



FEDERATION OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NURSES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

FOHNEU

The Federation of Occupational Health Nurses within the European Union

Minutes 29th BOARD MEETING

**Bucharest, Romania
21st - 23rd May 2009**

ATTENDANCE

Executive Officers

Julie Staun	President	Denmark
Bernadette Jackson	Vice-President	United Kingdom
Eeva Himmanen	Treasurer	Finland
Susan Pierrot	Secretary	France

Board Members

Jytte Kruckow	Denmark
Dominique O'Brien	France
Panayota Sourtzi	Greece
Heniett Hirdi	Hungary
Una Feeney	Ireland
Marisol Quiroga Medina	Netherlands
Geert Van Gent	Netherlands
Fernando Morato Ortiz	Spain
Fiona Colgrave	United Kingdom

Observers

Ecatarina Gulie	Romania
Carmen Nicolae	Romania
Natalia Scaiceanu	Romania
Elena Stanescu	Romania
Eugenia Olaru	Romania
Ada Baches	Romania

Isabel Hernandez Maestre	Spain
Victoriya Georgieva	Translator Spain

Apologies

Hans Schwertzner	Germany
Katarina Michaliou	Greece
Simon Borg	Malta
Eduarda Gumarães	Portugal
Margarida Rasteiro	Portugal
Annika Claesson	Sweden

1. Opening

The board meeting was opened by the President, Julie Staun at 09:15.

The FOHNEU board was welcomed to Bucharest by Ecaterina Gulie, President of the Romanian National Nurses Association.

We were then introduced to an enthusiastic team of eight observers from different nursing disciplines. The Romanian nurses explained that they were relatively new to most fields of specialist nursing but were active members of the ICN¹ and EFN².

Members of the FOHNEU board were invited to their conference which was to take place on Saturday 23 May at the main hospital in Bucharest Julie presented the aims and work of the federation.

2. President's address

Julie Staun welcomed all to the board meeting and expressed thanks to the members attending from Romania. Their participation was made possible by the success of the twinning project and is an inspiration to others. She then went on to deliver her opening speech in which she detailed recent changes to the FOHNEU board and the participation in important international OH events.

See appendix 2.1 for the full report.

The board was reminded that as official campaign partners with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work we have a responsibility to promote the campaign in each member country. Details of how to do this and all the campaign material can be downloaded from the agency's website most European languages.

<http://hw.osha.europa.eu>

The Romanian delegation has already been in touch with the Focal Point³ (FP) in Bucharest. It was suggested and agreed upon that we invite the national FP to the FOHNEU board meetings.

Action

In collaboration with the FOHNEU representative of host country The President will officially invite the national FP to each board meeting.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from the representatives of Germany, Malta, Portugal and Sweden.

4. Ratifying the agenda

As the agency representative was unable to attend the board meeting, the agenda was modified accordingly and ratified by the board

5. Minutes from previous meetings

¹ International Council of Nurses

² European Federation of Nurses

³ Term used by the agency for national contacts involved in the campaign

- **Board Meeting, Bilbao 29th – 31st October 2008**

The minutes were ratified.

6. National Updates

Spain

As the board had not received a report from Spain, Fernando gave a brief update.

Ireland (Appendix 6.1)

The financial crisis has resulted in a halt on recruitment. OHNs are not being replaced during periods of absence such as maternity leave. There is an Increase in stress related sick leave. OH services are overstretched and the INO⁴ has issued a statement.

Pre-employment assessments are carried out less frequently and this in turn, has had a financial impact on the OH Physicians.

The recent national conference was held in association with another OH group and gave very encouraging feedback. At the next

At the next Annual General Meeting Una will stand down as chair person and will therefore be recruiting a new representative from Ireland for the FOHNEU board.

UK (Appendix 6.2)

The UK government is focusing strategies on improving the health of the working age population, helping to prevent people from becoming sick and having to take time off work; and, where sickness does occur, helping to ensure that people can remain in or swiftly return to work. UK organisations are developing plans for a multi-disciplinary UK Council for Occupational Health. A new commission of experts to advise the Government on the future role of nurses and midwives has been announced by the Prime Minister. A review was launched in April 2009 to maintain and improve the health and well-being of the National Health Services workforce. The UK Government has agreed to fund the development project and its first year of operation of a National Accreditation System for Occupational Health services.

