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The Newsletter of European Medical Specialists

Draft directive on patient's rights in cross-border healthcare in second reading

In June 2010 the European Council for Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) reached a compromise agreement on the draft directive on Patient's rights in cross-border care. The compromise agreement concluded under the Spanish Presidency aims to strike the right balance between rights of the patients in cross-border healthcare and the responsibilities of the Member States for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. This agreement addressed several key issues such as the definition of Member State of Affiliation, recognition of prescription, reimbursement or prior authorisation (See UEMS News 2010.04)

The Compromise will now return to the Parliament for a second reading. Further to its Copenhagen Council Meeting in October 2008 the UEMS formulated a series of suggestions based on the following key points:

- Maintaining professional mobility within the scope of the directive
- Establishing European-wide standards for healthcare providers
- Guaranteeing quality and safety in the use of eHealth and Telemedicine
- Increasing stakeholders involvement

On the basis of these four principles, the UEMS formulated six amendments, three of which were maintained in the final draft.

First, the UEMS expressed its concerns that the same level of guarantee in terms of quality and safety must apply to the use of eHealth and telemedicine services as compared to "traditional" medical acts. Then, the UEMS supported the introduction of appropriate mechanisms of consultation with relevant stakeholders, particularly with an aim to properly implement the directive. Finally, the UEMS supported the creation of a list of rarer conditions but pointed above all to the need for involving the relevant experts while doing so.

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EBA Helsinki Declaration on Patient Safety

The UEMS has committed itself to advocate for continuous improvement of safety in healthcare thereby showing its concern for the development of high standards of care at European level. During their Helsinki meeting, the UEMS Section of Anaesthesiology addressed the issue of Patient safety and issued a Declaration whereby they acknowledged the need for better safety and quality care while practising their speciality.

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Former UEMS Secretary-General Robert Peiffer passed away



It is with deep regret that the UEMS has to announce that Dr Robert Peiffer, who was Secretary-General of the UEMS from 1990 to 1999, died on 21st September 2010.

Dr Peiffer was a well-respected maxillo-facial surgeon in Brussels who joined UEMS as an enthusiastic member of the Section of Oro-maxillo-facial Surgery prior to accepting the role of Secretary-General.

The UEMS Executive and the UEMS Secretariat would like to contribute their sincere condolences to Dr Peiffer's widow and relatives. The UEMS will remember him as a distinguished doctor and colleague and will remain ever-grateful to him.

Draft directive on patient's rights in cross-border care in second reading

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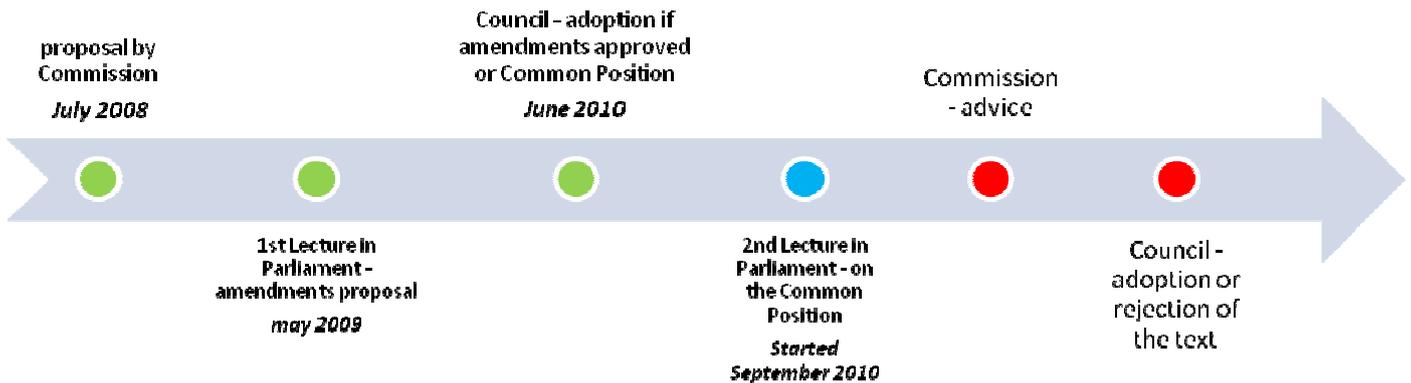
The UEMS welcomed the political compromise negotiated under the Spanish Presidency. The UEMS will continue its contacts with European decision-makers in order to raise their awareness on the potential draw-

backs of this compromise though, notably with regard to the achievements of the first draft of the text adopted by the European Parliament. The UEMS is determined to actively contribute to the revision of this directive which is likely to

pave the way to the general improvement of healthcare across Europe. Healthcare professionals and especially medical specialists play a significant role in cross border care provided to patients. The UEMS remains convinced that the necessary

guarantees regarding the quality and safety and continuity of care must be included in the final text and will therefore pursue its efforts and advocate for these key issues to remain within the scope of this directive.

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Patient Mobility — Background of a draft directive

In the framework of the draft directive on Patient's rights in cross-border care, the issue of reimbursement of care received abroad has been recently raised (See UEMS news 2010.04).

The draft aims among others at shedding light on the areas of legal uncertainty

remaining while receiving care in another Member states.

One of the aims of this draft directive is to ensure that the free movement of persons is guaranteed for patients receiving care in another Member State. According to the draft directive, patients should be al-

lowed to travel to another Member State in order to receive good, appropriate and timely treatment.

The UEMS has committed itself to defending the principles of quality and safety and continuity of care for all patients irrespective of the place where healthcare is provided. For this purpose,

the UEMS also pointed to the importance of patients' and health professionals' involvement in the implementation of the directive, notably by means of adequate consultation whenever necessary.

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The Belgian Presidency's Health priorities

Since the 1st July 2010, the Presidency of the European Union is assumed by Belgium. The Belgian Presidency defined the following priorities in the field of Health:

- **Management public health risk:** The Belgian Presidency will notably evaluate the results of the Influenza Pandemic
- **Cross border care:** Belgium will continue the revision process of this directive following the agreement reached by the Spanish Government during the previous

Presidency. In its programme, the Belgian Presidency insisted on the particular attention that will be devoted to the questions of health professionals as well as chronic diseases and medicinal products.

- **Pharmaceutical Package:** Belgium will continue the legislative initiative constituting the pharmaceutical package. Particular attention will be paid to proposals aimed at combating the counterfeiting of medicines, pharmacovigilance and information to patients.



- **International level:** the Belgian presidency will ensure the preparation and coordination of the Conference of the Parties on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

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Information to Patients

- *The European Medical Organisations oppose information be delivered by pharmaceutical companies on drugs subject to prescription*

The European Parliament is currently revising the Directive 2001/83/EC which deals with the authorisation of drugs for human use and forbids the advertising of drugs subject to prescriptions.

This directive aims to address the issue of information provided to patient for medicinal products submitted to prescription. The main challenge focuses on the distinction between information to patients and advertising to patients from Pharmaceutical industry manufacturing and delivering those products. The European

Medical Organisations among which the UEMS have issued a common position paper whereby they express their major concern as regards the potential revision of the directive. The EMOs have agreed to “ban direct information of patients about drugs subject to medical prescription by the pharmaceutical industry which produces and distributes them. Such an initiative open the way for yet more direct communication with the patient using methods scarcely distinguishable from advertising which are neither independent nor objective, which carry risks without



proving any medical or social advantage.”



EBA Helsinki Declaration on Patient Safety

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The UEMS strongly supports this initiative and welcomes the growing interest for Patient safety which is one of the issue which the UEMS has committed itself to address.

Anaesthesiologists are safeguarding the best interest of patients whenever they are at their most vulnerable, being it in the perioperative process, the intensive care unit, including critical emergency medicine, when they suffer pain or need procedural sedation. Hence, it is natural that the Section and Board of Anaesthesiology (EBA) saw the need to improve patient safety efforts in Europe. Following the suggestion by Prof. Hugo Van Aken (chairman of the Multi disciplinary Joint Committee), the EBA developed the “Helsinki Declaration on Patient Safety in Anaesthesiology”, which was launched during the Euroanaesthesia 2010 Congress in Helsinki in June.

This political document drafted by the European Board of Anaesthesiology and the UEMS Section of Anaesthesiology would never have been elaborated without the participation and meticulous discussions between scientific subcommittees and within the Board of the European Society of Anaesthesiology. It was also published as a priority paper by the European Journal of Anaesthesiology. The work towards the final document was hard and very intensive, but the EBA is proud and pleased with the reception it got both at the launch and afterwards. It was welcomed by political authorities, the WHO, the European Patient’s Forum, the medical-technical industry, the UEMS, the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists and more.

This might have been a mere shooting star and a “nice event”, had there not been plans to monitor its compliance and further promotion plans in

the field of patient safety. A new task force on patient safety in anaesthesiology has been installed as a joint venture EBA-ESA (politics and science). Furthermore, during the days and weeks that have passed after the launch, we have received requests from many organisations outside Europe who want to follow in our footsteps. The launch of this declaration is a major step forward, but much remains to be done. We are ready for the challenge.

To read the full declaration: http://journals.lww.com/ejanaesthesiology/Fulltext/2010/07000/The_Helsinki_Declaration_on_Patient_Safety_in.3.aspx



EUROPEAN UNION OF
MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

Avenue de la Couronne, 20
BE - 1050 Brussels

Phone: +32 2 649 51 64
Fax: +32 2 640 37 30
Web: www.uems.net
E-mail: info@uems.net

UEMS BOARD & COUNCIL MEETINGS (Prague, 7th-9th Oct. 2010)

These meetings will present an outstanding innovation with the participation from one representative of each UEMS Section and Board. This extension will as from now be applied further to the decision taken in Istanbul last year. As a consequence, the time schedule for the meetings was re-organised as follows:

Thursday 7th October 2010

11.30-12.30 Groupings of UEMS Sections
13.00-15.00 Plenary Meeting of the UEMS Sections & Boards
15.00-16.30 UEMS Working Groups
16.45-18.30 Discussion Forum

Friday 8th October 2010

8.30-9.30 UEMS Board
10.00-17.00 UEMS Council

Saturday 9th October 2010

9.00-12.30 UEMS Council



Practical information is available on the following website: <http://amca.cz/uems/>
Registrations to the meetings can also be made via this website.

O b i t u a r y

It is with great sorrow that the UEMS has to report the sudden death of our former distinguished Secretary-General, Dr Robert Peiffer.

Robert was a well-respected maxillo-facial surgeon in Brussels who joined the UEMS as an enthusiastic member of the Section of M-F Surgery prior to accepting the role of Secretary-General in 1990.

His appointment heralded major changes and improvements for the organisation, which at that time functioned on limited financial resources. These he achieved by his own considerable personal characteristics – always conscientious, quietly spoken and gentle in his relations with others yet with an underlying fierce intellect and steely determination. By these means he strengthened and guided both the Sections & Council, personally writing many policy documents and encouraging relations with outside bodies and the European Institutions.

When he retired in 1999, the UEMS Council unanimously elected him “President d’Honneur” of which he was extremely proud.

Although he will be sorely missed, his achievements will bear testimony to his life.

The UEMS has conveyed personally our sincere and profound condolences to the family.

