

Reports of working groups

**EURACT Council meeting
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REPORT OF WEBSITE WORKING GROUP

The EURACT web site: Bringing information on teaching to European teachers of family medicine

Yonah Yaphe MD, EURACT Council representative for Israel

EURACT is pleased to announce the launching of its new Internet website at the Council meeting in Zagreb in October 1999. This site is the successor of the site launched in 1995 but is completely redesigned with new content. In this presentation I will introduce the site, describe its content and discuss possibilities for future development and use.

Aims

The aim of the site is to facilitate communication between EURACT members via the internet on teaching family medicine/general practice in Europe.

Manpower

The site is run by the publicity task force of the council. The technical management of the site is by Mednet, an Internet company based in Greece.

Structure

The site consists of the following 10 units.

The **home page** is the gateway to the site. Next to the EURACT logo in the center is a notice of the next EURACT-sponsored teachers conference or course, in this case the Riom course in France in November. On the left-hand side of the page is a menu with links to all the other pages on the site. On the bottom of the page is a link to the European society of general practice/family medicine, our parent organisation.

The **bylaws** page appears after the home page. On this page a description of EURACT and its activities follows.

The **members'** page has contact data for all council members on the following page. We hope to include data on all EURACT members in future on this page.

The **task force** page includes reports from EURACT task forces which meet at all council meetings. Currently reports on basic medical education, vocational training, continuing medical education, publicity, academisation and core books in family medicine are available. We will update these reports after each council meeting.

The **resources** section will be the largest and most useful section of the site. It will contain EURACT documents on teaching, position papers, significant scientific publications, the text of talks by EURACT members and more. Reports from council meetings will be available here as well as the reports of educational activities in member countries. In future it will contain slide shows, lectures and other resources useful to teachers.

The dates and location of past and future council meetings will be found on the **council meetings** page.

We hope that the **courses and conferences** page will also be a frequently visited page. Here we have listed (by continent) important upcoming course and conferences. Conferences such as Vienna 2000 WONCA Europe have links to their website for further information on registration abstracts etc.

The **related web sites** page has links to WHO, WONCA, EQUIP, EGPRW and the European Journal of General Practice. It also has links to Medline via PubMed, the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine in the US and a master links of links for family medicine.

More links can be found on the **teaching and national organisations** page. These include links to national colleges, societies and associations of family medicine in Europe as well as links to University departments of family medicine around the world that have useful course guides and other ideas for teachers.

Finally the site has a **guest-book** where visitors can record their impressions ideas and suggestions.

We hope that the site will be visited and used. We are open to suggestions of resources or links to add. The members of the publicity task force are willing to work hard to make the EURACT website an attractive and useful tool for the development of family medicine education in Europe.

REPORT OF THE LANDSCAPE WORKING GROUP

Present:

The second part of the »Landscape analysis« was presented during the plenary meeting and the problems regarding low response rate and the need for finishing the exercise were demonstrated. During the first group session, the group has come to the following conclusions:

- The non-responders will be chased until the end of the year. This is especially important because some of the countries (e.g. Italy, Portugal, Sweden) are not adequately represented in the questionnaire. Some of the members of the group have agreed to try to motivate the non-responders.
- The council members are being asked to look at the report and comment on the »inconsistencies«
- The analysis will be prepared for the next council meeting in Israel.
- The following outputs of the exercise are being considered: a short report in the communication section of the European Journal of general practice, a scientific paper (together with the discussion paper on the multiple key informant strategy) and a short EURACT publication on the topic.

In the second session the members of the group have gone through the entire document and have commented on it, giving a lot of valuable information and ideas which will help in the final draft of the paper.

Igor Švab

REPORT OF NEW WORKING STYLE GROUP

Present:: Jan Heyrman, Adam Windak, Paula Vainiomäki, Gernot Lorenz, Ivar Østergaard, Justin Allen (Chair)

This group was considering the paper on council meeting produced by Allen and Windak and received written comments from six other members. From these and general discussion it appeared that there was little support for decreasing full Council meetings to an annual basis. The chief reasons put forward for this were the loss of continuity, and the very large gaps that would result if a meeting was missed by an individual member.

