



To: all CPME Members

Brussels, 22 July 2008

Dear Colleagues,

Following the June meeting of CPME, and the subsequent declarations of resignation of France, Spain and Italy from CPME, there have been some press reports that have contained an inaccurate account of the events leading up to this decision.

As you will be aware, CPME undertakes an enormous amount of activity on behalf of the EU's two million doctors. A brief look at our website (www.cpme.eu) will confirm this. It is our opinion that a decision on the part of any national delegation to leave the organisation should be made on accurate and complete information. Accordingly, we attach, on behalf of CPME's Executive Committee, a factual account of events since December 20th 2007, and the way in which the issues have been handled. This document will appear on the CPME website, and we would be grateful if you would circulate it to the Board members of your organisation for information.

The Executive Committee considers that its officers, the Board and the General Assembly (GA) have all taken extreme care to try to understand and to address the concerns of their colleagues from France, Spain and Italy. We are particularly disappointed that no examples have ever been given of how the proposals to reform our internal arrangements would have improved the effective and visible activities of CPME to date. That said, we have responded openly and democratically to the concerns, and have made decisions that recognise some of them as being valid.

We have not included any of the very large number of documents that support the chronology and decisions we have set out. However, if you do need any further information, we will be very happy to assist.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Michael Wilks
President

Lisette Tiddens-Engwirda
Secretary General



Situation regarding the resignation of France, Spain and Italy
– summary by CPME Executive Committee

On December 20th 2007, the CPME President, Dr Daniel Mart, and the incoming President, Dr Michael Wilks received a letter from the Presidents of the Consejo General de Colegios Medicos de Espana, the Conseil National de l'Ordre des Médecins Français, and the Federazione Nazionale degli Ordini dei Medici, Chirurghi e degli Odontoiatri d'Italia.

The three Presidents expressed major concerns about recent democratically adopted decisions of the CPME Board and General Assembly (GA) concerning weighted voting, and raised issues relating to the governance of the organisation. They jointly proposed that:

- arrangements should be implemented within the CPME to make it “more representative” and to base its decision-making processes on the arrangements accepted by the Member States of the EU within the European Parliament
- the multilingualism inherent in the composition of Europe should not be perceived as a cost or a constraint and that each one of the official languages of the CPME – German, English, Spanish, French and Italian – should be “respected”
- English and French, which are the two working and decision-making languages in the CPME should be “systematically treated” in the same way
- the executive of the CPME should be strengthened, by:
 - (i) increasing the political role of the (four) Vice-presidents
 - (ii) amending the statutes to allow for a two-year mandate, renewable once, for the President, the Vice-presidents, the Treasurer and the Secretary-General
 - (iii) redefining the role of the Secretary-General as administrative only and with “no political function.”

In this same letter the presidents of these three associations raised the question of their future non-participation in CPME work and the suspension of their contributions until these matters were resolved to their satisfaction.

This letter was considered by the CPME Executive Committee (EC) on January 16th 2008. The EC decided that the best way to proceed was to gain a better insight into the problems as seen by the three countries, and therefore issued an invitation to the Presidents to attend the next EC meeting on February 6th.

In response, the three Presidents declined this invitation, requesting instead clarification of the EC's likely response to the demands for change that were set out in their letter of December 20th. A meeting with representatives of the three countries and a CPME delegation was arranged, hosted by the Ordre des Médecins in Paris on 15 February 2008.

None of the three countries' delegations attended the CPME Subcommittee and Board meetings in March. In spite of this, the Board carefully discussed the situation, and recognised that the concerns expressed by the three countries should be responded to. The Board established a "strategy working group" under the chairmanship of Vice-President Dr Konstanty Radziwill to examine all the issues raised and to make recommendations to the EC in time for full consideration at the June Board meeting. The CPME President called for an extraordinary GA meeting to be held immediately following the Board, so that any recommendations made could be swiftly progressed.

Following the Paris meeting the EC decided to recommend to the Strategy Group:

- that a weighted voting process on the budget should be considered by the Board and GA
- That the relationship as it exists in practice already, between the Secretary-General and the EC, should be reflected in the RoP as well
- that French and English should be placed on an equal footing.

