

**EUROPEAN REGION OF THE  
WORLD CONFEDERATION FOR  
PHYSICAL THERAPY**

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**Chairman Report  
2006  
European Region  
of the WCPT**

## Introduction

The General Meeting (GM), held in Croatia, in May 2006, forces us to divide this Report in two periods.

The period from January to May, focused on the preparation of the General Meeting and the period from June to December.

The first period has been fully documented in the papers and detailed reports submitted to the General Meeting, so in this report we will refer mainly to the period of activity after June 2006.

Considering also that this report is complemented by the reports from the Chairs of the three working groups and from the Treasurer, I will only give a general overview of the organisation and of the activities, highlighting some of the major achievements.

## A general view of the organisational structure

Accordingly to the Report of the Treasurer for the year 2006, the European Region of WCPT has had 33 member organisations in good standing, representing a total of 152.043 Physiotherapists.

The functional structure of the organisation has remained stable, and the elections at the General Meeting in Croatia maintained the composition of the Executive Committee, during the year 2006, since the Chairman and the Treasurer were re-elected.

Emma Stokes was elected as Regional Representative for the period 2007-2011, and was offered the possibility to attend the Executive Committee meetings as an observer, but due to other professional commitments she was unable to attend any of the meetings in 2006.

The contract with the General Secretary, David Gorria, has been renewed for two years.

The composition of the working groups has changed after the General Meeting, but a majority of members in each group has remained, assuring the continuity of the ongoing projects.

List of elected officers		
	Before the GM	After the GM
Chairman	António Lopes– (2002-2006)	António Lopes– (2006-2010)
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman	Sigrun Knuttsdottir (2004-2008)	Sigrun Knuttsdottir (2004-2008)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman	Dagmar Pavlu (2004-2008)	Dagmar Pavlu (2004-2008)
Treasurer	Eckhardt Boehle (2002-2006)	Eckhardt Boehle (2006-2010)
First Alternate EC	Riitta Partia (2004-2006)	Riitta Partia (2006-2008)
Second Alternate EC		Johnny Kuhr (2006-2008)
Regional Represent.	Anne Lexow (2003-2007)	Anne Lexow (2003-2007)
		Emma Stokes (2007-2011)
Alternate Regional Rep.	Cosimo Bruno (2003-2007)	Cosimo Bruno (2007-2011)
Auditors for the 2008 GM		Cyprus and Finland

The members of the working groups until the General Meeting, May 2006, were as follows:

Professional Issues working group

- Dagmar Pavlu - Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of WCPT*)
- Malene Haneborg (Norway)
- Martin Weidinger (Austria)
- Miriam Barcia (Spain)
- Natalie Beswetherick (UK)
- Philip van der Wees (Netherlands)

European Union Matters Working Group

- Sigrún Knútsdóttir – Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of WCPT*)
- Elisabeth Carrington (UK)
- Elisabeth Haase (Denmark)
- Hans de Boer (The Netherlands)
- Maria Suwalska (Poland)
- Pedro Vergara (Spain)

Education Working Group

- António Lopes, Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of WCPT*)
- Charlotte Hager-Ross (Sweden)
- Eric Pastor (France)
- Grahame Pope (UK)
- Nina Holten (Denmark)
- Regina Jetzinger (Austria)

The decision of enlargement of the working groups has been considered as a correct one and it was maintained for the next period of work.

