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Summary of the Executive Committee Meeting

held in Estoril, Portugal, on 13-14 March 2009

The last Executive Committee Meeting of the European Region on 13 – 14 March 2009 in Estoril, Portugal, focused primarily on the revision of the WG's actions to develop the future activities 2008 – 2010 approved at the 6th General Meeting of the European Region.

The meeting also focused on the 2008 annual reports from the ER-WCPT Chairman, the Chairs of the WGs and the Treasurer. The reports would be sent to the MOs and posted on the ER-WCPT



The Executive Committee also discussed about the latest developments of the **EU project**. According to the project's time plan, a **presentation of the results will take place at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 21 – 24 Strasbourg, France**. Member Organisations and WGs members have been invited to participate in the event. For the presentation, the WCPT CEOs network had offered full support and collaboration to present at the event promotion and public health material from their Associations.



At the meeting, the Executive Committee was also informed about the new edition of the **International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO)** where Physiotherapists have been positioned in a higher ranking position (health professionals), in comparison with the previous edition of 1988 (where physiotherapists were included within the group of “technicians and associate professionals”).

The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) is one of the main international classifications for which the International Labour Organization (ILO) is responsible. It belongs to the international family of economic and social classifications.

World Health Day - Health is the Greatest Wealth

Article from Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Health

World Health Day – celebrated every year on 7 April – is an excellent opportunity for us all to think about our health. I want to see all Europeans living healthy lives with access to high-quality healthcare, regardless of where they live. Sadly, the reality is quite different.

In Europe, there are striking health inequalities both between and even inside countries. People in many of the EU's new member countries from the East do not live as long as their western counterparts. The average life expectancy for women varies up to 8 years depending on the country. For men it is 14 years! The gap in healthy life years is even greater – for women this can be as high as 18 years. To address the issue, a Commission proposal on reducing health inequalities in the EU is due to be adopted by the end of 2009.

Today we are facing an economic crisis that could worsen the health of Europeans. In such times, protecting public health is even more

important. Health is an intrinsic good, of course. But it is also an economic asset. A healthy population means a productive workforce that can continue working and contributing productively as it grows older.

The crisis hits vulnerable groups – young people, migrants, pensioners – particularly hard. We need focused health interventions to protect these people. And to ensure everyone has the information and care they need to live healthily and free of disease.

The European Commission has an important role to play – helping EU countries invest in health and use healthcare resources effectively. This is no time to cut health budgets or pass on costs to patients already struggling with lower incomes. We mustn't lose sight of the fact that our greatest wealth is our health.



Case studies on the Implementation of the MPS at National level

Further to the Report on the Implementation of the Migration Policy Statement (MPS) for physiotherapists in the ER-WCPT, adopted at the General Meeting 2008, the EU Matters Working Group (EU WG) continued following up the implementation of the policy document

The main objective of this investigation and presentation of case studies is to assist Member Organisations who have not implemented the MPS to assess ways of implementing the document and address particular barriers that they may have



at national level and investigated the ways in which the MPS has been implemented. The results of the survey carried out between 2006 and 2008 indicate that six countries have implemented the MPS at national level (the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark).

identified in the implementation of the MPS at their national level. These case studies will serve as a guideline or reference for those MOs who have not yet implemented the MPS at national level, so that they could be able to identify similarities and /or differences in their mechanisms and adopt or adapt to their system as necessary.



The following set of six questions served as a basis for the discussion and here we present the information given by Portugal and Poland.

1. Why has the implementation of the MPS at a national level been important for your MO?

Portuguese Association finds important the possibility of informing and supporting its members in what concerns to mobility and process of Recognition of Professional Qualifications, as well as informing about the necessary procedures that can facilitate the process in a correct and swift form, increasing the satisfaction of the members and therefore reinforcing the legitimacy that the members bestow on them.

Beyond the advantages for the member physiotherapists, the implementation of the MPS and of other prominent policies awards the MO credibility before the Government and consequent recognition of competences, prompting so that the Government legitimises the Association as a professional body and with the structure and the characteristics for it to represent itself and to eventually become an Association of public right. Facilitating the mobility process is, in a way, facilitating the procedures of the Government, in the quality of competent authority, and consequently its image in terms of European instances.

Polish Association finds the Migration Policy Statement very important tool and supportive document for good cooperation with officials, as in talks with authorities responsible for education policy and directors of Physiotherapy Faculties, and in the meetings with National Authorities responsible for recognition of professional qualification in physiotherapy.

2. In what ways has this influenced the profession in your country?

In Portugal, there are some indications that, in an indirect form, this is influencing the profession from the education process to the professional practice. In terms of the education process and with the need to adequate it to the Bologna process, it has become a worry that the courses award credits units (ECTS) and competences to the professionals that should be convergent with the remaining EU Members States. In terms of the professional practice, the recognition of the professional qualifications is done on a basis of the basic education and lifelong learning.

