



Spring Council Meeting 24th – 25th April 2026 Tunis – Carthage Thalasso Resort

REPORT OF THE OFFICE FOR EU & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Activities of Dr. Marc H.M. Hermans, Officer for EU & International Affairs

During the EEC meeting in Tbilisi, Dr. Maeve D. proposed to accept the invitation by the stakeholders of **the Panacea project** to take the floor at their closing event in Brussels at the Flagey building. This project had been researching the placebo and nocebo effects in medical treatments. Although at face value the merits of this project were not very clear, the meeting offered valuable information to share with members of the MJC on Pain. During a contact with the MJC's Bureau, MH mainly addressed the meanwhile general UEMS policy to collaborate with scientific associations within a frame work of Memoranda of Understanding. Later on, a contact was established between the Panacea project and the Bureau of the MJC on Pain Medicine. The EEC looks forward to outcome of this work in progress.

1

After the Tbilisi Council meeting I had several contacts with a young Georgian reporter on the functioning of UEMS. This **Georgian interview** allowed us to present the UEMS a second time to a Georgian audience, and a larger one than we could do during the symposium preceding our council meeting.

The Officer for EU & Int'l Affairs attended several **meetings of the other EMO's**. They will take the floor during the Council meeting and comment themselves on their activities. Attending these meetings might be questioned on their efficacy considering the time invested in travelling as well as the related financial costs.

MH also attended the European Medical Organisations' Presidents' meetings alternatingly held at the offices of CPME or UEMS in Brussels.

On the 27th January **FEMS organised a conference "Doctors under Strain"** in the EU Parliament. The event was hosted by the Italian MEP, Mr. Raffaele Topo. This debate on the recognition of medical work as an arduous occupation was certainly well attended. Among other speakers, UEMS was invited to a presented a talk on the Risk of Being a Doctor. The content of his contribution was mainly based on the results of the EU supported TASHI Project¹ on task shifting in medicine, the Route

¹ https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/05bdbaec-6c01-4d60-aa57-a982261a096d_en



Health Workforce² study on the desertification processes and the METEOR Project³ on healthcare workforce retention strategies.

Mrs. Isabelle Dumaine and MH took part in an **on line Focus Group on the Study Supporting an Impact Assessment of Directive 2005/36/EC** on the 23th of February '26. This is part of a larger study on the EU Portability Initiative set up by the European Commission. The European Commission gave this task to Ernst & Young Italy. Although during the meeting some criticisms were worded by different professional participants, the UEMS will continue to work with this project. It is seen as one of the first times professionals are invited to discuss issues pertaining to this Directive experienced by some stakeholders as controversial

Dr. Roberto Mediavilla Torres, a postdoctoral researcher from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Mental Health Services Research and Training of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, invited **MH to co-author a paper *Working conditions and mental health among doctors and nurses in the European Union, Iceland and Norway***. Roberto submitted it to the Lancet Regional Health Europe edition and it's now under review.

The EC appointed MH as the officer to **offer guidance to the MJC on Disaster Medicine**. The formal procedures were elaborated under the coordination of Mrs. Amélia Donaghan. The on line elections under the chairing of *Prof. Roberta PETRINO*, president of the Section of Emergency Medicine, resulted in the appointment of a president, *Dr. Michael MALLOY*, as secretary *Dr. George-Teo VOICESCU* and as treasurer *Dr. Aivars VETRA*. Unfortunately, because of my participation to a study visit to Lviv, I could not attend the first on line meeting of the MJC.

Exploring the already existing non-medical stakeholders and initiatives in this field, I had a talk with the Mayor of my hometown Mechelen, *Mr. Bart SOMERS*⁴. Mechelen, twin town of Lviv, was invited together with Frankfurt, Breda, Tallinn, Riga and Timisoara to take part in a two days study event organised by the City Council of Lviv. Since our city delegation consisted of a Police commissar, the Emergency Help Coordinator and an Officer of the Fire Brigade but lacked any medical background, Mr. Somers suggested me to take part.

The way Lvivians illustrated by presentations and real time visits how they adapted civil infrastructure agencies and facilities to war situations turned this stay into a unique learning experience. Members of the MJC already got a report describing the very important strategies increasing the civil protection.

During a second visit, I had the honour to talk with the Belgian ambassador for Ukraine, Mr. Luc Jacobs. He showed himself very helpful to support all actions from our side for the best of Ukraine.

According to MH's experiences **contacts with direct stakeholders** seem more valuable than the former contacts with Members of the European Parliament. You're always received very friendly

² Int J Health Policy Manag 2023;12:7454

³ <https://meteorproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/D6.2.pdf>

⁴ A few years ago, he was elected The Best Mayor of the World



during the contacts in the EU parliament, but they all declare themselves incapable to do something related to health issues, since these belong to the portfolio of the member states. This is one of the different elements contributing to the fact that **no meeting with the members of the Task Force for EU & International Affairs** took place after the Council meeting in Tbilisi. My personal clinical agenda was more than busy, the terminal disease of my mother in law requesting a lot of care, and an invitation sent out apparently didn't reach all members. Next to that, many things were already shared and translated in concrete actions during the EEC meetings. It looked too much like abusing the time of eminent UEMS delegates.

Activities of Mrs Isabelle Dumaine, EU Policy & Public Affairs Manager

The KEEPCARING project is focusing on reducing stress and preventing burnout among healthcare workers. The combination of non-digital, digital and AI-driven approaches should lead to innovative and co-created solutions. Three studies are running: one on biomarkers of stress, one on the effects of virtual reality on wellbeing and a third one on the use of a diary by nurses to evaluate their stress level.

The DISCERN-DSS PROJECT is an Erasmus Plus project. The project goals are developing modules of training on telemedicine and digital soft skills using digital tools of teaching. Dr. Andy Brittlebank (Section of Psychiatry) and ID attended the Train the Trainer workshop at the Aristotle university in Thessaloniki.

The UM-HEART-VR project is an Erasmus Plus project focusing on Upskilling Malaysian Healthcare for empathy and communication through virtual reality which has just started in 2026. From 17th to the 19th March 2026, the hybrid kick-off meeting took place in the UEMS Domus Medica Europea. ID and Mr. Marc Sartori represented the UEMS.

Conclusion

During the last few years the activities of the Office have been increasing in number and broadening in engagements. This is not only the case for the UEMS Officer, but it's also true for the activities of the policy and public affairs manager. We both had the honour and the pleasure to represent and bring UEMS to the fore on many occasions.

This requires reconsidering conceptual aspects of this UEMS Office. It asks for a process of thinking over the role and function of everybody involved. Next to the internal aspects of this evolution, also external aspects, not the least the troublesome geopolitical situation, pushed to develop some ideas about the lines along an adjustment process could take form.

Dr. Marc H.M. Hermans
Officer for EU & International Affairs

Mrs. Isabelle Dumaine
EU Policy & Public Affairs Manager