



**UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS
SPÉCIALISTES**

**EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL
SPECIALISTS**

**UEMS CARDIOLOGY SECTION
NEWSLETTER
January 2006**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main task of the UEMS cardiology section is to harmonise education and postgraduate training in cardiovascular medicine throughout Europe. The steering committee of our group believe that many clinicians are confused by the plethora of organisations that govern European cardiology and have decided to publish a regular newsletter that we hope will highlight our work and clarify the way we interact with the other European bodies.

I hope that you will find this service useful and would welcome feedback. Remember we are here to represent you.



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2. THE ORGANISATIONS

UEMS (European Union of Medical Specialists)

The UEMS was founded in 1958, two years after the Treaty of Rome, and represents all European medical specialists. UEMS currently consists of 37 Specialist Sections (including the UEMS-Cardiology Section), 4 Joint Sections and several Boards; like the organisation of the European GPs/Family Physicians (UEMO) it reports,

through the “Standing Committee of the Medical Doctors” (Committee Permanent, www.cpe.be), to the different EU bodies (EU Council, EU Commission, EU Parliament). The statutory purpose of the UEMS is the harmonisation and improvement of the quality of medical specialist practice in the European Union (EU).

UEMS – Cardiology Section

The basic organisational structure of the UEMS-CS consists of the Plenary Assembly and of the Steering Committee.

The *Plenary Assembly* of the UEMS-CS consists of two delegates from each EU-/EFTA- and also each Non-EU-Country, one representing the National Cardiac Society and the other the National Professional Union (Fig. 1). The Plenary Assembly holds its annual meeting during the ESC-Congress; in some years a second meeting takes place in Brussels in May. The Paediatric Cardiologists (AEPC, www.aepc.org) constitute a subsection and are represented by 2 delegates in the Plenary Assembly. A representative of the Permanent Working Group of European Junior Doctors

(www.pwgeurope.org) is also member of the Plenary Assembly and the Steering Committee. In 2001 the European Society of Hypertension (www.eshonline.org) became an official member of the UEMS-CS; vascular medicine remains part of the UEMS Section of Internal Medicine.

The *Steering Committee* (Fig. 1) is the administrative body of the section and consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Past-President, Board Members, one delegate from the Non-EU Countries, a delegate from the AEPC and a delegate from the PWG. They are all elected by the Plenary Assembly for a four year period of office.

