



European Union of Medical Specialists  
Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes

# The Newsletter of European Medical Specialists

## Assuring a sustained and respected corporate identity of the UEMS

### Summary:

- **Future Physical Agents Directive will limit exposure of operating staff to electromagnetic fields**
- **Guide on EU-funded research projects in biotechnology**
- **On decision of the UEMS Executive, the March Council meeting will be postponed until Saturday 18th March 2006**



**Dr. Zlatko Fras**  
President

**S**tarting a new mandate, chairing an association of more than 1.6 million organized medical specialists in Europe, is surely not an easy task for anybody. In addition, an extra burden is imposed by having behind one nearly 50 years of successful harmonization activities participating corporately in the highly demanding, sometimes stormy, and even 'tricky' environment of creating common European standards within the health care sector. Especially, as I am primarily 'only' a physician, not a diplomat or professional politician. However, it is an even greater challenge courageously to proceed searching for future ways on how the specialist medical profession

can proactively participate in assurance and protection of an easy access to, as well as the highest possible quality, of specialist medical care for all Europeans. First of all, as a head of the new Executive Committee (EC) I have to express the greatest possible gratitude to our recent predecessors within the office, who left for us an almost shiny cleaned desk – the new UEMS Statutes and Rules of Procedure were recently generally renewed and

**Start with what is right,  
Not what is acceptable...**  
Franz Kafka

As was the case for the five decades till now, for us in the new EC surely the very first priority among the objectives for the forthcoming years will be further defence of the professional interests of European medical specialists in general, with the special emphasis on assurance of high level of professional self-regulation. This is of special importance regarding

**“ We would strive to assure continuous participation to development of the highest possible quality of health care services and at the same time also protected professional autonomy of medical specialists in Europe... ”**

adopted, and the process of EU Directive on Professional Recognition adoption was finished after years of cautious monitoring and lobbying at the highest level influenced in as much as possible in favour of the UEMS membership and our patients.

the study, promotion and harmonization of the excellence of specialist medical training, everyday medical practice and as a consequence, more generally, the health care for all the citizens within the EEA.

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**For practical reasons, the meetings of the Board and Council of UEMS will be postponed by one week. (see page 4)**

**The meetings will be held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2006**



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I am very much sure that only UEMS can serve as the appropriate trans-national, pan-European, as well as the most comprehensive professional body (covering nearly all the existent medical specialties) to assure /prepare high enough quality common standards within this field. In my opinion, only reaching a consensus at the level of our Council (where all the professional Sections & Boards are also appropriately and regularly represented over the last few years), could provide a safe and trustworthy framework of standards for further promotion of the free movement of specialist doctors within the EU.

Having in mind an overview on the whole tree of the UEMS organizational structure, with all the National Medical Associations (members of the Board & Council), numerous professional Sections & Boards, as well as joint projects and/or formal bodies for cooperation with either other professional and/or scientific medical organizations in Europe as well as in United States (i.e. in EACCME) – it is sometimes close to 'miraculous'

to have all this in appropriate and stable mode of continuous functioning. In this respect, we will certainly do our best to strengthen the cooperation and to enhance the efforts of those numerous European specialists, who besides their routine clinical practice, are spending in many associations, societies, federations - all devoted to science, better

professional knowledge and training (through CME/CPD), autonomous status of the profession, etc.

I hope that all the members of the 'new team' will fulfil the expectations of those members of the Council who voted for us in October 2005. By their majority votes, to my mind, they had expressed also their general belief that we could manage successfully the task of appropriate representation of the medical specialist profession in all the member states of the EEA and wider, to the EU institutions and any other authority and/or organization dealing with ques-

tions directly or indirectly concerning the medical profession in Europe, as well as to face and take any other action which might further help towards the achievement of our mutual objectives of the UEMS.

To celebrate appropriately in 2008 our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this organization should also be set among our priorities. Neverthe-

**However beautiful the strategy,  
You should occasionally look at the results...  
Winston Churchill**

less, the proper remembrance to all the past crucial achievements that has and achieved such a highly respected position within the European medico-political reality, could also serve to open some new perspectives and/or horizons, both within the organization itself as well as facing to the outside environment.

Members of the new enlarged UEMS EC are preparing a General Strategy of activities for the new mandate, which will serve as a basis for the creation of some of the very concrete and more detailed Action Plans for different areas of interest for the organization. I

hope it will be prepared so that it can be presented to the Council during the Budapest autumn meeting at the latest.

Trying not to be too poetic, but realistic to the end - and with all due respect to the professional ethics of all of our individual medical specialist members - I am and will stay truly convinced that the single richest source of the real UEMS corporate power is simply related to devoted and considerate work of some of the highly responsible members of the 'brotherhood'; in every Member State as well as every other single part of the organization... I personally, as well as the other members of my close team, will surely do our level best not to lose that dedication.

**Dr. Zlatko Fras**  
President of UEMS



## Concerns of the medical profession towards EU Directive on physical agents

*A EU Directive on the minimum health and safety requirements with respect to the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields) was passed in 2004. Once into application (by 2008), this Directive will put limits on exposure of operating staff to electromagnetic fields from 0 to 300 GHz. This limit to be imposed is 100 times lower than that considered to be minimally safe for patients undergoing magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans.*

Medical experts already see this legislation as overly cautious. Concerns were notably raised that this new law would mean that pioneering advances will be banned and patients will not be given the best treatment. The incorporation of these limits into law is likely to make many MRI procedures illegal through-

out Europe and would at the same time close off development in a field with tremendous clinical potential.

