

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



**EU Matters WG
Report
2006
European Region
of the WCPT**

Introduction

The main objectives of the EU working group are to maintain a high profile of EU matters within the European Region of WCPT (ER-WCPT).

Members

The members of the working group until the General Meeting 2006:

Elisabeth Haase, Denmark

Elizabeth (Liz) Carrington, Uk

Hans de Boer, the Netherlands

Maria Suwalska, Poland

Pedro Vergara, Spain

Sigrún Knútsdóttir, First Vice Chairman of the European Region of WCPT as chairman of the Working Group.

Unfortunately, Pedro Vergara had not been able to participate in the work of the EU WG for his term of office due to illness.

At the Executive Committee meeting in June 2006, members of the EU Working Group were appointed for the next 2 years.

All the members of the Working group were appointed again except Pedro Vergara. In his place, Pedro Borrego from Spain was appointed.

The General Secretary of the European Region of WCPT, David Gorria has also been working with the group and has attended all its meetings.

Terms of Reference and activities

The EU WG recommended the following actions for the period 2006 – 2008 that were approved by the General Meeting 2006.

1. Migration issues

1. Follow up of the implementation of the Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications (Priority).
2. Continue to Investigate the establishment of a Common Platform at European level based on the Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications (Priority).
3. Follow up of the implementation of the Migration Policy at national level.
4. Provide Migration statistics for physiotherapists in the EU.
5. Continue to facilitate migration for physiotherapists.

2. Enlargement of the EU

1. Continue providing general information about the enlargement of the EU and start mapping the prospective EU countries if they are not Member Organisations of the WCPT.
2. Follow up and assist Member Organisations with their specific needs in relation to the EU accession (Priority).
3. Encourage networking among Member Organisations.

3. Health issues in the EU

1. Be proactive in the field of health issues in the EU (Priority)
2. To continue the follow up of the implementation of the Health Policy Statement of the European Region of WCPT.
3. Continue liaison with other health professionals and organisations at EU level
4. Supervise health issues that might involve Physiotherapists' skills.

4. Legislation and Directives in the EU

1. Continue the follow up of EU Legislation development relevant to the Physiotherapy Profession and be proactive in that field.
2. Monitor any professional regulation that might include PT competencies or skills.
3. Develop close contact with European Institutions.

Meetings

In the year 2006, the Working Group had two meetings:

- 9 – 11 February, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 12 – 14 October, Brussels, Belgium.

Activities

Migration issues

Directive 2005/36/EC on Recognition of Professional Qualifications.

The Working Group reviewed this Directive that was approved by the EU Commission on 07. September 2005.

The Working Group had found that a translation mistake had been made in the official publication in Annex V on Specialities for medical doctors with speciality in Physical and Rehabilitative Medicine, where in some EU language translations the title used was "Physiotherapy".

Already in 2005, letters had been sent to the EU Commission, the EU Council and to the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) - the Section of medical doctors with speciality in Physical and Rehabilitative Medicine - to point out this mistake and ask for correction. It was noted that in the minutes of a meeting of the UEMS from 2006, they had pointed out the same mistake. In November 2006, a letter was sent again to the UEMS to ask for co-operation in correcting the mistake.

In the Hungarian translation of Annex V of the Directive, not only the title of the speciality but also the title of the doctors with speciality in Physical and Rehabilitative Medicine was wrongly called "fizioterapia". A letter had been sent to the Hungarian Physiotherapy Association in 2005 and twice again in 2006 to ask them to take action regarding this error.

It is recognised by all parties involved that achieving changes to wording in EU legislation will be a long term objective.

Common Platform.

The Executive Committee had established a Common Platform Task Force in 2005, composed of the Chairmen of the Working Groups on Education and EU matters as well as two additional members from each of these groups - Hans de Boer and Liz Carrington represented the EU WG, and Graham Pope and Nina Holten the Education WG.

The EU WG has emphasised the importance of investigating the feasibility of establishing a Common Platform at European level based on the Directive for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications and the group was actively involved in the preparations for a Common Platform Workshop that was held in conjunction with the General Meeting 2006.

