



Plenary meeting of Committee 2 's Hertogenbosch, Noord-Brabant-NL, 6th October 2009

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Draft Minutes of the Plenary Session of AER Committee 2 "Social Policy & Public Health" Katowice-PL, 20th March 2009

Summary of the main outcomes:

- Adoption of the Katowice Declaration on "Financing Regional Healthcare"
- Election of Constantin Ostaficiuc as AER Committee 2 President
- Adoption of the AER position on the proposed EU Directive on Cross-border Healthcare
- Adoption of the AER position on the EU Green paper on Health workforce mobility

1. Presentation and adoption of the Katowice Declaration on "Financing Regional Healthcare"

Christina WAHROLIN, Committee 2 Vice-President (Värmland-S), presented the outcomes of the Conference held on 19th March 2009 and its amendments. The amended version of the Katowice Declaration on Financing Regional Healthcare was unanimously adopted.

2. Adoption of the agenda of the plenary meeting

The agenda was unanimously adopted with some amendments to the order of events. Thus, Agneta GRANSTRÖM presented the updates from the e-health network before the discussion on the latest developments and Committee 2 responses to European developments.

3. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last Committee plenary session were unanimously adopted with an amendment to the text concerning Johan SMEDBERG's presentation during the region's corner.

4. Committee 2 Elections

After having launched an election procedure, the AER Secretariat had received the following nominations:

Committee President:

Constantin OSTAFICIUC, Timis (RO): President of Timis County; Member of the Committee of the Regions – *nominated for a second mandate*

The results of the elections were the following:

Constantin OSTAFICIUC was unanimously elected Committee President and Christina WAHROLIN keeps the position of Vice-President of AER Committee 2. The AER Committee 2 members and Secretariat take this opportunity to thank Christina WAHROLIN for her excellent work as Acting President of Committee 2.

5. Latest Developments and Committee 2 Responses

AER Response to the proposed EU Directive on cross-border healthcare:

Claudia MESCHEDE from the AER Secretariat provided the members with some background information on the Directive proposal. The Directive on cross-border healthcare follows the adoption of the Bolkenstein Directive, in which the health sector was excluded, in conformity with the AER 's demands. Claudia MESCHEDE reminded the audience of the concerns raised by the AER in its summary of the Directive proposal: the lack of a legislative basis, the need for a better definition of the terms used to enable a better organisation of regional healthcare systems. The AER response therefore suggests that the European Commission add to the Directive the establishment of a **Prior warning system** to enable the regions to foresee and manage the patients' flows. **The AER response to the EU Directive proposal on cross-border healthcare was unanimously adopted.**

AER Response to the European Commission Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health

Claudia MESCHEDE indicated the main factors of influence on the workforce for health the AER noted in its Summary of the Green paper: the ageing population, the raising demand for more specialised healthcare and the mobility of health professionals mean that Europe will need more health workforce, and especially the rural areas, where attracting health professionals can be a real challenge. Jolanda SCHNEIDER (Noord-Brabant, NL), suggested to add an amendment to the AER Response, specifying that the EU should support regional initiatives targeting women, immigrants, people with disabilities, people with chronic diseases and elderly to participate to the health labour market. **The AER Response to the EC Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health was then unanimously adopted**, including Jolanda Schneider's amendment.

6. Updates from the Committee networks

a) E-he@lth

Agneta GRANSTRÖM (Norrbotten-S), Network Chairperson, reported on the 2008 activities of the e-he@lth network. The AER e-he@lth network participated to a number of European events, notably to a meeting with DG Info Society & Media in Brussels in February. She then warmly invited all Committee 2 members to the upcoming AER Arctic Light e-Health Conference to be held in Norrbotten on 3-5 February 2010. Finally, she underlined the importance of keeping the interests of the patient in mind when developing e-health tools, as the patient is at the heart of the system.

b) Emergency Planning

John SMITH, (Devon-UK), Chairperson of the AER Emergency Planning Network, presented the outcomes of the informal meeting held by the Emergency Planning Network on 4th December 2008 in Brussels. There are a number of specific areas of interest to members, among which, the impact of pandemics, forest fires, avalanches, nuclear accidents, etc... Flood management eventually came out as the most relevant issue for the next event. John Smith invited all the members of Committee 2 to take part to the Emergency Planning seminar on "Regions Preparedness for Floods" held in Limoges on 30th March.

