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PATHOLOGY

The specialist section of pathology is actively working to establish and strengthen contacts with the new EU member and candidate countries. In the forthcoming meeting in May 21st in Helsinki, special emphasis is put into incorporating the Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the activities of the Section and in establishing close relationships also with Russian colleagues.

Among the core activities, especially the following are being actively pursued both as tasks of dedicated task groups and as topics of round table discussions: Autopsies as part of quality assurance and assessment in health care, European specialist examination as a means of harmonization of training, tissue banking as a new activity of pathology departments and as a means to develop the interface with other specialities, "virtual microscopy" as a means of advancing harmonization of training and as a way to arrange European Board Examination, and development of joint examination together with Section of Dermato-Venereology to raise the level of dermatopathology.

As to the concern of declining rates of autopsies in practically all European countries, a policy paper was prepared and presented to UEMS Executive Committee.

Concerning tissue banking, a policy paper is being prepared and will be presented to UEMS Executive Committee after the Helsinki meeting in May 2005.

New ways are being sought to gain broader participation in the European Board Examination which is considered an effective way of guiding and advancing harmonization. One way, actively pursued, is to advise the member countries to harmonize their examinations with the existing national examinations. As another possibility, recently developed "virtual microscopy" that makes examination site-independent is explored as a technology to make the examination more accessible. Specialist section of pathology is also supporting recent efforts to combine the forces of all European pathology chairs and training program directors in order to advance training and certification. For that purpose, an active role was taken in the founding in March 2005 of European Association of Pathology Chairs and Program Directors (EAPC).

Manpower planning and recruitment are issues which are growing in importance. They have been tackled in round table discussion and will be subject of continuing and further analyses and recommendations in near future. Especially concerning recruitment, not only professional training but also research and teaching as investments in pathology career tracks are being emphasized.

The Section of Pathology is working together with the Section of Dermato-Venereology to reach an agreement on a dermatopathology examination. A concept agreement formulated by a joint working group has been submitted to both Sections for formal approval. It is felt that an examination in dermatopathology under the guidance of both UEMS Sections will be instrumental in raising the standards of dermatopathology.