

The UEMS Physical & Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) Section and Board held its most recent meeting in Vienna from 17th–19th October, 2002. It was very well organised by Dr Haymo Bruhne and colleagues.

The President of the section, Professor Veronika Fialka Moser (Austria) commenced the proceedings by warmly welcoming all the members. It was her last meeting as President and she expressed thanks for all the support she received in the past four years. She made particular notice of certain retired members whom she described as “pioneers who made significant progress to the development of the speciality”. She briefly outlined some of the achievements of her presidency and thanked the current executive and members for their hard work. She welcomed the proposed new accession countries and looked forward to future harmonisation of their traditions in PRM. She further welcomed the incoming President of the PRM Board, Dr Angela McNamara (Ireland) who has responsibility for education and training.

Dr McNamara addressed the General Assembly. She saw the Board as having a responsibility to improve the quality of care by developing standards that will ensure that certified specialists in PRM possess the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for best practice in the PRM speciality. She emphasised that the Board has an obligation and duty to patients and the public and the Board depends on PRM specialists to deliver the appropriate and requisite specialist healthcare. She further emphasised that the Board has an obligation to its own certified members in all countries of the EU and elsewhere. The Board must support its own members in all relevant professional matters pertaining to the speciality. She stressed the importance of accreditation of trainers and training centres through using the existing structured curriculum and examination. These are important measures of PRM specialist competence.

The Board has accepted that having “time-limited certification” with re-certification through continuing professional development (CPD) are measures of quality training and are a way to ensure accountability and transparency for the speciality going forward. Certification therefore is at the core of much of what the Board does. Professor Guy Vanderstraeten (Belgium), Vice President of the Board is ‘Director General of Board Certification’. He has overall operational authority for the process of Board Certification and is ably assisted by the recently appointed Examination Secretary, Professor Xanthi Michail (Greece). Information pertaining to the process of Certification is available on the Board’s web site.

The feasibility of setting up a *European College* with all Board Certified specialists as Members is under consideration. This would provide a focal point for the speciality. It could exist as a Virtual College and/or at a physical location.

Other issues under consideration by the Board include:

- The use of distance learning techniques for the purpose of “training the trainers”.
- Support for the research endeavour within the speciality.
- Networking strategies for certified members internationally and with members of the Board.

- Development of co-operation between ISPRM and European organisations of PRM.
- Development of inter-speciality collaboration.
- Liaison with European officials in Brussels to explore the available funding opportunities and supports which would benefit our speciality going forward.

Dr McNamara recognised and complimented all past and present members of the Board for their dedicated, committed and voluntary hard work. In particular, she thanked her immediate predecessor Professor Jan Ekholm (Sweden). Professor Ekholm continues to lead the section on CPD.

The UEMS PRM section has two other major committees which deal with Clinical affairs and Professional matters.

The Chairman of the Clinical Affairs committee is Professor Bengt Sjölund (Sweden) and he has made a significant contribution to the process of accreditation. He has worked hard at encouraging all of the member countries to become involved in the accreditation process. He informed the General Assembly in Vienna of the current development of CARF in Europe and advised on the implementation of Leonardo and Erasmus/Socrates-funded projects. He encouraged and promoted these sources of funding to other universities and institutions to engage in seeking funds for projects from these sources.

The Professional Practice Committee is being given high priority by the Section as there are many issues and concerns expressed by delegates from the member countries. The Chairman of this Committee, Dr Guy Wanet (Belgium) is well positioned and located to address these issues and concerns on behalf of the Board. There is still a substantial amount of work to be completed to ensure the future of the speciality, particularly in light of the recent Doctor’s Directive. Harmonisation of PRM in all the member countries is a major challenge particularly as the EU will soon welcome the new accession countries who bring their own structures and cultures into the European family of PRM.

Dr Anthony Ward (UK) was elected as the new President of the UEMS section for four years and he gave a short acceptance speech to the meeting. Professor Alain Delarque (France) reported on the very successful 2002 intensive programmes (IP) in the European School Marseille on ‘Posture and Movement Analysis’. The next Marseille course will take place from 1st–10th July 2003. A large response to this opportunity is expected from PRM interested trainers and trainees from around Europe. The theme of the course is “Motor disabilities: Rehabilitation, Assessment and Neuro-physiological supports”.

For information on the speciality of PRM, the work of the Section and the Board, you are invited to visit the Board’s website: <http://www.euro-prm.org>. In January 2003, the examination results will be available after the Jury meets in Ghent, Belgium. The next meeting of the UEMS, Board of PRM will take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia March 27–29, 2003.