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UEMS Section of Occupational Medicine

Minutes of the Meeting on 25th April 1997
Glasgow

Attendees:	Dr Tom McMahon	Ireland (Chairman)
	Dr Ewan Macdonald	UK (Secretary/Treasurer)
	Dr J Van der Vliet	Holland
	Prof Kaj Husman	Finland
	Dr Jostein Waage	Norway
	Prof Marcel-Andre Boillat	Switzerland
	Dr Carlos Sobral	Portugal
	Dr E Alquier-Bouffard	France
	Prof Alain Cantineau	France
	Dr Eleni Economou	Greece
	Dr Gunnar Ahlborg	Sweden
	Dr Bo Netterstrom	Denmark
	Dr John Malone	Ireland
	Dr Haldun Sirer	Turkey

1	Apologies: Dr E McCloy	UK
	Prof Feyza Erkan	Turkey
	Dr Paavo Jappinen	Finland
	Dr Vlasta Deckovic-Vukres	Croatia
	Prof Jadranka Mustajbegovic	Croatia

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and matters arising

The Chairman welcomed representatives who were attending for the first time and invited them to give a brief report from their countries.

Dr Economou described the situation in Greece and is producing a report of this.

Prof Kaj Husman described the situation in Finland, where there are 443 active occupational health specialists and a further 850 untrained doctors, most of whom work part time. There are five medical schools. There are five part-time Professors in Occupational Medicine. Overall there is a shortage of specialist doctors. He welcomed the work being done on core competencies.

Dr Haldun Sirer submitted a written report, the Status of Occupational Medicine in Turkey. (**Appendix A**). There are four types of specialists involved in occupational medicine in Turkey, ranging from clinical specialists, public health specialists and industrial workers. There are three Institutes linked to occupational disease hospitals. The Turkish Medical Association provides a small course for 63 hours for 15,000 physicians. The Occupational Medicine coverage of industry is variable.

The Minutes of the previous meeting on 18th January 1997 were reviewed. Dr Anna Rask-Anderson had written to correct the entry related to Sweden. There are 80 members in the Section of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. There is a separate organisation for the industrial occupational physicians called the Association for Occupational Health Physicians. This was confirmed by Dr Ahlborg.

The Chairman invited Prof Alain Cantineau from France, attending as an unofficial observer, to describe the situation in France. There are 6000 practitioners working in companies or group occupational health medical services. About 95% of the public workforce are covered. Coverage for private companies is about 60% with their own practitioners. The number of employees in a company determines the level of occupational medicine input. If the size of a company is such that less than 20 hours per month are required, the company is required to recruit the service of a group occupational health service. These unions have a role in reviewing the health of workers but they are weak generally. The role of the practitioner is to focus on the working conditions, but most of the time is spent at annual medical examinations. There is a shortage of 300 practitioners to fulfil the obligations of the law.

Dr Jacques Van der Vliet from Holland, also attending as an unofficial observer from the Society of Occupational Medicine, Holland, had 1800 occupational physicians who have a wide role. Absenteeism continued to be a major topic. All employees have access to occupational health because of the absence control related legislation. Employers are responsible for their first year of absence. He discussed the role of the Dutch Medical Association nominating representatives to UEMS Sections. Because the occupational physician registered with the Society, rather than the Association, this had caused the difficulty.

3 Chairman's Report

The Chairman said that there were some problems in getting nominations from France, Germany and the Netherlands. This was related to internal arrangements within each country. The process was that the national nominating body had to nominate the representatives to the committee.

For those countries where nominations had not yet been received he proposed that an academic representative be invited as an unofficial observer from the European Association of Schools of Occupational Medicine (EASOM) and a practitioner representative from the European Network of Societies of Occupational Physicians (ENSOP), so that each country would have an unofficial academic and practitioner observer who could keep the section on occupational medicine informed about the developments in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Dr Jacques Van der Vliet was attending as a representative from the Netherlands Society of Occupational Health. Dr Macdonald would write to EASOM and ENSOP to seek other nominations. Prof Alain Cantineau and Dr Alquier-Bouffard, both Presidents of the Federation Francoise des Medecins du Travail, would be invited to attend the next meeting.

