



**EUROPHARM
FORUM**

Summary
Consultation Meeting
EuroPharm Forum

Copenhagen, Denmark

26 May 2009



Organised by
the Professional
Secretariat at

WHO
Collaborating Centre
for Drug Policy and
Pharmacy Practice
Development

In attendance

Executive Committee

Th(Dick) Tromp	The Netherlands	Elected President
Gerald Alexander	United Kingdom	Appointed Treasurer
Ingunn Björnsdóttir	Iceland	
Balázs Hankó	Hungary	
Astrid Kågedal	Sweden	

Professional Secretariat

Kirsten Holme Christensen	Denmark	Professional Secretary
Anja Sichlau	Denmark	Administrative Assistant

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Observatory: <http://www.europharm.pbworks.com>

Discussion Fora: <http://intranet.europharmforum.org>

Members

- Belgium: Dirk Broeckx
- Denmark: Steffen Bager, Peter Jørgensen
Niels Kristensen
- Estland: Kaidi Sarv
- Finland: Harry Ovaskainen, Ingrid Wiberg
- Hungary: Gyöngyver Soós
- Iceland: Adalheidur Palmadóttir
- Ireland: Brendan Hayes, Pamela Logan
- FYR Macedonia: Zlatko Balalovski
Lidija Petrusevska-Tozi
- Norway: Inger Lise Eriksen
Anne Markestad
- Sweden: Thony Björk, Carin Svensson
- The Netherlands: Jan Smits
- Turkey: Serif Boyaci, Erdogan Colak
- United Kingdom: Gerald Alexander, Raj Patel
John Turk

Observers and interest groups

- EPSA: Tomaso Piaggio, Louise Winnecke-Jensen
- ESCP: Cecilia Bernsten
- FIP: Luc Besançon
- PCNE: Birthe Søndergaard
- PGEU: John Chave
- WHO: Kees de Joncheere
- EFPC: Pim de Graaf
- WHO Collaborating Centre, Pharmakon: Janne Albertsen,
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Opening

EuroPharm Forum President Th(Dick) Tromp welcomed the delegates and observers in attendance; Spain had registered, but did not attend. Kees de Joncheere (WHO) welcomed all to the premises of the WHO Regional Office for Europe. He presented the apologies of Regional Director of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Marc Danzon, and Deputy Regional Director of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Nata Menabe, who were unavailable to attend the Consultation due to coinciding responsibilities connected to the 62nd World Health Assembly. On their behalf, Mr de Joncheere conveyed the continued support and commitment of the WHO to the Forum.

Mr de Joncheere briefly outlined the role of the WHO in the Forum and some of its history: The WHO had run the secretariat and was explicitly included in the statutes for several years until 2006, where the organisation had sought a more strategic role and new ways of creating and establishing collaboration with pharmacists in Europe. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding expressed the wish on behalf of the Forum and the WHO to maintain and specify the areas and approaches of the collaboration, and there were many areas of potential co-operation in line with the 2008 Tallinn Charter on health systems.

The Memorandum of Understanding was seen by members as a positive step forward towards increased collaboration; however, there was slight concern as to the balance of mutual obligations expressed in the agreement. Also, members would like to know concretely how the Memorandum had served to ameliorate the relationship. President Th(Dick) Tromp responded that the relationship had developed from its rather formally defined, static character into a collaboration of a more flexible nature and with a built-in feedback system. Easy and frequent contact had been maintained and developed on both organisational and professional issues with several members of the WHO staff, Regional Adviser Health Technology and Pharmaceuticals, Kees de Joncheere, Manager Pharmaceutical Policy in NIS, Health Technologies and Pharmaceuticals, Nina Sautenkova and Deputy Regional Director of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Nata Menabde. The expectations of both organisations were in good balance, although the Memorandum may prove to have room for improvement at the time of renewal depending on how the collaboration develops.

Following this welcome by Mr Kees de Joncheere, EuroPharm Forum President Th(Dick) Tromp informed the attendants that he and the Professional Secretary would provide an introduction to the meeting, following which all would be asked to express their opinions and priorities. Certain items would be selected for further debate. In accordance with the input provided by the attendants during the day, the Executive Committee would prepare the 18th Annual Meeting, and decisions as to the future of the Forum would be taken by the General Assembly in October.