Netherlands (Appendix 6.3)

The Dutch association is going through a complete reorganisation and has new officers. There is renewed interest reflected in an increase in members.

Hungary (appendix 6.4)

Hungary has 248 OHN members in the MESzK⁵ and has become an official and active member of FOHNEU.

A detailed survey was carried out In February this year, on the activity, status and working conditions of the Hungarian OHNs. Statistical analysis is awaited.

Henriett proposed, on behalf of her organisation, that Hungary would host the spring 2010 FOHNEU board meeting in Budapest. The invitation was accepted by the board.

Julie commented that most of the former eastern block countries have medical orientated OH services in workplaces and are now getting organised and prevention orientated.

⁴ Irish Nurses Organisation

⁵ Council of the Hungarian Health Care Professionals

Denmark (Appendix 6.5)

Association membership and OHN education statistics are declining but paradoxically there is greater demand for OHNs.

Finland (Appendix 6.6)

Occupational health law protects the OHN role.

There is a trend towards outsourcing OH services. In view of the present economic situation the ministers are responding by promoting health and reducing poverty. OH units are feeling the strain.

The FAOHN⁶ is currently carrying out a survey on OHN salaries and client information.

The size of the Finland land mass and lack of personnel makes it very difficult for OHNs to visit all work places in the Northern parts of the country.

France (Appendix 6.7)

The reforms concerning OH are still the main point of discussion. Legislation is expected at the end of 2009. The GIT⁷ will soon publish a referential document on the role of the OHN.

Greece (Appendix 6.8)

A new law proposes to increase OHS inspection departments nationally but doesn't take into account the role of the OHN

In Greece there are about 100 specialised OH physicians but other specialists such as dermatologists and even surgeons and gynaecologists can practise in OH.

The National nursing conference took place last week. 30 abstracts came from OH.

The ICOH documents have now been translated into Greek. Panayota estimates about 100 OHNs and will check the figures for the next board meeting.

Romania

Although the representatives from Romania had not prepared a report, they were invited to speak about their situation.

(see feedback from Romania after meeting observations, page 11)

The observers present at the board meeting, have limited knowledge of the role of the OHN but are enthusiastic about developing the speciality in Romania. The present situation is based on inspections from the labour ministry with nothing on OHN levels. Cristina works in a hospital but is interested in studying working conditions. The Physicians are in charge. At Cristina's hospital a doctor comes once a week to study and improve working conditions such as lighting etc. This is regarded as social work. Romania has a high level of night workers because of family life.

Julie commented that Denmark has guidelines limiting night shifts to a maximum of 4 per week.

The board discussed recent scientific evidence concerning night workers.

The cancer risk recognised at the moment is only for breast cancer and guidelines are expected from the IARC⁸

⁶ Finnish Association of Occupational Health Nurses

⁷ Groupement des Infirmiers du Travail

⁸ International Agency for Research on Cancer

Julie asked that FOHNEU have abstracts on new research publications on our web site.

FOHNEU can help Romania to stimulate interest with our expertise. At present nurses have a module in OH in the general training curriculum. Post basic education is only for doctors. Bernie commented that an EU commission paper should help support the implementation of OH. The RCN has a document "Occupational Health Nurse competences" which Bernie will send to the contacts in Romania any others who are interested.

Natalia wants to make a study about rail workers and the board discussed different assessment criteria for transport workers. Panayota has similar question about bus drivers. Varying levels of assessment take place in different countries and may include eye tests and psychological tests but some transport workers only need to have a valid driving licence. Pilots are assessed by psychiatrists.

Greece has legislation, the UK carry out yearly assessments. Natalia Scaiceanu welcomes any information on the subject. Send to pusol.scaiceanu@gmail.com

Portugal

Julie explained that Portugal are in a crisis situation and have no formal group at this moment in time. Margarida is still in contact and we support her efforts to re establish.