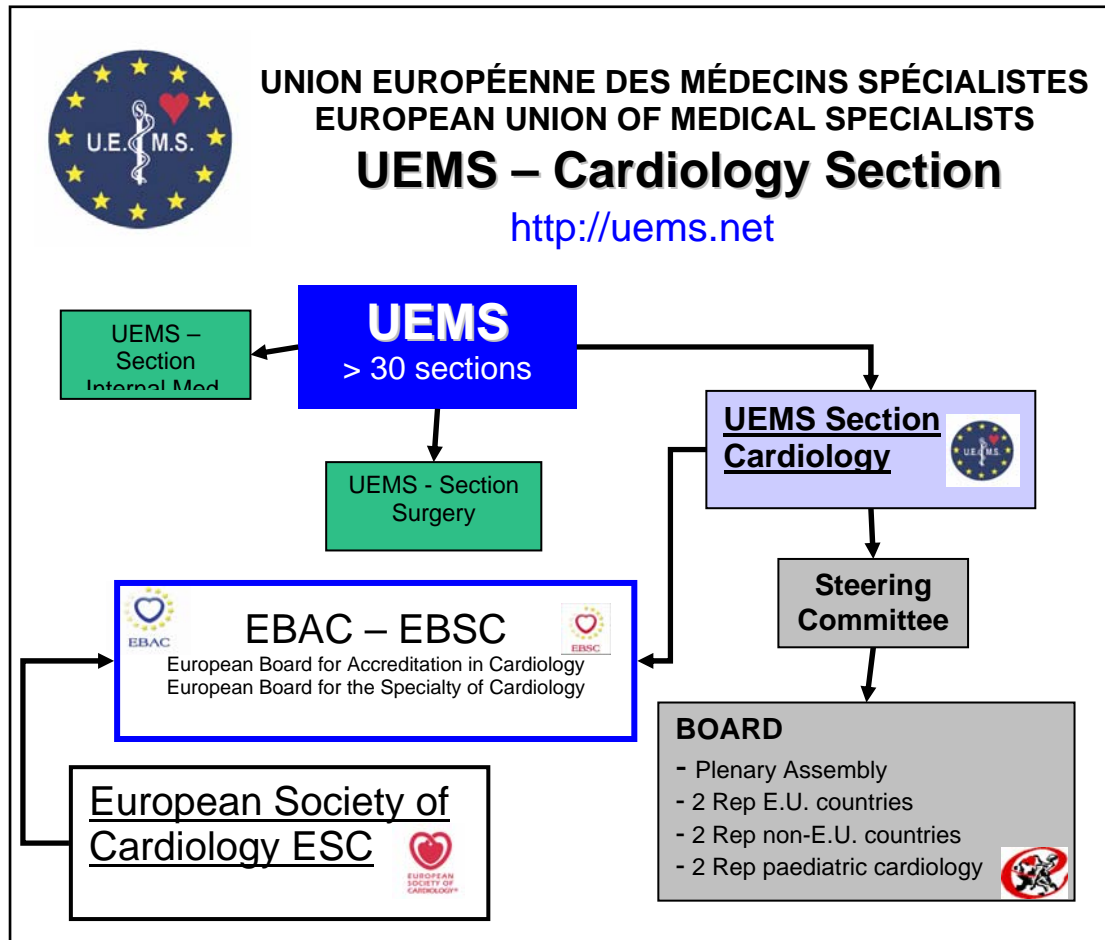


Fig. 1 - UEMS Cardiology Section as part of the UEMS and the ESC.

ESC (European Society of Cardiology)

The *European Society of Cardiology (ESC)* is primarily concerned with education, science and research. Although the ESC also has a major interest in training, the UEMS-Cardiology Section has the statutory responsibility for training European Cardiologists. The interests of the two organisations overlap but the

good offices of the former ESC-Presidents Lars Ryden (SE), Marteen L Simoons (NL), Jean-Pierre Bassand (FR), and the current ESC-President Michael Tendera (PL) have ensured close and fruitful cooperation between the two bodies.

Two important links between ESC and the UEMS-CS have been created – the EBSC and EBAC:



EBSC (European Board for the Specialty of Cardiology)

The *“European Board for the Specialty of Cardiology (EBSC)* was founded in 1992 by Prof Gunther Breihart (ESC President at the time) and Dr Michael Petch (its first chairman).

EBSC oversees and awards the Diploma of European Cardiologist. The organisation is also developing subspecialty training programmes in cooperation with the relevant Working Groups and Associations of the ESC (e.g. echocardiography, electrophysiology and intervention,) and is devising schemes for the evaluation of training centres.

EBSC website was launched in 2005 and is positioned as a central information point for individual accreditation in cardiology. All necessary information on the Diploma of European Cardiologist is available on the [website](#); from useful tips to downloadable electronic application forms.

www.cardiology-accreditation.org



EBAC (European Board for Accreditation in Cardiology)

The “*European Board for Accreditation in Cardiology*” (EBAC) was founded in May 2000 by Prof Lars Ryden (ESC President at the time) and Prof Heinz Weber (its first chairman) and is responsible for the accreditation of CME-Programmes.

EBAC works according to the quality guidelines of EACCME (the clearing house of the UEMS for CME) and is the only European organisation that is entitled to accredit and approve high quality cardiovascular CME-programmes. The competence and legitimacy of the Board are assured by its two parent organisations, the ESC and the UEMS CS.

EBAC accreditation is the approval of the scientific and didactic value of a Continuing Medical Education (CME) programme in cardiology, by an independent board of European experts. Keys to a successful accreditation are:

- High quality of the scientific programme;
- Absence of commercial bias;
- Accessibility to an international audience;
- Compliance with EACCME Guidelines on CME.

Two types of CME programmes can be accredited by EBAC:

- Events (congresses, conferences, workshops...) - 500 events were already accredited by EBAC (223 in 2005), in 27 European countries.
- Distance Learning Products (Internet based courses, CD ROMs, CME articles/ text) - 47 Internet based courses, 41 CME articles/ texts and 6 CD ROMs are accredited by EBAC.

A calendar of all EBAC accredited programmes can be found on the EBAC website in the [“Accredited Programmes”](#) menu.

The application procedure is performed on-line. For more information on EBAC (procedure, policies and requirements) visit the website www.ebac-cme.org, or contact the EBAC office directly at contact@ebac-cme.org.

www.ebac-cme.org

3. RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

The logo and administrative basis of the UEMS cardiology section were agreed at a meeting in Paris, Jan. 1999

- An annual subscription based on the number of cardiologists belonging to the national society of each member country (currently 2 euros per head for founder states and 1 euro per head for accession countries) was accepted during the Plenary Assembly, Barcelona 1999. This has proved to be controversial but most countries have adhered to the rules. The UEMS-CS can therefore cover the costs of a secretariat, administration, advertising, producing letters, faxes, e-mails etc.
- The first secretariat started work in Vienna in 2000. The UEMS cardiology section staffed a booth at the ESC congress in Stockholm 2001 (figs 2 & 3) and has also distributed flyers explaining its structure, delegates and mission to ESC delegates at subsequent ESC congresses.

