

President's Report 2004

Dr Clement Leech

President EUMASS-UEMASS

Introduction

It has, since the Congress in Ghent, become traditional for the President to report to delegates, reflecting on the main events which occurred during his term of office and to outline the Council's aspirations for the future of EUMASS. I consider this to be a worthwhile exercise and am happy to maintain this tradition.

Oslo Congress June 02:

The Congress in Oslo was held in Soria Moria, the headquarters of the Norwegian Medical Association, an ideal venue with magnificent views and excellent facilities. The congress was very well attended and expertly organised. The diverse but relevant academic programme included topics such as ;

- Hospital financing and quality assessment
- Rehabilitation issues
- Disability evaluation issues
- Use of International classifications

- Epidemiological issues
- Ethical issues
- Educational issues
- Psychosocial issues
- Problems with consistency in decision making and
- Functional Capacity Evaluation

This academic programme was complemented by an excellent and most enjoyable social programme.

The organising committee of the Oslo Congress deserves our gratitude and admiration. Thank you.

At the end of the Congress, its President Dr Herman Anker assumed the Office of President of EUMASS from the outgoing President, Dr Peter Donceel. It was for Herman, one of his proudest moments.

MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUMASS

1. Council Meeting Budapest Oct 02

i) Apologies from President unable to attend through illness

ii) Dr Agnes Hovarth announced her departure from EUMASS Council and introduced her colleague Dr Ferenc Moricz as new council member for Hungary.

iii) Working Group set up in the field of Disability Evaluation focused on the Prevention of Chronic Disability from Low Back Pain

iv) The Council formally and unanimously approved the application from the Slovak Republic for full membership of EUMASS

Dr. Viliam Sinay is welcomed as its representative.

2. Council Meeting Leuven 1st March 03

i) Dr. Brandtzag from Norway informed the Council of the very sad news of the recent death of Dr Herman Anker, the President of EUMASS. As a

mark of respect, a minute's silence is observed by the Council to his memory.

We had lost a dear colleague, a close friend and a dedicated President.

ii) In one of his last communications to the executive, Dr Anker proposed Dr Herina Brandtzag as the new representative for Norway. The council unanimously approved this proposal and welcomed her.

On the council's behalf she undertook to represent EUMASS at Dr Anker's funeral and to lay a wreath ON THE Council's behalf.

iii) The Council unanimously elected Dr Clement Leech as President of EUMASS

3. Council Meeting Lille June 03

i) Council was welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Lille.

ii) The facilities which we enjoyed this week were visited and approved.

iii) The President outlined - The Renaissance Project—an early intervention assessment programme based on International Guidelines on the Management of Low Back Pain. The programme has

been proven to be highly successful in preventing Chronic Disability from LBP.

The Council was appraised of the draft EU Guidelines on the Management of LBP www.backpaineurope.com

The council unanimously decided to endorse them on their publication in Oct 04 and to assist in their dissemination and implementation.

Dublin was confirmed as the venue for the 2006 EUMASS Congress.

5. Council Meeting Berlin Oct 03

This meeting was expertly organised by our German colleagues Ina and Hans and more resembled a mini Congress than a Council. It included an academic programme as well as an unparalleled social content with visits to the Chancellery, the Bundestag and of course the Kaisersall.

6. Council Meeting Leuven Feb 04

i) The President welcomed Dr Gert Lindenger as an additional council member for Sweden.

ii) The Council accepts the Executive's recommendation to Lies Van Meerbeek, administrative co-ordinator of the Department of Occupational and Insurance Medicine (Catholic University Leuven) to afford the Council with part-time administrative support.

iii) In accordance with the statutes the Council elected a new Executive which will take office after this Congress.

The new executive is as follows;

President: Dr Martine Gouello

Vice-president: Dr. Clement Leech

Secretary-General: Prof. Peter Donceel

Treasurer: Dr. Annette de Wind, the outgoing Treasurer Dr Paul Stidolph will remain on the executive, in an advisory capacity, for a short period to ensure continuity.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TNO proposal for a EUMASS Scientific Secretariat

Wout de Boer of the TNO (Institute for Applied Research) submitted a proposal to create a scientific secretariat of EUMASS. Exploratory talks were held to assess the feasibility of such an arrangement. After discussion, where concerns were expressed regarding the ambiguity of EUMASS time, resources and responsibility, the Council decided not to enter such an arrangement.

EUMASS-AADEP- DWP London July 03

In July 03 a delegation from AADEP including the President and Past –president met with Dr. Annette de Wind, Dr Paul Stidolph and Dr Clement Leech to explore the possibility of promoting closer

collaboration and exchange of expertise between EUMASS and AADEP.

EUMASS-AADEP and Prof. Kim Burton from the European Commission Research Directorate.

Discussion on International Guidelines on best management of LBP. 11 countries over past 8 years. Consistent recommendations

Draft EU guidelines –review existing guidelines and include results of other research were considered.

International Social Security Association ISSA

ISSA is a Society of organisations and institutes whose main focus is not on medical aspects of Social Security. It was considered that there would be no significant mutual benefit in forming an association.

London Feb. 04

In the DWP a 2 day 4 nation meeting was held. Countries included UK, Norway, the Netherland and Sweden.

Various aspects of the Functional Assessment of Capacity for Work were discussed. Further particulars can be found on our website.

WEBSITE

The old website through the efforts of our webmaster Paul Treacy has been transformed to a new dynamic interactive website and I urge you all to visit it regularly for an exchange of views and information.

FINANCES

Because of the expenses necessarily and inevitably incurred in operating the website and the need for administrative support resulting from increased membership it was deemed necessary to impose an annual subscription of 250 euro for each member state. The current financial status of EUMASS I am pleased to inform the meeting is healthy.

CONCLUSION

A lot done—more to do !!!

I am satisfied with the general direction and pace with which EUMASS is evolving but there is no room for complacency. We must continue to grow not only in terms of membership but also in stature and influence.

The next EUMASS Congress will take place in Dublin Castle on June 8th-June10th 2006.

To view the excellent facilities visit its website at www.dublincastle.ie

I want to thank all the members of the Council for their cooperation during my term as President and also the Executive whose dedication is essential to the existence of EUMASS, in particular to the Secretary-General Prof. Peter Donceel and to Dr Paul Stidolph who has served unstintingly over the years holding the Offices of President and Treasurer. He is to leave us soon and I welcome his replacement Dr Annette de Wind.

Finally, it is with great pleasure that I call upon the Vice –president Dr Martine Gouello to come forward to receive the President’s Medal and assume the office of President.