CED EU INFO

Issue 4 - September 2011

COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN DENTISTS

Introduction

Welcome to the 4th issue of CED EU Info of 2011. This issue is divided in two sections: the first section provides updates on EU topics relevant to the dental profession and the second section contains more general information regarding EU policy.

SECTION I – EU TOPICS RELEVANT TO THE DENTAL PROFESSION

TOOTH WHITENING

On 20 September 2011, the EU Council adopted the Council Directive amending Directive 76/768/EEC, concerning cosmetic products, for the purpose of adapting Annex III thereto to technical progress. Following the Council's decision, tooth whitening products containing up to 0.1% of hydrogen peroxide will continue to be freely available to the consumers on the market. For products containing between 0.1% and 6% of hydrogen peroxide, clinical examination and first treatment by a dentist will be required, to ensure the absence of risk factors or oral pathologies, after which the patient will be able to continue the treatment by him or herself. The use of these products by persons younger than 18 years will not be allowed. Tooth whitening products containing more than 6% of hydrogen peroxide will continue to be prohibited.

Member States will have 12 months to transpose the Directive into national legislation after its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

The CED had called repeatedly for appropriate regulation of tooth whitening products at EU level in line with the advice from the European Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety which stressed that higher concentration products can be safe when used after a clinical examination and under the supervision of a dentist. The CED considers the Council decision to be a very important step towards ensuring patient safety and removing any uncertainty as to how and by whom tooth whitening could be performed in the EU.

DENTAL AMALGAM

BIO Intelligence Service (BIOIS) has been contracted by the European Commission (EC) to carry out a study on the reduction of mercury pollution from dental amalgam, which will imply an assessment of the use of mercury in dental amalgam. BIOIS has sent a questionnaire to key stakeholders and investigators across the EU to gather concrete information and sound data on the issue. BIOIS will present an interim report in the beginning of November and the final report in February 2012. A stakeholders' meeting is planned for March 2012.

DIRECTIVE ON THE RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (2005/36/EC)

The EC published the summary responses of the public consultation on the modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive (PQD) as well as the evaluation report of the PQD on 6 July 2011.

Evaluation process - next steps:

- High level conference planned for 7 November 2011 to review the outcome of the Green Paper Modernising the PQD;
- Commission's legislative proposal by the end of 2011.

On 27 July 2011, MEP Emma McClarkin published her Report on the Implementation of the Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC. This report sets down the political priorities of the European Parliament for the review of the PQD. The report is scheduled for adoption in the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) on 17 October and in the plenary on 14 November 2011. The CED has contacted Ms McClarkin to discuss CED concerns and priorities for the review of the PQD.

On 29 August 2011, the EC published a legislative Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System (the IMI Regulation). The IMI was developed by the EC to allow national, regional and local authorities to communicate quickly and easily with their counterparts abroad. The Proposal is intended to establish a comprehensive legal framework for IMI, with the following key elements:

- a set of common rules to ensure that IMI functions efficiently, including clarification of the roles of the different actors involved in IMI;
- a framework for the processing of personal data in IMI;
- a list of legal provisions supported by IMI; and,
- a list of areas to which IMI could be expanded in the future.

SINGLE MARKET FORUM

The Single Market Forum will be held in Krakow, Poland on 2-4 October. The Forum is part of the Single Market Act initiatives and will bring together the EC, represented by the Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Michel Barnier, public authorities at various levels of government and parliaments, social partners, stakeholders' organisations, businesses, etc. The Forum will examine the state of the Single Market, the transposition and application of directives, and be an opportunity to exchange best practices.

A series of workshops on key areas of the Single Market will take place, one dedicated to the PQD and in particular the European Professional Card. The Steering Group on the Professional

COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN DENTISTS (formerly EU Dental Liaison Committee)
President Dr Wolfgang Doneus
T +32 (0)2 736 34 29 F +32 (0)2 740 20 26 ced@eudental.eu www.eudental.eu

Card, which was set up by the EC on January 2011, has been developing case studies on the potential benefits of a professional card for specific professions – notably doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, engineers, and tourist guides. The Group will present its final report during the workshop.

MATRIX FEASIBILITY STUDY ON HEALTH WORKFORCE

The EC has contracted Matrix, a UK-based consultancy company, to prepare a feasibility study on health workforce planning and trends in the EU. The feasibility study will form the basis for the planned Joint Action on health workforce planning.

The purpose of the feasibility study is to map the existing health workforce planning in the EU and to provide information about health workforce trends. The work related to the study was started at the end of July, an interim report is expected in mid-October and the final draft report in April 2012.

Matrix has been reaching out to the Member States and to the EU-level stakeholders, including the CED in preparation of the study. In the first stage of the study, country profiles for 34 countries (Member States, official candidates and EEA countries) will be prepared and countries will be grouped according to the planning system they employ. Case studies of 10 countries will then be prepared, to determine the criteria for effective workforce planning. In October or November, Delphi surveys on criteria for effective planning will be sent to a large range of stakeholders (500) and the first results will be presented and discussed with the Joint Action group in February or March 2012.

JOINT ACTION ON HEALTH WORKFORCE PLANNING

On 19 September, the second formal preparatory meeting on a future Joint Action on health workforce planning was organised in Brussels and attended by the CED (Nina Bernot and Sara Roda). During the meeting, the first preliminary results of the feasibility study by Matrix were presented, and the contents and structure of the Joint Action were discussed. Member States and stakeholders also indicated who might be interested in participating in the Joint Action.

The CED indicated an interest in principle in participating in the work package dealing with skills and competences, estimating future demand, skill mixes and task shifting. It is not yet clear if the work package will deal specifically with dentists. As a next step, Belgium, the Joint Action leader, will hold an informal meeting with the Joint Action associated partners on 17 and 18 November in Brussels, to further elaborate the contents of the individual work packages.

Joint Actions are a mechanism for co-funding of common activities by the EC, the Member States and EU-level stakeholders under the Health Programme. The Joint Action on health workforce planning is expected to start in late 2012 or early 2013 and run for 3 years, with a total budget of around 5 to 6 million Euros.

FLUORIDATION OF DRINKING WATER

On 22 June 2011, the EC published the opinion of the Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks' (SCHER) on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water. The opinion was adopted by written procedure on 16 May 2011.

EUROPEAN STANDARDS

On 1 June 2011, the EC published a communication on a strategic vision for European standards and a legislative Proposal for a regulation on the European standardisation. The proposal is aimed at accelerating, simplifying and modernising the European standardisation system. The new regulation proposes the development of standards for services. While healthcare was excluded from the Services Directive (2006/123/EC), this proposal could signal a new attempt to bring also activities of healthcare professionals such as dentists under the services umbrella. The CED will continue to monitor this issue.

ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS

The EC has presented a draft proposal to update and improve EU rules to protect workers from electromagnetic fields. It intends to update the current exposure limits to take on board new scientific evidence, particularly in relation to exposure limits of MRI in hospitals.

SECTION II – GENERAL EU POLICY

CROATIA'S ACCESSION

On 17 September, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk officially handed over the EU Accession Treaty text to Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor in Zagreb. The English text of the document received the final endorsement of the EU Member States. The signature of the Treaty is foreseen for December 2011. Croatia is scheduled to become an EU Member on 1 July 2013 after the treaty is ratified by all the Member States and Croatia.

TURKEY RELATIONS WITH EU

EU-candidate Turkey has announced that it will freeze relations with the EU if the Republic of Cyprus is given the EU Presidency in 2012. The division of Cyprus represents one of the most difficult issues affecting EU-Turkey relations. The future of Turkey's accession talks is strongly connected to the resolution of the Cyprus situation.

POLISH PRESIDENCY

Poland took over the Presidency of the Council of the EU on 1 July 2011. In the area of public health, Poland's programme puts special emphasis on reducing health gaps within the EU's population, mainly through prevention, health promotion and education. It also envisions action on brain and neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's; and depending on the Members States' positions, to address e-health, partnership for innovation to promote healthy and active ageing, antibiotic resistance and ensuring that patients have access to reliable information about prescription medicinal products. In the area of the internal market, the Polish Presidency intends to improve, among other key actions, the administrative cooperation between Member States, focusing on the IMI System.

Comments, questions and contributions please contact:
ced@eudental.eu