The speakers' presentations and the outcomes of this meeting are available in a separate document available on the AER website:

<http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2009/epnseminar.html>

c) Equal Opportunities

Stéphane COOLS from the AER Secretariat presented the latest activities of the AER Observatory on Gender Issues (OGI). Two meetings took place in 2008: the first one was held in

April 2008 in Brussels and was an opportunity for the AER Observatory to discuss with the European Commission about issues such as migrant women and microcredit. The second meeting was hosted by the Region Valencia (E) at the occasion of the Committee 2 Fall Plenary Session. During this VIIIth AER Conference on Equal Opportunities, the declaration on equal access to the labour market was adopted. Working documents of these two meetings are available online: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/equal-opportunities.html>

Stéphane COOLS reminded participants of the upcoming meetings on gender issues for the year 2009: AER OGI has dedicated the year 2009-2010 to violence against women, with a introductory meeting on 28th May 2009 in Brussels and a second meeting on 15-16 October in Karlstad, which will focus more specifically on domestic violence against women from a public health perspective. These meetings will also provide the participants with an opportunity to discuss the possibility for the Observatory on Gender Issues to become an AER Standing Committee.

d) Preventing Alcohol-Related Harm

Karin MERNELIUS (Jönköping-S), Network Coordinator, gave an overview of the 4th Alcohol Peer Review held two days earlier (18 March 2009) in Katowice on "Alcohol and Pregnancy". The final Conference of the Alcohol Peer Reviews will be held in Barcelona in Spring 2010. The outcomes of the peer reviews are available on the AER website under: <http://www.aer.eu/en/main-issues/health/alcohol-prevention/aer-alcohol-peer-reviews.html>

6. Regions' Corner

a) Istanbul Proposal to create a new Committee 2 Working Group on disabilities

Murat ELLIALTI, European Affairs Specialist and representative from the Province of Istanbul (TR), presented the proposal of Istanbul to create a working group on people with disabilities. One tenth of the population in Europe has some kind of disability. It is necessary to take into account the economic and social consequences resulting from this observation, and to change the laws discriminating against people with disabilities. The AER is relevant as the regional level is where policies are implemented. In Europe, the tools to mainstream disabilities are the UN Convention on people with disabilities and the European Disability Action Plan, but these documents are primarily directed to national governments.

The aims of the AER Working Group "Equal Europe for people with disabilities" should be the promotion of disabled people's rights, cooperation and the exchange of best practices at the regional level, the influence of policy processes and the involvement of people with disabilities in the decision-making processes.

AER member regions unanimously approved the creation of a Working Group on people with disabilities.

b) "A Competitive Europe Needs Cutting Edge Quality Health Care"

Martin ANDREASSON (Västra Götaland-S) invited the Committee 2 members to participate to the Conference "A Competitive Europe Needs Cutting Edge Quality Health Care" which is to be held in Brussels on 29-30 October 2009. This seminar, organised in association with the Swedish EU presidency, aims to look at how Europe can take a leading position in health care quality and patient safety. Keynote speakers will include senior decision-makers from policy and administration, business, industry and research from all of Europe.

c) Silesia-PL

Barbara DANIEL, Director of the Regional Health Department in Silesia (PL), gave an insight to the specificities of the Polish and Silesian health system and the challenges they face.

9. Update from the AER

Claudia MESCHÉDE gave updates from the AER Presidium held in Istria (HR) on 16th March. It was decided that the General Assembly 2009 would take place in Belfort and would focus on energy, environment and innovation. Among the other upcoming events, the Committee 3 Plenary session, dedicated to culture and tourism, will take place in Dürres, Albania.

Finally, Claudia MESCHÉDE announced that AER will keep following the developments of the Green paper on territorial cohesion and represent the interests of the AER member regions at EU level regarding the future of Cohesion Policy.

10. Date and venue of the next Committee meeting

The next plenary session has been fixed for 5-7 October 2009 in Den Bosch, at the kind invitation of Noord-Brabant-NL and will include a Seminar on “Innovation for Demographic Change”.

The Committee members and AER wish to thank the Region of Silesia (PL) for hosting the meeting and their warm hospitality.

All presentations made during this meeting as well as the Declaration on Financing Regional Healthcare are available on the webpage of the event:

<http://www.aer.eu/events/health-social/2009/springconferencecom2.html>

CB, June 2009