4 Membership

Further nominations had been received from Croatia, Dr Vlasta Deckovic-Vukres and Prof Jadranka Mustajbegovic, who had been invited to the meeting but had too little notice to be able to come. Dr P Jaappinen had been nominated to be the second representative from Finland and had submitted his apologies.

5 Correspondence

- i Correspondence from the UEMS had included the letter from Dr Peiffer giving advice about the necessary steps being taken within France for nominations.
- ii The letter on Charter and Training. Further information was expected.
- iii A letter nominating the Croatian associate members.
- iv Notification of the UEMS Meeting for Chairman of Secretaries in May. Dr McMahon said he would be making a 15-minute report from the Section at that meeting.
- v A Draft Project Charter on the Visitation of Training Centres. This was tabled. Subsequent discussion raised concern from attendees about the possible creation of bureaucracy. It was agreed that the document would be studied in more detail and would be an item for discussion at the next meeting of the Section. **(Appendix B)**

6 Review of the Purpose Statement and Objectives

It was agreed that they would be revised to include the overall objects of the UEMS as follows:

In addition to the object of the UEMS, the Occupational Medicine Section will promote the development of the occupational medicine specialty in Europe with the aim of improving the health of people at work. To achieve this the Section has the following objectives:

- a To influence the European Union legislators
- b To collaborate with appropriate agencies
- c To advance and harmonise the quality of specialist medical practice
- d To identify the common areas of the discipline, including the competencies and to ^{in formation and} provide advice and training programmes for specialty and non-specialist doctors.

7 Core Competencies Conference 24/25 April 1997

Those present, who had attended the Core Competencies Conference of the previous two days, reviewed the progress made and agreed that this was valuable for the purposes of the Section. The Chairman said he would be reporting the progress made on the collaborative work on competencies at the May UEMS meeting.

8 The Draft Memorandum of Understanding

This has been circulated to Members at the meeting and debated the previous day with representatives of EASOM and ENSOP. The proposal of mutual collaboration in the three organisations was approved. It was agreed to circulate the approved Minutes of the Section to EASOM and ENSOP who would reciprocate. It was agreed that the Chairman would meet with the Chairman of EASOM and ENSOP and that the collaboration of the three European organisations - the UEMS Section in Occupational Medicine, the European Association of Schools of Occupational Medicine and the European Network of Societies of Occupational Physicians would enhance and advance the objectives of the Section and open up an effective channel for mutual discussions. It was agreed that the Chairmen of the three organisations would meet at least once per year. The Glasgow Agreement is attached to the Minutes. **(Appendix C)**

9 Subscriptions and Finance

The Secretary/Treasurer reported that he had not yet opened an Account. It was proposed that he opened an Account to be administered by the University of Glasgow and this was approved by the meeting. A subscription was agreed from each country of 150 ECU's was confirmed. Each country to send an order, payable to the University of Glasgow, to Dr Macdonald. Associate Member countries also included in this arrangement. The unofficial observers are not required to contribute. Dr Macdonald pointed out that the University of Glasgow would charge the account a small percentage for its administration. This was accepted by the Membership and it was agreed that the account would be used to cover secretarial, fax and related administrative costs.

10 Any Other Business

Prof Kaj Husman suggested a spreadsheet is designed to collect standard data from each country on the status of occupational medicine and he agreed to draft this and send to the Secretary.

The Chairman proposed that at the next meeting of the Section the objectives and the creation of an action plan would be major items on the agendas. **(Appendix D)**

11 Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was proposed that the next meeting would be Saturday 1st November in the UEMS Office in Brussels at 10.30am. The Secretary would confirm this was possible.