plan, the European Commission will launch an EU Health Portal later this year. This Portal would provide a “one stop shop” for health information issued by the EU and a gateway to the websites of national and regional health authorities and civil society.

The Conference and exhibition in Tromsø were opportunities to showcase eHealth success stories from across Europe, which included several projects fostering eHealth applications and which have been co-financed by the EU Public Health Programme and Information Society Technologies Research.

Current projects funded by these programmes notably include the creation of electronic patient records and the elaboration of e Health guidelines for Member States.

Further to contacts with the European Commission, the Executive of UEMS is currently examining the opportunity to raise this issue to the next Council and Sections meetings in order to provide the Commission with extensive expert input on this area.

For any further information on the Conference: www.ehealth2005.no.

EU policies and actions on eHealth: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/qualif/health/index_en.htm

Success stories:

- Clothing actively monitoring your health: http://dbs.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?ACTION=D&CALLER=PROJ_IST&QM_EP_RCN_A=63342
- Ensuring better quality information on health websites: http://dbs.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?ACTION=D&CALLER=PROJ_IST&QM_EP_RCN_A=58116
- A more accurate instrument for “keyhole surgery”: http://dbs.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?ACTION=D&CALLER=PROJ_IST&QM_EP_RCN_A=58082
- Capturing and processing information for chronically ill patients: http://dbs.cordis.lu/fep-cgi/srchidadb?ACTION=D&CALLER=PROJ_IST&QM_EP_RCN_A=53659

Future meetings

UEMS Council

Munich, 20-21 October 2005
Brussels, 11 March 2006

EACCME Advisory Council

Brussels, 26 November 2005

The voice of practising medical specialists in Europe