However before any conclusion was drawn it was suggested that the purpose of the council should be considered and then the group should go on to consider how best this could be achieved. There was some discussion on this, without any clear resolution – among the suggestions were:

- To provide long term strategy for EURACT, and commission appropriate work (to ask questions not to provide answers). This would encompass a.b.c. on page 1 of the paper.
- To represent members and national interests in an international forum. This would encompass d.

The problems of continuing with the existing pattern of two meetings per year, i.e. the size and expense, and the difficulties working in large plenary sessions, will not be addressed.

It was decided for the moment to address the second of these by developing further the ideas for different working style, and the first will be not addressed at present.

Continue to hold two Council meetings per year.

Review of council working methods

1. Task forces

These are a key part of the organisation, with the opportunity of carrying out many of the functions needed for the organisation. However they need to undergo further development. Council needs to set these up with a clear remit over a period of time, and a definite outcome or product. They should attempt to include non-council members, and should be able to use non-EURACT expertise if needed. Task force leaders should produce a business plan, incorporating costs for involvement of non-council

members, and extra meetings if thought necessary. Ordinary members can also become corresponding members if they wish to by responding to information on the web site. Council members will be expected to be members of one task force, and only one. Task force work is expected to also happen between Council meetings, and chairpersons will be asked to report on these interim activities at the beginning of each Council meeting – a bit like the personal review of activities.

It was recognised that for Task Forces to work effectively we need to prioritise our work and limit it to the achievable – the idea of a five year plan was suggested – this should be considered by the Executive Board, who will also consider whether TF chairs should attend the annual EB Strategy meeting.

A template for the task force report was suggested by Gernot:

1. Name of the task force
2. Leader
3. Members (Council)
4. Members (External)
5. Corresponding members
6. Experts
7. Business plan with:
 - Budget
 - Meeting plans
 - Product, and delivery date
8. Reports of activities at Council meetings
9. Interim progress reports

There was some discussion as to whether one of the council meetings each year should be just for Task Force work, with external members invited. This was not agreed, but it was suggested that Task Force sessions should always be timetabled on a Saturday so that external members could join for those sessions at moderate cost.

- Task forces**
- **clear and finite purpose**
 - **every council member, 1 Task Force**
 - **external members by invitation**
 - **corresponding members**
 - **sessions always on Saturdays**

2. Working groups of Council

There will be the need for groups to continue to work on specific activities of a continuing nature – these are different from project orientated Task Forces and should be given a different name. An example is the Publicity Task Force, which should be renamed as a Working Group of Council.

3. Other new ideas

The new ideas for small group sessions in the paper are all to be tried and evaluated. This meeting has already tried the “Five minutes one slide”, “Collect and go”, and “Open small group” sessions, and comments have been favourable. The other options should also be tested.

It will be necessary for Council members to be prepared do to preparatory work, to send in ideas and to participate in generating new ideas if these new ways of working are to succeed.

New ideas for small group working to be implemented and evaluated.

4. Relationship with other conferences

Sufficient time must be available if Council meetings are to be linked with other national meetings. No more than one day, or two sessions of a Council meeting should be taken up with other meetings. If greater EURACT input is needed it must be negotiated on an individual basis, outside the Council meeting.

REPORT OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING WORKING GROUP

This paper tries to summarise some of the advantages of a close and formal relationship of vocational training schemes and academic departments.

The scientific content of vocational training has to be up to date. By scientific content is meant the state of the art of the knowledge (including skills and attitude) of the discipline. This can be evidence based, a result of consensus, or related to the norms and values of the discipline. Together you might call that the paradigm of the discipline.

The most evident way to reach this goal is to establish a permanent link between the research efforts of general practice (this applies as well to the outcomes as to the methodologies) and the basic medical education (which is usually organised in a multidisciplinary way).

The place where these streams should meet is the academic department of general practice. In this place there must be a continuous interaction between training, research, contacts with GP-practices and other academic departments. Such an interaction is of vital importance for the future of our profession as an academic discipline.

Research questions arise in daily practice and they should be conveyed to the relevant staff of the department and be “translated” into projects and programmes. The outcomes have to be “fuelled back” into daily practice, in training programmes etc. Also the training will raise questions, which can be relevant for instance for educational research. As a matter of fact, this is the implementation of the quality cycle.

Such an interaction is beneficial for both parties. The department needs the constant input from the field, and the field needs the constant output from all the sectors of the department.

Another argument to bring the vocational training under the aegis of academic departments is the strengthening of the department itself within the structures of the medical school or faculty. Simply by adding the staff of the vocational training to that of the department enlarges its influence and impact. The other clinical disciplines do the same!

I am well aware of the potential conflicts with regard to power and hierarchy. But these have to be overcome in view of the envisaged goal.

There is still an argument I like to mention in relation to the need of the establishment of academic departments in a number of EURACT countries. The vocational training schemes, together with existing CME programmes, are in some cases the nucleus of new academic departments. In cases where this is not yet realised, the existence of the schemes and programmes can be used in the negotiations with faculties and governments. And this may facilitate the process. All medical schools in Europe should have an academic department of general practice!!

REPORT OF THE CORE BOOK WORKING GROUP

No report received.

REPORT OF THE TRAINEES INVOLVEMENT WORKING GROUP

Present: Jan Heyrman (Chair), Justin Allen, Dag Søvik, Adam Windak

Starting Point:

- During General Meeting Mallorca, a trainee group asked for more emphasis on the trainee involvement in our group.
- In the EB meeting of the ES the point of developing exchange possibilities was raised and delegated to EURACT
- In a one-slide/five minutes discussion in the council, the idea was received favourable for further reflection, with the warning not to organise things for the trainee's, but help them to organise their interest points.

Discussions and proposals:

1. International conference for trainees: to help trainee's to formulate their areas of interest. Why not propose them to build further on an existing UK tradition of annual or biannual Trainee conferences. Justin can check if there is some interest in doing so. Jan agreed to ask his Flemish "trainee forum" if there interest, eventually to join the UK initiatives.

2. Exchange programs: the most feasible, and perhaps very interesting exchange formula is the short type of exchange, for a week or two. It would be of interest to collect support budgets and the conditions for it. It could also be of interest to have information on the optimal structure of such exchange. It was decided to wait for point 1 interest, and then help them to find the money channels and the structural information

3. Twinning programs: a more easy form is the exchange between two vocational training programs and institutes that already have links, or exchange or twinning options at the teachers level. Leuven and Bergen are in this situation. Jan and Dag will explore if there is interest to stimulate this at the bilateral level

4. Existing links and networks that include trainees

Existing experience within other networks could be explored. Examples: International students association, junior doctors group in relation to Permanent Working Group in EU, which is probably in relation to The CP. UEMO evt. or the experience with the teaching cancer care network. JH will explore further.

5.Trainees in EURACT

Already in the past, trainees were involved on an individual basis, to contribute to task force work. By helping with the collection of data, by helping with literature search, by contributing to the final publication. It could be helpful in the future also.

The idea of reserving a dedicated place in the council, evt. through a rotation scheme, was considered to be better postponed to a later date, after some form of organisation structure.

Responsible	Action	Deadline
Justin Allen	Contact responsible National Trainee Conference to test eventually interest in international conference	End 99
Jan Heyrman	Contact responsible of Flemish Trainee organisation to test eventual interest in international conference	End 99
Dag Søvik and JH	Check possibilities to extend the twinning relations between Leuven and Bergen to the trainee level	End 99
Jan Heyrman	Explore existing students networks	End 99

REPORT OF THE FINANCE WORKING GROUP

Present: Sakis Simeonidis (Chair), Jan Heyrman, Justin Allen, Adam Windak

It was discussed the different ways that exist to collect proper information about membership and money of each country. The purpose for this is the need of information for clear financial situation of EURACT in order to get subsidies from ESPG/FM and to bid for funding of task forces projects as well; finally to move to a more effective financial management.

It was decided that

- Every Council member has to close the national account for EURACT by the 31st December 1999 and report to the Treasurer the amount of money he/she has to transfer or bring in cash in Sprint Council meeting (Israel).
- All Council members will do the same every year; additionally they will bring a list of paid and non-paid members.
- At the Spring Council meeting the Council members that have secretariat, mailing etc. expenses will apply for reimbursement, which will be allowed against current year income.