After the General Meeting the members of the working groups were as follows:

Professional Issues working group

- Dagmar Pavlu - Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of WCPT*)
- Dieter Hollerwoger (Austria)
- Malene Haneborg (Norway)
- Miriam Barcia (Spain)
- Natalie Beswetherick (UK)
- Philip van der Wees (Netherlands)

European Union Matters Working Group

- Sigrún Knútsdóttir – Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of WCPT*)
- Elisabeth Carrington (UK)
- Elisabeth Haase (Denmark)
- Hans de Boer (The Netherlands)

- Maria Suwalska (Poland)
- Pedro Borrego (Spain)

#### Education Working Group

- António Lopes, Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of WCPT*)
- Charlotte Hager-Ross (Sweden)
- Emil Igelsbock (Austria)
- Grahame Pope (UK)
- Nina Holten (Denmark)
- Sonia Souto (Spain)

### **Approved documents at the General Meeting**

From the several reports that have been adopted at the General Meeting and are relevant to describe the work developed at Regional level, a particular attention must be paid to the following:

- The revised Migration Policy for Physiotherapists in the European Region
- The revised Health Policy Statement of the European Region of the WCPT
- The follow up report and recommendations regarding the implementation of the “European Physiotherapy Benchmark Statement”
- The report on Specialisation for Physiotherapists within the European Region of the WCPT.
- The proposed model for the development of Specialisation within Physiotherapy in the European Region of the WCPT
- The Revised Education Policy Statement
- The report on “Quality Assurance in Physiotherapy Education”
- The report on the development of further work on the implementation of the Framework for Physiotherapy Clinical Guidelines Development
- The report on the establishment of the Network on prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles and recommendation on the development of the Network
- The report on the implementation and use of the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) by the Physiotherapy Profession in the European Region of the WCPT
- The report on raising awareness among Member Organisations of the Bone and Joint Decade and the existing international data base

### **Other major activities and achievements**

The ER-WCPT obtained membership of the EU Commission Health Policy Forum in 2006. The Health Policy Forum with a consistent set of member organisations, for the discussion of key policy areas, serves as an information and consultation mechanism to ensure that the aims of the Community’s

health strategy are made clear to the public and respond to their concerns. It provides an opportunity to make contributions to health policy development, its implementation and the setting of priorities for action.

This achievement, very rewarding, was only possible because we have been able to prove the quality and relevance of our work in a stable and proactive way, for many years, since the work of the Standing Liaison Committee of Physiotherapists (SLCP) of the European Union and more recently of the working group on EU matters, and of the General Secretaries that served the Region.

This confirms the Region as the recognised voice of the profession at European level. My sincere thanks to all that have contributed to this major achievement.

This will increase our responsibility to contribute towards the European agenda and will be very demanding, but it will be also a great challenge and opportunity for improvement.

Within this perspective of recognition of the credibility of our organisation, and of our profession, I must also refer the formal invitation to participate on the revision of the WHO Declaration on Stroke 2006, held on 22-24 March 2006, in Helsinborg.

The approval of the new legislation at EU level opened the possibility to create “common platforms” in order to waive compensation measures and facilitate free migration.

This has prompt the Executive Committee to designate a task force, with members of the EU and Education matters working groups, to study the subject in detail and prepare a Workshop on a Common Platform and Legislation - Regulation held in conjunction with the 2006 General Meeting.

The Region, through the initiative of the Professional Issues Working Group, also organised an invitational conference on “Clinical Practice Guideline Development and Implementation” in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2006.

The Conference was hosted by the Netherlands Association (KNGF).as part of their annual congress that also included an International Programme, on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2006, about the challenges for the future in physiotherapy. Around 50 representatives from 27 Member Organisations were present at the Conference.

Finally, I will refer that the two projects submitted to the EU Commission asking for grants for their development had been approved. The themes of the projects were as follows:

1. Staying clean: Guide exercises programme to support smokers / ex-smokers in giving up.
2. Pain in the back? Guide exercises programme for avoiding back pain in children and teenagers.

The projects will be developed by the ER-WCPT during the years 2007 – 2009 and will raise the profile of the profession and our organisation itself.

## Representation of the Region in meetings and events

The European Region, through its Regional Representative participated in the fifty-sixth session of the **WHO Regional Committee for Europe**, held on 11 - 14 September 2006 in Copenhagen, Denmark, where a statement was presented on behalf of the Region.

