

ERO Plenary Session

Rome, 17 – 18 April 2009

WG Parity

The WG ERO Parity was set up in 2004 with the mission to collect and compare information, to analyze the situation of dental practices throughout Europe and to examine the expenditure and income of dentists in Europe.

After 5 years of activity the WG Parity has fulfilled its task.

The first chairwoman of the WG was dr. Simona Dianiskova. Since 2007 the WG has been chaired by myself.

Throughout the activities of the WG Parity, the list of the WG members was changing slightly.

The WG started with the following members:

Simona Dianišková, Slovakia

Jörg Krainhöfner, Austria

Anna Lella, Poland

Gerhard Seeberger, Italy

Edoardo Cavalle, Italy

Vesna Barac-Furtinger, Croatia

Rodica Aldica, Romania

Bedros Yavru-Sakuk, Armenia

Ralf Wagner, Germany

Currently WG members are:

Anna Lella, Poland

Simona Dianišková, Slovakia

Vesna Barac-Furtinger, Croatia

Bartholomeo Griffa, Italy

Voicu David, Romania

Bedros Yavru-Sakuk, Armenia

Up to now the WG had several meetings and elaborated a number of questionnaires with a view to compare the dental practices in Europe.

The surveys that were carried out contained questions about cost analysis, need of investment, expenses for materials, organization of dental practices (premises, employees), age structure, working time of dentists, etc.

Thus, the analysis were not only concentrating on financial aspects. The WG has experienced some difficulty with collecting data concerning dental income.

It was also underlined by the representatives of National Dental Associations that a simple comparison of prices might be misleading, it was suggested to that it would be better to establish an average cost profile of a dental practice.

A number of times the WG provided information responding individual requests for information (e.g. the requirements to run a dental practice, types of professional organizations).

The WG also analyzed the structure of dental care in the different countries, accessibility to dental care and the allocation of public funds.

The results of the WG work indicate that qualifications of European dentists are on the same level (qualifications of dentists from the new EU Member States are automatically recognized in line with the EU Directive).

The dental materials used by the dentists and their working techniques are also on a similar level in European countries.

The significant differences occur when it comes to the evaluation of dentists' work and the prices and reimbursements for dental care.

Recently the ERO Board advised the WG to concentrate on analysis of the current state of affairs in the countries of Central Europe (such as Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, etc.) so as to find out how the situation of the dental profession and of dentists is evolving there, particularly with regards to the legislative, political and financial contexts.

I am of the opinion that the situation of the dental profession in the Central European Countries has been well analyzed recently. The situation in these countries, in comparison to the "old" EU Member States, is more or less the same as the education of dental practitioners and the way the profession is exercised.

The movement of dentists and patients proves that the main differences that are observed relate to economic factors (differences in remuneration of dentists, differences in prices of dental services) and, as already mentioned, the collection of reliable financial data is difficult.

It should be noted that movement of dentists from the new EU Member States is not as huge as some had expected before the accession, even though most obstacles related to recognition of their professional qualifications are gone.

The movement of patients (so called "dental tourism") is more visible. Patients in Europe become mobile in search for dental care that is cheaper, but still of high quality.

It is also to be noted that the various details concerning respective countries are comprehensively indicated in the recently updated "*EU Manual of Dental Practice*". Many of us have been actively co-operating in its elaboration and it should serve as a reliable source of information.

Therefore, it seems that continuing the work of WG Parity will not lead to any further results. **I propose to assume that the WG Parity has fulfilled its task and it is time to dissolve it** and to concentrate on the activities of other Working Groups.

Anna Lella

Chair of the
ERO Working Group "Parity"