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2008 ER-WCPT General Meeting

The Europe Region of the WCPT is pleased to announce that 33 Member Organisations have registered themselves to participate in the General Meeting of the Europe Region 2008, to be held on 22-24 May 2008 in Athens, Greece. A Workshop to approve the EU Project Guides, Part A – **Pain in the back: Guide exercises program for avoiding back pain in children and teenagers** will also be held for WCPT Europe Region delegates on **21 May 2008** at the same venue.

We would also like to announce that the documents for the General Meeting have been posted on the ER-WCPT website. Those documents are available under the members' area in the download section. To get them, Member Organisations have to login on the ER-WCPT homepage, with their Member Organisation user and password. If your Member Organisation has not requested yet its login data, you should contact via e-mail Oliver Conrad (conrad@zvz.org) and he will send the data immediately.

2nd European Congress on Physiotherapy Education

The Executive Committee of the ER-WCPT and the Swedish Association of Registered Physical Therapists (L.S.R.) would like to remind Member Organisations about the **2nd European Congress on Physiotherapy Education**, entitled "Lifelong learning, developing the physiotherapy profession – Linking education, the profession and employment". The registration has been opened and there is an early registration fee of 300 EUR till 31 May 2008. There is also a student's fee for 250 EUR.

The congress has attracted more than 220 submitted abstracts from interested participants all over Europe as well as in other continents. Upon the now concluded peer review process, it has been decided that the programme will hold



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about 80 platform presentations and 90 poster presentations in addition to key speakers, work shops and symposia. We anticipate participation from most member organisations and we advise not to miss out on this occasion to promote and discuss life long learning in physiotherapy in a European and international context.

All physiotherapy educators, educational researchers, clinical educators and physiotherapists involved in community and patient education as well as professional organisations, employers and national authorities are invited to the Congress. The congress is organised in collaboration with European Network for Physiotherapy Education, ENPHE, and Nordic Educational physiotherapists, NUF.

The Region wishes Member Organisations to promote the Congress as widely as possible and encourage their members to attend this event in Stockholm (Norra Latin), Sweden, on 25-26 September 2008.

A Workshop to approve the EU project, Part B – **Staying clean: to support smokers/ex-smokers in giving up** on **24 September 2008** and a half-day Post-Congress meeting for ER-WCPT delegates after the Congress would also take place at the same venue, on **27 September 2008**.

For further information visit the website <http://www.allready.net/lsr-intranet/>

Summary of the Executive Committee Meeting held in Estoril, Portugal, on 28 - February - 2 March 2008

The last Executive Committee Meeting of the Europe Region was held in Estoril, Portugal. The Executive Committee meeting focused primarily on the revision of the documents which will be presented at the 2008 General Meeting (GM) and in the GM preparation.

The meeting also focused on:

- EU grant for the joint ER-WCPT project,
- the 2nd Education Congress in Stockholm, Sweden

EU grant for two ER-WCPT projects - Since the last Executive Committee meeting, there were two meetings, each one related with each part of the project.

Part A - Pain in the back? Guide exercises programme for avoiding back pain in children and teenagers – The Education WG met on 19 January 2008, in Madrid, Spain.

Part B - Staying clean: Guide exercises programme to support smokers / ex-smokers in giving up. – The Professional Issues WG met on 26 January 2008, in Brussels, Belgium.

Related to Part A, a literature review had been made by the German Association. This literature review had been sent to the Project Partners and to the Education WG Members, as evaluators of the guide developments, for comments. The WG Members and the Project Partners had sent their comments to



the German Association which had been evaluated and include as appropriate. The objective of this literature review was to find best practice models in order to prepare an intervention programme.

The next steps were agreed as follows:

- To send the final review to the stakeholders and Member Organisations for comments.
- To develop the intervention programme to be presented to the MOs at the workshop in Athens. The programme will be also sent to the MOs before the workshop for their evaluation and comments.

ER-WCPT Congress on Physiotherapy Education in 2008

The Chairman of the Education WG informed the meeting about the activities undertaken to prepare the 2nd Congress on Physiotherapy Education as follows:

- The abstracts submission was closed on 2 January 2008. 220 Abstracts had been received.
- Registration: The registration has been opened. There would be an early bird

registration for 300 EUR till the 31 May 2008. For the Education WG members and for the students involved in the organisation of the Congress the registration would be offered for free.