It is also relevant to consider the contacts with the **European Commission - DG Internal Market and DG Health and the European Parliament**, regarding, for example, the following matters:

- Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications;
- Service Directive,
- High level process of reflection on Patient Mobility and Healthcare developments in the European Union;

I will specially mention that the ER-WCPT has been invited to collaborate with the EU Commission in a pilot project named Internal Market Information (IMI) and related to the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, and specifically to the obligation of the Member States concerning administrative cooperation on this matter.

The involvement with all relevant European organisations related to our field has been kept. The General Secretary, with the contribution of members of the Executive Committee, has kept the regular contacts with the following organisations:

- **European Health Policy Forum**  
With the new membership, the Region has attended two meetings of the European Health Policy Forum on 5 April 2006 and on 22 November 2006. Both meetings were held in Brussels.
- **European Public Health Alliance - EPHA**  
EPHA provides useful information on health issues and EU policy developments and a Member's Electronic Newsletter. The General Secretary regularly attends EPHA Policy Co-ordination Group Meetings, together with other health organisations. The goal of these meetings is to exchange information among EPHA Members and to discuss the main health topics on the EU agenda.
- **EPC – European Policy Centre Information**  
EPC provides information and analysis on the EU policy agenda and regularly organises Breakfast Policy Briefings and occasionally conferences. Its site <http://www.theepc.be> provides very useful information for a general overview of European Policy-Making.
- **Health Professionals Organisations based in Brussels**

The Regions has continued its liaison with the following health professional organisations based in Brussels:

Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), Dental Liaison Committee of the EU (DLC), the European Midwives Association (EMA), Standing Committee of Nurses of the EU (PCN), Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU), European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), European Health Management Association (EHMA) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).

## Future Plans

The annual reports from the Chairs of the three Working Groups, that are complementary to this report, present the details about the implementation of the plan of activities for 2006-2008, approved by the General Meeting.

Nevertheless, we can assume that there are some major projects that define the future commitments of the Region, and show a coherent line of action.

Regarding the EU matters, the project of developing a Common Platform for the Physiotherapists must be a priority of this working group, accordingly with the aims of our Charter.

This project will involve as well the other working groups, and in particular the Education Working Group, that will also monitor the developments of the Bologna Process.

The second Congress on Physiotherapy Education - 2008, will also be a major priority of action.

The Professional Issues Working Group, among other relevant issues, will further develop the work related to clinical guidelines, implementing the conclusions of the invitational conference held in Amsterdam.

At organisational level, the improvement of communication with the Member Organisations, the physiotherapists, and the public, in general, will also be a priority of action. Within this project the constant renewal of our website is included, having in mind an easy access to the Member Organisations to update directly their own information, and to improve the quality of the information available.

The objective to reinforce the image of WCPT, and of the European Region, as a credible and proactive organisation, representing physiotherapy as a relevant health care discipline and profession, will also be pursued in all activities to be developed.

A final word to stress the relevance of the two projects accepted by the EU Commission. They represent a new challenge to the European Region and certainly an opportunity to contribute to raise the profile of the profession and of our organisation.

## Closing Remarks

It must be stressed that our programme of action has been developed respecting the budget approved at the GM, as can be seen in the Treasurer's Report.

All the work of the European Region of the WCPT has been possible with the contribution from a vast number of persons, including the members of the working groups, to whom I would like to deeply thank. Our organisational model relies on the appointment of members to the working groups financially supported by the Member Organisations, and I would like to thank those who have made it possible.

In general terms I would like to thank the support and collaboration of the Member Organisations in the activities promoted, in particular at the General Meetings, and at the Conferences and Congress.

I would like to say a final word of thanks to our General Secretary, David Gorria, for his support and friendship, stressing his competence and commitment to implement the Working Group's and Executive Committee decisions.

It has been my privilege to chair the Executive Committee, and I must state that the friendship, understanding attitude and collaboration from the members of the Committee, have made my task very easy and extremely rewarding. My warm thanks are extended to all of them.

**António M. F. Lopes**

*Chairman of the European Region of WCPT*