



# EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR EMERGENCY MEDICINE







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European Commission  
Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General  
Health services consultation  
B232 8/102  
B-1049 Brussels  
Belgium

31 January 2007

Dear Sir,

### Re: Public consultation regarding EU action on health services

I understand that today is the last opportunity to submit comment on the European Commission consultation on health services. The associated Questionnaire has only recently come to my attention and the questions seem to relate primarily to cross-border healthcare of patients who are seeking elective treatment in another EU country. However, Commissioner Kyprianou is quoted as saying that the consultation process offers "...an opportunity to shape the future of healthcare in Europe..." and it therefore seems appropriate that The European Society for Emergency Medicine (EuSEM) should submit an expression of interest in contributing to future debate on the health needs of citizens in Europe.

EuSEM is the professional body in Europe which represents physicians providing emergency medical care and is now a Federation of twenty national societies of Emergency Medicine with almost ten thousand affiliated individual medical members. It is one of the main objectives of the Federation that emergency medical care of high standard should be available to every person in need in all situations at all times. High standards of emergency care are undoubtedly available in some EU countries but this is not a universal finding and, indeed, the Doctors' Directive lists only seven countries in which Emergency Medicine is currently recognised as a medical specialty.

Emergency Medicine has status within the Union Europeenne des Medecins Specialistes (UEMS) as a Multi-Disciplinary Joint Committee which is currently revising the Core Curriculum for the specialty to include essential competencies and which is working towards the establishment in recognised departments of training programmes of comparable standard across Europe. There remains reluctance in some EU countries to acknowledge a need for the specialty of Emergency Medicine but an increasing number do recognise this need although some are seeking to develop training programmes of shorter duration than required by EU Directive.

There is undoubtedly an increasing mobility of citizens within Europe and many of those who require health care away from their country of primary residence do so in emergency circumstances and not by elective choice. EuSEM is not aware that there currently exists any Community legislation which seeks to ensure that all citizens in Europe have the right to be able to access specialist emergency healthcare of equally high standard wherever the need arises. This principle is inherent within the Manifesto of the European Society for Emergency Medicine and we believe that emergency healthcare across Europe should be provided by emergency physicians trained to a high and comparable standard.

I have not focussed as requested on the nine specific questions identified in the consultation because they do not seem to relate primarily to the provision and availability of emergency healthcare. However, I hope that this important aspect of health need arising from cross-border mobility will be given appropriate consideration in the proposals which the Commission will bring forward later this year.

Yours faithfully,

Dr David Williams  
President, European Society for Emergency Medicine



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