- A Workshop to approve the EU project, Part B Staying clean: Guide exercises programme to support smokers / ex-smokers in giving up, would take place before the Congress at the same venue, on 24 September 2008.
- A half-day Post-Congress meeting for ER-WCPT delegates would also take place after the Congress at the same venue, on 27 September 2008.
- Programme: A draft Congress programme was presented to the meeting.
- The Education WG and Executive Committee Members would be used as Chairmen of the Congress sessions and as well as substitutes and discussion facilitators.
- The Congress organisers should appoint someone to summarize the conclusions from each session.
- The Organising Committee should take care of the protocol of the opening ceremony.

Promotion of the field of physiotherapist activities

To promote physiotherapy related activities dealing with political issues of Member Organisations, the initial steps in the establishment of a continuous professional development programme by the Austrian Association is presented.

Due to the lack of a national wide system to

monitor the continuous professional development of physiotherapists in Austria, the Austrian Association established in 2004 the possibility to demonstrate professional development in form of the so called "Weiterbildungsdiplom". Since then, members of the Austrian Association as well as non members can apply for the



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“Weiterbildungsdiplom” if they are able to demonstrate 80 hours of professional development within 3 years on a voluntary base.

However, as this certificate had not been recognised by the Austrian health authorities, it had no legal or official implications. This changed from 2008 on. In extended negotiations the Austrian Association reached a breakthrough with a mayor health insurer. First, the latter recognises the Austrian Association as the authority, in assessing the requirements of an adequate level of professional development, based on the already existing “Weiterbildungsdiplom”.

Second, the granted “Weiterbildungsdiplom”, enables physiotherapists registered by this insurer to apply for an up to 50% reimbursement of expenses for course fees related to the granted “Weiterbildungsdiplom”.

The Professional Issues Working Group invites all Member Organisations of the ER-WCPT to share their successes in dealing with political issues, which would lead to an increasing body of references.

09.06.2008 - 10.06.2008 Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)

EU cross-border health care legislative proposal postponed

The European Commission announced on 19 December 2007 that the EU cross-border health care legislative proposal, which is expected to clarify the rules on cross border healthcare and is tackling patients' rights to

obtain reimbursable medical treatment in another EU member state, was postponed until early 2008 (probably until spring 2008) due to a series of open and controversial questions that need further discussion.

EU pension initiative to support workers' mobility

The European Commission has recently published two studies that report that supplementary pensions' schemes are still a problem for the mobility of the workers across Europe, and support the Europe-wide initiative to improve people's access to supplementary pension rights when changing jobs or working in another EU country. Over the coming months the Commission will be working together with the

Slovenian Presidency to make progress on finding agreement for an effective and proportionate directive to reduce obstacles to mobility without placing undue burdens on pension providers

For further information:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/73&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=EN>



A new European Commissioner for Health

The European Commissioner for Health, Markos Kyprianou, has resigned from its current position to take up the role of Foreign Minister in the new Cypriot Government. Mr. Kyprianou's successor is Mrs. Vassiliou, who was tipped as a Health Minister for Cyprus in 1999 and has been very active in the environmental field and human rights. She is

known for her support to women and their representation in politics and business. ER-WCPT would like to thank Commissioner Kyprianou for his hard work under this Commission and would like to offer our warm welcome to Androulla Vassiliou. The current Commission mandate ends in autumn 2009.

European Parliament hearing of new Health Commissioner

Following the resignation of Commissioner Kyprianou, a hearing was held on 1 April 2008 to confirm the appointment of his replacement, Mrs Vassiliou in the European Parliament.

On 29 February 2008, the Council of the European Union decided by written procedure to appoint Mrs Vassiliou as European Commissioner for Health, from 3 March 2008 to the end of the current Commission's term of office, on 31 October 2009.

Background

In accordance with the Framework Agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission, it was agreed that the Mrs Vassiliou would appear before Parliament without delay and in full compliance with the prerogatives of the Institutions.