In October 2006, the EU Working Group and the Common Task Force members, Antonio Lopes and Nina Holten as well as the Treasurer, met to make recommendations for the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee agreed the recommendations and recommended work should be taken forward by the Common Platform Task Force.

IMI Project.

The ER-WCPT had been invited by the EU Commission to collaborate in the development of the Internal Market Information (IMI) Project. The Executive Committee had accepted this invitation. Three meetings took place in 2006. The first one took place in July when representatives of the EU Commission met with the General Secretary of the ER-WCPT to explain the tool and discuss collaboration. The second meeting took place in October where members of the EU WG, the Common Platform Task Force members, Antonio Lopes, Nina Holten and the treasurer of the Executive Committee, Eckhardt Böhle, met representatives from the EU Commission where the tool was again explained and comments from the ER-WCPT were presented.

On the same day, the EU WG, the task force members and the treasurer prepared further comments to be presented to the EU Commission at a third meeting in October which was attended by the General Secretary and the treasurer on behalf of the ER-WCPT.

The EU Commission was pleased with the proposals and comments from the ER-WCPT and suggested they be used as a working document for the EU Commission and the other three professions participating in the pilot project.

The EU Working Group was pleased with the development and specially thanked Liz Carrington for her good work in preparing the comments for the ER-WCPT.

The Member Organisations have been informed about the development of the project through the Newsletter.

Migration statistics.

It had been decided to use the Migration Statistics from the EU Commission that are published every two years as a reference for Migration Statistics for physiotherapists. The WG had found that some of the information provided in the Data Base was misleading and that some countries had not supplied the information asked for by the EU Commission. Letters were sent to the Member Organisations concerned encouraging them to contact their National

Authorities to ask them to fill in and clarify their statistical data and explore any the errors found.

Revision of the Migration Policy.

The Migration Policy that was adopted in 2002 was revised taking the following points into consideration:

- ❖ Reference to the Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications
- ❖ Reviewing of the chapter on enlargement of the EU
- ❖ Dividing some points for clarification
- ❖ Including a recommendation to monitor cooperation between authorities.
- ❖ The revised Migration Policy was approved at the General Meeting 2006.

Enlargement of the EU.

- ❖ A report on the problems and needs of the Member Organisations in the new and prospective EU countries had been prepared for the General Meeting 2006.
- ❖ A new letter was sent to those Member Organisations that had not answered a previous letter sent in 2005. This was done as a mapping exercise to further clarify their problems and needs, to enable the ER-WCPT to make an action plan and to inform them how the ER-WCPT could be of assistance.
- ❖ A letter was sent to the Bulgaria and Romanian Member Organisations congratulating them on the accession to the EU and informing them about the implications of accession for the physiotherapy profession in their countries.

Health issues

The Working Group has followed the development of the EU Health issues such as the EU Commission Public Health Programme 2003-2008 and the EU Health and Consumer Protection Programme 2007-2013.

Revision of the Health Policy Statement of the European Region of WCPT.

The revised Health Policy Statement that had been approved at the GM in 2004 was revised again taking into consideration the following:

- ❖ Comments from the Working Group
- ❖ Comments from the Member Organisations
- ❖ Reference to the EU Health and Consumer Protection Programme 2007 – 2013.

The revised Health Policy Statement was approved by the GM 2006.

Membership in European Health Forum (EHF).

In 2006, the permanent membership of the ER-WCPT in the EHF was approved, having been applied for in 2004.

The General Secretary has attended the meetings of the Forum. The EU WG recommended that Elisabeth Haase and Hans de Boer would be responsible for this issue together with the General Secretary.

Legislation and Directives in the EU

The EU WG has followed EU legislation development that might be relevant to the physiotherapy profession.

Closing remarks

The work of the EU WG is ongoing and the results of the work will be presented at the General Meeting in 2008.

As chairman of the group, I would like to express my appreciation for the continuity of the members in the group and to welcome the new member, Pedro Borrego. I express my sincere thanks to all the members of the group and to the General Secretary for their active work in 2006 as well as for their friendship and I hope for fruitful and good working years until the General Meeting 2008.

Sigrún Knútsdóttir

Chairman of the EU Matters Working Group of the European Region of WCPT