Introduction by EuroPharm Forum President Th(Dick) Tromp

In his presentation, Th(Dick) Tromp outlined:

- The views, positive as negative, expressed by members, departing members and observers since October 2008
- The criticism raised by members at the General Assembly in 2008: quality, cost, communication and visibility issues, balance between administrative and professional support by the secretariat
- The fact that different members have different needs of the Forum
- The perceived rigidity of the professional programme
- The increased level of activity of and between the Executive Committee, Management Team and Professional Secretariat since October 2008.

To respond to the issues raised by members, Th(Dick) Tromp reported that the Executive Committee had taken the following measures:

- Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for Collaboration with WHO Europe (to comply with members' wish for a close relationship with the WHO)
- Establishment of an Observatory on pharmacy practice (to satisfy members' need for a horizon-scanning tool and to bring more dynamics into the professional programme)
- Consideration of a pharmacy practice implementation network of international organisations
- First investigations into increased collaboration with observer organisations
- Drafting of a new EuroPharm Forum Vision leaning on the FIP Vision

- Studied the tender accepted from the WHO Collaborating Centre, Pharmakon in 2006, which had emphasis on administrative support and follow-up on the outcome of the General Assembly in 2005
- Focused heavily on improving and increasing communication with members and observers.

In addition to following up on the above, future steps should preferably include the following:

- Young membership on the Executive Committee, which should reflect the membership of the Forum geographically
- Increased professional support from the WHO Collaborating Centre, Pharmakon
- Increased professional contribution from members
- Investigation into raising funds besides membership fees (alternative membership, sponsorship)
- Members' assurance to support the Forum in terms of communication (whitelisting the server, providing contact names in the association).

Demonstration of the Observatory by Professional Secretary Kirsten Holme Christensen

Kirsten Holme Christensen demonstrated the 5 elements of the Observatory which functions as a scanning facility and document library.

1. Discussions on Pharmacy Practice: Users can introduce or contribute to professional discussions.
2. Pharmacy Practice Documents: A library of documents scanned for relevance. A translation function allows for inclusion of documents in several languages with keywords provided in English. As the Observatory is brand-new, there is a great need for members and others to provide more links and documents for inclusion.
3. Forum Practice Domains: Areas maintained by the Moderators of the active Forum Working Groups.
4. Evidence-based Pharmacy Practice: Collection of evidence within specific areas gathered by the WHO Collaborating Centre, Pharmakon for the Danish Pharmaceutical Association.
5. Pharmacy Practice Events: An interactive calendar of pharmaceutical meetings, congresses etc.

Access to the information contained is open to all users without passwords. The search function is active on all elements in the Observatory. All information included has been validated which provides an improved search result. Contents include national, grey literature. Commenting on the Observatory is password-protected to support traceability opportunities.

An instructional leaflet on the Observatory has been produced and made available on the Observatory website, www.europharm.pbworks.com, and on the Forum website, www.europharmforum.org, under the heading Professional activities, Observatory.

Open Agenda

Following these two presentations, all participants accepted the opportunity to speak and express his or her views. Based on this input, a debate was organised under 6 headings. The messages delivered by members during the "open microphone" session have been incorporated in the report of these items, where item 7 summarises members' general sentiments towards the Forum and recent initiatives taken:

- 1. Mapping of the EuroPharm Forum**
- 2. Professional domains**
- 3. Observatory**
- 4. Finances**
- 5. Vision to Practice 2020**
- 6. Membership**
- 7. Members' general sentiments**

1 Mapping of the EuroPharm Forum

Members expressed that there was a place for the Forum. To strengthen the position of the Forum:

