



Minutes of the ERO - Plenary session 24 September 2008, Stockholm

A Welcome / opening of the session

Patrick Hescot welcomes all participants to this plenary session. A special welcome is addressed to the colleagues from the British Dental Association (which have rejoined ERO) and to the observers from the Netherlands, Ireland and Estonia which he hopes to be able to welcome again in Rome as members. Having them back would mean that a part of our mission to reunite the big family of European dentists would be accomplished.

He is very pleased by the presence of so many representatives from the member associations. This of course obliges the board to work even more effectively. Everybody is highly motivated to do so. It will be shown under the different points during this afternoon.

B Agenda of the business meeting

B.1 Roll call – Verification of the quorum

Philippe Rusca welcomes as well all participants and proceeds to the roll call. The quorum is largely established.

B.2 Approval of the agenda

The agenda is approved without amendments.

B.3 Approval of the minutes of Istanbul

Ernst-Jürgen Otterbach asks for correction of the new theme of the working group Liberal Dental Practice in Europe (p. 4). It should read: Basic rights of the dentist with regard to separate or selective contracts between dentists and insurance companies.

There are no other amendments; the minutes are therefore adopted.

Here Patrick Hescot points to the ERO Newsletters which are intended to keep everybody well informed about what's going on in ERO.

B.4 Reports of the Board

There have been two Board meetings since the plenary session in Istanbul, reports Philippe Rusca. The financial situation of ERO is very satisfactory. He expresses his thanks to the 80% of member associations which have paid their dues. He tells those who have difficulties paying the membership fee by bank transfer that he accepts also cash payments here on the spot.

The treasurer finally points out that the changes in the FDI-membership fees will also have consequences regarding to the ERO fees.

In the future, he would appreciate receiving the delegation lists from all the member associations before the plenary session. This facilitates the organisation of these meetings.



Again he reminds the participants to confirm reception of the e-mails by pressing the yes-button on the screen when receiving a mail and of course to inform the secretariat about all changes.

B.5 Working groups

1. Prevention

Denis Bourgeois' group is treating 3 topics. The first one is the organisation of the Oral Health Day in Europe. The second is the screening and prevention of oral cancers and the third is EGOHID (European Global Health Indicators Development Programme).

The World Health Day is getting a bit in the way of the European Oral Health Day. The question is, should we organise this European day or should we integrate it in the World Health Day. It would not create a conflict if we organised the European day by ourselves; but does it make sense to do so? Denis Bourgeois would appreciate receiving some feed back from the representatives of the ERO member associations. All opinions to this subject are welcome.

Oral cancer campaign – it is planned to organise a consensus conference in collaboration with INCA (French National Cancer Institute). It will take place on June 12, 2009.

Denis Bourgeois invites everybody to attend the EGOHID conference to be held here in Stockholm on October 26, 2008.

For the EGOHID project it is planned to establish a European observatory. Patrick Hescot wants to know if ERO should take part in this or not.

Simona Dianiskova reports that Slovakia has been involved in this project which has had a great success in her country. She very much recommends that all parties (professional organizations, ministries of health and decisions makers) should be involved in the project. This is very important. Patrick Hescot announces a paper or resolution that will have to be voted on in Rome.

In order to avoid a semblance of too much agreement in this point, Jörg Krainhöfner informs that Austria will abstain from this project simply because in his country a governmental agency is taking care of it and the professional association will not be involved in this matter.

This topic has not yet been discussed in the CED, explains Orlando Monteiro da Silva. It will be the subject of tomorrow's meeting. But he thinks that this is a good project and that it represents a good network between the different organisations in the dental field in Europe.

Stefaan Hanson pleads for abstention as well, since there is not enough information for the moment.

Patrick Hescot explains that there will be no voting on the topic today and that the purpose of the discussion is simply to provide information. He promises to inform the member associations before any kind of observatory is established. There will be more information for the plenary session in Rome.

Concerning the Oral Cancer Day Denis Bourgeois informs that the working group will contact all parties involved. This conference will take place in Paris and will help us to scan the European environment - actions can follow in the countries that are interested. Thanks to the collaboration of INCA there is a budget for the speaker's fees and expenses. Everybody is invited to participate.



