



UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES



SECTION FOR PSYCHIATRY EUROPEAN BOARD OF PSYCHIATRY

10 February 2010

Mr Jürgen Tiedje
Head of the "Professional Qualifications" Unit
European Commission
DG Internal Market and Services
Office: SPA 2 06/020
BE - 1049 Brussels

Dear Mr Tiedje

Re: On psychotherapy and accrediting psychotherapy training in the EU - position of the UEMS Section of Psychiatry

The UEMS (Union of European Medical Specialists) representing 1.4 million medical specialists, has 30 medical associations as full members representing all EU and ETA states. The UEMS is the most representative organisation of medical specialists in Europe. The UEMS Section of Psychiatry represents 28 European national psychiatric associations as full members: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and UK. Additionally the Section has 3 associate members and 5 observer members.

Psychotherapy is an evidence-based method of treating mental disorders used widely in psychiatry as essential part of health care. It is a multi-professional healthcare activity practised by many healthcare professionals under national guidelines. Psychiatry is the only regulated profession in which psychotherapy training is an integral part of the basic training. The UEMS *Charter of Training for Psychiatry* specifies the requirements for psychotherapy training in the training of medical doctors specialising in psychiatry.

Based on the different structures in national health services, European countries have different policies in defining training requirements for psychotherapy practitioners. After their university degree, psychologists interested in psychotherapy have access to psychotherapy training and qualification in European countries. In many countries other healthcare professionals may also be qualified in psychotherapy after their basic healthcare training.

An organisation called EAP (European Association of Psychotherapy) has presented itself to the European Commission and national authorities as an organisation representing psychotherapy at national and European levels. The EAP has also claimed that it is an organisation which should establish a common platform for psychotherapy as a separate EU profession according to the directive on the recognition of professional qualifications 2005/36/EC.

UEMS Section of Psychiatry emphatically rejects this approach and states its concern at this proposal for the following reasons:

1. The EAP views are significantly different to those of the UEMS regarding psychotherapy and psychotherapy training in that it is opposed to the accepted and established training of psychotherapies practiced in European healthcare systems for the safety of patients. The member organisations of EAP represent mostly very restricted and inadequate training

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curricula and forms of psychotherapies practised in Europe and they are not representative of European psychotherapy training and practice.

2. The EAP does not represent psychiatrists and neither does it represent psychologists trained in psychotherapy, which are the key professions in psychotherapy. Within the recognised specialty of psychiatry there is already a proper training programme in psychotherapy.
3. After their psychotherapy training the trainees in psychotherapy will not become independent healthcare professionals. The UEMS has emphasised in its statement (1994) that before psychotherapeutic treatment is started the patient must be diagnosed and assessed by a qualified psychiatrist.
4. Training programmes and qualifications with insufficient standards are dangerous to vulnerable members of the public and would undermine the principle of high quality care which they wish to ensure.
5. The EAP is not a representative organisation either at national or European level. In some countries there is not even any member organisation of EAP.
6. The idea of a new platform for psychotherapy would introduce a new European specialty independent of the existing specialties, which is not the purpose of common platforms.

Finally, the Section of Psychiatry wishes to emphasise that mental disorders are unfortunately common amongst the population. People suffering from mental disorders are vulnerable and they must be protected from unqualified treatments. The choice of the treatment for the patients must be of sufficient standard and quality in order to meet the needs of the patient. To meet this purpose the trainees of psychotherapy must have an adequate basic healthcare training before being accredited to be psychotherapy practitioners.

The UEMS Section of Psychiatry is fully willing to be available for consultation and the provision of any further information.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr. Kari Pykkänen
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President of the UEMS Section of Psychiatry
Vice President of the UEMS

For more information about UEMS European Section of Psychiatry, <http://uemspsy psychiatry.org>