The main purpose of the hearing was to give

the parliamentary committees a chance to confront Mrs Vassiliou's views on the priorities of her area of responsibility. The hearing also strengthened her democratic accountability and legitimacy.

To prepare for the hearing, Mrs Vassiliou was requested to reply to a written questionnaire. The written questionnaire is compounded in two parts: general and specific questions. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/commission/2008/questionnaires_en.htm

Results and initial responses

The Commissioner made a very good impression during her hearing, and initial responses from MEPs, the press and other present stakeholders has been very positive. The Commissioner demonstrated a strong background in her Curriculum Vitae and presented a powerful and passionate commitment to public health protection and promotion.



EU Call for Proposals 2008

The European Commission Public Health Programme has published its call for proposals for 2008, in order to ensure that the EU organisations participate in the 2nd Programme of Community action in the field of Health (2008-2013), and fulfil all the programme objectives, under a wide variety of financing mechanisms. The deadline to submit proposals to the calls is 23 May 2008.

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/howtoapply/call_for_propal_en.htm

On the following link you will be able to find out further information about the objectives of the programme (2008 – 2013), the budget, who can participate, call for projects and other material related with the health programme.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/documents/prog_booklet_en.pdf

Commission proposes to continue financing Community Tobacco Fund to pay for awareness-raising on dangers of tobacco

On 4 February 2008, the European Commission proposed to extend the financing of the Community Tobacco Fund for the next two years. In the current funding period, the Fund gave support to the "HELP – for a life without tobacco" campaign. (<http://www.help-eu.com>)

The Smoke Free Partnership has urged a far more cost effective use of these resources.

Background

The "Community Tobacco Fund" is derived directly from the aid granted for the

production of raw tobacco within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The CAP reform regulations of 2003 and 2004 provide the mechanisms allowing the existing tobacco subsidies to be converted to a single farm payment as income support to farmers.

Under the tobacco reform of 2004, the tobacco-producing Member States will phase out production linked payments for tobacco growers between 2006 and 2010, replacing them with non-production-linked



'decoupled' payments. These will be linked to the fulfilment of certain environmental, animal welfare and food quality standards ('Cross Compliance'). Some countries have already completely decoupled their payments and, as such, the budget for tobacco subsidies has declined from €922 million in 2005 to €321 million in 2007.

The Fund's budget

In 2004, the budget heading relating to the Community Tobacco Fund has been allotted an appropriation of 14.4 million euro to cover communication actions taken by Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection (DG SANCO).

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

In the political discussions on the need to continue giving support to the production of raw tobacco, which costs around 950 million euro per year, the Council decided initially to introduce a levy not exceeding 1% on this subsidy to finance a Community fund for research and information. The percentage of the levy required for the Fund has been increased in stages, and will be raised up to 5%, and its scope was extended.

The current maximum ceiling for tobacco aid stands at €337.937 million, meaning that the maximum annual amount which can be transferred to the Fund is €16.897 million.

The projects financed by the Fund

The development of new tobacco varieties and cultivation methods, alternative uses for raw tobacco and alternative crops (until 2001) and projects to help tobacco growers to switch to other crops or activities (since 2002). These projects are run under the responsibility of the Agriculture General Directorate (DG AGRI).
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm

Improving public awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco consumption through education and information. The Fund gave support to the "HELP – for a life without tobacco" campaign. These projects are run under the responsibility of the DG SANCO.

The Fund's public health objectives

- Raising public awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco consumption, including passive smoking.
- Improving the relevance and effectiveness of the messages put across about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption, and the methods of communication used (language and images).
- Preventing and stopping smoking.
- Disseminating the results to the national authorities and the relevant sectors.



Smokeless tobacco products are addictive and hazardous to health, scientific committee concludes

Smokeless tobacco products are addictive and hazardous to health, a scientific committee concluded.

The Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) in its opinion on smokeless tobacco products addressed their health effects and addiction potential. Furthermore, it examined the role of these products in smoking initiation and cessation, as well as the possibility to extrapolate the experience and use patterns from countries permitting the use of oral tobacco to other EU-countries, where this use is currently banned.

According to the opinion, smokeless tobacco is addictive and withdrawal symptoms are broadly similar to those seen in smokers. Smokeless tobacco products contain various levels of toxic substances and these products

are carcinogenic to humans.