- The uniqueness of the Forum should be established; part of this is its relationship with WHO Europe and, therewith, its commitment to WHO public health goals. The mission should be in focus. The angle should be professional; the Forum should have political independence to maintain objectivity. The boundaries should be carefully set while enjoying a high level of collaboration with other organisations; in particular, collaboration with FIP and PGEU should be intensified. Meetings between Secretaries/Executive Committees/Presidents of the observer bodies were suggested with the aim of avoiding duplication of work. Closeness to WHO was considered important for lobbying purposes and for strengthening its professional public health and health system profile. The Forum could be the link between the FIP and its members and the WHO and its members.
- The Forum should offer an effective working platform for national development centres, be a network for practitioners. The Forum should provide credibility, validation to the profession. The Forum should have a voice whenever professional items are discussed and have an active role in commenting on legal documents produced by the European Commission.
- The Forum should aim at being continuously visible to members and observers to remain at the forefront of their minds, eg by increasing the frequency of meetings, political and professional, and securing frequent electronic communication. Members should be asked directly for their active involvement. Furthermore, the work of the Forum should be rendered far more visible to the world.
- The success of the Forum would depend on members communicating back to the Forum – providing information, feedback and constructive criticism to the Forum. Members should identify the needs of their health authorities to be able to ask the Forum for the right support.
- The Executive Committee was advised to collaborate with observers, eg ESCP, when relevant to avoid overlap and repetition. As a concrete example, it was suggested that the Forum establish a virtual consultation group between the Forum, the ESCP and possibly more observers in order to consult with each other as to how to move forwards.
- Discussions with the FIP as to collaboration should be opened:
 - The Forum should first determine its objectives to establish a basis for the discussions
 - It was suggested by some that the Forum become part of the FIP while others had a vision of the two bodies taking the same direction while maintaining independence, eg the Regional Fora could be present at strategic discussions in the FIP.
 - Could the Forum take advantage of the FIP brand image? Or establish its own brand through a change of name of the organisation?
 - It was suggested that some FIP Congress activities with particular focus on a European clientele could, with advantage, be isolated and converted into EuroPharm Forum activities.
 - Would closer relationship with the FIP imply a need to broaden Forum activities to include hospital and industrial pharmacists etc.?

Drawing some initial conclusions from the delegates' input, Th(Dick) Tromp informed the audience that, as a starting point, the Executive Committee would seek to ensure presence by the Forum during the Strategic discussions of FIP. Furthermore, steps would be taken to initiate talks with the FIP with regard to increasing the level of collaboration without losing the independence of the Forum. Finally, the idea of establishing virtual consultation group between observers was immediately taken on by the Executive Committee and would be initiated

2 Professional domains

At the General Assembly in Riga (2005), the political delegates had identified a number of professional issues of interest to their organisations. However, on the professional side, representation in the prioritised working groups was scarce.

The input from the delegates in the Consultation revealed a need for the Forum to establish contact to both the political and the professional representation of the national organisations; on their part, members could support this by acting as gate openers ensuring that communication from the Forum be branched out from the political representatives into the organisations and further out to their members. Meanwhile, the Executive Committee should pinpoint the precise professional target group (innovators, practitioners, ...)

It was suggested that the Forum should be marketed well to the national organisations to provide them with an incentive to carry out their studies in an international context rather than nationally. Access to information and experiences from other member countries was considered important. The Observatory was seen as a useful tool to involve the professional representatives, whereas the level of IT technology involved in the Discussion Fora was considered too high for some.

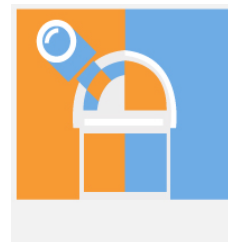
The Consultation concluded that focus should be on a restricted number of professional domains. The success of the activities would rely on support from both the Forum and members. Members are needed to contribute their knowledge within a given domain, and this, again, calls for resources allocated by members. President Th(Dick) Tromp suggested that the political representation in the national organisations use their local impact to provide contact to their national experts in the professional fields in focus in the Forum.

Some members expressed a wish to have the Forum provide more training seminars, workshops, etc. Such professional programmes could well be organised in collaboration with other healthcare foras. To secure the appropriate type of representation, it was suggested to split the political (General Assemblies) from the professional meetings.

There was a concrete suggestion for the Forum to focus on professional domains of attention relating to issues such as quality assurance in pharmacy, quality indicators, managed care, medical records and quality of medicines. There was, furthermore, a suggestion that the Forum establish a practiced body of, eg, 5 people to support the production of practice documentation.

