

Annex 4

Organizing Council Meetings

**EURACT Council meeting
October 7-11, 2009
Witten, Germany**



Dr Phil Phylaktou

Euract EB meeting-Vienna Feb 09

Project title: Euract Council Meeting hosting -3yr report (May 07-Oct 09)

Project aim: To review the answers of a questionnaire regarding the costs of the last 6 Council meetings in 6 European countries and to project on vital issues regarding the organization on Council meeting hosting. This short, informal and preliminary research will eventually lead to a possible guide for future hosting in order to provide ideas or guidelines in the organization of future Council meeting organizations using as resources the past experiences of Council members who hosted such an event.

Sample hosts:

Dr Mladenka Vric-Keglevic (Croatia)

Dr Mario Sammut (Malta)

Dr Monica Lindh (Sweden)

Dr Phil Phylaktou (Cyprus)

Dr Elena Frolova (Russia)

Dr Stefan Wilm (Germany)

Questionnaire issues:

- 1. Accomodation**
- 2. Meals & beverages**
- 3. Transportation**
- 4. Entertainment**
- 5. Extras**
- 6. Financial resources**
- 7. Participants**
- 8. Conference day**
- 9. Level of difficulty**
- 10. Benefits**

Euract Council Meeting -3yr report (May 07-Oct 09)

The **accommodation cost (1)** varies among the 6 countries and this is purely dependent upon the actual meeting site. In **Croatia** for example, it was held in a **Local Medical School / Health Authority building** which reduced the cost as also shown with **Russia** when the **Academy Hotel** was used. In **Sweden** at a **hotel/ retreat house** with a higher cost, in **Malta** in a **Jesuit House** with extra low prices, and in **Cyprus** at an **International Conference Center** with the highest cost. (Please note that as far as Cyprus is concerned we could have had it at a much lower cost place in another city but the transportation cost daily would have made up the difference and also the time constraints for that particular meeting were a factor that came into play). Overall however, the decision of the 6 National representatives as to where to hold the meeting brings about a **variety of suggestions for future meetings.**

The **meals & Beverages cost (2)** is also dependent upon the meeting site and in cases such as **Croatia and Malta** these costs were **incorporated into the Accommodation price.** A suggestion is derived from these 2 countries as to finding places with the ability to incorporate food prices into accommodation for a lower cost. For the rest of the countries such as Sweden, Cyprus, Russia and Germany this was not the case as shown from the table.

Transportation (3) does not play a critical role as most Council Members pay out of pocket to get to the meeting site as well as leaving from it. As far as other transportation is concerned it is really dependent upon the time factor allowed by the meeting program for extra outside trips which are limited for the most part.

Entertainment (4) is another issue which is really up to the individual National representative to utilize his or her own resources in order to satisfy this factor. In some cases such as **Sweden** the entertainment was **sponsored by the municipality** and thus the cost was reduced. In **Croatia, and Malta** the cost was approximately around 2,000e and in **Cyprus** around 6,000e (mainly sponsored). In the case of **Russia** the entertainment had the lowest cost which can bring about the conclusion that: **entertainment cost can vary from the lowest to the highest in any country depending on sponsorships** and it is not a major issue to worry about, taking into consideration that the Council can actually entertain itself with **“special musical events”** with especially talented Council members who have passed the **“EURACT STAR ACADEMY”**.

The **extra cost(5)** factor is also a non-important issue as this can be reduced by as much as possible via a well organized committee (which helps out in different ways to minimize this

amount). Unfortunately, such large organizations will have hidden extras which can surface toward the end of the event. It is noted from all countries involved in the research that anywhere between 1-2,000e can be expected but as in the case of Malta, it can be really low (142e)!

These **5 factors** mentioned above bring about the total cost which as a summary can vary according to the site of the meeting. The following 5 discussed below, will explore the technical aspect of the organization.

*The **Financial resources** list from these 6 countries expose a chief common factor among them all. **The local GP Association** seems to be a top direct link in the financial resource lists of these 6 countries. This can serve as a suggestion for future holdings. Also, **pharmaceutical companies** (as in the cases of Malta, Cyprus & Russia), **local municipalities, Health & industrial authorities, and other donations from individuals** interested to promote academic medicine. (Suggestion to maintain the motive within the local GP associations of each European country represented in Euract by promoting Euract interaction with these associations via academic programs, courses etc)*

The **number of participants** is shown to be anywhere between: **32-40**. It would be advisable for all preliminary calculations to be made within that range. In exceptional cases there might be a low number such as 28 or 29. Obviously, the higher the number of Council members attending the higher the cost. I do not think that this factor can be alleviated.

The **Conference day** seems to be a common issue or a “requirement” that is arranged by each country during the Council meetings for individual purposes/needs within each country. For example, in the case of **Malta** it was the **contribution by the Euract CPD committee** in the International Conference, in the case of **Cyprus** it was the **contribution of Euract** in general and Euract Council members in the presentation of issues in the efforts of the local Family Medicine Association to promote Academic Family Medicine in Cyprus in the absence of a medical school. In the case of **Russia** a Conference with locals was scheduled and in **Germany** a 2hr conference with students (not for fund raising purposes) was involved.

The average **level of difficulty** for the Council meeting organization was rated as **8** (Quite difficult) among the 5 countries (Croatia, Sweden, Malta, Cyprus & Russia) on a scale 1-10 (1 being extremely easy, “I’d do it again”, and 10 being extremely difficult “never again”). The chief reason for this rating is due to the responsibilities for such an event falling on the shoulders of one

individual, however with good organization (as it was the case in all countries) each council meeting can be a success.

However, a **promising rating of 4** came only from Germany (2nd time host) which listed “lots of work but FUN especially when linked with great help from coordinators” can save us all from great worries before hosting such an event by the direct promotion of team work and a more positive outlook!

The **benefits** listed **“Honor for the Local Family Medicine Department”** as the chief benefit for having the council meeting in 4 out of 6 countries (Croatia, Malta, Cyprus & Russia) taking part in this mini survey. Also, **personal gratification by the organizer** was listed in the same 4 countries, as well as the **interaction of council members with local GP’s**. In the case of Cyprus, **participation of local GP’s** in a Leonardo -2 pilot course was listed as a highly regarded issue in terms of Euract contribution to the local organization. Lastly, in the case of Germany, **“Reputation for the University”** was listed as the benefit. The entertaining sentence **“Fun to be a host”** was listed directly by Sweden & Germany. This proposes a suggestion for future holdings of Euract council meetings in these countries! However, it was also listed indirectly using other terms by all the other countries involved, so a fair conclusion as to **“Hosting Euract council meetings can be Fun”** by any country can be derived from this experience.

End of preliminary 3 yr report on Euract council meeting hosting.

Thank you for your attention