The Committee also stated that on the available evidence it is not possible to draw conclusions as to the relative effectiveness of smokeless tobacco as an aid to smoking cessation in comparison with established therapies. Moreover, trends in prevalence of smoking and use of oral tobacco are not predictable, as no extrapolation can be derived on the use of oral tobacco in countries where it has not been used before.

SCENIHR provides the Commission with an updated and useful assessment in order to manage health risks in a responsible way according to its competences.

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_013.pdf

European Commission policy priorities for 2009

On 13 February 2008, the European Commission presented its Annual Policy Strategy for 2009, which highlights the policy objectives in five priority areas: growth and jobs, climate change and sustainable Europe, making a reality of the common immigration policy, putting the citizen first, and Europe as a world partner. A number of initiatives will be put forward on important issues, such as: patient safety by a proposal on medical devices, health and safety at work, equality between women and men, free movement of people, flexicurity. The Commission will now start an exchange of

views with the European Parliament and the Council on where the policy priorities should lie in 2009, and how this should be reflected in the Commission's legislative and work programme to be adopted in October and in the budget for 2009.

For further information:

http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/synthesis/doc/aps_2009_en.pdf



European Commission Consultation on Patient Safety

The European Commission launched on 25 March 2008 an eight week public consultation on patient safety. The results of this will help in the development of the Commission's proposal for on general patient safety issues planned for the end of 2008. That proposal will address the important issue of patient safety throughout the European Union (EU) and will include a detailed first pillar, addressing healthcare-associated infections (HCAI), on which separate public consultations have already been held.

The two primary objectives of the Commission's general patient safety proposal will be:

1. To support Member States in their efforts to minimise harm to patients from adverse events in their health systems, through appropriate policies and actions to

improve safety and, therefore, quality of care.

2. To improve EU citizens' confidence that they will receive sufficient and comprehensible information available on levels of safety and available redress in EU health systems, including healthcare providers in their own country and in other Member States.

Patient safety issues can affect all EU citizens. The Commission would like to have the views of all those involved in this field from the patient and consumer to national competent authorities, from the health professional to the healthcare manager and anyone else who wishes to participate.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/patient_safety/consultation_en.htm

First World Health Professions Conference on Regulation

The first World Health Professions Conference on Regulation (WHPCR) will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 17-18 May 2008.

The main focus will be on: 1) the role of professionals in addressing health needs; 2) models of health professional regulation; and 3) regulatory governance and performance.

Taking place just prior to the World Health Assembly (19–23 May 2008), the WHPCR will provide a global, inter-professional forum to explore the future of the health care system regulation and the role of the health professions in regulation for improvement in health care to the benefit of patients.

The conference will bring together policy



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makers; health system managers and administrators; researchers and scientists; as well as leaders in the health professions. It is organized by the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA)* in cooperation with the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT).

The registration is now open at: www.whpa.org/reg/index.htm and the preliminary programme could be found at: www.whpa.org/reg/programme.htm. Those interested in submitting an abstract for poster presentations could find further information at: www.whpa.org/reg/abstracts.htm

eHealth 2008 conference

The eHealth 2008 Conference will be held in Portoroz, Slovenia, on 6 – 8 May 2008

The conference will highlight solutions to eliminate various barriers in European healthcare. These barriers are either geographical ones, like those between healthcare providers, regions and states, or communication difficulties among the various

players in healthcare systems which include users, healthcare workers, management, or regional and national authorities.

For further information:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=3698

Positive Aging

Positive Aging. An Interdisciplinary Team Approach for Health Professionals. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. 24 – 25 May 2008.

The aim of this conference is to bring together an interdisciplinary audience of health professionals and researchers to address some of the issues and challenges facing the aging population today. Hear about the most current research findings from leading

experts, learn how research can be translated into practice, and discover useable resources to promote healthier, more positive living for Canada's older adult population. The importance of an interdisciplinary team approach to care giving and research will be emphasized.

For further information or a downloadable brochure, please visit:
www.interprofessional.ubc.ca

2nd European Congress on Physiotherapy Education

Life Long Learning: Developing the Profession | September 25-26 2008, Stockholm

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