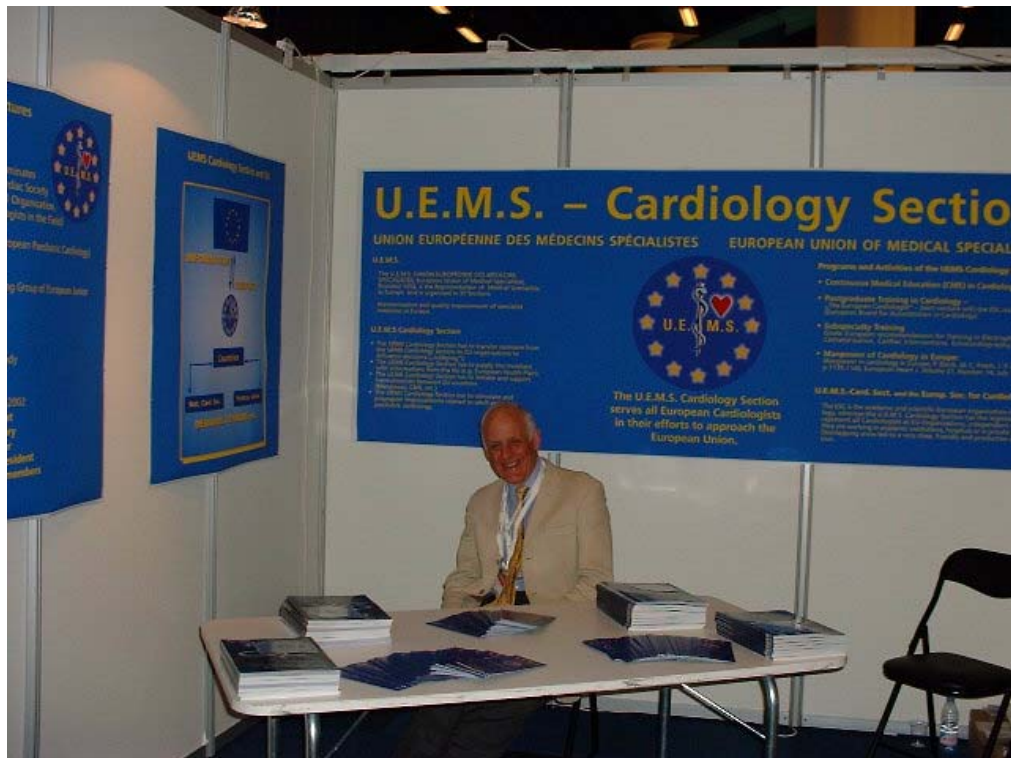


Fig. 2 - Michael Petch and the first UEMS-Booth in Stockholm 2001



Fig. 3 The first flyer 2001



Fig. 4 - Mrs. Marianne Laczko, the former secretary of the UEMS CS during the ESC Congress in Berlin 2002.

- A website (<http://www.uems-cardio.com>) was established in 2001.
- A European model for cardiology training (chapter 6) has been agreed (see <http://www.uems-cardio.com>).
- Minutes of our meetings are now published on our website.
- Through lobbying, the UEMS cardiology section has helped to ensure that cardiology remains a recognised specialty throughout Europe.
- A workforce survey was conducted in 1999/2000 and published in the European Heart Journal (Block et al. Manpower in cardiology in Europe. European Heart Journal 2000; 21: 1135-40 and Block et al. Manpower in cardiology II in Western and Central Europe. European Heart Journal 2003; 24 : 299-310)

4. THE FUTURE

The UEMS Cardiology Section intends to

- Supply the EU- and non-EU representatives with information related to cardiovascular disorders and general public health from all the different EU organisations and beyond.
- Promote and represent the interests of European cardiologists to all the EU bodies directly or via the UEMS or the Committee Permanent (<http://www.cpme.be/>).
- Harmonise national structures in order to achieve “European Standards” of training and CME in cardiology.
- Stimulate improvement in the diagnosis, prevention, treatment, professional competence, continuous professional development, and evidence based care of cardiovascular disease.
- Conduct a new workforce survey in 2006. We hope that the results of this survey will be available in May.

5. CONTACTS AND LINKS

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Links and Websites

Link to UEMS:

<http://www.uems.net/>

Link to UEMS Cardiology Section

<http://www.uems-cardio.com>

Link to EBSC

<http://www.cardiology-accreditation.org>

Link to EBAC:

<http://www.ebac-cme.org>

Link to European Society of Cardiology:

<http://www.escardio.org/>

Link to the European Commission:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm

Link to European Society of Hypertension:

<http://www.eshonline.org/esh/index.asp>

Link to Paediatric Cardiology:

<http://www.aepc.org/>