3 Observatory

The Observatory was very well received by the audience who could see great potential in the project; for instance, it was considered an extra asset that the library of the Observatory can provide access to national, grey literature. Moreover, participants were particularly pleased by the fact that links and documents are validated before inclusion and, as such, offer users an improved search result.



The member organisations believed that the Observatory could save them time in addition to provide professional value, not least as the facility can be used and improved directly by their own members. It was considered important that professors of pharmacy practice be made aware of its existence. Moreover, it was thought that marketing of the Observatory in general was essential.

Some members would like to provide further comments (to the Secretariat or directly on the Observatory) when they had had an opportunity to look a little closer into the functionality of the Observatory.

4 Finances

President Th(Dick) Tromp informed the delegates that the Executive Committee, endorsed by Treasurer Gerald Alexander, had continued at the planned level of activity despite the strained economy brought about by members' withdrawals. This decision has been made, as the Executive Committee could see no purpose of reducing the Forum's activities to pure administration in 2009, given that it was apparent to them that the continued survival of the organisation would depend on the professional outcomes of the year.

In 2009, this decision would imply a draw on the Forum's reserves. Based on the performance of the year, the General Assembly would have to come to a conclusion, at the Annual Meeting in October 2009, as to the future of the Forum.

The member representatives expressed approval that means be spent from the reserves to produce outcome for the year and increase the potential of survival of the Forum. Members believed that it was essential for the Forum to provide "value for money" for members to choose continued membership of the Forum over other organisations; matching the needs of members would result in financial resources being provided.

Members suggested that the payment system of the Forum be re-engineered entirely, and that other sources of income be conceived, eg a gain on the Observatory, individual membership, profit on meetings, applying for grants, national sponsorship (financial or practical) of particular programmes/studies. To members, the cost of membership should equal up to the benefits, which should, therefore, be transparent.

It was suggested that the redefinition of the Forum be determined first, and that the Executive Committee subsequently establish if a financial basis could be secured to carry the Forum towards its vision.

There was a suggestion to look into the possibilities of cutting costs. There was a concrete suggestion to reinvestigate the question of saving VAT on the Forum's costs, which would reduce membership fees for those able to deduct VAT. However, Executive Committee member Ingunn Björnsdóttir and Niels Kristensen of the Association of Danish Pharmacies confirmed that the matter had been investigated in depth, and it had been found that it could not be solved to members' advantage.

5 Vision to Practice 2020

The delegates found it import to position the pharmacist in the healthcare chain; the Forum should provide the practical tool for that in broad lines. Focus should be on the patient and the production of health for the patient; however, medicines as the core business of the pharmacist should not be forgotten. Patient empowerment should be addressed as well as decreasing health risks. It was suggested that the Forum had the ability to look into pharmaceutical services and their distribution and success rates in Europe in order to provide evidence-based information to countries seeking to implement services. Use of information technology was mentioned along with the role of the pharmacy in medication safety (focus on DRPs and medication errors and their detection and solution) and new ways of sending prescriptions. The EuroPharm Forum strategy should be phrased to benefit member organisations.

6 Membership

There was a wish from the audience to know the reasons for recent members' withdrawals. President Th(Dick) Tromp confirmed that this had been investigated as much as was possible. He underlined that the Forum could not survive more withdrawals and called for a sense of European solidarity.

It was suggested that mediation (eg through the PGEU), rebranding and approaching FIP could be an impetus for former members to rejoin the Forum.

The Executive Committee had a wish to explore alternative forms of membership (individual, students, sub-national, etc.), the idea of which some members expressed their support of. However, there was a general recommendation for the Executive Committee to continue working towards gaining back lost members before taking steps towards extending membership, as this would also require a thorough investigation into the terms of membership, eg voting rights, benefits, fees.

7 Members' general sentiments

President Th(Dick) Tromp asked the representatives to give the Executive Committee their impressions of the activities implemented so far.

In general, the audience expressed that the initiatives taken were positive and results had been achieved over a short lapse of time. Members that had previously expressed their criticism with the Executive Committee and the Professional Secretariat recognised that the points of criticism had been addressed and largely rectified. There was great satisfaction with the type of meeting organised in the Consultation, and there was a recommendation to repeat the exercise on future occasions. The investigative activities of President Th(Dick) Tromp and the Executive Committee Members towards member countries were appreciated by members.