REPORT OF THE PUBLICITY WORKING GROUP

Present: Justin Allen (Chair), Yonah Yaphe, Mårten Kvist, Sakis Simeonidis, Margus Lember, Adam Windak, Dag Søvik, Ivar Østergaard (Jan Heyrman and Okay Basak present this meeting)

Absent:- Owen Clarke

Notes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Website

Yonah and Sakis were congratulated on the splendid work in getting the site up and running so well. Sakis reported the costs so far to be: -

Set up and site design	1500EU
Page costs	180EU
Annual host costs	600EU

The very surprising thing was that all the information so far put on the site amounted to only 3 web pages. Group members emphasised how important it is to keep the site up to date, particularly with forthcoming events. Yonah and Mårten are to undertake this. Mårten has also taken on the role of maintaining the list of European meetings. There was some discussion as to whether this should be left to a Maltese group who are apparently in negotiation about providing this service for the European Society. It was decided that we should continue to maintain our own - information to be sent to Mårten.

Possible new content for website

Yonah led a discussion group the previous day, which had come up with a number of suggestions.

1) List of members - there was a long discussion on this, with no consensus. The points in favour were the service to members in promoting easy communication and the secondary benefit of providing a relatively easy way of tracking membership - names would be deleted if they did not pay! The points against were the workload in setting this up and maintaining it, the need for getting individual consent, and the problem of the list being "hi-jacked" by commercial companies.

It was decided to explore the security angle first, and get an estimate of the cost of site protection and reconsider.

Action: Yonah, Sakis

Benefits to members page

A simple page indicating and encouraging membership, possibly like the leaflets produced by Isabel in the past. Yonah will draft something and send round electronically for comment.

Action: Yonah

On-line teaching

Sakis was very keen on this idea - developing on-line materials for teaching teachers. There were two objections, one being that material carefully collected should not just be given away. The second was that doing this properly takes a great deal of work in setting up the site. It was agreed to defer this for now, and Sakis is to produce a discussion paper on this for a small group session next Council meeting.

Action: Sakis Simeonidis

Other actions on website

Yonah needs information on good GP teaching Department web pages so that links can be set up. This needs to be done for all countries, so Yonah is to send a message to all Council members to do this. He also asked that the information on the teaching organisations page should be checked; this is also to be included in the letter to Council members.

Action: Yonah

Yonah also wishes to put on the web all the important NLG and EURACT documents produced in the past. These should be sent either in hard copy or electronically to Yonah, who will send them on to an editorial board (Dag, Igor, Justin) who will decide what should be included.

Action: all members (to send what they have), Yonah (to collate and send to editorial board)

Communication pages in European Journal

So far the system devised at the last meeting appears to be working, although there was a bit of a hitch for the most recent copy. The working group decided that the following items should go into the next three issues: -

Report on the "EURACT" session style introduced at the Three Network Conference in Mallorca

Action: - Jan by mid December

Report of the Zagreb meeting

Selection of Hospital Posts position paper

Action: - Justin by mid December

Descriptive introduction to the website

Action:- Yonah by end February

Interesting developments in family medicine teaching; reports from three countries - Belgium, Austria, and Lithuania - for end February

Action:- Justin to write briefing notes and contact authors

Extended Publicity Booklet

The first draft of this, produced by Igor, was discussed. There was insufficient time to go through line by line, but it was decided to delete the section on EUROCCUM and insert one on the website, and delete the bibliography, which is of necessity incomplete and inaccurate and does not contribute to this booklet (*JA note to Igor - what about listing Council members publications that are internationally accessible - i.e. in mainstream journals?*)

Working group members are to receive the paper electronically from Igor, and send corrections and comments to him. He will carry out the revisions and send round to all Council members for final checking. It will then be published a) on the web and b) in booklet form, when a budget is identified, probably printed in Estonia.

Action: Igor to send out draft, amend in light of feedback, and send round for approval.

All members: to send back comments within two weeks of receipt

Justin: to sort out arrangements for publishing and printing

Publicity Posters

Three were produced for Mallorca by Jan and Agnes; they will need maintaining in quality and content, and be available for other meetings, and on request to Council members in their own countries.

Action: Agnes, Jan

New publicity ideas

Sakis suggested the idea of developing a Teachers' CD - again it was felt that this type of development could be difficult, and was not strictly a Publicity matter. Again it was suggested that he develops his ideas on paper and puts them forward to the full Council at the next meeting.

Action: Sakis