



EUMASS - UEMASS

European Union of Medicine in Assurance and Social Security
Union Européenne de Médecine d'Assurance et de Sécurité Sociale

XIXth EUMASS Congress, Padova, June 14-16, 2012

President's report

Dr Sören Brage, EUMASS President

The Congress in Padova is coming to an end. It has been an outstanding congress, and a privilege to be here, to participate in discussions, and to listen to scholars and academics on topics that interest me. Organising a congress every second year is one of the main objectives of EUMASS, but we also have other tasks – ensure international cooperation of social insurance physicians, promote better standards in assurance medicine, and defend ethical standards and functions of social insurance physicians in Europe. In this President's Report, I will go through some of these tasks and actions taken in the period 2010-2012.

It is not necessary to tell you that the future for European welfare is at best uncertain, and in a worst case scenario the outlooks are plainly grim. How can we finance welfare systems in times of financial collapse, promote rehabilitation and return to work when the labour markets show record high unemployment, and provide fair pensions and health care when poverty is spreading. Such questions demand attention and action, and has been illuminated at this congress.

As physicians in social insurance and in assurance, we will all meet challenges in the coming years. There will be strong calls for restriction of benefits. Let us constantly remember and remind each other that we are physicians, and that the promotion of good health is our main task.

Congress in Berlin 2010

The 18th EUMASS Congress was held September 23-25, 2010 at the Charité Hospital in Berlin as a joint congress shared by EUMASS, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sozialmedizin und Prävention, and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Epidemiologie. The main theme of the joint congress was "*Individualized Prevention and Epidemiology*".

In the EUMASS part, there were over 110 presentations in plenary and parallel sessions on important issues such as assessment methodology, ICF, sick-leave management, return-to-work, health inequalities, long-term care, and mental health. In addition, round table meetings were organised, as well as a small poster section during the congress. Hans-Werner Pfeifer was Congress President with the inspiring support of Council members Renée Wirtmüller and Ina Überschär..



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The EUMASS congress was well attended by 240 delegates from German sickness funds, and 200 EUMASS participants from 23 countries.

Since the Berlin Congress was organised in cooperation with two other medical associations, the EUMASS council took great care in evaluating the experiences afterwards. We were very pleased to have high attendance and a vital, lively congress, but a joint congress is more complex to organize.

The council meetings

The EUMASS council has met at four occasions in 2010-2012. There were two meetings in Leuven in January, 2011 and February, 2012. In both we were hosted by the Catholic University Leuven. The April meeting 2011 was held in connection with the 2nd International Congress of Medical Assessors in Maribor, Slovenia. The council was invited to attend the congress by the Slovenian Institute of Pension and Invalidity Insurance and the Slovenian Health Insurance Institute. Finally there was held a council meeting in Helsinki in September 2011, organised by the Finnish pension institutes KELA and KEVA. The council meetings have counted 30-35 representatives from most of our member countries, and they have been efficient and professional.

The council meetings have in this period included a scientific program on the day(s) before the meeting itself. All these have been well organized, and of high academic and professional interest.

The executive committee has had its own meetings in connection with the council meetings.

Scientific Committee 2010-2012

To secure academic and professional standards of EUMASS, the council decided in 2010 to appoint a Scientific Committee. A main task for the committee is to guarantee the scientific quality of future congresses in cooperation with the organising committee for the congress and the Executive Committee of EUMASS. For 2010-12 the following EUMASS council members were appointed to the Scientific Committee: Cristina Dal Pozzo, Peter Donceel, Hans-Werner Pfeifer, Freddy Falez, and Jorma Järvisalo (appointed chairman).

For the Padova Congress program, the committee also included Giuseppe Bonifaci and Federico Cattani, from the Italian organizations INAIL and INPS.

The Scientific Committee has regularly met in connection with the council meetings, and in addition has had meetings in Berlin in 2010 and in Padova in 2011.

The work of the Scientific Committee has been comprehensive, including setting up the program for the Congress, inviting plenary speakers, assessing abstracts, and planning plenary and parallel sections during the Congress. The Executive and the Council are very grateful for the efforts that the Scientific Committee has made, and recognize the value of



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such a committee to monitor the content and quality of the congress. Therefore it has been decided to make the Scientific Committee a standing Committee.

The present Scientific Committee will after this congress partly be renewed and consist of: Wout de Boer (chairman), Freddy Falez, Jorma Järvisalo, and Hans-Werner Pfeifer.

The working groups

Except for the work with the Congress, practical work in EUMASS is done in the working groups. In this period, two groups have been active.