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Francisco Rodriguez-Lozano reports on the national day on the prevention of oral cancer which was organised in Spain a year ago. The corresponding campaign has been very successful. Experts have designed a course in the detection of oral cancer for dentists. They attempted to reach a consensus statement on oral cancer similar to the one that Denis Bourgeois is now proposing; the results were very interesting.

This year, Italy has also launched a campaign on this topic, declares Stefano Briganti. An "Oral Cancer day" is organised and they are trying to work out a resolution. Therefore his association fully agrees with Denis Bourgeois' project and will support it.

Denis Bourgeois comes back to the subject of the Oral Health day. Although the "technical question" regarding a separate day or an integration of the European day within the World Health Day is still not answered, the working group will do everything possible that this event turns out to be a success.

There has been a successful project named "Activities related to Prevention of Oral Health - Polish perspective" which Anna Lella is presenting (see the presentation attached): The DMFT rate in Poland is very high and the reasons for this are very complex. The mission of the Polish government with respect to health policy is very clear, but the importance of the "dental problem" is unfortunately secondary. There were several questions to be answered: What can we achieve without funds? Where can we find allies? What are the priorities in dental prophylaxes and services? Education (as stated in Denis Bourgeois' questionnaire) in a broad meaning is very important. Communications campaigns are only effective if directed towards real audiences. The continuing professional dental education in Poland is well developed, but - according to the Polish dentists - it is not sufficient. That's why they decided to spread education to other target groups, such as: other healthcare professionals, future mothers, young parents and school teachers. They fully supported the establishment of the Oral Health Day, which allowed them to be active and more visible to the public; to organise media campaigns. There have been a lot of articles related to oral health, dental service, oral prophylaxis as well as oral cancer prophylaxis in the main medical journal. An announcement on the front page was a big event for the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists. There were also campaigns connected with Oral Health Day in others newspaper, on the radio, on TV and through e-media. For the future they plan to have other specialists, such as general practitioners, paediatricians and gynaecologists joining the campaign. They intend to use the authority of teachers for the information campaign and try to find a balance between commerce and healthy nutrition as far as school shops are concerned. The presence on TV is always a financial question. The costs of prime-time space are very high – that is why public health oriented programmes are broadcast at unattractive times – which in turn highly reduces their effectiveness. The same financial issue applies to professional spots, animations and posters.

Raising awareness in the media is important; but the question is: Which media should be involved, what arguments should be used? A solution might be to focus on local media.

Anna Lella intended to finish her presentation with some positive conclusions. But unfortunately there was an incident in Poland just before 12th September 2008, where a seriously ill child (13 years old girl) died because of complications after a tooth extraction. The only question was: who is guilty of this death; no one asked about methods of prevention.

2. Education

Alex Mersel first thanks his colleagues for their support and cooperation. A lot of work has been done. First they started with finding out the needs of the different dental association in the field of education. Three main tracks were defined: 1. a platform of courses and congresses; 2. the pilot project to introduce e-learning courses in which Slovakia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia and Lithuania will take part. The

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first rule of cooperation was established yesterday. The 3rd track was finding ways to collaborate with the other regional organisations. This discussion will hopefully be fruitful.

Patrick Hescot declares that all these education programs have the consent of the FDI. He has discussed the topic with Burton Conrod. In a year we will have the results and then we might discuss the possibility of extending the programs. For the time being they are intended more particularly for the Eastern countries, which are more in need of these programs than the Western countries.

Patrick Hescot refers to the Pan European Congress which caused big discussions in the last plenary sessions. Since all the Western countries have their own congresses, the PEC will be limited to the Eastern countries. There this congress is needed and ERO will continue to give it its label. A contract regarding the aegis of these congresses needs still to be established. The board is taking care of it. The 3rd Pan European Congress will be held in Ukraine (Kiev) from December 9 to 11, 2009. There will be no costs for ERO.

3. Parity

Anna Lella reports on the proceedings of the WG Parity. It has been announced in Istanbul that this group has taken up a new direction of work, which is to focus on the problems that dental care is facing in Europe; especially accessibility to dental care and the allocation of public funds. Even though dental practices in Europe seem very similar nowadays, there are still things that should be analyzed and compared. Many surveys describe the situation in the EU member states, but very little is known about countries which are not in the EU. Those countries that joined ERO recently will be of special interest for the working group. One of the issues for the future is a further comparison of data on how the average dental practice in the new ERO member states works (types of practice, number of dentists in a practice, gender and age of dentists etc.)

