



EUROPE REGION

World Confederation
for Physical Therapy

Report of the EU Matters Working Group of the ER-WCPT for the year 2008

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

Introduction

As new elected Chairman of the group, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the previous Working Group members and the General Secretary for their contribution and good work. Especially I would like to express acknowledgement and gratitude to the previous Chairman of the EU Working Group, Sigrún Knútsdóttir.

The main objectives of the EU Working Group are to maintain a high profile and to be a permanent observatory to new regulations and issues related to the physiotherapy profession within the European Region of WCPT (ER-WCPT). Fostering for cooperation with the European Commission and Parliament is vital in an expanding European region.

Members of the Working Group:

The members of the Working Group were appointed in May/June 2008:

- Roland Craps, Second Vice Chairman of the Europe Region of WCPT as Chairman of the EU Working Group
- Elizabeth (Liz) Carrington, UK
- Ana Dimovska Boljevic, Montenegro
- Hans Krijgsman, the Netherlands
- Emma Stokes, Ireland
- John Xerri de Caro, Malta

The General Secretary of the Europe Region of the WCPT works with the group and attends all its meetings. Residing in the same country with the chairman is an advantage for the communication and for attending the meetings in Brussels.

Meetings

The first meeting of the EU Working Group was held in Brussels, Belgium, on 16-18 October 2008. The venue was the new secretariat of the EU-WCPT.

Future meetings are planned on

- 20 and 21 February 2009 in Brussels, Belgium.
- 11 and 12 September 2009 in St.Julians, Malta.

Terms of Reference and activities

The EU WG recommended the following actions for the period 2008 – 2010 that were approved by the General Meeting in Athens on 2008.

The EU WG members agreed a distribution of responsibilities as follows:

1. Migration Issues

1. Continue following up the implementation of the Directive on Recognition of Professional qualifications
Lead: Liz Carrington / Helper: Emma Stokes.
2. Continue following up the implementation of the Migration Policy at national level
Lead: Liz Carrington / Helpers: Ana Dimovska and John Xerri de Caro
3. Continue providing Migration statistics for physiotherapists in the EU
Lead: Liz Carrington / Helper: Roland Craps and David Gorria
4. Continue facilitating migration for physiotherapists
Lead: David Gorria / Helper: Roland Craps)

2. Enlargement of the EU

1. Continue providing general information about the enlargement of the EU
Lead: Hans Krijgsman / Helpers: WGs members.
2. Continue following up and assisting Member Organizations on their specific needs in relation to the EU accession
Lead: Hans Krijgsman / Helpers: WGs members.
3. Encourage networking/twinning among Member Organizations Lead: Hans Krijgsman / Helpers: WGs members.
4. Continue mapping the prospective EU countries if they are not in the WCPT and be proactive in contacting and giving information to their physiotherapy associations
Lead: Hans Krijgsman / Helpers: WGs members.

3. Health issues in the EU

1. Continue being proactive in the field of health issues in the EU
Lead: Hans Krijgsman / Helper: Roland Craps.
2. Continue following up the implementation of the Health Policy Statement of the European Region of WCPT
Lead: Liz Carrington
3. Continue liaison with other health professionals and organizations at EU level
Lead: David Gorria

4. Legislation and Directives in the EU

1. Continue monitoring EU Legislation development relevant to the Physiotherapy profession and being proactive in that field.
Lead: Ana Dimovska / Helper: David Gorria.
2. Encourage MOs to be proactive at national level and make contact with their authorities and European Parliament members related to documents for adoption at EU level that have implications for the physiotherapy profession
Lead: Ana Dimovska / Helper: David Gorria.

3. Continue monitoring the EU Cross Border Health Care Directive (Health Service Directive)
Lead: Liz Carrington / Helper: Roland Craps.

Activities of the EU Working Group

The Group decided to distribute the responsibility for each activity among the WG Members.

Migration Issues

Continue following up the implementation of the Directive on Recognition of Professional qualifications

Responsible persons: Liz Carrington / Helper: Emma Stokes.

Directive

The Working Group prepared a document presenting specific information for physiotherapy based on the Directive on Recognitions of Professional Qualifications. Including the parts/actions of the Directive that shall be done (mandatory) or may be done (choice) by the National Authorities to implement the Directive at national level. This document would be useful for the Member Organizations when discussing the Directive and their statutory instrument with Regulatory Authorities. A first draft document would be presented at the next meeting of the WG for discussion.

IMI

The EU WG recommended contacting the EU Commission before the next WG meeting to ask about further developments since our initial involvement in this project which was concerned with making this system user friendly for physiotherapy regulators. It would also be investigated if the IMI should become a system available for individual users.

