

UEMS Section of Occupational Medicine

Minutes of the Meeting on 4th April 1998
at the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, Royal College of Physicians, London

Attendees:	Dr Tom McMahon	Ireland (Chairman)
	Dr Ewan Macdonald	UK (Secretary/Treasurer)
	Dr Knut Skyberg	Norway
	Dr Vlasta Deckovic-Vukres	Croatia
	Dr George Stamatopoulos	Greece
	Dr Marc Bregliano	France
	Prof Kaj Husman	Finland
	Dr Blaise Thorens	Switzerland
	Dr Bo Netterstrom	Denmark
	Dr Anne M Birkeland	Norway

- 1 Dr Ewan Macdonald extended the welcome of the UK Faculty of Occupational Medicine to the Occupational Medicine Section of the UEMS. Dr Tom McMahon, Chairman of the Section, thanked the Faculty for its hospitality.

Apologies

Dr Anna Rask Andersen	Sweden
Dr Gunnar Ahlborg	Sweden
Dr Jacques van der Vliet	Netherlands
Dr Piet Kroon	Netherlands
Dr Elena Economou	Greece
Dr John Malone	Ireland

2 Minutes of Last Meeting and matters arising

- 2.1. The Chairman welcomed representatives who were attending for the first time, Dr Anne Margrete Birkeland. Some of the attendees commented that in future it is likely that only one of the national representatives of the Section would attend each meeting and that would usually be on an alternate basis.
- 2.2. Dr McMahon reported on his further discussions with Dr van der Vliet about the developments in the European Network of Societies of Occupational Physicians (ENSOP). Dr McMahon discussed the purpose of ENSOP and considered that our relationship with ENSOP should be one of co-operation as it was with EASOM. This was agreed.

3. Chairman's Report

- 3.1. Dr McMahon had attended a meeting on Continuing Medical Education (CME) held in London the previous week, to which Section

- 5.4. A letter from Piet Kroon, Holland, about representation from Holland. The Secretary had replied inviting him to send the Dutch representative of EASOM as an observer until national representatives had been formally identified.
- 5.5. A letter from Dr Macdonald to John Monks, Secretary of the UK TUC, about European contact which the Section could use. A positive and helpful reply had been received.
- 5.6. A letter from Dr Macdonald to his local MEP, Mr Ken Collins, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection, who responded helpfully confirming that he would discuss the Section with Dr William Hunter. Since then a letter had been received from Bill Hunter suggesting a meeting initially between Dr McMahon, Dr Macdonald and Ron Haigh of DGV.
- 5.7. A letter from Dr Kit Harling, Dean of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, about the proposed doctor's directive suggesting a reduction in occupational medicine training time from four years to three years. This led to a lengthy debate about training periods in the countries represented at the Section's meeting.
- The UK has two year common trunk and four years specialist training.
 - Croatia has two years common trunk and three years specialist training.
 - Norway has one year common trunk and four years specialist training, including a 500 hour course.
 - Greece has a four year training programme, one theory, eight months practical, the remainder being in specific specialties such as respiratory medicine, dermatology.
 - Denmark has two years common trunk and three years supervised training.
 - In Switzerland occupational medicine is a sub-specialty of internal medicine or general practice. These take five years and are followed by a two year specialist occupational medicine training including a 700 hours course. In Switzerland there are currently changes in the specialist sub-category but there would be considerable difficulty if the occupational medicine specific training was extended to more than two years.
 - In Finland there are two years of common trunk and four years specialist training, two of which are supervised. One of which is hospital-based structured training in pulmonary medicine, dermatology etc. including a 130 hour course. There is one year in an occupational medicine institution. Finland is currently training about 20 specialists per annum. They currently have 450 specialists covering 90% of the population, with a working population of 1.6 million out of their total 5 million population.
 - In Germany there are three levels of training; full specialist, sub-specialist and other factory doctors. They are not represented in the occupational medicine section because of the internal politics of these three groups leading to no nominations from Germany.
 - In France there are two years common trunk and two years occupational medicine training. All doctors have normally a 10 year programme from the start of medical school to the completion of

1400

200

specialist training. The University course is normally 6 years. Currently some accelerated training in Occupational Medicine is being taken in France because of a shortage of occupational physicians.