Anna Lella is convinced that the cooperation with other WG is very important, especially with the Prevention Group. It would be interesting to start by analyzing the accessibility to dental treatment. She thinks that the World Oral Health Day introduced by the FDI this year is a great initiative and that we should try to profit of this occasion for promoting the issues related to oral health and the dental profession in Europe as much as possible.

4. Liberal Dental Practice in Europe

Ernst-Jürgen Otterbach has taken over the task of Voicu David (who is absent) to report on the activity of this WG. As mentioned before, the group formulated a new theme in Istanbul. Yesterday there was the first meeting treating this subject. There are a lot of questions that need to be discussed and reconsidered. Insurance companies are trying to offer separate or selective contracts to dentists, but it is unlikely that their intent is to liberalise dental practice; it has more to do with the strengthening the position of the insurance companies. So we must ask ourselves which role we are to play, if we are contracting partner of an insurance company. How do we deal with the question of the selection of treatment? What about the insurance company selecting the patients? What happens if the partner is the insurance company and not to the patient? How do we deal with the fact that the contracting partner (dentist) becomes dependent from the insurance company, and how is the situation for those who do not sign a contract with these companies; are they going to be the losers? What happens to quality?

There are many questions that need to be answered. The WG will continue their work, possibly by drawing up a questionnaire to find out what the opinion of the member associations is.

Orlando Monteiro da Silva thinks this is a very interesting subject. In Portugal they already have experience in this matter. And he is therefore rather pessimistic how much importance will be attached to the professional association by the insurance companies. He doubts there is much that can be done

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against the powerful insurance business. The most upsetting fact is that they dictate the rules but do not take over responsibility.

Ernst-Jürgen Otterbach agrees. One single dentist has no chance against the big insurance companies. There the support of the professional association is needed. These companies will always have their sights on the commercial aspects, but we are the therapists and only we can protect the patient.

Patrick Hescot is looking forward to the discussion of this subject in Rome.

5. Enlargement

The activities of the WG Enlargement are continuing in the Eastern European countries. The latter are aware of the efforts for harmonization of our profession within the EU and they want to be a part of it by improving the level of their own dentistry as soon as possible. It is very important to reduce the existing differences, but this will take some time. Face to face meetings with representatives of the dental associations and the health ministries and health authorities can help a lot. Therefore such meetings have been scheduled for 2009 in the following countries: Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; for 2010 in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Turkmenistan. The purpose is to have a better understanding of their problems and expectations. Most of the Dental Associations coming out of the Soviet system need to be organized and ERO should try to help them. Of course other needs and wishes, based on a survey that has been done previously, such as prevention, educational programs, courses and conferences and continuing education programs, will not be forgotten. Here the cooperation with the other working groups of ERO and the FDI is welcome and needed. He thanks all those present for their approval and support. Without this all these activities could not be accomplished.

6. Women in dentistry

The feminisation in dentistry is a reality, declares Vesna Barac-Furtinger. The mission of the WG Women in dentistry is to organize a network of cooperation and support. She lists the members of her WG and confirms that the network is strong and working well. With reference to the conclusions of the plenary session in Istanbul, she emphasises the importance of e-learning especially for women. She announces further results to be presented in Rome. Finally Vesna Barac-Furtinger would like to know which one of the following two themes "Women in the educational process" or "The impact of feminisation in dentistry" should be treated in priority.

Edoardo Cavallé votes for the second one. Wolfgang Sprekels agrees. The phenomenon is recorded everywhere, not only in Europe. The number of women in the dental profession is steadily increasing. Their life work time, however, is shorter than that of their male colleagues and this creates problems. At the same time, the authorities give more and more responsibilities to auxiliary personnel. We have to fight this development and that is why the second issue should have absolute priority. He predicts that if in the medical area nurses are working instead of medical doctors, the same will very soon happen in the dental area as well. Why can't hygienists do the dentist's work? They do it cheaper. Wolfgang Sprekels thinks it is high time to discuss this issue; we should have dealt years ago with this very serious problem.

