The word of the President

New Year is one of those symbolic moments. This is an ideal opportunity to stop, reflect, reinforce beliefs, reunite people, and reenergize for the future. At the end of every year, we are very pleased to gather together to review our achievements in the past year, as well as to look toward the future with confidence and hope.

That’s one thing the New Year always offers: a look back into the past before we move forward into the future.

So, revisiting 2017, my thanks to all our members for the wonderful contribution to make AEMH one very active organization at European level in the last years and whose work was recognized by the award I received in Dusseldorf last November, as one of the 100 most influential people in the world in healthcare in the category Associations and Federations. I would very much to share with you this distinction because I didn’t see it as personal but as a result of a teamwork including the members of the Board, national delegates and our secretary.

For 2018 our most important challenge will be the implementation of a European Academy of Clinical Leadership, a project that we are developing in partnership with UEMS and some Universities.

One of our key moments for 2018 will be the 3rd Joint Meeting together with FEMS that will take place in Lisbon from 7 to 9 of June. I want to take this opportunity to invite you all to be present and to enjoy this beautiful city.

The year is new and so are our hopes and aspirations. May we be able to keep up to our new resolutions with high spirits. Here are warm wishes to you for the coming New Year. Happy 2018 to you and your loved ones.

João de Deus,
President
Following an invitation from FEMS, the AEMH president, Dr João de Deus was part of a delegation (including FEMS president, Dr Enrico Reginato and secretary general, Dr Bojan Popovic) meeting the EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, Dr Vytenis Andriukaitis. The main topic of the discussion was the inequalities among doctors' working conditions and salaries across Europe. The field where we would like to draw the European Commission's attention are those inequalities that make the free movement of physicians in the EU a one-way drive in the direction east-south - west-north. The consequence are the distortions of the single EU labor market where nobody is happy: the countries of immigration have difficulties to integrate such a huge number of physicians and their families and maintain the same standards for domestic and immigrating doctors, while the countries of emigration face the lack of doctors and the problems to maintain minimum standards required for the public healthcare to function properly. Migrations by themselves are a positive movement as long as they are due to the optimization of the systems (e.g. make one central hospital instead of numerous smaller ones in each town, provided that the logistics challenges are solved) or when they happen in a random/symmetric pattern due to the natural desire of professionals to move, to exchange experiences etc. But when they become a one-way trend without any particularly desired effect on healthcare optimization, they are not positive anymore, rather a symptom that somewhere something is wrong. EU, and even most of EU member states internally, go for a more decentralized public healthcare (in organizational and budgetary terms), which is good for the local population, but it poses major challenges if the labor market is disbalanced. A disbalanced doctors labor market eventually causes disbalanced healthcare standards across EU which converts people, otherwise in favor of the European integration process, into its opponents.

As a consequence of the autonomy of the Member States in regulating their healthcare systems, João de Deus mentioned the existence of 3 situations with respect to healthcare in the EU member states:

- Countries with high GDP, of which a high ratio is allocated to healthcare;
- Countries with lower GDP, of which a reasonable ratio is allocated to healthcare;
- Countries with low GDP and a low ratio allocated to healthcare.

He further pointed out the issues of doctors’ burn-out as well as task shifting which are dangerous for the safety of patients.

On 16 November 2017, together with EAHM and HOPE, AEMH co-organized the 4th European Hospital Conference, alongside the Medica Fair in Dusseldorf and the 40th German Hospital Conference. The theme of the conference was E-health, its challenges and opportunities. The morning session informed on the European Commission E-health Action Plan 2012-2020, followed by the view of the AEMH, EAHM and HOPE’s view on the respective action plan. The afternoon session focused on presenting various national context (i.e. Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Denmark).

AEMH was represented by its President, Dr João de Deus, and its 3rd Vice-President, Dr Erich-Theo Merholz.
The State of Health in the EU: The European Commission has undertaken a two-year initiative in cooperation with OECD and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies aimed at providing data and insight into the national healthcare systems. As a part of this initiative, the Country Health Profiles give an overview of the state of health of the EU population and the key risk factors as well as a brief assessment of the EU national healthcare systems in point of accessibility, effectiveness and resilience. The profiles use a standard structure and methodology, but the content is adapted to what is relevant for each EU country. The EU countries are not ranked according to their overall performance but to their national specificities and the progress recorded. One main conclusion would be that too little is spent on prevention, while most budget allotted to healthcare is used for disease treatment. Better access to primary care is needed the same as health promotion and disease prevention need to be enshrined into all policy sectors so as to improve people’s health and reduce pressure on the health systems. Ideally, these reports are aimed to support national health authorities to tackle challenges and shape policies and investments accordingly. You may access the individual profiles here.

European Medicines Agency to be relocated to Amsterdam, the Netherlands: On 20 November 2017, the EU 27 ministers of health selected Amsterdam as the next seat of the European Medicines Agency, currently located in London, the UK. This is one consequence of the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is responsible for the scientific evaluation, supervision and safety monitoring of medicines in the EU. The EMA is essential for the functioning of the single market for medicines in the EU. The Commission will now prepare legislative proposals reflecting today’s vote for adoption under the ordinary legislative procedure with the involvement of the European Parliament. The Council and the Commission are committed to ensuring that these legislative proposals are processed as quickly as possible in view of the urgency of the matter.

European Antibiotic Awareness Day: 15 November 2017: Like every year for the past ten, the European Antibiotic Awareness Day was marked in Brussels by representatives of the European institutions as well as stakeholders concerned with raising awareness of the increasing antibiotic resistance. With 25 000 deaths per year and € 1.5 billion in healthcare costs and productivity losses in the EU, raising awareness is not enough. More concrete action is needed that bridges differences and raises the level of all Member States to that of the highest performer. It is to this end that the Commission prepared the One Health Action Plan Against AMR and set up a One Health Network to give Member States’ experts from the human and veterinary health sectors a forum to exchange good practices.

EMOs Meeting Calendar

- 13-14 April 2018, CPME Board and General Assembly, Brussels, Belgium
- 27-28 April 2018, UEMS Council Meeting, Marrakech, Morocco
- 3-4 May 2018, EJD Spring meeting, Zagreb, Croatia
- 8-9 June 2018, AEMH-FEMS joint General Assembly, Lisbon, Portugal
- 5-6 October 2018, FEMS General Assembly, Turin, Italy
- 19-20 October 2018 UEMS Council Meeting, Brussels, Belgium
- 9-10 November 2018, CPME Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland

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