

Report of UPIGO General Assembly held on 16 October 1999 at Dresden (Germany)

Opening address: by Professor Adinolfi

In his opening remarks the President pointed out that we were meeting in DRESDEN for the 45th Annual Assembly of UPIGO, which had been set up in Paris in 1953. The 45 annual assemblies held in its 46 years of existence were proof of the vitality of our Union.

President ADINOLFI listed the events which had marked his three years in office:

The creation of EBCOG (European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology) which had resulted from the merger of EBGO (an offshoot of UPIGO) with ECOG (stemming from EAGO).

As a consequence of this UPIGO found itself in a new situation somewhat isolated from EBCOG and UEMS.

UPIGO would nevertheless continue in its mission of a professional organisation in Europe and other countries of the world. UPIGO represented the interests of gynaecologists and obstetricians.

UPIGO was responsible for maintaining quality care for the women of Europe or other countries.

UPIGO's immediate concerns were Further Medical Training, ethical and medical liability issues.

UPIGO's field of action is immense.

President ADINOLFI concluded by thanking all those who had helped him during his term of office, with special thanks to Professor LINK for the excellent organisation of the DRESDEN meeting, and by offering his best wishes to Doctor TSATSARIS, his successor as President of UPIGO.

Report by the Secretary General: Professor Guy SCHLAEDER

Professor SCHLAEDER recalled that at the Athens Assembly 10 European countries were represented by 18 delegates. The priority topics were further medical training and the creation of a website on INTERNET. These two topics would today be the subject of detailed development.

Over the past year we had had many contacts in and outside Europe. Many countries had shown interest in our work but had unfortunately not been able to join us for financial reasons. This was the case of Armenia, Georgia, Bulgaria and Malta.

We had the pleasure of welcoming four new delegations in Dresden: Doctor Nicolescu Serban Mihnea representing the Romanian Society for Obstetrical Gynaecology, Professor Vesna Kesic representing the Yugoslav Society for Obstetrical Gynaecology, Professor Theodosi Gjergji representing the Albanian Society for Obstetrical Gynaecology and Doctor Saad Agoumi representing the Association of Private Gynaecologists in Morocco.

A warm welcome was extended to the new delegates. UPIGO was the first body to have been set up with the aim of uniting the world's gynaecologist-obstetricians with a view to a concerted study of professional practice, ethical and all socio-political issues.

Although its current membership was essentially European, UPIGO's statutes clearly authorised participation by non-European countries. Within Greater Europe UPIGO was the only professional body representing our specialist professional field. Enjoying official recognition by the Council of Europe, UPIGO had privileged access to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in particular to its Committee on Social and Health Questions.

In a much changing world where our action was too often restricted by political, legal or financial constraints, it was important to react, to unite our efforts.

We were under the moral obligation to maintain our professional working environment at the highest level on which the health of women and the new-born were directly dependent.

Treasurer's Report: by Doctor Raymond BELAICHE

Accounts would henceforth be kept in euros.

Countries not yet having paid their contributions would be sent a reminder via the delegates present in Dresden for onward transmission to their national societies.

The treasurers concerned were requested to pay in exactly the amount required and clearly to identify on their remittance orders the country making the payment.

First main topic: Continuing medical education (CME)

This was the subject of many substantive contributions, coordinated by Martin LINK. The situation in Germany, Austria and Switzerland was presented by Martin LINK with the participation of Hans JÖRG WELTI in respect of Switzerland. The other reports were presented by Annick CONZEMIUS for the Benelux, Marek SPASZINSKI for Poland, Milan KUDELA for the Czech Republic, Jan STENCL for Slovakia, A. KALOGÉ-ROPOULOS for Greece, G. ADINOLFI for Italy, Guy SCHLAEDER for France and Sweden.

A. CONZEMIUS spoke about the European Accreditation council for CME.

Martin LINK and Guy SCHLAEDER were tasked with drawing up a summary for subsequent broad dissemination.

Second main topic: UPIGO site on Internet

Andrea ZACUTTI and Raymond BELAICHE each made an interesting presentation on this subject. After discussion and with the Assembly's agreement, Raymond BELAICHE would open an Internet site, in principle in three languages - English, French and German - in accordance with the UPIGO tradition. It would be an open site and each delegation would be welcome to take part.

The address of the UPIGO site is as follows:

<http://www.upigo.org>

Statutory General Assembly

- the reports by the Secretary General and the treasurer were approved unanimously
- the next Bureau of UPIGO would be composed as follows:
  - President: Dr Nicolas TSATSARIS
  - Treasurer: Dr. Raymond BELAICHE
  - Outgoing President: Prof. Giovanni ADINOLFI
  - Secretary General : Prof. Guy SCHLAEDER

The next General Assembly would be held in POZNAN (Poland) from 6-8 October 2000 and would be organised by our friend Professor Marek SPASZYNSKI.