7. Twinning Project

FOHNEU partner	Twin	Result/Comments	Action
Belgium	Czech republic	No results after 4 years	Call for anyone who has a contact to come forward. Panayota will contact school of nursing and Eeva will help Belgium to continue efforts as soon as they have a representative
Denmark	Slovenia	Previous contact has changed profession	Julie to find a new contact
	Lithuania	Taken over from Portugal	
Finland	Estonia	Contact was made but recent communications are unanswered There are 30 OHNs	Eeva will go to Estonia and try to re-establish the contact and hopefully organise a board meeting there
France	Romania	Completed	Find contact
	Croatia	New project	
Germany	Not twinned	Had Latvia, given to the UK	
Greece	Cyprus	Currently no OHNs and only 3 OH physicians in employment	FOHNEU information still passed on to previous contact
	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	New project	Find contact
Hungary	Slovakia	New project taken over from Sweden	Find contact
Ireland	Hungary Turkey	Completed New Project	Find contact

Netherlands	Poland	No contact	Continue efforts
Portugal	Not twinned		
Romania	Not twinned	New member	
Spain	Bulgaria	No contact with any group but OHNs do exist	Spain's translator will try to help
Sweden	Not twinned		
UK	Malta	Established contact	Maintain
	Latvia	Contact made with NNA	Develop

Comments about the twinning project.

Julie asked that some countries now take on a second twin and that the twins of those members not able to take action at the present times should be taken over also

Julie established contact with Anne Raj of Poland, through the HOHNEU project and Jytte has also had telephone contact with her. Anne has difficulties with English but communication is possible via her daughter and it is the Netherlands that have this twin and contact responsibility.

If Romania wishes to join FOHNEU they can form a group and become formal members, to represent as yet the non existing OHNs in Romania. They would qualify for the minimum fee as the group has less than 50 which is 50€ per year. The Romanian representatives agreed.

8. Congress

The 5th FOHNEU congress was due to take place in 2010. However because of the time needed, 2 years to organise a congress, the date has been postponed until 2011. Members are to ask their associations for bids to be presented at the new board meeting.

9. ESNO⁹

For the benefit of those not present at previous meetings, Bernie explained ESNO and FOHNEUs involvement. The President is Pascal Rod, France.

ESNO is associative member of the EFN¹⁰.

Bernie is the nominated representative but is active from a distance to avoid travel expenses.

10. Malta Conference

Bernie represented FOHNEU at the **International Safety & Health Conference** which took place in April in Valetta, Malta.

The title was **Working Together in Safety and Health**.

Bernie spoke about FOHNEU and the HOHNEU project and had lots of interest. There was an OHN present who would like to be involved with FOHNEU and will hopefully attend the next board meeting which is being organised through MUMN¹¹. It is hoped that our presence will influence ministers into putting OH into practise.

11. FOHNEU Publications

⁹ European Specialist Nurses Organisation

¹⁰ European Federation of Nurses

¹¹ Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses

FOHNEU has to date published three journals. As the last one came out quite some time ago, the question of whether to produce another one has discussed at previous board meetings. As publication involves heavy costs, the executive officers suggested that instead we update the FOHNEU leaflet. Panayota suggests that we await the updated definition that she is working on and the board agreed. The board had a divided opinion whether an organisation can successfully rely on only electronic documentation or whether it was preferable to have some hard copy publications such as journals and leaflets.

12. Website

FOHNEU has not enough cash flow to update the web site. Some changes have recently been made and Bernie sends regular requests to the Oisín the webmaster in order to keep the information up to date. There is now a “News Box” on the front page. The research abstracts need up to date papers.

Action

All members were asked to find available research papers and evidence based practice in their respective countries. We will accept all languages as it's not always possible to translate. The abstracts should be in the required format as described on the website and sent to Panayota

We also need more sponsors. Some board members think that the state of the web site has a negative affect on securing sponsorship and Una has had feedback stating this.

13. HOHNEU

There were nine students in the first intake; seven from the UK, one from South Africa and one from Finland. This unique European Union qualification should be promoted in each country. No other professions have achieved this. The red banner will be put back on our web site for easy access.

There followed a discussion about credit transfers. Selection for the course is done by individual merit. The rights to the programme can be bought by a country and translated into their own language, using EU commission financing from the Leonardo project. The course fees are currently £3,500, approximately 4000€ and can be paid in yearly instalments. The course is not multidisciplinary as are many other Masters that are available to nurses. This is an EU project but has global applications. It incorporates EU legislation.

14. Internal Survey

Julie presented the preliminary results of the benchmarked survey, and asked that each country take the time to review their answers for a final review. We went through it and compared results from 2005 & 2009. Some questions are ambiguous and have been interpreted differently by members.