The EC transmitted these decisions to the three Presidents, who responded on April 14th by refining, or adding to their original requests, asking that the working group considered:

- Changing the system of voting, on the basis that a "change to the system of voting is an absolute priority"
- Reviewing the language policy, placing English, German, Italian, Spanish and French on an equal footing in terms of cost and process in the plenary sessions and working group meetings
- Redefining the working arrangements of the EC, so that if the president is unavailable, the first vice-president looks after his functions, three vice-presidents, or more, are responsible for geographical representations or thematic assignments, and demanding that the Secretary-General should be a doctor, and also chosen and appointed by election.

The strategy working group met on April 29th. It consisted of members appointed by the Board, and also invited a representative of the three countries to attend. In the event, Dr Francis Montané (France) and Dr Ramon Huerta (Spain) were both present. The group considered all the issues under debate, and resolved to recommend to the EC that:

- Weighted voting for the voting of the annual budget should be supported
- Article 6 of the Statutes should be amended to stress that both the Secretariat and the SG also assist the EC.

The group did not support recommending a change in the voting system on the Statutes, and was not persuaded about the practicalities of a regionally-elected EC.

The May meeting of the EC considered the report. Although the working group did not support weighted voting on the Statutes, the EC did resolve to take this forward for further debate, and therefore made the following recommendations to the June Board:

1. That the Board recommend to the GA that the Strategy Working Group (SWG) develops proposals for statute changes to introduce a weighted voting

process, the type of voting system and the majority required for the CPME budget

2. That the Board recommend to the GA that the SWG develops proposals for statute changes to introduce a weighted voting process, the type of voting system and the majority required for the CPME statutes
3. That proposals should be based on previous CPME work (CPME 2004/124) as a starting point
4. That the proposals of the SWG on the relationship of the SG to the EC, and the position of the French and English languages should be incorporated into the Statutes and Rules of Procedure at the GA in October 2008.
5. That the SWG further considers options for elections to the EC being based on grouping countries in an appropriate way.
6. That the GA should vote on the replacement of Dr Huerta as Internal Auditor
7. That the GA should vote on the replacement of Dr Calloc'h as Vice-President
8. That depending on the outcome, elections for the posts of Internal Auditor and Vice-President should be held immediately.

In making these recommendations, the EC made clear, in a letter to the three countries (May 18th) that they would be placed on the agenda of the June Board meeting. However, (1) to (5) would be withdrawn if the three countries had not paid their contributions to the CPME for the first half of 2008 (these payments were due at the beginning of the year). Recommendations (6) to (8) would be withdrawn if payment was forthcoming by June 4th.

Subsequently, to be in good standing with full participation rights according to the Statutes, payment was made by France for its outstanding contribution for the first half of 2008.

The President of Italy wrote in advance of the June GA promising to pay their contribution. On the basis of this it was agreed to give the Italian delegation voting rights. Regrettably, up to date, the payment from Italy has not been received.

The President of Spain, in a letter dated July 4th 2008, said that "the Board of the "Consejo General de Colegios Médicos" agreed to pay the fee corresponding to the first semester of 2008. You will receive it in a few days." This payment is still awaited.

All three countries were represented at the June Board and GA. The above proposals (1-5) were considered. Recommendation 6 was withdrawn by the Board, and recommendation 7 was withdrawn by the EC. Recommendation 8 therefore became irrelevant. The debate was complicated by the fact that the French delegation tabled counter-proposals, and made it clear that it wished there to be a linked vote on weighted voting on the budget and on the Statutes. This approach was rejected by the Board with an overwhelming majority. Many delegations spoke in favour of the compromise that was available – to have weighted voting on the budget, and to take forward work on some of the three countries' concerns.

A frequently-voiced request from speakers and addressed to the delegations of France, Italy and Spain was to provide at least one actual example of a circumstance in which the voting system had damaged the effectiveness of CPME or the position

of these delegations. As at the Paris meeting and during subsequent meetings none were provided.

Unfortunately, the Spanish delegation left the meeting early without informing the Chair of the meeting.

The subsequent GA supported weighted voting for the budget, the need to maintain the practice of multilingualism, and a redefining of the relationship between the Secretary General and the Executive Committee thus clearly addressing the needs and worries of the three delegations in a democratic manner.

On June 25th, 26th and 27th, respectively Italy, Spain and France resigned from CPME. Under the Statutes, their membership, and an obligation to pay contributions, continues until June 30th 2009.

The Executive Committee