

Minutes of the 22. annual general meeting

8 Avenue Simon Bolivar, Paris 75019, on Saturday, 1 st October, 1994.

Prof. Ch. Bolender presided. Other delegates present included Drs R. Bijlstra (Netherlands), C. Degroote (Belgium), W. Schmiedel (Germany), A. Ferrini (Italy), and N. Flood (Ireland).

Also in attendance were Drs Bourdillat and Faure (France), and Dr P. Picchioni (Italy). An apology was received from Dr J. C. Bailey (Britain).

The minutes of the 1993 meeting were read by the Secretary and approved by all members.

1. REPORTS FROM MEMBER DELEGATES

ITALY

Last year has been another difficult one for Italian orthodontists. Taxes, Medical Defence Insurance, and practice expenses all increased markedly, while the devaluation of the Italian Lire added to the cost of imported items and equipment. Fees, on the other hand, have remained static for four or five years, partly due to the recession, and partly as the falling birth rate reduced the number of orthodontic patients.

The country's political and economic problems would appear to dominate the immediate future.

GERMANY

Such is the economic recession that ten per cent of orthodontic practices may close down within the next few years. Higher expenses, lower fees are again the problem as the Government constricts annual payments. In addition, the German training produces too many graduates annually: postgraduate students spend two years at University, plus two years at an approved specialist practice. This is not a system that provides adequate controls.

BELGIUM

While still maintaining their separate identities, the four Belgian associations have combined to conduct discussions with the Government. In the past year, orthodontics has gained official recognition as a specialty, but those who practice orthodontics are not recognised as specialists.

A grant-in-aid system operates in Belgium, though the Government contribution is only the equivalent of 2,000 Fr. francs (about £250) for 3 years treatment. Nonetheless, some generalists find it worth their while to travel abroad for crash courses in orthodontics.

NETHERLANDS

The newly elected Coalition Government plans to reduce Health Service Costs in dentistry during 1995. Other than "essential" treatment, such as for cleft palate patients, it proposes to exclude all orthodontics from the Insurance Schemes. Patients will have to pay privately or buy their own insurance. Nonetheless fee cuts of 7% are expected. The Government regulates private fees by maintaining them at the same level as the public health service.

IRELAND

The Orthodontic Society of Ireland formally applied to the Dental Council for the establishment of a Specialists' Register.

Eligible patients may obtain free orthodontic treatment from the regional Health Boards. Fee paying patients attend private practitioners. As eligible patients are numerous, long waiting lists have developed. To ease the congestion, the Eastern Health Board has asked private specialists to treat 500 of the most urgent and difficult cases for an overall fee of £1,000.

BRITAIN

A written submission from Dr Bailey reports:

1. The newly formed British Orthodontic Society embraces all existing orthodontic factions - Specialist Practitioners, salaried Hospital Consultants and Community Orthodontists, University Academics, and General Practitioners who undertake some orthodontic treatment.
2. No progress on the Specialists' Register, though an investigation into specialisation within the E.U. is being carried out by the Chief Dental Officers. This may lead to something.

FRANCE

A grant-in-aid system that allows orthodontists to charge their own fees has operated in France since 1984. The system works well, but there are fears that the new Government may seek changes.

2. WORLD FEDERATION OF ORTHODONTICS (WFO)

The Fourth International Orthodontic Congress will be held in San Francisco in May 1995 under the sponsorship of the American Association of Orthodontists.

It is anticipated that, during this congress, the bylaws of the world Federation of Orthodontics will be confirmed. The first official meeting of the WFO is scheduled for May 2000, after which further meetings will occur every five years in conjunction with the International Orthodontic Congress.

On behalf of EFOSA, Dr. N. Flood wrote to Dr William DeKock, c/o A.A.O., wishing the project every success. Referring to the bylaws, it was pointed out that while the WFO wished to confine Fellowship in the Federation to qualified orthodontists, there seemed to be a loophole that would allow all member of national associations to be eligible. Accordingly EFOSA suggested a minor addition to article 4.1.1. : "Fellowship in the Federation shall be open to any specialist orthodontist with a recognised postgraduate qualification who is already a full member of a national or regional association or society of Orthodontists affiliated with the WFO."

In a gracious reply, Dr DeKock said that in their view the term "orthodontist" by definition means "a specialist who has recognised postgraduate training." He pledged, however, that the ideas of EFOSA would receive thoughtful consideration by the executive Committee. He was aware that some associations included generalists who practised some orthodontics.

3. EURO-QUAL PROGRAMME

The Euro-Qual Programme is a concerted action by nine orthodontists attached to eight European universities. Their aim is to develop and establish a "European Orthodontic Quality Assurance System," that will improve effectiveness and efficiency in orthodontic care throughout Europe" (East and West).

Much preparatory work has been done under the headings of Education, Clinical Standards, Personal Evaluation, Customer Satisfaction, Equipment and Materials. Their proposals are to be presented at the consensus Meeting in Amsterdam next March.

This ambitious programme has a visionary concept that commands respect. Its scope is so wide that one can foresee many difficulties to surmount. There are also fears in some quarters that their best efforts may be subverted by Governments anxious to establish more controls in their efforts to restrict payments to the profession.

It was agreed by Council that all eight EFOSA delegates should attend if possible, the initial Consensus Meeting in Amsterdam.

4. EFOSA DIRECTORY

The EFOSA directory is to be published during 1995. Each country is requested to submit its entry list by next January.

5. CHANGE of EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Professor Ch. Bolender (France) is to retire from the presidency, and is to be replaced by Dr N. Flood (Ireland). Dr. R. J. Bijlstra (Netherlands) takes over as Secretary. Council has approved Dr. Bijlstra's request for the assistance of a part-time secretary.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, Dr. W. Schmiedel reported a surplus of 17,070 DM.

7. 1995 MEETING

The next EFOSA meeting is to take place in Dublin in early October.