Main topic no. 1: Professional organisation of obstetrical gynaecology in Europe and North Africa: What? How? For what purpose?

Members responsible: Dr Annick CONZEMIUS, Prof. Martin LINK, Prof. Guy SCHLAEDER.

Main topic no. 2: Medico-legal issues, malpractice.

Member responsible: Prof. Pierfrancesco TROPEA.

Special lecture: The Gynaecology of Tomorrow

By Prof. Marek SPASZINSKI.

For 2001 a proposal by Doctor AGOUMI to hold the Assembly in Morocco was tentatively adopted.

Further topics were dealt with at the Dresden General Assembly.

A clinician's perception of bioethics: by Professor Claude COLETTE

In a both dense and colourful presentation, Claude COLETTE urged that doctors should preserve a freedom of action at one with their conscience. "Only service rendered over time and borne out by experience and irrefutable logic should guide our action. Hippocrates and Ambroise Paré said nothing other than that. The individual and the social framework, the well-spring of his security, his freedom and his prosperity are the shared purpose of those who are legitimately placed in charge of their fellow-men. There lay the very basis of the powers of the politician and the physician. Plato taught this 20 centuries ago.

UPIGO's relation with the Council of Europe: by Professor Guy SCHLAEDER

UPIGO had been participating for a number of years in the meetings of the Council of Europe's grouping of NGOs dealing with health matters.

Several NGOs had shown interest in improving health education of children and teen-agers. Professor Guy SCHLAEDER had been charged with coordinating their proposals before transmission to the parliamentary bodies. Work was currently being directed to a proposal for a better sexual education with a view to avoiding voluntary termination of pregnancy and sexually transmissible diseases, especially among adolescents.

The General Assembly of UPIGO approved the proposal.

Still within the framework of the NGOs dealing with health matters, UPIGO had supported a motion put down by EAPC (European Association for Palliative Care) prior to a vote by the Parliamentary Assembly. The motions had been well received and EAPC thanked UPIGO for its support.

A second request for support had reached us more recently from IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Association) in favour of a free choice of sexuality and procreation, as well as a better sex education. The General Assembly supported the proposal by IPPF.

The European Conference on "Health and Human Rights" was held at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 15-16 March 1999. The Conference had been a highly successful event, attended by 300 participants from throughout Europe. Canada and the United States had delegated observers. UPIGO was represented by its Secretary General, Guy SCHLAEDER. The presentations had been varied and interesting. Special reference was made to the beneficial role of NGOs in promoting health and in fostering improved relations between countries, as well as between various social groups within countries.

Ethical and legal aspects of birth in Italy: by Professor Pierfrancesco TROPEA.

Medical progress, particularly in the field of assisted procreation, had led to situations which had not occurred to the legislator.

Law reform was required to take account of scientific progress. It was Professor Tropea's wish that paternity after artificial procreation be broached at European level with a view to defining a law that would be equal for all countries.

The situation of Obstetrical Gynaecology in Morocco: by Doctor Saad AGOUMI

A newcomer to UPIGO, Doctor AGOUMI was pleased to talk with us about the association of private gynaecologists over which he presided. The association's aims were in line with UPIGO's areas of concern: professional ethics, defence of professional interests, quality of care provided.

Morocco had a population of some 30 million inhabitants 70% of whom were under 30.

Access to care was still difficult. There were comparatively few doctors - 480 gynaecologists in private practice, 103 engaged in the public sector.

Rural areas were particularly difficult to look after, with 90% of births taking place in the home in the presence of a "traditional midwife".

I hose in charge of health had a difficult task.

The whole Assembly followed closely what Doctor AGOUMI had to say. UPIGO welcomed Doctor AGOUMI's proposal to hold the General Assembly of 2001 in MOROCCO.

Other business :

- The participants expressed their appreciation of the organisation of the meeting by Professor Martin LINK.

- There was abundant and fruitful discussion.

- The Dresden Assembly was attended by 21 delegates representing 11 countries:

G. THEODHOSI - AL, H.J WELTI - CH, M. KUDELA - CZ, M. LINK - D, M. STEINER - D, A. MAL-TER - D, H.H. WAGNER - DK, C. COLETTE - F, G. COUSIN - F, A. KALOGEROPOULOS - GR, R. FORLEO - I, P. TROPEA - I, A ZACUTTI - I, A. CONZEMIUS - L, S. AGOUMI - MA, M. SPACZYNSKI - PL.

Members of the Bureau: G. ADINOLFI, President, N. TSATSARIS, In-coming President, G. SCHLAEDER, Secretary General, R. BELAICHE, Treasurer.

Professor G. SCHLAEDER  
Secretary General