Until now the board decision was that the survey is strictly for internal use by FOHNEU representatives and must not be published elsewhere without permission. Julie informed the board that several OH Nurses and OHN Organisations have shown interest in this survey, and requested a debate on this at the next meeting.

(Appendix 14.1)

15. Constitution

The 5th aim of FOHNEU was omitted from the last edition. It will be added but as agreed by the board this is not an amendment and will still be the 4th edition.

Action

Sue will make the corrections and send out to members. The constitution will also be put on the website.

16. Working Groups

After a review of the input since the last board meeting it was again decided that the working groups need to be reorganised. The officers decided where to put members as to best use their skills.

Jytte has worked on her own successfully and will continue to do so as the EU Committees

Education & Research remains unchanged.

Money-makers

Una will team up with Eeva, Geert and Dominique.

The Ad Hoc Group contains the members who are at the moment inactive; Sweden, Cyprus Germany Portugal and Spain

Results of the working groups since the last board meeting.

EU Committees

Jytte presented work from her group since Bilbao. Jytte had to work alone as the other member from the UK, Jane, left.

(Appendix 16.1)

The board was given an explanation on the EU decision and legislation making process. The booklet handed out identifies all members of the EU Parliament, committees and commission.

A proposal by Jytte to put all the information into one document was agreed upon.

Education and Research Group

Panayota presented her work on the definition of Occupational Health Nursing.

(Appendix 16.2)

After all countries have reflected on this and given feedback to Panayota, she will present the definition at the next board meeting.

Survey on Occupational Health Nursing; Education and Practise in the EU.

The questionnaire needs updating. Panayota went through the old questionnaire where she has already made some changes. This is correlated to the core curriculum. We will be getting the questionnaire for comments only, not to be completed.

A proposal to merge elements from Julie's survey and Panayota's work into one project was agreed upon by the board.

Panayota presented the action plan of the group. (Appendix 16.3)

European Lobby Group

Marisol reported on the work that her group has done since the last meeting. The main objective is to find subjects relevant to Occupational Health to lobby. The group had started to study some subjects but then Bernie sent them a green paper which Marisol then followed up and drafted a response. The ER group and Bernie also gave input. This first exercise helped Marisol to establish a working method and further lobbying is now going on resulting in a second letter being sent about psychological risks. The next step is to follow up these first two lobbies. Julie commented on the good work done.

Money-makers

Una has been working alone and has had no results from efforts made to get sponsors. The financial down turn has had an effect. Now the reinforced group should be active and get input from different countries.

The working groups then went to work.

Spanish situation.

Spain was asked to clarify their situation as the one attending FOHNEU board member had left during Friday's meeting. (This discussion took place on Saturday). Isabelle stated that she had a mandate from Fernando to make decisions on his behalf.

AET the official association in Spain were represented at this meeting by Fernando and Isabelle. The FOHNEU board was informed by Gurutze in Copenhagen that she was no longer a member of AET.

AET sent a communication to FOHNEU during the Bilbao meeting but did not attend, claiming to have not received any communication from FOHNEU. The secretary confirmed that all communication had been sent to both representatives, Fernando Morato Ortiz and Alfredo de Andres, who was introduced as the second representative in Portugal. There has been no response or communication from either nor comments stating that there was a problem with emails not reaching their destination. From now on all communication will be sent to the AET email address and AET has the responsibility to query if problems arise. All FOHNEU representatives are aware that FOHNEU holds at least two board meetings a year and that they should receive all relevant documents accordingly.

FOHNEU is aware that another OHN Group is under development in Spain Gurutze Aguirre Alava, Teresa Gene Escoda and Esperanza Alonso Jimenez. This group has expressed their intention to seek FOHNEU membership and possibly attend the next board meeting as observers.

It is however essential that formal application and documents are sent to the FOHNEU President for presentation to the FOHNEU board.

Julie referred to the letter sent from FOHNEU to AET from the Bilbao meeting.

Although an unusual situation there is nothing in the FOHNEU Constitution to prevent two groups representing a Member State.

Situations involving voting procedures would require consensus as there is 1 vote per country. Julie expressed hope that a mutual agreement could be reached by the 2 groups as Spain is a very significant member country. In the unfortunate situation where no agreement can be obtained then as stated in the Constitution, the question of Spanish representation will be decided by the FOHNEU board.

