



EUROPEAN REGION

World Confederation
for Physical Therapy

Report of the Chairman of the European Region of the WCPT for the years 2006-2008

**ADOPTED at the
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Athens, Greece**

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EUROPEAN REGION OF WCPT FOR THE YEARS 2006 – 2008 TO THE GENERAL MEETING 2008

European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT)

Introduction

The changes at organisational level

The elections at the General Meeting in Sibenik brought a change in the composition of the Executive Committee.

The members for the period 2006-2008 were the following:

- Chairman – António Lopes (2006-2010)
- 1st Vice Chairman – Sigrun Knuttsdottir (2004-2008)
- 2nd Vice Chairman - Dagmar Pavlu (2004-2008)
- Treasurer- Eckhardt Boehle (2006-2010)
- Regional representative - Anne Lexow (2003-2007) – Emma Stokes (2007-2011)
- The 1st alternate elected for the period of 2006-2008 was Riitta Partia from Finland
- The 2nd alternate elected for the period of 2006-2008 was Johnny Kuhr from Denmark
- The alternate to the Regional Representative (2007-2011) is Cosimo Bruno from Italy.

The composition of the Working Groups did also change due to the normal renewal process.

For the period of 2006 to 2008 the members of the Working Groups were as follows:

Professional Issues Working Group

- Dagmar Pavlu - Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of WCPT*)
- Dieter Hollerwoeger (Austria)

- Philip van der Wees (Netherlands)
- Malene Haneborg (Norway)
- Miriam Barcia (Spain)
- Natalie Beswetherick (UK)

European Union Matters Working Group

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

Education Working Group

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

The major activities and achievements

The great diversity of activities of the European Region in this period of time can only be understood with the consultation of the several specific reports presented to the General Meeting. In this report I will only highlight some of the most relevant facts.

EU Projects Granted under the Health Programme 2003 -2008

The joint project submitted to the EU Commission asking for grant for its development had been approved and is under development. The two themes of the joint project are as follows:

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

The project will last two years, May 2007 – May 2009, and involves 26 Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT in its development. The grant received by the EU Commission will finance a 60% of the project with a total amount of 382.828,86 EURO.

Conference on Clinical Guidelines

A conference entitled “Clinical Practice Guideline Development and Implementation to learn and to exchange information” was held on 10 November 2006 and an International Programme was also held on 11 November 2006, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. 27 Member Organisations from the ER-WCPT were present.

GIN Membership

As recommended by the MOs at the conference on Clinical Guidelines, the Region applied for membership of the Guidelines International Network (G.I.N.). G.I.N. is an international non-profit association of organisations and individuals involved in clinical practice guidelines. Founded in November 2002, G.I.N had grown to 70 organisational members and partners representing 34 countries from North and South America, Asia, European and Oceania, plus the WHO.

G-I-N sought to improve the quality of healthcare by promoting systematic development of clinical practice guidelines and their application into practice, through supporting international collaboration.

2007 WCPT GM

The Chairman of the ER-WCPT attended the 2007 WCPT Congress and General Meeting on behalf of the Region. In addition the General Secretary of the ER-WCPT attended as an observer, to support the WCPT at its stand, where material from the Region was distributed to the congress' participants. The other members of the

Executive Committee had also attended the WCPT General Meeting and Congress as delegates from their National Associations.

At the same venue of the 2007 WCPT GM, an Informal ER-WCPT meeting was held on 30 May 2007 for ER-WCPT MOs. After the informal meeting, a reception took place to thank the contributions of those who were members of the ER-WCPT Executive Committee and left their positions between the 2003 WCPT GM and the 2007 WCPT GM, namely: Inger Brøndsted, Carmen Serbescu and Anne Lexow.

Representation of the Region in meetings and events

The Region has been represented in several meetings and events.

A special reference must be made to the participation at WHO meetings.

The European Region has continued to participate in the WHO Europe Committee Meeting on an annual basis.

