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EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS**

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**Report from PWG-meeting in Bern Thursday and Friday  
7-8 November 2002 in Hotel Ambassador**

The President, Dr. Nina Tiainen, welcomed the delegates and the guests.

Dr. Barbara Goeggel from the host country was elected chairperson of the Plenary Meeting

PWG liaison officer to UEMS, Dr Fleur Sprangers, represented a comprehensive and very informative report from the Stockholm meeting 18-19 October.

From the reports of Subcommittees/ Working Groups  
Medical Workforce Subcommittee (PWG 2002/097)

A salary survey for junior doctors in Europe is being planned.

PWG Economy Working Group (PWG 2002/098)

It is noteworthy that Italy and Belgium are not members of PWG anymore.

A special arrangement is in place for Poland; keeping membership, but suspending contribution payment

**Future structure of PWG**

A discussion is started concerning the structure of PWG had been initiated in the spring of 2002. This is an ongoing debate that so far has not led to a final conclusion. To some extent the discussion reflects the variation of organisation of medical professional organisations across Europe. One of the elements of this discussion is the question of introducing a PWG Executive Committee. The Plenary decided to form an informal Executive Committee.

**Future co-operation between European medical organisations**

The Plenary discussed co-operation in Europe. The need for a strong organisation to ensure the medical profession's influence in Europe was underscored. PWG recognises CPME as the umbrella organisation of the medical profession in Europe. PWG has not decided which of the proposed models presented by the president of CPME they will go for. The background paper concludes:

“Difference of opinion, priority, or goals will exist but that the respect for the formation of a powerful common consensus should in most cases supervene individual concerns in a spirit of mutuality and professional collaboration.”

The Plenary decided to support the principle of developing closer ties with CPME and other organisations (PWG 2002/165rev2).

## **General practice as a specialist discipline**

The Plenary adopted a proposal to support the inclusion of general practice as a specialist discipline under Title III of the Directive. Furthermore PWG stated that the quality and content of the training should be formalised before considering the length of training.

## **Proposal for a PWG publication**

The Kensington publishing company has approached PWG in the spring with the proposal to begin a yearly PWG publication. The proposal had been discussed in the London Plenary meeting, and it was decided to explore the matter further. The recent experience UEMS had with Kensington was well known to the PWG and has contributed to a cautious attitude, and the Plenary decided not to continue co-operation with Kensington.

## **PWG representatives to UEMS Sections and Boards**

Eleven vacancies were filled. By and large the PWG representatives are well received in the Sections/Boards. PWG is opposed to European Board examinations, and, as they always have done, emphasise the need to improve the quality of the educational process.

## **Creation of a new global organisation for junior doctors?**

There is no worldwide organisation for junior doctors. At the invitation of AMA-RFS, seven organisations attended an informal meeting in Washington in October and decided to form a new organisation, known at this stage as the "Global Alliance of Residents and Junior Doctors, GARD". The chairperson of the GARD Steering Committee, Dr Michael Suk from the US, was a guest at the plenary meeting on Berne.

A Steering Committee of 6 is established. The PWG President and the Irish delegate to PWG are members of the group who is mandated to draw up a plan to presented in conjunction with the WMA meeting in Helsinki in the fall of 2003. One point that seems to be of some concern is that Pfizer sponsors the junior doctors' expenses incurred by these meetings.

## **Health Care in Switzerland**

Dr Yves Guisan, Member of the National Council, was invited to present challenges in Swiss health care. He gave a very informative account of the problems facing health care, problems that are well known also from other countries, such as rapidly rising costs and various measures to curb the expenses. One measure adopted in 2001 limits the number of doctors working in free practice. No new licences will be issued before 2005.

## **Other items**

The Plenary elected Barbara Goeggel as the liaison officer to the UEMS.

The next PWG meeting is in Vienna 1-3 May 2003.

It is always a pleasure to be a guest at the PWG meeting. This was no exception, a very effectively chaired meeting with good focused discussions.

Hans Asbjørn Holm