In the summer of 2008, the Commission undertook a series of steps to gather feedback from Member States and to evaluate the pilot project. The results of this exercise were presented in the Commission Staff Working Document "Implementation of the Internal Market Information System (IMI): report on the Professional Qualifications Directive pilot project" (SEC(2008) 2743) which accompanied the Commission Communication "Delivering the benefits of the single market through enhanced administrative cooperation. Progress report on the Internal Market Information System (IMI)" (COM(2008) 703 final).

At the present time, the European Commission is preparing to extend the use of IMI for Professional Qualifications to additional professions (nurses, dental practitioners, veterinary surgeons, midwives, architects, secondary school teachers and radiographers). The fully operational version of IMI for the Professional Qualifications Directive would be released immediately after the "IMI Training and Awareness-Raising Days", to be held in Brussels on November 25 and 26, 2008 (Ref: <http://www.epractice.eu/document/5089> and http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/imi-net/imi_awareness_days_en.html)

The EC recommended to the EU WG to review the mentioned above reports and to inform the MOs about them. It was also agreed to recommend to the MOs to contact their national authorities using those reports and also ask the

MOs to inform the ER-WCPT about their experiences related to the IMI project.

Common Platform

The EU WG was asked to evaluate and suggest options for achieving the first step in developing a Common Platform: monitoring the different situations of the profession in the EU Countries. The reason was that only after achieving the first step would it be possible to think about the viability of establishing a Common Platform.

A Common Platform briefing paper, with options for the Executive Committee, was presented for discussion at the next EC meeting.

Continue following up the implementation of the Migration Policy at national level

Responsible persons: Liz Carrington / Helpers: Ana Dimovska and John Xerri de Caro

1. The EU WG agreed to review of the use of Migration Policy and, if used, a series of focused case studies describing how Member Organisations used it in a positive way. These case studies, if available, would be disseminated to the Member Organisations to explain how/why the Migration Policy can be used by them.
2. In order to achieve this objective, Anna Dimovska and John Xerri de Caro would prepare two articles for the next meeting about these case studies. The articles would be also published in the ER-WCPT newsletter.

Continue providing Migration statistics for physiotherapists in the EU

Responsible persons: Liz Carrington / Helper: Roland Craps and David Gorria

In addition to the collection of new statistics for the two year period 2007-2009, the EU would report, on the European Commission website, on migration statistics/professional titles and other details i.e. accuracy, based on information provided by the national authorities in each Member State. This information may be of use to the Member Organisations particularly if there are trends in the movement of physiotherapists.

The EU Working Group would also give special attention to the information provided by the new EU Countries, Bulgaria and Romania.

Continue facilitating migration for physiotherapists

Responsible persons: David Gorria / Helper: Roland Craps)

The EU WG agreed the following two actions:

1. To develop a flow chart on Migration for the Member Organisations summarising the process of gaining registration through the Competent Authority to be completed in their own language and preferably also in English. This flow chart would facilitate migration of physiotherapists in Member Organisations. The document would be published on their own websites. A draft flow chart would be presented at the next meeting of the WG. Liz Carrington and Roland Craps would be responsible for this task.
2. To ask the Member Organisations to update their Migration information posted on the ER-WCPT website. When contacted, Member Organisations would be also asked to include an optional heading on unemployment rates stating that these vary in Member Organisations at different times and for current information contact the MO's. (The MOs have the free choice to fill this in). The General Secretary would contact all the Member Organisations before the next WG meeting.

Enlargement of the EU

- Continue providing general information about the enlargement of the EU
- Continue following up and assisting Member Organizations on their specific needs in relation to the EU accession
- Encourage networking/twinning among Member Organizations
- Continue mapping the prospective EU countries if they are not in the WCPT and be proactive in contacting and giving information to their physiotherapy associations

Responsible persons: Hans Krijgsman / Helpers: WGs members.

In order to fulfil the mandate of the 2008 GM on Enlargement issues the EU WG agreed to develop an Information tool which would include modules on:

- ER-WCPT
- Regulation (i.e. Directive on recognition of professional qualifications) and including a description of benefits, models, lobbying
- User needs evaluation (Quick scan)

The tool would be a small package with basic information from the EU and ER-WCPT.

The purpose of this tool would be to assist Member Organisations who have recently joined the EU or who are acceding to the EU or preparing to become members of WCPT.

A draft content of the info tool would be prepared for the next EU WG meeting.

Health issues in the EU

Continue being proactive in the field of health issues in the EU

Responsible persons: Hans Krijgsman / Helper: Roland Craps.

