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### 37th EAHM General Assembly in Düsseldorf



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Delegates from numerous EAHM member countries gathered in Düsseldorf on 16 November 2007 for the association's General Assembly, which was held in parallel with an EAHM seminar on accreditation (see report on page 7). Members were welcomed by their German colleagues and many availed of the opportunity to attend what was - as many participants later attested - a high quality continuing education seminar. A series of other simultaneous events - the German Hospital Conference, the Golden Helix Awards for 2007 and the MEDICA exhibition - also proved popular.

Opening the General Assembly, EAHM President Paul Castes announced that Willy Heuschen's term as General Secretary would be renewed for a further five years (2008-2012), a decision which was greeted with widespread approval among delegates. Mr. Heuschen expressed his pleasure at being able to continue in his current role and thanked delegates for their vote of confidence in him. He added that he hoped to be able to count on the support of EAHM members in the future.

The President then presented his activity report, a comprehensive account of the activities of the various organs of the association since Mr. Castel was elected to the position in September 2006. During this period, the EAHM work programme was largely devoted to organising the accreditation seminar held the previous day, circulating public statements on planned European Union measures in healthcare and plans to commence a partnership project with hospital IT managers around Europe.

In 2006, the EAHM carried out a survey of members, of which more are planned, on their efforts to measure patient satisfaction. This initiative was followed in 2007 by a survey on mobility among health service staff. This type of activity marks a new departure for the EAHM. Surveys of this nature are simple, unbureaucratic measures which allow the association to better determine members' positions on topical issues and help build a better picture of the organisation of healthcare in Europe.

Mr. Castel then briefed members on two position papers adopted by the EAHM as part of the European Commission's consultation exercise on health services.

The documents focused primarily on quality assurance and hospital accreditation. The latter issue was the driving force behind the previous day's seminar and further activities have been planned for 2008 to consolidate the association's ongoing work on both issues. Most of these will be organised during France's presidency of the European Council in the latter half of the year.

Mr. Castel then addressed proposals to extend EAHM membership to other national associations in Central and Eastern Europe, including Romania. Delegates approved Romania's application to join the EAHM pending a positive outcome to the President's visit to the country.

While Bosnia-Herzegovina's application has not been ruled out, it remains a longterm prospect. The action programme also includes the continuation of current projects and, of course, the organisation of the 22nd EAHM Congress in Graz, the primary focus of all EAHM activities.

Moreover, the work programme will feature plans to hold a new event in 2009. The EAHM will also monitor EU activities and develop policy positions, where appropriate.

The activity report is available in full on the EAHM website. General Secretary Willy Heuschen then reported on the 2006 financial accounts and

the budget for 2008. He first noted the good news that the statement of accounts was closed with a surplus of approximately €4,000. With the agreement of the Board, additional reserves will be allocated for new EAHM activities in order to be able to provide members with a comprehensive package of services. Delegates unanimously approved the statement of accounts and budget, which the auditors had previously certified as accurate.

In conclusion, Mr. Nikolaus Koller, Austria's representative on the EAHM Board and President of the Federal Conference of Hospital Managers in Austria, briefed delegates about the forthcoming EAHM congress in Graz, providing details of the city, the congress agenda and the themes chosen. His invitation to attend what promises to be an excellent event was welcomed on all sides.

The next EAHM General Assembly will be held on the morning of 25 September 2008 in Graz, just before the official opening of the congress. We cordially invite all our readers to the event and look forward to a large attendance.

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