

REPORT OF EURACT COUNCIL, MAASTRICHT 11th to 14th NOVEMBER 1998

27 countries were represented in this Council Meeting, and in addition, Professor Chris van Weel, President of the European Society was present for part of the meeting. He addressed the opening and confirmed the importance of EURACT to the continuing development of the European Society.

He is hoping the European Society will be able to co-ordinate the three network organisations in producing combined strategies on clinical topics which would address the research, teaching issues, and quality assurance issues in general practice.

Teaching Organisations Database

The Council has been struggling for some time communicating with key players in general practice education in individual countries. A structured survey is being carried out to identify key "umbrella" organisations that could be used as contact points. A "landscape" questionnaire was completed in order to identify key contacts to circularise regarding the Mallorca conference

Majorca Conference

This is the first three network conference: the sessions will be organised into presentations and workshops in the areas of research, education and quality assurance. Two keynote speakers are being selected by EURACT to talk on "The challenges facing general practice education in the changing world of general practice" and "General practice teacher selection"

Abstracts have to be in by January 15 and all members should have received a preliminary application form from the conference organisers.

The European Society "Ten Targets".

There was a short period of small group work to enable council members to decide the most important educational issues from within these. It was considered that urgent action was required to promote items 2, 3 and 4 particularly, priority for individual council members being largely determined by the state of development of general practice in their countries. Further work is to be carried out both in a task group and in the Executive Board and be brought back to a future meeting.

Council Business Meeting

55 new members were proposed, but a similar number of members have left, so the total membership remains the approximately the same. Three new countries were declared eligible to have council members - Lithuania, Russia and the Ukraine,. Bulgaria and Malta have expressed an interest but have to raise the necessary number of individual members before they become eligible.

Budget

Income and expenditure remain largely static as the main variable (expenditure on special educational projects). It is now usually managed by bidding to the European Society for project funds.

Quality standards for European Surveys

This was triggered by the recognition that although quick surveys at meetings were a very useful method of rapidly collecting an overview, they remained based on the opinions of one person from each country. Jan Heyrman proposed a new structure derived from a key informant interview process. The aim is to get higher quality data from surveys, which will stand up to the rigorous analysis required for journal publication. There was a wide ranging and often dysfunctional debate which can be summarised by saying that the idea was supported in principle but that further work was needed before adoption.

Relationships with other teaching organisations

Relationships with AMEE have already been established with reciprocal observers being appointed. A request from the Europe Against Cancer network has been received suggesting that a similar relationship should be developed. This was welcomed in principle but in addition the Council is to examine ways in which such relationships can be formalised.

Task Group Work (Fuller reports from these meetings may be available on request).

Vocational Training - This group is about to produce statements on quality standards for hospital training and general practice teachers, is looking at re-assessment of hospital training, the content of release course teaching, and the educational content of hospital posts. This is an active group with participation from members outside Council.

Higher Professional Education - It is considering two issues: the first being extra targeted training immediately following vocational training, and secondly, training for identified high flyers as future academics.

CME - Is trying to develop a European "map" of patterns of education; is considering the interactive Internet site between three countries (Holland, Belgium, Germany), and is looking to present a joint presentation in Mallorca.

Academic Practice Working Group - Is developing work on the European Society ten targets.

Education Research Course

Council then joined the course organised by the University of Maastricht, and Professor Harry Crebolder. A separate brief report is attached.

Future Meetings

EURACT Council - 17th to 21st March 1999 - Krakow.

European Society/Three Network Meeting - 19th to 22nd May 1999 - Mallorca.

EURACT Council - October 1999, Croatia (date to be confirmed)

Regular Courses:-

a) New teachers course - 12 to 14th April 1999 - Corfu.

b) Teachers Course - Slovenia (Bled) - Teaching the Management of Chronic Diseases in General Practice - 8th to 12th September 1999

There will also be a course in Leuven on Teaching Evidence-based Practice, at the end of August, and the annual Riom course for course organisers in November 1999 - further details will be sent as soon as available.

General meeting - EURACT should hold a general meeting in 1999. Although the Mallorca meeting is not an official Council meeting, it is felt that there are more likely to be individual members present. It has been decided therefore to seek a time within

the Mallorca meeting to hold our two-yearly general meeting - further details to be announced.