

The EAPC President's message

The EAPC is growing. During the last EAPC Board Meeting in November, two new collective members were welcomed – the Danish Society of Palliative Medicine and the Norwegian Association for Palliative Medicine.

The Research Network is still active. Several reports have recently been published, which our members and other interested parties can find on the EAPC website (www.eapcnet.org).

On behalf of the Research Network, Philippe Poulain and Marilène Filbet are organising the 2nd Research Conference in Lyon, which is to take place on 23–25 May 2002. For more information, please go to www.eapcnet.org/congresses/lyon2002.html

As discussed in the President's message published in the *European Journal of Palliative Care* (8.1), the Board is working to make the EAPC a more 'open' organisation. It is our goal to represent all healthcare professionals and volunteers working in palliative care in Europe and include as many members as possible in the daily life of the association. To ensure a regular renewal of board members, it will be proposed – during the next General Assembly – that a Board member can only be re-elected once, giving him or her a maximum of eight years consecutively on the Board. After a break, it will be proposed that the person can be re-elected.

The next General Assembly will take place in Granada on 26 April 2002 during the IV Congress of the Spanish Society of Palliative Care (SECPAL).

Suggestions for new initiatives are also welcome. Please contact the EAPC Head Office if you have a proposal. At the Karolinska Institute, the EAPC Eastern European Office is established

and hard-working. The office is chaired by Dr Carl Johan Fürst, with Sylvia Sauter as Executive Secretary. This initiative was made possible thanks to support from the Open Society Institute in the USA. For more details, please visit our website.

The EAPC wants to focus on palliative care in geriatrics. Our Honorary Member Vittorio Ventafridda, in collaboration with Professor Irene Higginson, is preparing a consensus meeting on this issue in the near future.

Topics on ethics are also a point of lively debate within the EAPC. An Ethics task force – chaired by the philosopher Lars Johan Materstvedt in close collaboration with Dr Charles-Henri Rapin – is working on new statements for the EAPC on physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia.

We are moving forward in the planning process of the next biannual conference to be held in the Netherlands in June 2003. Plenary speakers will soon be invited. Please get your abstracts ready to submit, as the deadline is July 2002.

Finally, I would like to encourage all interested readers who work in palliative care to actively join our organisation. If you have any questions about the EAPC, how to join, and if there are any specific networks, task forces or other ongoing initiatives that you may be interested in, please visit our website, contact the Head Office, or contact me personally.

On the behalf of the Board, I welcome all new initiatives to improve palliative care in Europe.
Stein Kaasa, President of EAPC, Professor in Palliative Medicine, the Netherlands

www.eapceast.org

The EAPC has launched a new website (www.eapceast.org) as part of its

project to support the development of palliative care in Eastern Europe.

The aim of the site is to facilitate communication and discussion among people interested in palliative care and to ease access to information, relevant documents and articles.

EAPC East also encourages:

- Membership to the EAPC and participation in its activities
- Submission of articles from Eastern Europe to the *European Journal of Palliative Care*
- Attendance of Eastern European healthcare professionals in EAPC congresses and other international meetings
- Exploring opportunities for the development of educational materials to be translated into native languages.

The following countries are involved:

Albania, Armenia, Azerbajdzjan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.

For further information on this project or if you are interested in joining, please contact the EAPC East Centre. Tel: +46 (0)8 617 9304. Fax: +46 (0)8 617 9333. email: info@eapceast.org

The Trinity China Challenge

The historic Trinity Hospice in Clapham in the UK is celebrating its 110th anniversary with a challenging bike ride in China. The hospice is challenging all those in the health service to get on their bikes!

The Trinity Challenge will take place 5–14 October 2002 and involves a 452 km bike ride in the Beijing area of China and includes sections of the Great Wall of China. The aim of the

sponsored event is to raise money for the hospice as well as celebrating its achievements over 110 years.

Trinity is appealing to supporters, old and new, to come forward and sign up for this exciting challenge. To join, participants need to pay a registration fee of £250 and then raise a minimum of £2,500 for Trinity Hospice. In return, you will receive training advice, flights, accommodation, full technical and medical support, all internal transfers and the use of good quality bikes. Participants do not need to be experienced cyclists, but do need to be reasonably fit and prepared to put in lots of training beforehand. If you are interested, please contact Gay Rose, Event Organiser for an information pack and application form on +44 (0)1462 634646. email: gay@actionforcharity.co.uk

The Geneva position

Founded in 1993, the Equipe Mobile de Soins Palliatifs communautaire (EMSPc – Mobile Community Palliative Care Team) is a team of medical and nursing staff that provides secondline assistance on request. Apart from its consulting role, it co-ordinates strategies between various care centres and is involved in training carers.

The EMSPc (MCPCT) is an integral part of the regional palliative care project that involves several public, university and private socio-health sectors in the canton of Geneva. As did the EMSPc several years ago, clinicians today realise the fact that palliative care patients are not acknowledged by professionals until a very late stage in their condition. This 'awakening' is often triggered when the patient and his/her family are confronted by a major crisis situation, or when the patient reaches the final stage of life.

Armed with these facts, the EMSPc is currently working on an approach that will enable them to identify palliative care situations as soon as a centre for health and social action intervenes. The study was carried out in autumn 2001, and is directed at all professionals and services working in the home environment. It aims to reflect their perception of palliative care, their experiences and their difficulties when faced with these types of situation. Results are expected shortly. For more information, contact Verena Luchsinger, Co-ordinating Nurse, EMSPc, FSASD & HUG, 36, avenue Cardinal Mermillod, CH-1227 Carouge, Geneva, Switzerland. Fax: +41 22 420 2251. email: verena.luchsinger@ge-ariane.ch

Switch on a light against pain

Federazione Cure Palliative Onlus recently organised a second national day against pain of the terminally ill, which was held on 11 November 2001.

Federazione Cure Palliative Onlus was established in 1999 by 22 of the most prominent non-profit Italian associations involved in palliative care for terminally ill patients, whose aim is to contribute through co-operation to the further development of palliative care in Italy. The Palliative Care Federation now comprises 43 of the most important non-profit organisations in Italy, which operate to help, support and assist people in the terminal phase of their life. More than 150,000 associates have joined the Federation.

During the day, the 43 organisations arranged, with the help of the volunteers, numerous events in more than 100 places all over Italy, which included discussions and meetings on terminal illness and pain. Special lightening pens were distributed to

remind healthcare professionals of a new initiative 'Switch on a light against pain'.

On 11 November a collection of signatures in favour of the Charter of Rights for the Dying (Ethical Committee, Fondazione Floriani, 1997) was started. The collection will last until the end of February.

HIS celebrates 25 years

2002 marks a special year in the history of the Hospice Information Service (HIS) at St Christopher's. Not only is it 25 years since the Hospice Information Service was established, as a way of sharing experience and knowledge within the worldwide hospice community, but January 2002 also sees the launch of a new information service, managed jointly by St Christopher's and Help the Hospices.

The new service, Hospice Information, brings together the experience and established reputation for the high quality of the HIS and the national remit and innovative information developments of Help the Hospices. This 'joined up' working will enable us to maximise synergy and to offer an enhanced enquiry service, website and statistical information.

Many of the 'old' publications will continue. These will be joined by a weekly electronic news bulletin, *Hospice UK online*, with the latest UK and international news on healthcare management, personnel and fund-raising.

For further information about hospice information, or if you would like to become a member, do please contact us: Hospice Information.

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We would like to thank our official sponsors for 2001/2002:

