



UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES
EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

Association internationale sans but lucratif

International non-profit organisation

AVENUE DE LA COURONNE, 20
BE- 1050 BRUSSELS

www.uems.net

T +32 2 649 51 64

F +32 2 640 37 30

info@uems.net

UEMS 2013 / 22

REPORT
OF THE
SECRETARY GENERAL

UEMS COUNCIL MEETING

PARIS

Friday 18th October 2013

Saturday 19th October 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UEMS continues to be highly active in its areas of activity, and the achievements since my last report reflect that. This increased level of activity can only be sustained by the combined efforts of the members of the UEMS – from National Medical Associations (NMAs) and from the Sections and Boards – working in conjunction with the UEMS Executive and our Secretariat.

Significant achievements have included:

- confirmation (at last!) that the UEMS will be able to commence building works on our new home, Domus Medica Europea
- considerable advance in complying with the financial regulations required of the UEMS as a result of changes in Belgian law and our status as a “large” AISBL
- further expansion in our activities, in political lobbying, medical training and assessment, and in the confirmation of specialist practice
- consolidation of our activities in accreditation, and preparation for a major international conference to be held in 2014.

As on previous occasions, I can confirm the “added value” of the UEMS as an organisation that is a demonstrable result of the contributions made by our members, the Executive and our Secretariat.

ISSUES WITH SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Domus Medica Europea

Colleagues will be aware, from my written reports, from correspondence and through presentations at Council meetings, of the difficulties that have been experienced during the protracted attempts by the UEMS to receive permission from the Brussels planning authorities to make renovations to the UEMS premises at 24 Rue de l'Industrie.

Extensive representations have been made, lawyers have been consulted, plans have been presented, amended, re-presented, amended again (with different concerns having been expressed), further representations have been made, and... finally... just this month... permission has been granted for building works to be commenced!

While this frustrating process has required that our plans – for the current five floor building to gain in height and functionality from the addition of two floors, additional meeting rooms and more extensive office space – have had to be more conservative in the extent of our alterations and in the façade of the building, it is now expected that in 2014 the UEMS and our colleague organisations will move into our rebuilt building.

I look forward to being able to say, “Welcome to Brussels” with a sense of pleasure and collective accomplishment; knowing that our generation has made possible – with thanks for their foresight and commitment – what the founders of the UEMS had hoped to achieve, and knowing that we will hand over to the next generation solid foundations, not only in our policies and well-established co-operation throughout our continent, but also in a home for all European medical specialists and for our colleagues.

UEMS finances

It is pleasing to be able to confirm that the UEMS's financial situation remains healthy, and that our organisation will be capable of fulfilling the requirements of the “mortgage” loans that supported the purchase of our building. In addition, the Executive will report to the Board that it will be possible for us, again with suitable financial control, to support the expenditure that will be required for the renovation of Domus Medica Europea.

The balance of income of the UEMS – from membership subscriptions, from our accreditation activities and from our investments – coupled with a careful control on expenditure related to our activities, means that the UEMS has been more able to deal with the global financial challenges of the last five years. It has been said that “the best time to invest is in a downturn”; if that is indeed the case, despite the challenges described above, our investment in property in one of the prime locations in (one of) the political centre(s) of Europe will have been a wise one.

The healthy state of the UEMS's finances also means that membership subscriptions have been held at reasonable levels. The UEMS fully appreciates the financial challenges that affect its member organisations, hence has made great efforts to deliver more results while not asking for more money.

Probity and prudence with financial matters also applies in terms of our “external” responsibilities. Considerable efforts have been made to bring the UEMS in compliance with all relevant components of Belgian law – as a large “not for profit “AISBL” organisation registered in Belgium, the UEMS is required to comply with Belgian law – and it is re-assuring to be able to confirm that, while further work remains to be completed, the UEMS has complied with the responsibilities related to its VAT status, its accounting procedures and the opening of accounts for our Sections and Boards. At last count, 47 accounts have been opened with the main UEMS account.

May I strongly emphasise the need for full achievement of all of these requirements.

UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES
EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

Association internationale sans but lucratif – International non-profit organisation

Recognising the considerable additional amount of financial work already required of the UEMS, and the further expectations from Domus Medica Europea, the Executive has agreed to the employment of a new member of Secretariat, whose duties will cover these areas. I welcome to our organisation Monsieur Thierry Kalala who joined the UEMS family just over a week ago.

The UEMS has worked with our Bank – yes, sometimes they are responsive to their clients' needs, particularly when the client has a rather large account! – to ensure that reported problems related to the transfer of money to accounts in Belgium have been resolved. Further improvements are planned, including improved methods of providing access to monies held in these accounts.

SECTIONS AND BOARDS

Much of the strength in membership of the UEMS – there are approximately 1000 active participants in our work – is related to the excellent work performed in each speciality area. The UEMS has 41 Sections (most of which have associated Boards – S&Bs), 23 Divisions, 10 Multi-disciplinary Joint Committees (MJC)s and 1 Thematic Federation (TF).

During this year much effort has been focused on enhancing the relationship between the UEMS Office and the S&Bs, MJC)s and TF. This has included increased personal contact, support for opening bank accounts, guidance on UEMS rules of procedure, attendance and assistance at meetings, and support for expansion of activities.

It is essential that the UEMS maintains an up-to-date register of all colleagues involved in our activities. Please ensure that your details on our central database are correct!

Postgraduate Training

Further important work being performed in this area includes:

- the development of training standards in accordance with the UEMS Template for European Training Requirements
- a much-needed survey on training durations for each speciality in each European country.

This work is being led by the Working Group on PGT.

European examinations

CESMA has expanded its work on the visitation of European examinations, with the aim of enhancing the quality of these examinations. This will be achieved through feedback from peers. The UEMS Executive is looking to CESMA to strengthen its work in

assuring high standards in European examinations and to increase harmonisation through this mechanism.

This is particularly important as European examinations now are held in 30 specialities, with national authorities increasingly adopting these as the applicable examinations for trainees in their countries.

ECAMSQ

Further expansion of work in this area has been maintained, with current work including:

- a draft document on MCQ writing
- a proposal for developing a set of specifications for IT providers of e-portfolios
- examination of potential partners for the e-portfolio work

This work is being led by the Steering Committee on the e-platform that met on 5th October 2013, and acts on the UEMS's recognition that e-platforms and e-portfolios will be the basis for much of the future development in this area.

Liaison and communication

The members of the UEMS Executive appreciate the opportunity to learn from, and share with colleagues experiences of medical specialists in our many country and even more specialities. As always, please send invitations to the UEMS office with sufficient time available to check availability, and to ensure that an available member of the UEMS Executive team is able to attend.

LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

Given the issues currently being considered by the European Parliament and the Commission, the UEMS has been particularly active in its lobbying activities. This has partly been as a result of progress in the legislative timescale of certain key political initiatives, but also due to greater emphasis being placed by the UEMS on this activity.

A summary of this activity includes:

Corporate Social Responsibility: Ethics & Transparency

- There has been considerable development in this area, following the initiative in which the UEMS participated, namely the European Commission platform that drafted the European Code. This set out common values and principles applicable in key areas of industry involvement in CME/CPD, research and development, clinical trials and promotional activities.
- Following this, EFPIA has launched a code applicable to the Pharmaceutical sector, that includes new guidance on contacts with the medical profession

EU Healthcare Workforce

- The UEMS has continued its involvement as an active partner within the EU Joint Action on Healthcare Workforce Planning and Forecasting for data collection (Work Package 4) and horizon scanning (Work Package 6). This responsibility is carried out in co-operation with the CEOM (European Council of Medical Orders) within the framework of the “European Observatory on Medical Demography”.
- After an initial meeting in April 2013, further work has involved expanding co-operation to include the OECD, WHO and Eurostat, and to cover aspects related to cross-border healthcare and patient mobility.

