



## GREEK ASSOCIATION OF GENERAL PRACTICE/FAMILY MEDICINE

Thessaloniki, September 10, 2015

Dear colleagues,

It is a privilege for me to represent Greece in our Council for yet another year. And there have been many years that I have had this privilege. It is very good to see you all.

There are a couple of issues, concerning the European Networks that I would like to bring to your attention and consideration, but in order to do that I would like to ask you to bear with me for a very short historical review on the creation of WONCAEurope. You will find out that it will assist in your better understanding of the points to be reached.

In 1992, following the WONCA elections, a four-member committee was formed, as far as Europe was concerned. The members of this committee were: Lotte Newman from UK, President of the European Region at the time, Joan Gené Badia from Spain, Doug Brusegaard from Norway and yours truly, Bodossakis-Prodromos Merkouris from Greece. The committee's objective was the actual creation of what is WONCAEurope today. Within this scope we had elaborated with the Scientific Body of European GPs in existence at that time, namely the SIMG. In essence, the Group of Eight was created, as a result, which consisted of the pre-mentioned four individuals and in addition, the Executive Board of SIMG. After many discussions and negotiations, we concluded to the foundation of WONCAEurope (Inaugurative Conference, Strasburg, 1995).

During those conversations back then, an essential need had become obvious, in terms of the creation of a series of Standing Committees with the New European Society of GPs, namely those that had to do with Training, Research and Quality Assurance. Taking into account the fact that there were already in existence respective European Networks at that time (New Leeuwenhorst Working Party, EGPRW and EPuip) we had decided to ask those Networks to assume the responsibility of the roles as described above, within the European Society of GPs. In exchange, it was decided to provide each of these Networks with an ex officio member position to the Executive Board of WONCAEurope, while at the same time they were to receive a determined portion of WONCAEurope's budget for their activities, respectively. At this point I have to say that my personal view, which was under-voted at the time,

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was that the ex officio member position to be offered should be within the European Council instead. Those views of mine have not changed until today and please keep in mind that my approach has come from ever been supportive towards the three main Networks (EGPRN, EURACT and Equip) where I was the Greek National Representative for a series of years.

The evolution of the New Leeuwenhorst Working Party, over the years, resulted to the EURACT while that of EGPRW to EGPRN. A peculiar “mutation” if I may put it as thus, has occurred during the following years, as far as the infrastructure of some of the Networks is concerned. Namely, besides the fact of the gaining of extra monetary resources coming from individual membership fees from their members who are at the same time paying members of the societies that consist WONCAEurope, in addition they have managed to reach a more independent level through the introducing of elections amongst their country members to elect national representatives. Of course there lies the paradox in this picture. It is like having independent colleges existing within a national college.

A series of negative aspects and situations have occurred as a result. To begin with, I cannot stretch enough the fact that, the Networks’ fees are way too high and the respective GNP of member countries is not taken into consideration. In addition, this unchecked independency of the Networks has unfortunately served as ground for inappropriate actions by certain members who have used their roles invalidly, guided by their personal agenda. As the President of the Greek Association of General Practitioners I am obligated to briefly mention the case of Mr. Dimitris Karanasios, an ex-member of the Greek Association of General Practitioners, after his personal choice to stop being one, who have been using his EURACT membership and Greek representation unethically and invalidly, in order to achieve his own personal and political goals. For further details on this, I would urge you to read the attached letter to EURACT sent by Mrs. Eirini Chatzopoulou, the Greek President of the Training Committee, where all specifics are noted. I would hate to elaborate too much on this point. Suffice it to say that you could not find my name in the EURACT membership list, as Mr. Karanasios has decided do just strike it off, as simple as that!

I believe that it is essential for us to discuss and tackle with these problematic areas of the structure of the Networks, as well as their functionality. The Greek

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Association of General Practitioners is more than willing to participate and to assist in any way it can.

Yours truly,



Bodossakis-Prodrimos Merkouris  
President of the Greek Association  
of General Practitioners (ELEGEIA)

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