The Babylon group

There is a high degree of confusion and uncertainty on the use of many terms and concepts in European social insurance. This leads to misunderstanding, and slower clinical and scientific progress. The council has therefore endorsed the start of a working group on nomenclature, called the Babylon Group. The main goal is to facilitate understanding and communication in the field of insurance medicine in Europe. The definitions will be based on international regulations.

In this period the Babylon group has been active. Central terms in English have been discussed in cooperation with Oxford University Press. The endpoint for the Babylon project is a matrix of commonly used words in different languages, being put on the EUMASS web site for use by EUMASS members.

The working group on ICF

This group is working with the dissemination of ICF and the integration of the ICF model into the national insurance administrations. After the successful development of the ICF-based core set for disability assessment, and its publication in 2007, the group has worked with the dissemination of ICF in various national settings, and with the validation of the core set. These two aspects are linked to each other, and dissemination is aided by the validation study.

Data collection for the validation study was completed in 2010, and afterwards, the study has been anchored at the Research Unit of the Association for Swiss Insurance Medicine (ASIM) in Basel. Further analyses and reports will come from this unit, and the results have partly been presented at this congress, at congresses in Germany, and at council meetings. The cooperation between EUMASS and ASIM has been very fruitful.

In addition, and as reported at this Congress, further validation studies and intensified use of ICF have been carried out in Iceland, Sweden, and Italy. The interest for ICF is slowly expanding, and there is, in my view, a need for continuation of the working group.



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Expansion

EUMASS is growing. Switzerland has been accepted as a new member. At present, 18 countries are represented in EUMASS. In the coming two year period we expect more countries to become members. There has been a notable interest from countries in the Eastern part of Europe. We welcome this interest, and hope it will strengthen our position.

Strengthened professionalism

In both 2011 and 2012 there were academic mini-symposia in conjunction with the council meetings in Leuven. These symposia have been excellently organized by Professor P Donceel on highly relevant topics for EUMASS. Internationally renowned academics and researchers in social insurance medicine have participated. The symposia have been attended by council members, social insurance doctors, and academics.

Our Finnish hosts had prepared a highly profiled seminar the day before the council meeting in Helsinki with special foci on vocational rehabilitation, work resumption, and work capacity assessments.

The council had the opportunity to attend the 2nd International Congress of Medical Assessors in Maribor in 2011. The Congress had very high academic and professional standard, and had cardiovascular diseases as the main theme during the first two days, while the third day had a more general approach to insurance medicine. Several council members presented their work at this congress.

The quality of these mini-symposia, seminar and congress was outstanding and inspiring, and the council has strongly supported a continuation of these arrangements. It gives the council members new insight into research advances and best practice all over Europe.

External collaboration

The network in EUMASS functions very well and the importance of this network must not be underrated. Many members draw advantage on the expertise and network of individual members in studies and work they are doing for their national organisations. Particularly interesting here is the network on sick leave management that many EUMASS members have taken part in. The results of this network are published on EUMASS website. The paper is called "Professional sick leave: the role and functions of professionals in managing sick leave in different European countries" and describes and analyzes sick-leave management in nine European countries.

Administration

The secretariat is located in Leuven. We have been greatly aided by Lies van Meerbeek who does an outstanding job to hold this organisation together. She has also greatly aided us with the website.



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Communication

The website of EUMASS (www.eumass.com) is our main window to the outside world. The site is public, and contains links to other organisations, and information on social security medicine in Europe, on symposia, on presentations both at congresses and otherwise, and on results from working groups.

We ask of all users to check the website and send comments to the secretariat. Some comments have already reached us, and we will, in the future, make appropriate changes.

The statutes

There have been no changes in the statutes in this period.

Finance

EUMASS is in a healthy financial state. Our income comes exclusively from membership fees, and the expenditures have in the last years been moderate. It is a great advantage to have some means for the website, for the secretariat, and costs for a few designated speakers at congresses and council meetings.

The coming two years 2012-2014

The executive committee was elected by EUMASS council in spring 2012, and consists of:

- President: Sören Brage
- Vice President: Cristina Dal Pozzo (main organizer of the 2012 Congress in Padova)
- Vice President: Gert Lindenger (main organizer of the 2014 Congress in Stockholm)
- Secretary General: Annette de Wind
- Treasurer: Peter Donceel

The changing role of social insurance medicine in Europe, and the change of our professional role will be evident in the coming years. EUMASS must be prepared for these changes with open, but critical minds to necessary changes, focus on scientific evidence for our professional activities, and inclusion of new member countries.