



EAPC task forces

Palliative Care Development in Europe Task Force: European Survey

On 28 September 2003, the first meeting of the Palliative Care Development in Europe Task Force took place in London.

It has been established that the task force will be carried out by the EAPC in collaboration with the International Observatory of End of Life Care and Help the Hospices.

The objectives of the task force are the following:

- To provide reliable information on the delivery of hospice and palliative care in Europe in a manner relevant to the EAPC, as well as to intergovernmental organisations and national and regional governments
- To explain the current organisation of hospice and palliative care, taking into account political, social and healthcare policy, and related factors
- To facilitate access and communication between relevant hospice and palliative care associations and societies that operate in European countries
- To identify key people who have studied the process of hospice and palliative care development in their own setting and who may provide country-specific data to assist policy makers, planners and professional associations.

Experts from all the European countries will be included in the survey. The Task Force final report will be presented at the 9th Congress of the EAPC that will be held at Aachen, Germany, 6–10 April 2005 and will be published on the EAPC website and in different scientific journals.

Palliative Care for Children in Europe: Towards an International Network Task Force

The EAPC has endorsed a proposal by Dr Richard Hain for the establishment of a task force on paediatric palliative care to facilitate and support the care of children in Europe with life-limiting conditions by:

- Identifying existing national organisations
- Identifying existing opportunities for education and training
- Considering a model of collaboration between adult and paediatric palliative care services in Europe
- Developing a Europe-wide strategy for achieving and evaluating the model.

Standards on Organisation, Services and Delivery of Palliative Care Task Force

The idea of a common European minimum or basic standard for palliative care has been proposed and discussed for some time now. The first step was the collection of existing standards by Urska Lunder and Sylvia Sauter. Their poster was presented at the congress in The Hague and an oral presentation was made at the recent Open Society Institute (OSI) conference on policy in Budapest. There has been increasing ambivalence concerning the effort and impact of a European standard for several reasons; one being the difficulties in finding an appropriate level relevant to many countries and another reason is the important process of producing national/regional or local standards.

In Budapest the members of the group led by Carl Johan Furst, Chair of the task force, concluded the following, 'For the time being, we do not know if it is worthwhile to put in a lot of (non-existing) money, time and effort into

producing such a standards document'. A more realistic approach would be to work in more detail with the existing standards. The first step would be to elaborate on the data we have already collected and write a review article describing the different documents in more detail. Such a publication would be of benefit for future decisions on a common standard and for those who are producing their own national standards. The intention is to produce this in the near future. This manuscript will be circulated for feedback before being submitted for publication.

The second step would be to make a critical appraisal of the existing standards to help people to choose an existing standard for a specific purpose and use it as a template or as it stands. This may need an expert group to provide a consensus. The proposed EAPC working group could make up such a group and meet once the manuscript has been drafted and discussed.

The third step would be to decide whether this critical appraisal is enough or if the EAPC needs to produce a standard document.

Recommendations for Nursing Education Task Force

The document is in its final review process. The complete document will be published as a downloadable pdf file on the EAPC website. Short commentaries will be published in both the official EAPC journals.

Translations of EAPC position paper on euthanasia

Lars Johan Materstvedt, chair of the EAPC Ethics Task Force on Palliative Care and Euthanasia, has agreed to supervise and co-ordinate the process regarding translations of the paper – Materstvedt LJ, Clark D, Ellershaw J *et al.* Euthanasia

and physician-assisted suicide: a view from an EAPC Ethics Task Force. *EJPC* 2003; **10**(2): 63–66 and *Palliat Med* 2003; **17**: 97–101 – which was adopted by the EAPC Board of Directors as the organisation's official position in June 2003. Materstvedt has proposed eight particular rules that he thinks should govern the translation process and these will be put before the Board shortly. At this stage, a German and an Italian translation are under way.

Exchanges and collaboration with other organisations

Project for collaboration with IASP

The EAPC Board of Directors has agreed to organise an official Satellite Symposium at the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) Congress in August 2005 in collaboration with the Australian Association for Palliative Care.

WHO and UICC

The WHO and l'Union Internationale Contre le Cancer (UICC) have published a document entitled *Global Action Against Cancer* on the WHO website. The EAPC Executive Committee has approached the UICC and the WHO to urge them to give more emphasis to the importance of and the need for palliative care for cancer patients. EAPC members can download the document from the EAPC website.

WHO and the EAPC

The EAPC was invited to a meeting by the WHO on strategies to improve and strengthen cancer programs in Europe and was represented by its President Stein Kaasa. The meeting took place in Geneva in November 2003. The overall goal of the meeting was to reinforce

collaborative efforts to improve and strengthen European cancer control programs at national level, with a special focus on central and eastern European countries.

Council of Europe

The Société française d'accompagnement et de soins palliatifs (SFAP) has informed the EAPC Board of Directors about a report on euthanasia (no 9898) which should have been discussed by the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe in their session at the end of September. With a number of resolutions presented by Mr Dick Marty, Switzerland, this report invites the parliamentary assembly to call governments of the member states of the Council of Europe 'to consider whether legislation should be envisaged, where it has not already been introduced, to exempt from prosecution doctors who agree to help terminally ill patients undergoing constant, unbearable pain and suffering without hope of any improvement in their condition, to end their lives at their persistent, voluntary and well-considered request, subject to prescribed rigorous and transparent conditions and procedures'.

SFAP has reacted strongly, contacting its national representatives on the Council of Europe. The discussion of the report has now been postponed until a session in January 2004. The EAPC's Board of Directors has decided to react to the report by highlighting to the parliamentary assembly the need to implement better palliative care.

EAPC Internal rules for Endorsement

The EAPC Board has agreed on rules for the endorsement of events to promote palliative care and diffuse

knowledge such as congresses, conferences and courses.

EAPC endorsement for conferences, congresses or other special initiatives

The EAPC may accord two levels of endorsement to a conference or a congress or other special initiative (audiovisual or printed material). They are as follows.

1. *Under the Auspices of EAPC*: this does not imply a quality seal, but the EAPC requires that the following conditions should be fulfilled:
 - The event (conference or congress) must be endorsed by an EAPC representative (a member of the Board of Directors, a chair of an EAPC Network, a national contact or an officer at EAPC headquarters)
 - If the event or the organiser is in a country where the EAPC has a representative, this person should give their agreement before EAPC auspices can be granted
 - If neither the event nor the organiser is in a country where the EAPC has a representative, the agreement of at least two EAPC representatives from other countries is required.
2. *'In collaboration with the EAPC'*: this level is used where there is some sort of direct collaboration with the EAPC as far as the content of the initiative is concerned. In this instance:
 - The Board of the EAPC must see the scientific programme in the planning stages and must be given the opportunity to comment on it
 - One or two persons nominated by the EAPC Board, the Executive Committee or EAPC's President should be part of the scientific or the editorial committee of the initiative.