Even though experts have always been aware of the potential side effects and theoretical risks with the use of MRI scans, no obvious health risks among operators or patients have been noted since their introduction a few decades ago.

Despite this lack of evidence, research into interventional MRI would become illegal once the Directive is implemented. Moreover, Doctors would need to rely more on Xray examinations universally accepted as having demonstrable unwanted side effects. MRI scans currently carried out on children with mild sedation would also need to be done under general anaesthetic as parents and nurses would not be allowed to accompany and

comfort children during the procedure and it will make it more difficult to provide appropriate care for anaesthetised, monitored and anxious patients.

Some experts also stated that this piece of legislation could lead to a medical brain drain to the US where the rules are less strict. US safety limits as set by the Food and Drugs Administration are 1,000 times higher than the levels proposed by the EU.

As this outcome is totally unsatisfactory, practical consideration should be given into how the Directive should be implemented at the national level in a proportionate and appropriate manner.

***The Executive of UEMS requested the opinion of the Section of Radiology and is currently looking into the most appropriate approach to lobby decision-makers at the European and national levels.***



Source: [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

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***“The medical profession is right about the fact that there is a lack of evidence for deleterious effects”***

***Michael Clark  
UK Health Protection Agency***

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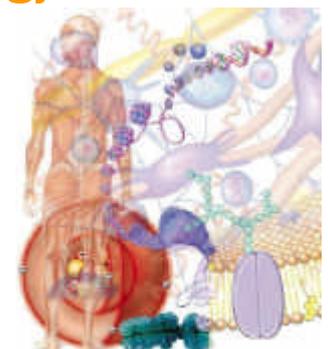
## EU support to new developments in biotechnology

***The European Commission recently presented “100 Technology offers stemming from EU Biotechnology RTD results”, a catalogue of biotechnology developments arising from EU-funded research projects over the last 10 years.***

This guide aims to put researchers and companies in contact, hopefully leading to new and innovative products and processes based on this research. Examples featured in the catalogue notably include applications for biopharmaceuticals and biomedical tech-

nologies to support medical diagnosis and therapy. For further information, please consult the following website:

<http://www.cordis.europa.eu/int/lifescihealth/src/leaflet.htm>.



Source: [www.web.monroec.edu](http://www.web.monroec.edu)



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## Decision by the Executive of UEMS to postpone the meeting of Council by one week

*The Executive of UEMS, convened in Brussels on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January 2006, decided to postpone the March Council Meeting by one week, i.e. until Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2006.*

Although the dates of meetings were commonly agreed between the European Medical Organisations several years ago, the Standing Committee

of European Doctors (CPME) settled its meetings for 2006 on the same days as UEMS. As several delegations would have problems in attending two meetings on the same day, the UEMS Executive took the difficult decision, as a sign of good will towards the national delegations concerned by this problem, to postpone the March Council Meeting to Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

*The Executive would though like to apologise to any delegations for which this causes any inconvenience, but this decision was deemed to be needed in order to avoid deleterious choices for the medical profession. UEMS looks to the CPME to reciprocally help with their Autumn meeting.*

*If you have any views with regard to the issues covered in this Newsletter, do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat of UEMS.*

## Events

### eHealth and eInclusion Workshop

Warsaw (Poland), 15 February 2006

*This workshop is aimed at organizations interested in participating in IST (Information Society Technologies) Call 6 of the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6). The target audience includes service providers, user groups, public authorities, research centres, SMEs and industrial organizations active in the field of eHealth and eInclusion.*

### EU 2006 Work Plan for the implementation of the Public Health Programme (2003-2008) – Information Day

Luxembourg, 22 February 2006

*This event is organised by the European Commission in order to present the Public Health Programme's objectives and encourage potential beneficiaries to submit proposals in 2006. For further information or registration, please contact the following email address: [sanco-infoday@cec.eu.int](mailto:sanco-infoday@cec.eu.int).*

### eHealth 2006 High Level Conference “eHealth & Health Policies: Synergies for better Health in a Europe of Regions”

Malaga (Spain), 10-12 May 2006

*This event is organised with the objective of analysing the role of European regions in eHealth strategies. More details are available at the following website: [www.ehealthconference2006.org](http://www.ehealthconference2006.org).*

## Publications

### European Commission, “Environment & Health”, 2005

[http://reports.eea.eu.int/eea\\_report\\_2005\\_10/en/EEA\\_report\\_10\\_2005.pdf](http://reports.eea.eu.int/eea_report_2005_10/en/EEA_report_10_2005.pdf)

### Contributions to the Open Health Forum (Brussels, 7-8.11.2005)

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_overview/health\\_forum/open\\_2005/contributions\\_en.htm#3](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_overview/health_forum/open_2005/contributions_en.htm#3)

### Mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention across European Member States: a collection of country stories, 2006

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_projects/2004/action1/docs/action1\\_2004\\_a02\\_3\\_0\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2004/action1/docs/action1_2004_a02_3_0_en.pdf)