17. Results of the Working Groups

European Lobby Group

Fiona presented the groups ideas.

Marisol had shown the group members how to find relevant papers the websites although at the moment there is nothing relevant to Occupational Health.

A letter on a mental health subject was drawn up to be sent by Julie. The group will find two papers to respond to before the end of the year.

Bernie asked for the groups to produce work plans with the following headings:

- Goal
- Method (s)
- Outcome
- Deadlines.

EU Committees

Jytte will modify the presentation and booklet using feedback and keep it up to date.

Money makers

The main objective is to keep established sponsors and to get new ones. The group is now made up of members from four different countries giving potential for bringing in sponsors from more EU wide area. The group will now continue an active search for potential sponsors.

Julie will send the FOHNEU leaflets to members in the group, and in particular to France where an Occupational Health Nursing conference is to be held next month.

Education and Research

Panayota went through the work plan of her group. (Appendix 17)

18. Finance report

Eeva explained difficulties in taking over as treasurer as she has not got all the relevant documentation from the previous treasurer. Receipts and bank statements are missing

The old bank may have archives. The missing documents are sporadic and not consecutive, making it difficult to understand but the result is that FOHNEU has incomplete financial records.

There was a suggestion that we have an internal checking of the books. This was agreed upon by the board and Geert and Panayota volunteered to do this. Regular cash flow is needed together with a goal for minimum balance.

Action

Eeva will make a plan.

Collecting sponsorship monies has also been a problem but with Bernie's efforts we have now recuperated the lost sums. Eeva is now in a good position to keep a follow up.

Eeva presented the report of the financial transactions 2008, 2009 and the budget. (Appendix 18.1)

Some items were unclear and will be checked.

It was noted that the Netherlands had not paid their fees this year.

Marisol explained a difficult situation with the treasurer in the Netherlands and apologised stating that they will pay now.

19. Elections of executive officers

There are no candidates for the two executive officers positions of Vice-President and Secretary. Henriett was interested in taking the Secretary's job but other unforeseen circumstances make it impossible for her to take up the post at this moment in time. Henriett explained that she cannot be absent from her 1 day study commitments which will end in June 2010.

Sue agreed to continue as secretary for one more board meeting.

Julie requested that Bernie be allowed to continue as Vice-President as FOHNEU cannot function effectively otherwise. She also asked that people consider taking on the executive posts in the future as the continuity of FOHNEU depends on it having active members who are willing to invest their time and energy.

Marisol stated that as her country had not established contact with Poland, she could ask her organisation to offer financial support to Hungary. Julie expressed concern that this would interfere with ongoing efforts in the twinning project towards Poland.

20. Any other business

Post meeting feedback from Romania.

The observers explained more of the situation in Romania and thanked FOHNEU for being invited to the board meeting. Now that they have the umbrella of FOHNEU they have evidence to report back to their association to make a start in Occupational Health Nursing. At the moment General Practitioners carry out health checks on workers but working conditions are generally not evaluated.

The FOHNEU board will attend the Romanian Nurses' congress this afternoon where Julie will speak.

Marisol suggested that instead of going through the national updates in detail at the board meeting, we read them up before hand and put questions.

Julie replied that this question had been discussed by the board many times and was the aim for good practice. It required that the updates are sent by the agreed deadline, one month prior to the board meeting. If nothing has changed in a countries status, this should be stated but it is not an option to not produce a report as this is a required action of all member associations. Time managed presentations have also been practised but as stated by some members, what is happening in each country is of great interest to the others and a key part of the board meeting.

Marisol would like to have more information to take back to her association and suggests a best practice presentation, for example, one from a country each time. Julie was in agreement with this as long as it is evidence based practise.

Action

"Best Practice" will be added to the update reports and the agenda.

21. Date and place of next meeting

The next board meeting will be held the 15th, 16th and 17th October 2009 in Valetta, Malta

The dead line for sending national updates to the secretary is agreed as the 15th September 2009.

22. Closing the meeting

The President thanked everyone for all the work done and closed the meeting on Saturday, 23rd May at 12:15pm.

Members staying in Bucharest over the weekend were asked to attend the Romanian Nurses' conference.