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Members

France

Hôpital Expo

Hôpital Expo-Intermedica was held in Paris in May 2006. This exhibition- forum was once again the occasion for 2,500 hospital professionals to meet, compare their experiences and learn of developments in the sector.

Among the numerous presentations, seminars and discussion groups organised during this event, an entire morning was dedicated to the use of DRGs and activity-based costing in Europe.

A European report supported by the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE), was made public during this session. By comparing the different acceptances of the term DRG as well as their applications to national hospital sectors, it reveals that the motivations leading to the adoption of DRGs, the proportion of hospital activities financed in this way and the coordination systems may be completely different from one end of the continent to the other. After this report of heterogeneity at the European level, a Finnish speaker, Eero Linnakko, directly continued by explaining how the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway, but also

Estonia, had gathered around a single concept of DRGs, to then differentiate themselves in relation to its effective implementation at the level of hospital management. This topic will be included in one of the next issues of *Hospital*, in order to clarify the debate on the single European DRG.

Austria

"Healthcare without Borders"

The 50th Hospital Management Congress of the Austrian Association of Hospital Managers was held from 29 th to 31st May in Villach, Austria, on the theme of "Healthcare without borders – Cooperation and internationalisation of the health sector".

The multilingual international congress demonstrated the opportunities and possibilities that a Europe without borders could offer. The programme illustrated successful projects of European collaboration in the health and hospital field, such as the Healthregio project (www.healthregio. net), carried out within the framework of the European Union's external programme, INTERREG III. The project gathers validated data and works on concepts and strategies aimed at optimalising the healthcare sector in the trans-border region of Austria-Czech Republic-Slovakia- Hungary. In the long term, this should favour the development of a quality site for the provision of healthcare in central Europe. Healthregio highlights the differences between health systems, as well as their resources and potentials in order to reorganise them together, for example via a trans-border use of infrastructures, better access to health services or an international transfer of skills. The strengths of the project revolve around the demonstration of the necessity for action within national systems, the setting up o comparative regional statistical data, the promotion of the mobility of patients and health staff, and improvement in the training and qualifications of health staff. In her presentation, Renate Burger, of the company Gesundheitsmanagement Burger-Wieland OEG, tackled the consequences of the judgement of the European Court of Justice which led to the cross-border dimension of market offers. This should be accompanied by regulations determining responsibilities and control of patient flows. At the EU level, Mrs Burger believes it would make sense to install a European framework of reference on quality and patients' rights.

Dr Luigi Bertinato, Director of the Office of Health and Social Affairs for the region of Venice, gave his thoughts on the fields of EU action. Dr Bertinato presented a cross-border cooperation project in his region, the Alps-Adriatic Community, which aims to improve quality of care. One of the biggest challenges will have been to create the legal framework. "Working together across borders offers us the possibility of finding solutions to our problems", stated Dr Bertinato. The EU could, for example, look into the problem of the use of languages at the time of care.

One of the results of the project is recognition by partners of the feasibility of an active collaboration and also of the faculty of integration of new partners, Slovenia in this case. Competition in Europe will intensify, which will make cooperation urgent and essential. The necessary development of the regions should be guaranteed, which is something that the

field of health could carry out in an equitable way.

Along this same line of thought, Dr Günter Neubauer, holder of the Chair of Economics at the University of Munich, recalled the tendency of health economics to become more international. Barriers are only psychological. Internationalisation goes beyond the language in which training is given. The future lies in the internationalisation of the planning and financing of care (a European DRG system would be welcome), according to Dr Neubauer. (HH)

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