In the year 2006, Anne Lexow, as Regional Representative, participated in the fifty-sixth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, held in Copenhagen on 11-14 September 2006 representing the region and presenting a statement. She was joined by colleagues from the Danish Physiotherapy Association. The participants discussed important issues, such as the European strategy on non-communicable diseases; the proposed programme budget 2008-2009; the medium-term strategic plan for 2008-2013; the future of the WHO Regional Office for Europe; and, health security.

In the year 2007, the new Regional Representative, Emma Stokes, participated in the fifty-seventh session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, held on 17 - 20 September 2007, in Belgrade, Serbia. She was joined by colleagues from the Serbian Physiotherapy Association. At the meeting three policy and technical topics were presented

- Health workforce policies in the WHO European Region
- Second European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy
- The Millennium Development Goals in the WHO European Region: Health systems and the health of mothers and children – lessons learned.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) shares the issues concerning health in Europe, and information and projects are monitored, and the global implications recognised.

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;
- Internal Market Information (IMI) Project related to the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, and specially the obligations of the Member States concerning administrative cooperation on this matter. The ER-WCPT was one of four professions that would participate in the project. The other professions were medical doctors, dentists and accountants.
- Health Services Directive – Cross borders.
- EU Health Strategy, 2008 – 2013.

Other conferences

The Chairman of the ER-WCPT attended the ENPHE Conference, on 26-28 October 2006, in Brussels, Belgium. The theme of the Conference was: *Competence-based physiotherapy education: the stepping stone to international education and improved mobility?* The Chairman was a key note speaker on migration.

The Executive Committee has considered it necessary to be involved with all relevant European organisations related to our field of activity. Budgetary limitations have restricted a greater activity and forced the establishment of priorities.

Taking advantage of having our office in Brussels, and of having a full time General Secretary, priority has been given to attending the meetings held in this city.

The General Secretary has regular contacts with the following organisations:

- **European Health Forum - EHF**

In 2006, the permanent membership of the ER-WCPT in the EHF was approved. Meetings of the EHF are held twice a year. The General Secretary or a member of the EU WG had attended, on behalf of the ER-WCPT, the meetings during this period.

- **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.

- **European Health Professionals Associations -**

The European Region of the WCPT had contacts and meetings with the following Health Professionals associations:

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

Each of the several specific reports presented to the General Meeting has attached a list of proposed objectives and recommended activities. Most of the projects are ongoing and need to be continued or further developed. The General Meeting will have the opportunity to approve the plan of activities for 2008-2010.

Nevertheless, we can assume that all activities will be developed in line with the main objectives and priorities of the WCPT, and that there are some major projects that define the future commitments of the Region, and show a coherent line of action:

- Complete the inventory of the profession regarding the level of education, activities and scope of practice;
- Monitor the legislative developments at EU level, and their implications for the profession, and cooperate with all relevant entities and partners;
- Implement and evaluate the EU Health programmes (“back pain” and “staying clean”), and explore other opportunities;

- Further develop the work related to guidelines (clinical and multidisciplinary) and standards of practice;
- Follow up the implementation of the “European Physiotherapy Benchmark Statement” and the developments in education at European level, in cooperation with ENPHE;
- Promote the second Congress on Physiotherapy Education - 2008, and, in continuity, as proposed to the General Meeting, to prepare the third Congress.

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.

We will have a very ambitious plan of actions for the near future, but at the same time we are conscious of our limitations. After ten years of consolidation of our organisational model, we understand that there will be a need to explore new ways and mechanisms to better fulfil the objectives of the European Region of WCPT. For that reason a motion proposing the creation of a foundation is presented to the General Meeting.

Closing Remarks

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. At another level, I would like to thank the German Association for being the key element for the development of the two EU granted projects.

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, including Anne Lexow.

António M. F. Lopes
Chairman of the European Region of WCPT