The EU WG agreed to continue informing the Member Organisations about developments in EU Health Policies relevant to Physiotherapy practice through website documents. These documents would enable Member Organisations to engage with Authorities in shaping national Health Policy to include Physiotherapy.

The members discussed Public Health and the physiotherapy roles in it. One of the questions raised was how much knowledge on that matter do physiotherapists gain in their undergraduate education. The Working Group Members agreed to send a letter to the Education Matters Working Group asking to investigate to which extent Public Health is included as a subject in undergraduate curricula in European/Member Organisations' countries. This would help in getting more information about how and where physiotherapists obtains their knowledge of Public Health and, if needed, to act towards promotion of its broader inclusion in both formal and informal education of European physiotherapists.

Ana Dimovska Boljevic would be responsible for this task.

Continue following up the implementation of the Health Policy Statement of the European Region of WCPT

Responsible person: Liz Carrington

The EU WG agreed the following actions for the period 2008 – 2010:

1. To strengthen our Health Policy Statement in order to assist MOs in implementation. Assess what areas should be strengthened taking into

- consideration the new EU trends, especially health promotion and public health.
2. To raise awareness of the competence of the profession in making a contribution to the public health agenda. At this point it was noted that the PI WG was developing a guide / tool for Physiotherapists on health promotion and prevention adding the EU health strategy on public health and health prevention. The EU WG would collaborate and contribute to its development. DG Health and Consumers of the European Commission has launched a website for health promotion videos produced in Europe. The aim is to share ideas and best practice and to show what had been done in public health campaigns on issues such as addiction prevention, communicable diseases, cancer or nutrition and physical activity. The EU WG agreed to contact Member Organisations and ask them to publish their material, if available, on the mentioned above website. It would be also evaluated if the result of the two EU Projects, Pain in the back and Staying clean could be posted on that website.
 3. A review of the use of Health Policy Statement and, if used, a series of focused case studies describing how Member Organisations used it in a positive way. These positive case studies, if available, would be disseminated to the Member Organisations to explain how/why the Health Policy can be used by them

Continue liaison with other health professionals and organizations at EU level

Responsible person: David Gorria

The EU WG Chairman and ER-WCPT's General Secretary attended the EHF meetings on 10 December 2008 and 21 January 2009. They also attended the Open Health Forum on 11 December 2008.

A document outlining the benefits / added value of these memberships and the characteristics of these strategic partners would be prepared for next meeting. Posting this document on the ER-WCPT website will enhance the understanding of Member Organisations about ER-WCPT's strategic alliances and improve the understanding of the benefits of these alliances to European Physiotherapy.

Legislation and Directives in the EU

Continue monitoring EU Legislation development relevant to the Physiotherapy profession and being proactive in that field.

Responsible persons: Ana Dimovska / Helper: David Gorria.

CEN

The WG discussed the possibilities of transpose the ER-WCPT Physiotherapy Service Standards into a CEN Workshop Agreement, under the CEN Umbrella.

Comments were sent to the Executive Committee for evaluation.

Encourage MOs to be proactive at national level and make contact with their authorities and European Parliament members related to documents for adoption at EU level that have implications for the physiotherapy profession

Responsible persons: Ana Dimovska / Helper: David Gorria.

This is an ongoing task.

Continue monitoring the EU Cross Border Health Care Directive (Health Service Directive)

Responsible persons: Liz Carrington / Helper: Roland Craps.

A second proposal for a Health Service – Cross Border Directive had been developed by the EU Commission. The EU WG reviewed the content of the proposal and has sent comments to the EU institutions on 1 December 2008. A conference on the Patient Cross Border Directive organised by the Kent Council took place in Brussels on 9 December 2008. The Secretary-General and the EU WG Chairman did a presentation at that conference with representatives from the EU Commission and Parliament, and with national authorities.

Specific activities

ER-WCPT Foundation

The draft statutes of the ER-WCPT foundation were prepared and on 27 November 2008 Roland Craps and Eckhardt Boehle presented these to the EC. The Executive Committee agreed with the proposed statutes and the creation of the foundation would continue its process. Further information would be presented at the next EC meeting in March 2009.

e-Health

The Region should explore possible benefits about e-health for the physiotherapy profession. The EC agreed and a document would be prepared for the next EC meeting with some recommendations and further information about e-health and the physiotherapy profession. This will also be a first step in developing the observatory role of ER-WCPT concerning legislation in this matter.

Closing Remarks

The priority tasks of the EU Working Group in 2008 were the intensive consultations on the Cross Border Health Care Directive, to explore the options for establishing a Common Platform of physiotherapists at European level and the participation in the consultation process of the EU health strategy 2008 – 2013. Many of the activities of the Working Group reached the first drafts and are ongoing.

Roland Craps

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