In Poland, it was very helpful in the work of experts who worked out the new standards of education.

3. Why is this important for the physiotherapists in your organisation?

Having the MPS implemented, Portuguese physiotherapists unite all the conditions to make worth of their rights and fulfil with all their obligations, and find in their Association the support and guidance to hasten the mobility process, as well as their protection, avoiding disturbances and misconceptions that the unfulfilment of the Directive can bring upon the professional.

Polish physiotherapists who are looking for a job in foreign countries benefit from having MPS implemented.

4. Did you come across any particular barriers in the implementation of the MPS? How were these overcome?

While Polish Association didn't come across any particular barrier in the implementation process, the Portuguese one is drawing the



attention to the fact that they had some difficulty in obtaining pertinent information from National competent authority because Portugal is in a transpositional period of the Directive to the internal legislation and the consequent alterations introduced.

MOs should bear in mind that the implementation process is a slow one, requiring entire dedication on part of the participants.

5. Is it necessary to be the regulating body, or are there mechanisms whereby your organisation facilitated this for the competent regulating body?

Neither Portuguese nor Polish Association is a regulating body but they still take part in facilitating the migration process for the competent authorities, by implementing, disclosing and informing about the MPS, supporting and protecting the professional claimants. In Portugal, two professionals of the area, suggested by the Association, are part of the qualifications' recognition technical commission, while Polish Society of Physiotherapy is an advisor and member of the state Commission which recognises the diploma of physiotherapists from abroad.

6. Following your experiences with the implementation of the MPS, how would you advise another MO on proceeding?

First step would certainly be the translation of the MPS into national language and its dissemination. Both MOs, Portugal and Poland, advise on being informed of the entirety of the directive and of all the information that the EU disposes on the site "Regulated Professions Database" and cooperation with national competent authorities. If possible, it would be of extreme relevance to have and maintain a liaison with such entities, as well as create an internal structure of support to the potential migrants.

According to its Charter, 'it is the priority of the ER-WCPT to facilitate free migration and the right of establishment of physiotherapists within the whole European Region'.

Member Organisations represent countries within and outside the EU/EEA and therefore are encouraged to implement the relevant policies in order to provide such facilitation for their members. The ER-WCPT recognises that in addition to the generic aspects of this policy, some legislative requirements are specific to the EU.

Speech by Health Commissioner, Androulla Vassiliou

on Ageing and Population at the 7th European Business Summit (26 and 27 March 2009 in Brussels)

In the framework of the 7th European Business Summit taking place on 26 and 27 March 2009 in Brussels with the theme: "**Dare and Care:**

sustaining Europe's ambitions - Financing, Staffing and Greening", European Commissioner for Health, Androulla Vassiliou,



highlighted the impact of an ageing population on Europe's health systems.

She advocated the need for health systems to provide a greater focus on preventing and treating chronic diseases and the importance of finding ways to use resources more efficiently. Commissioner Vassiliou gave some examples of how EU action can provide economies of scale, pool expertise and resources and avoid duplication of efforts by

each Member State, thus improving cost-efficiency in health spending. While speaking on the impact of the financial crisis, the Commissioner said that it is "crucial that there is sufficient investment in public health now as part of a broader economic stimulus agenda".

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dyna/enevs/enevs.cfm?al_id=864

Patients' Rights Directive Final Report

On 31 March 2009, the European Parliament Committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) finally adopted the Rapporteur's, John Bowis (EPP-ED), Report on the proposed Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare.

The final report, including all the opinions of other Committees will be voted on in the European Parliament Plenary on 23 April 2009 can.

New funding opportunities in health: call 2009

The European Commission has published on 26 February the Work Plan for 2009 for the implementation of second programme of Community action in the field of health.

An Information Day presenting the work plan for 2009 and funding mechanisms has been held in Luxembourg on 18 March 2009 and in several Member States in other different dates.

The publication of the Work Plan was followed by the calls for proposals. The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) published calls for proposals for projects, operating grants, conferences and joint actions.

The calls present new funding opportunities for the European organisations active in the area of public health. The total budget available for

the execution of the 2009 Work Plan is about 48.2 million euro.

All proposals should address important problems in the European public health and be in line with the Commission's priorities expressed in the Work Plan.

The successful proposals should concentrate on aspects of public health that cannot be achieved on a national level. They should ensure a significant impact across the EU.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 20 May 2009.

For further information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/index.html>



First EU Health Prize for journalists

The European Commission has launched the first EU Health Prize for journalists in print and on-line articles. This prize is part of the Europe for Patients campaign and will reward journalists who have contributed to inform citizens on health issues, specifically the initiatives in the Europe for Patients campaign.