After this discussion, Prof Kaj Husman proposed that the Section should oppose a change in the reduction of training time in occupational medicine and this was generally agreed. It was agreed that the Section should write to the ACMT, the UEMS Management Council and a specialist training authority.

ACTION EM

- 5.8. Dr Knut Skyberg raised the issue of what further action the Section could take in relation to getting German representation. Dr Blaise Thorens agreed to make appropriate contact on behalf of the Section. Dr Ewan Macdonald will also write to his EASOM contact in Germany.

ACTION BT/EM

6 Finance and Subscriptions

The Statement of Account produced by the University of Glasgow for the UEMS subscriptions was circulated, showing a balance of £227.71. The subscription from France for 150 ECU's was yet to be credited. The other countries whose subscription had been received were Norway, Greece and a half subscription from Ireland. The subscriptions from all other countries have still to be received.

ACTION
ALL

7 Review of Purpose Statement and Objectives

The Purpose Statement and Objectives were reviewed from the previous minutes and agreed and are reproduced in these Minutes. (Appendix 2)

8 Review of the Proposed Charter

The Proposed Charter prepared by Dr McMahon and Dr Macdonald was discussed and corrected. The re-draft is attached to the Minutes, Appendix 3.

9 Future Strategy

- 9.1. Meeting with EC Commissioner Padraig Flynn It was agreed that Tom McMahon, Ewan Macdonald and Kaj Husman would form the delegation. It was also agreed that a two or three page document would be produced for the meeting which might include the Charter, Review of the Core Competencies Survey in Europe and the key issues. This document is to be drafted by Tom McMahon, Ewan Macdonald and Kaj Husman.

ACTION

It was also agreed that the same delegation would meet Ms Bernie Malone, M.E.P., the Chairman of the EU Social Affairs Committee.

9.2. Local Networks

It was agreed that all members should write to their local relevant politicians, e.g. Members of the European Parliament, leading Trade Unionists and EU Legislators. Ewan Macdonald agreed to circulate copies of the letters that he had written within the UK. Vlasta Deckovic-Vukres requested that the Secretary write to her, at the Section's agreement, to undertake the above actions.

ACTION EM/ALL

- 9.3. Marc Bregliano drew the attention of a recent report on 'Multi Disciplinary Services in Occupational Health and Safety in the European Union', produced by:

The Danish Working Environment Service (WES), Landskronagade 33,
DK2100, Copenhagen,
Denmark,
tel: +45 39 15 2000, fax: +45 39 15 2560.

Bo Netterstrom undertook to try and obtain copies of this report and forward them to the Secretary who would circulate to all members. It was agreed that this report had important implications for the future of occupational health in Europe and required review by the Section and within countries. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

ACTION BN/EM

Marc Bregliano had also written an article in the *Medicine du Travail* about the Section, copy attached Appendix 4.

10 **Working Group Reports**

- 10.1. Dr Jacques van der Vliet had been unable to progress the key contact working group and after discussion it was agreed that every Section member should, within their own countries, contact and identify the key politicians, trade unions and EU Legislators, as agreed in Minute 9.1.above.
- 10.2. Kaj Husman addressed the meeting on the progress of the survey of occupational physicians. He confirmed that he was obtaining WHO support for the survey which would be undertaken shortly.

11 **Any Other Business**

- 11.1 Dr Stamatopoulos raised concerns about the development of the Specialty within Greece and the proposed legislation to make restrictions on the role of occupational physicians, that they would:
- have to work in multi-disciplinary services
 - be unable to operate in industry unless working along with a safety engineer

- limit the doctor's role
- be restricted to working for no more than eight hours per day
- only work for one such company.

He was concerned that there was an agenda to abolish specialisation and that the drafter of this legislation apparently had his own safety business.

Dr Stamatopoulos was asked to draft a letter to the Chairman and Secretary who undertook to write to UEMS about the situation in Greece. Once the formal position of Dr Stamatopoulos had been established, other options of raising the issues of professional independence and contractual arrangements in Greece would be pursued.

11.2 Continuing Medical Education (CME)

Tom McMahon raised this issue and confirmed that it would be discussed at the next meeting. In discussion round the room most countries seemed to have a standard of 50 hours per year (Finland, Switzerland, Norway). Croatia had 7 days and France 78 hours.

12 **Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be provisionally planned for **24th October 1998, in Brussels**. This meeting would coincide with the large UEMS Meeting planned for 22nd October.