

REPORT ON EURACT COUNCIL MEETING **1.4.98 TO 4.4.98 MAORREN SWITZERLAND**

This was the first meeting of the new Euract Council following the recent elections, which had resulted in some major changes. There were some eight new members elected, representing approximately one third of the Council, and two members of the executive board have ceased to be national representatives. MAYrten Kvist, the Treasurer, is no longer a national representative member and Isabel dos Santos has left Council and the Executive Board. This produced a dilemma as it had been hoped that there would be a staggered retirement of officers.

Professor Jan Heyrman (Belgium) was elected as President for a further three years, and Dr Ivar Ostergaard (Denmark) as Secretary for one year. Three executive board members were elected for three years - Justin Allen (UK), Igor Svab (Slovenia), and Athanasios Simeonidis (Greece). To try to minimise disruption next year MAYrten Kvist was co-opted as Treasurer for a further year, and Adam Windack (Poland) was also co-opted to the Executive Board for one year. He will become a full member at the end of Dr Kvist's co-option.

First Council Session

This was spent in introductions and agenda setting for the rest of the meeting.

Second Session

Business meeting. New members nominated were accepted. Further development within the European society was discussed. Following our last meeting on the WHO Charter for Family Medicine in Europe, this has now been sent out for consultation to governments as a "framework document" rather than a charter; this is felt to be more politically acceptable. There remain a number of problem areas, particularly around the advocacy role and gate keeping, about which governments have a great deal of disagreement.

New publicity materials for organisations in collaboration and individual members were approved and should be circulated in the not too distant future. They will certainly be available for the meeting in Dublin.

It was suggested that a list of presentations being made by Euract members should be prepared and this is enclosed with this report, albeit incomplete, relying as it does on memory!

In accordance with European Society rules, two nominations have to be put forward from Euract for the Executive Board of the European Society. These were Professor Jan Heyrman and myself. A single delegate will be selected by the European Society in due course, the other acting as deputy.

Changes in Task Forces

With the resignation of Isabel dos Santos, the functions of the service task are to be split up. A new group is to be formed to continue with the Euractlink to encourage teacher exchange. Further details will be sent as soon as they are available, but funding will be available for travel in 1999, with applications in the Autumn of this year.

The regular teaching courses now seem to be running consistently and a steering group is to be formed within the Executive Board. The remit of the Vocational Training Task Force formed at our last meeting has been increased to cover hospital training.

Session 3 - Educational Research

A discussion on this was preceded by three presentations: one by Jan Heyrman on different methodologies for qualitative research, one by myself on action research and finally a brief description of sources of funding within the European Union. A short report on the first two presentations are appended. The Council then broke into four groups to discuss the issues raised.

This proved to be a very successful debate and a number of important issues emerged. As teachers we need to be asking the right sorts of research questions. We need to know the value and limitations of the types of information collection that we can make within Council. It was recognised that there is a need to move the ethos of scientific journals away from the more traditional scientific models and towards more qualitative research and discussion.

Session 4

A survey had been taken in which council members were asked what they felt were priority areas in the development of general practice education in their home countries. By far the most important Euract activity was felt to be the organisation of courses, conferences and other meetings for teachers. The second was in areas concerning vocational training. These continue to form a central area of activity.

The Council then went on to discuss future meetings. It is planned to have one meeting per year in association with the other networks of the European Society. The first of these will be Majorca, from the 20th to the 22nd May 1999, and will be a large open meeting. Euract will have responsibility for organising two morning sessions, each in association with one of the other network organisations, supervising symposia and presentations, and ensuring they are of an appropriate standard. There will be a call for papers after the Dublin WONCA meeting.

Future teachers' meetings will be:

Bled, Slovenia 8th to 12th September, 1999 on Teaching of Prescribing - a flier on this is enclosed.

Maastricht, Holland 13th and 14th November, 1999 - Workshop on Educational Research (being run in association with our next council meeting - you have already received preliminary notices of this) Further details will be available, hopefully in May.

School of Riom, Paris - Course Organisers Meeting - Teaching Quality Assurance 14th - 15th November, 1999 - (unfortunately this overlaps with the Maastricht workshop). Again details on this will be published as soon as available.

As at previous meetings, all members presented a review of current teaching activities and areas of interest in their own countries.

Dr J.N.B. Allen, UK Representative