Comments by EuroPharm Forum Observers and Interest Groups

EPSA, Tomaso Piaggio: Collaboration with professional organisations is important to the EPSA. Information from the Forum was considered valuable and was disseminated to the member students.

ESCP, Cecilia Bernsten: The ESCP is preoccupied with patient care, focusing on therapy rather than practice. The ESCP could see a benefit in joining forces with the Forum and would like to establish a more vivid collaboration, eg by connecting the Forum Working Groups and the ESCP special interest groups on common professional domains; the Forum could provide input, eg, with regard to implementation. The Forum was seen as the European branch of the FIP.

FIP, Luc Besançon: The Forum is considered an important professional body for Europe. It would be valuable to the FIP that the needs of *all* Forum members be identified and subsequently met through activities. The FIP could facilitate these activities based on its own expertise.

PCNE, Birthe Søndergaard: The PCNE is a network of research centres and universities in more than 20 countries in Europe with the aim of developing pharmacy practice and support the implementation of pharmaceutical care in Europe. The PCNE carries out research and development projects in several countries simultaneously, eg on Pharmaceutical Care for the elderly, self-care, DRPs, mystery shoppers. To bring this research to the practitioners, the PCNE would have an interest in collaborating with a professional body. From another angle, identification of unanswered questions within practice could also provide a basis for new research. The PCNE could consider providing input for the evidence-based area of the Observatory.

PGEU, John Chave: The PGEU sees a clear need for serious, objective, professional work. To the PGEU, politics and professional matters cannot be entirely separated, eg court decisions are an assessment of professional input, but with a political intention. The roles of the two organisations should be carefully worked out to define areas where they could support each other. The PGEU has an increasing need for scientific arsenal of the type that the Forum can provide, and the Observatory is seen as a positive initiative. More professionals rather than politicians should be represented in the Forum.

WHO, Regional Office for Europe, Kees de Joncheere: The WHO would like to see the Forum members work towards improving health systems by having regular discussions with their health ministries to, first, determine national needs and, subsequently identify possible actions in terms of pharmacy practice.

EFPC, Pim de Graaf: The EFPC was established in 2005 and has local, national and individual membership of about 130, representing practitioners in primary care, policy-makers and researchers/academia. The aim of the EFPC is to strengthen primary care by emphasising its multidisciplinary nature and community base and strengthening its quality. Its core function is to exchange information and to set the research agenda, using conferences and position papers as main tools. The EFPC also lobbies towards the WHO, EU and other relevant organisations and helps members to lobby. They would like to explore the possibilities of collaboration with the Forum, eg through conferences (concrete opportunity in 2012) on primary care and pharmacy, drug prescription, research in practice and patient adherence.

WHO Collaborating Centre for Drug Policy and Pharmacy Practice Development, Pharmakon, Janne Albertsen: The WHO Collaborating Centre fulfils the role of a non-political secretariat to the Forum following directions given by the Forum Executive Committee. The administrative role has been streamlined noticeably since the first agreement with the Forum in 2006. In 2009, the directions of the Executive Committee has taken a more professional turn. The WHO Collaborating Centre was pleased to see the Forum draw on the professional competences of the Centre to a greater extent and would be interested in taking this collaboration and utilisation of its professional resources and international experience further. The Centre would like to contribute to the activities of the Forum beyond the established agreement, eg regarding the Observatory.

Closing

President Th(Dick) Tromp closed the Consultation thanking the participants for their contribution and active participation. The Consultation had been held in a good atmosphere, and he was looking forward to meeting the organisations again at the 18th Annual Meeting in Budapest in October 2009.

Handouts

All handouts can be found on the EuroPharm Forum website www.europharmforum.org under the heading Conferences/meetings, 2009:

- List of participants
- Introduction by EuroPharm Forum President Th(Dick) Tromp
- EuroPharm Forum Draft Vision to Practice 2020
- EuroPharm Forum Communicates – A guide to the three EuroPharm Forum web pages
- Observatory – Information leaflet
- Useful items to inspire discussions at the Consultation
- WHO Collaborating Centre Pharmakon – A presentation.