Vesna Barac-Furtinger agrees that this is very serious in a lot of professions. Patrick Hescot further observes an inequality between the salaries of women and men. The increasing number of women in many professions has not led to a change in this matter. It is a problem and should be discussed in this WG.



Haim Neuman describes the situation in Israel. There are only about 900 patients per dentist. It is no longer a profession where you can earn enough money to support a family. Many dentists are therefore women and work part time. More than 60% of the students are women. This is a fact confirms Vesna Barac-Furtinger and it does not only apply to Israel.

7. Quality

Gerhard Seeberger is quite satisfied about the outcome of the questionnaires that has been sent to all member association during summer. He presents the results (see attached presentation) and thanks all those who answered. The WG was positively surprised about the participation in this questionnaire and the answers they got. They will work hard on this and try to meet the requirements and wishes of the member associations even though this will not be a simple task. They will present a first outline of answers in Rome.

According to Orlando Monteiro da Silva quality is a tricky topic and it is something that we have to keep inside our profession and avoid that others will make any propositions or even try to impose rules from the outside.

Apparently there has been a survey on this subject in Germany and Wolfgang Sprekels announces that he will present results which may be used by everybody. Quality is a keyword in this guideline. He thinks quality should not be the task of a single WG, but of all national associations. There are countries where quality or quality control is imposed by law. There are manuals and CDs. It would be interesting to know in which countries there are legal prescriptions and how they are handled. These are questions that should be answered as well.

This is exactly what we are going to do, confirms Gerhard Seeberger. It will be step number two. The answers they have received now indicated to keep going exactly in this direction.

8. Dental Team

Edoardo Cavallé reports that this group has met for the first time after Istanbul. Prof. Oulis presented a profile he is writing for the CED and this led them to think of changing the WG's name into Oral Health Team. They agreed about focussing on the profile of the auxiliaries according to the situation in different countries. The main profiles are: dental hygienist, dental chair side assistant, dental technician and possibly denturist. The first goal is to avoid that political issues lead to the creation of short degree dental therapists. He promises to present results in Rome. Edoardo Cavallé misses the participation from the Eastern Countries in his group. There is only one representative from Bulgaria.

Patrick Hescot points to the FDI Taskforce Dental Team. They will of course collaborate with ERO. It is very important for our profession to grant everybody access to dental treatment. The creation of auxiliary personnel in dentistry and their increasing competencies is a fact in some countries. Here, a dentist often takes care of the more complicated cases, and there is a tendency to delegate simple treatments to auxiliaries. ERO and FDI's role is to keep things the way they should be; in other terms, to make sure that dentists take prime responsibility for any dental treatment. It cannot be neglected that the cost factor is playing an important role in this matter. So the issue of auxiliary profession is critical.

Ralf Wagner thinks that Patrick Hescot has given a good overview of what is important in this matter. The task of this WG must be very clearly defined. Talking about cost-saving offers of dental treatment, he takes the opportunity to ask if it is really necessary to just provide anything for less money. There is a lot that needs to be discussed.



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Gerhard Seeberger likes to focus on reality. We have to keep a close eye on this issue. The task of this WG is very important. He describes a situation in Italy where a so-called dental team carried out a two year program for children in which no dentist was part of.

We will be back on this in Rome. Patrick Hescot thanks all working groups for their precious work.

B.6 Information on FDI matters

It is very important that ERO is as strongly present as possible in the FDI. That is why ERO representatives should be elected to position into the FDI council and commissions. All candidates from ERO running for FDI posts who wish to present themselves have now the floor.

B.7 Plenary session 2009 - Rome

The next plenary session will be held in Rome from 16th to 18th April 2009. The board and the working groups will meet on the 16th, the plenary session will be on the 17th and the scientific session on the 18th April 2009. He hopes again for a large audience.

As for the 2010 plenary session there are two candidates so far: Armenia and Georgia. Candidatures can be announced until the end of this year. The decision will be taken in Rome.

B.8 Miscellaneous

C Close of the meeting – adjournment

Patrick Hescot thanks the interpreters for their precious work and all the participants for their cooperation and support. The meeting is adjourned.

Dr. Patrick Hescot
President

Monika Lang
Minutes