

Wonca Europe Council, September 2008

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Since the last meeting of the Wonca Europe council, the new Executive has taken over. We have had two meetings: one in February in Istanbul and the other in May in Vilnius. I have been busy attending meetings, responding to various requests and e-mails from different sources. The secretariat had to deal with a lot of various requests from member colleges. The new initiative of getting Wonca Europe involved in research projects created additional work.

There are, however, some important issues that need to be specifically addressed in my report, although some of them will be dealt with in the agenda.

- **The European Journal of General Practice**

Although we have managed to save the journal in 2005, the cooperation with Taylor and Francis has not been successful. After the conference, I have received a worrying e-mail from one of the editors of the journal, prof. Michael Kochen, who has drawn my attention to the fact that we are still struggling with the subscription rates. I have asked Colin Bradley for his comments and some of you for help in solving this matter. The result of these discussions is that we are dedicating a large part of this executive to a joint session with Colin Bradley, and the representatives of Taylor and Francis. The matter was discussed during both meetings and it was decided that an interim editor takes over the editorial task from Colin Bradley and that we start looking for a new editorial board. We were fortunate enough to get Calle Bengtsson who was willing to take over this task.

- **The Wonca Europe strategy for the future**

At the end of the conference in Paris, I have had a keynote about the contribution of Wonca to family medicine development in Europe. My keynote has ended with the following three suggestions:

- We should accept the fact that we are one of many specialities in medicine
- We should cooperate with other specialist disciplines
- We should promote our successes to the public
- We should develop a method by which we could formally integrate the academic departments of family medicine in Wonca

I hope these suggestions are acceptable and could be implemented. We are having some successes in cooperation with other disciplines, but we still need to work a lot on last two action points.

- **Improvig collaboration with other specialist groups**

After the meeting with representatives of GPs with a special interest in clinical fields, we have prepared agreements between Wonca Europe and Wonca Europe Special Interest Groups (WESIGs). They are on the agenda

- **Wonca World**

As you all know, the Wonca world CEO, Alfred Loh and the president of Wonca World, Chris van Weel were both present during the conference in Paris. We have even had the same stand at the

conference. After the conference, I have maintained regular contacts with the headquarters in Singapore. There are several issues relating to Wonca World that will be part of the agenda of this meeting.

The first issue is the »conference problem«. This issue has been discussed on many occasions and I am hoping that we are going to come to a good proposal. The same issue was also addressed in the last issue of Wonca news. I am grateful to Job and the rest of the group that has taken over the task of preparing a document on this issue.

The second issue is the »subtrust idea«. As you recall, Alfred has proposed an idea of Wonca Europe being a subtrust of Wonca World. This idea was not accepted by the Executive and we have asked for alternative proposals by the CEO. We have suggested that we look at other international organisations and the way they do their business.

The next meeting of the executive is took place in February in Dubai. A few items on the agenda for Dubai have been proposed by colleges from Europe. The Austrian college has put forward three proposals: that the conference organisers of future conferences should keep their promises they have had in their bids and that a mechanism by which the implementation of ethical principles of relationship with pharmaceutical industry should be developed.

There was a meeting of Wonca world Executive in Dubai just after our last EB meeting in Istanbul. The meeting was organised in order to promote the family medicine development in this part of the world. As you may recall, a new Wonca region has been established (WONCA EMRO), and this was an inaugural meeting.

During the sessions, I presented our decisions regarding issues we have discussed in Istanbul and they have been accepted.

One of the big problems Wonca world is still money needed to finance an ambitious plan of family medicine development throughout the world, set out by Chris van Weel. The last financial report was negative also because the money from the levy of Paris was not included in the budget.

I was asked to attend the meeting of WHO Europe in Tallinn in June. Since I can not attend, Egle Žebiene has taken over to represent Wonca world.

TRAVEL

After the meeting in Paris, I have travelled to the following meetings:

ICOH meeting, Dubrovnik (8.-10.11.)

I have been involved as the Wonca representative at the ICOH conference in Dubrovnik in November where I have contributed with a keynote. Also I joined the first meeting of the Wonca-ICOH group, founded at 9-11-2007, together with Jacintha van Balen (see also: minutes of the Council Meeting).