Professional Qualifications Directive

- The UEMS has continued lobbying on the basis established in our successful influencing of the Vergnaud report, and our lobbying that contributed to amendments supported by the IMCO committee: particularly amendment 95 on the duration of training and competences.
- However, given these successes, it is disappointing to have to report that these key amendments, that included competences as the basis for mutual recognition, were rejected during the “trilogue agreement” process in June 2013.
- The final text of this Directive – regrettably without the amendments supported by the UEMS – was voted on, and adopted by the EU Council on 12th June 2013 and by the European Parliament on 9th October 2013 with the requirement that this is implemented within two years.
- Given the importance of these issues, the UEMS will start now to prepare for the next opportunity to achieve these and other important changes to European legislation, such as Common Training Tests.

Comité Européen de Normalisation

- The UEMS has continued to emphasise its absolute opposition to the CEN initiative and has continued its campaign based on an open letter supported by other EMOs and NMAs, and including expanding contacts with relevant like-minded organisations

Specific initiatives

- Regrettably, the UEMS, working with partner organisations, was unsuccessful in our bid for the Leonardo da Vinci programme
- The UEMS has continued to support the Section of Ophthalmology in its lobbying regarding Fluorescein strips, and EBCOG in its lobbying regarding Women’s Health
- The UEMS has continued to be an active participant in the EU Health Policy Forum, and as an expert partner organisation in the European Commission’s e-Health Stakeholders Group

UEMS - EACCME®

The introduction, as of 1st January 2013, of the new criteria for the accreditation of live educational events (LEEs), has consolidated the UEMS-EACCME's position as a leader in setting the standards for CME/CPD throughout Europe.

The more rigorous standards set out in these criteria have provided an important stimulus for improvement in the funding and delivery of CME/CPD throughout Europe. This is particularly well-timed, given the initiatives by the Pharmaceutical sector and the Medical Devices sector to ensure greater compliance with their own new standards in these areas. This alignment of initiatives has provided a useful opportunity for the UEMS to work with these sectors in order to ensure that high standards are achieved.

A quick summary of the accreditation activity for 2013 is:

Accreditation of e-learning materials

- for applications from 1st January to 30th September 2013

- 71 applications submitted for accreditation
- 28 applications have been accredited
- 15 applications are following the amendment process
- 9 applications currently are under review
- 1 application has been rejected
- 18 applications are subject to further input from the applicants

Accreditation of Live Events

- for applications from 1st January to 30th September 2013

- 1129 applications have been received
- 807 applications have been accredited
- 14 applications have been rejected
- 45 applications have been suspended pending further evaluation
- 263 applications currently are under review

A further training event for UEMS-EACCME[®] Reviewers was held on 6th July 2013. This provided a very helpful opportunity to reinforce key concepts, improve decision-making, and review the new criteria

*The UEMS-EACCME[®] continues to need experienced reviewers.
If you are willing to contribute to this important work, please volunteer!*

As a response to issues raised by applicants for accreditation, and following consultation with Reviewers, the UEMS Executive agreed to lowering the minimum application period for LEEs from 14 weeks to 12 weeks. While this has increased the need for timely decisions by Reviewers – that they confirmed they could deliver – it has been very helpful for applicants who may face tight deadlines.

As is the case for all members of the Executive, I have been active in visits to our Sections and Boards and to current and potential future external partners. A recent invitation to lecture in Moscow at a conference on CME/CPD and its accreditation, organised by our colleagues in Russia, emphasised the extent to which the work of the UEMS-EACCME[®] is now looked to as a model for other countries, and also the potential for continuing expansion of our family of medical specialists.

Preparations have begun for the second UEMS-EACCME[®] international conference on accreditation. This will be held on 28th February 2014 in Brussels, will review the outcomes of the first year of accreditation of LEES according to the new criteria, and the influence that these and other initiatives have had on CME/CPD throughout Europe.

Further work that also is underway is a review of the agreements that the UEMS-EACCME[®] has with partner organisations: National Accreditation Authorities, European Speciality Accreditation Boards, and our own Sections and Boards.

A PERSONAL NOTE

As always, both personally and on behalf of all UEMS members, I thank all members of the UEMS Secretariat for their excellent work that they perform.

Edwin Borman
Secretary General
October 2013