Journalists are invited to submit their articles using the on-line entry form on the Europe for Patients website. Articles published in print or on-line publications between 2 July 2008, when the first Europe for Patients initiative was adopted, and 15 June 2009 will be considered.

The selection of the winner will be a two step procedure. First, national juries chaired by the Commission's Representation and composed of 2 health experts and 2 journalists will select a national finalist from each Member State. The second step is choosing the winner and 2 runners up. This is the role of the EU jury, chaired by the European Commission's Director General for Health and Consumers, Mr Robert Madelin.

The 27 finalists will be invited to Brussels in autumn 2009 for a media seminar on EU health issues and a prestigious award ceremony hosted by Commissioner Vassiliou. The first prize will be 5,000 EUR, the second prize 3,000 EUR and the third prize 2,000 EUR.

The Prize will be awarded in the spirit of respect for media freedom and pluralism and in the context of the Commission's desire to improve communication between European Institutions and citizens.

The EU Health Prize for journalists and the Europe for Patients Campaign are funded under the Second Community Health Programme 2008-2013.

To submit an article and find out more, please visit Europe for patients' website:

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/europe_for_patients/index_en.htm

Youth Health initiative

The European Commission encourages young people to become active partners in promoting their health!

Why? Most health behaviours are established and shaped during childhood and youth. Adopting healthy behaviours early in life can prevent chronic disease later in life. Good health goes a long way in ensuring a

successful and productive life.

The health of children and young people is a key priority for the Commission.

As a part of its idea to empower young people to become active partners in actions to improve their health, the Commission has set up a new **Initiative on Youth and Health**.



This initiative will gather all youth-related initiatives in health and related policy areas across the Commission under one banner.

The chief aims are:

- To prioritise the health of children and young people in Europe.
- To highlight important health-related youth issues that the Commission is working on, including healthy life-styles, education, workplace, media and healthy environments.

The initiative emphasises **dialogue and involvement of young people** in tackling the health issues that affect them and invites young people to be active partners in our work on health.

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/youth/index_en.htm

Youth Health conference 2009

The two day conference on Youth and Health, organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Youth Forum and other youth organisations will be opened by Commissioner for Health, Androulla Vassiliou, on 9 July in Brussels.

About 400 people are expected to attend. This includes young people from across Europe, representatives from youth organisations, health professionals working with and for

young people and national and EU Institutions.

The conference aims primarily to listen to young people and to involve them in the decision making process about their health. It also aims at generating commitment from stakeholders to improve the health of young people.

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/youth/conference/index_en.htm

e-Health for individuals, society and the economy

By Nicola Bedlington, Executive Director, European Patients Forum

e-Health innovation, if properly harnessed, will help address the fundamental and well-known challenges facing Europe's healthcare systems – increasing demand due to demographic change, increasing demand for quality from informed and empowered patients and citizens and increasing demand for efficiency and financial sustainability.

The discourse at EU level by a whole range of stakeholders in recent years reflects this – the recent EU communication on telemedicine is an important call for action for more policy coherence, legal clarity and political will to accelerate efforts to create e-health solutions and inter-operability of technologies and systems across EU countries.



From a patient's perspective, perhaps the most important dimension of the communication is the need to build confidence and trust in e-health solutions. The European Patients' Forum sees huge potential for e-health as regards information for patients; patient-centred disease management; patient-healthcare professional dialogue; personalised healthcare; cross border mobility; quality and continuity of care and patient safety.

Share your good practice cases on ePractice.eu!

ePractice.eu wants to know how the use of ICT is leading towards the reorganisation of processes and to the implementation of eHealth, eGovernment and eInclusion projects or strategies.

For further information:

<http://www.epractice.eu/en/home>

Patients must be involved in the development of e-health solutions if those solutions are to be of optimum value. And e-health will only work for individuals, society and the economy if there is appropriate recognition of:

- the ethical aspects of e-health: dignity, consent, confidentiality and privacy
- the e-health literacy needs of patients and health professionals.

pHealth2009

pHealth 2009, will take place on 24 June 2009 - 26 June 2009, in Oslo, Norway. This event will bring together key players from all aspects of healthcare and technology to inform, discuss, debate, and learn about how personalized healthcare systems can help meet future healthcare needs. The workshop is a forum for presenting and discussing cutting edge technology for creating solutions for tomorrow's personalised health systems.

For further information contact:

phealth2009@sintef.no

3rd European Patients' Rights Day: 18 April

Patients' rights are becoming an increasing concern of EU institutions and stakeholders, as can be seen by the New Directive on Patients' Rights and cross-border care presented on July 2008 as well as the Europe for Patient Campaign launched in September by the Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou. For that reason Active Citizenship Network is promoting the celebration of a European Patients' Rights Day in all EU Member States as an occasion to inform, discuss and take commitments to improve patients' rights in Europe.

For further information: <http://www.activecitizenship.net/>

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