The conference of ESR in Vienna (7.-8.3.)

I have attended the meeting of the European society of radiology. They hold their meetings annually in Vienna and the conferences attract about 25 000 participants. This year they have added a session: ESR meets other disciplines and family medicine was targeted as the first one. Christos Lionis, Manfred Maier and myself have represented us in a session where the same problems were commented by radiologists and us. The atmosphere was very friendly and there was a genuine feeling that this was a fruitful session and that we can and should learn from each other.

European forum for Primary care meeting in Ljubljana (28. – 29. 3.)

The meeting of the European forum for primary care was organised in Ljubljana in March. I was asked to give a keynote about the perspective of primary health centres in Eastern Europe. The meeting was organised by our National health insurance and was also well attended by policymakers and colleagues, a lot of them from Eastern Europe.

Meeting of heads of colleges in Lisbon (4.-6. 4.)

This event was organised by the Portuguese college on our behalf. It was a very impressive and important meeting of 23 head executives of European colleges. The aim of the meeting was to exchange opinions about the future and the exiting functioning of member colleges. An important issue that was discussed during the conference was the relationship of Wonca and UEMO and the potential of Wonca to get involved in policy discussions. There was a general dissatisfaction as to how UEMO is representing family medicine at the European level. I have explained the history of the relationship. I am hopeful that the situation will improve, but would also like to have your suggestions as to how this should be improved.

We probably should also discuss the possibilities of this event becoming a regular one, since it has obviously proven to be successful. We have discussed a lot of things we have no time for during our regular council meetings.

Meeting with teachers of general practice in Dublin (8.-10.4.)

I was invited by the organisers of training schemes in Ireland to give a presentation about a potential use of teaching agenda. After the presentation, I ran a series of three workshops on family medicine teaching and the use of teaching agenda in one-to-one teaching.

Portuguese college meeting in Porto (18.-20.4.)

I was invited by the organisers to have a presentation on the use of educational agenda in construction of the curricula and other uses in general practice. The meeting was attended by heads of teaching institutions of general practice from Portugal and some high policy officials (deans etc.). It was sponsored by a pharmaceutical industry which seems very keen in supporting primary care and family medicine without direct marketing for drugs.

A conference on e-health in Slovenia (6.5.)

The Slovenian government has organised a conference on e-health without frontiers in Portorož, Slovenia. I was invited to attend as a keynote at the opening of the conference, together with the Swedish minister of health, a representative of software producers and a representative of consumers. My role was to represent the medical profession

Leonardo EURACT course in Iceland (20.5. -24.5.)

The Icelandic college has organised the Leonardo course, developed by EURACT, in Iceland. I was one of the course directors. This was probably the last international course of this type, since the course has covered entire Europe and there is probably no market for its being repeated (we have run 6 courses already). We have offered the course to Wonca World and it looks that we are going to run it in January in Oman.

A conference on depression in Granada (18. – 20.6.)

This was the first joint conference of Wonca Europe and World Psychiatric Association (WPA). The conference gathered more than 600 participants from all over the world and was a lively interaction between GPs and psychiatrists. It was a successful event, since we have managed to show how the two disciplines could work together in a productive way. The Wonca working party on mental health was very active during the conference. During the conference, I had the time to have a fruitful discussion with the organisers of the conference in Malaga in 2010.

Other trips

I was invited to attend the conference on primary health care, organised by the Ministry of health of Brasil, which will take place in August in Brasilia. My task is to speak about the developments of family medicine teaching in Europe.

CONCLUSION

The last year was a rather busy time with a lot of requests, some of which I could not fulfill. The task of Wonca Europe president is becoming a part-time job which involves regular work on e-mail and a lot of travel. Unfortunately, one can not fulfill all the expectations and respond to all the requests. I have received at least two invitations to attend a meeting in Brussels on a short notice, which I could not accommodate. Luckily, some of the other EB members (especially Tony Mathie and Egle Žebiene) have represented Wonca Europe at meetings as well.

In the end, I can summarise my report by saying that we are still developing in a positive way, which is reflected by a lot of activities and new ideas throughout Europe.

Igor Švab