



EUROPEAN REGION

World Confederation  
for Physical Therapy

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**Report of the  
Education Matters  
Working Group of  
the ER-WCPT for  
the period  
2008 -2010  
to the General  
Meeting 2010**

ADOPTED at the  
General Meeting 27-29 May 2010  
Berlin, Germany

## **REPORT OF THE EDUCATION MATTERS WORKING GROUP OF THE ER- WCPT FOR THE PERIOD 2008-2010 TO THE GENERAL MEETING 2010**

### **European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) Education Matters WG**

#### **Introduction:**

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The main objectives of the Education Matters Working Group are to promote the quality of physiotherapy education in Europe and to contribute to facilitate the reciprocity of recognition of physiotherapy qualifications.

#### **Members of the Working Group appointed in June 2008:**

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- António Lopes, Chairman (*Executive Committee European Region of the WCPT*)
- Emil Igelsbock (Austria)
- Nina Holten (Denmark)
- Camilla Wikstrom (Finland)
- Sonia Souto (Spain)
- Charlotte Hager-Ross (Sweden)
- Grahame Pope (UK)

The General Secretary of the European Region of the WCPT, David Gorria, worked with the group and attended all the meetings.

#### **Terms of reference and activities**

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The terms of reference of the Working Group for the period of 2008 – 2010 were agreed at the general meeting 2008 as follows:

- Follow up the implementation of the European Physiotherapy Benchmark Statement. To renew the EPBS with emphasis on physiotherapy specific knowledge, skills and competence as well as on the independence of the profession and its knowledge development

- Updating of the Policy Statement on Physiotherapy Education since Education is evolving quickly due to the Bologna Process
- Continuation of the Project on Specialisation
- Address education issues for Member Organisations involved in the Enlargement process and cooperate with the EU Matters Working Group in Accession facilitating;  
Monitoring and reacting to issues as they arise from enlargement
- Identify information to be included on the website under the button of education relating to basic education, post basic education, and research
- Gather information on quality assurance measures in Physiotherapy education and monitor the involvement of the Member Organisations in quality assurance activities
- Follow up the activities on Continuous Professional Development within the Member Organisations, and continue to monitor developments in re-registration, re-certification in collaboration with the Professional Issues Working Group
- Monitor the developments in re-registration, re-certification in all the ER-WCPT countries, in collaboration with the Professional Issues WG
- Continue facilitating closer links and cooperation with ENPHE.
- Monitor and promote the use of Evidence Based Practice in Physiotherapy education at all levels (Life Long Learning) and support efforts to embed EBP in clinical practice
- Contribute to the completion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Congress on Physiotherapy Education
- Prepare the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Congress on Physiotherapy Education to take place in 2012.
- To complete the Pain in the back project and make recommendations for its implementation.
- Maintain Glossary of key terms of the ER-WCPT to reflect all the documents produced by the Region
- Identify issues related to research in Physiotherapy that might be addressed by the ER-WCPT
- To investigate the relationships between MO's, the education providers, and their practice providers/partners

## Meetings

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The Education Matters WG held four meetings over the period 2008 -2010:

- 24 – 25 October 2008, Wien, Austria.  
With apologies for absence from Charlotte Hager-Ross
- 27 – 28 February 2009, in Copenhagen, Denmark.  
With the presence of all members
- 4 – 5 September 2009, Wien, Austria.  
With apologies for absence from António Lopes
- 14 – 17 January 2010, in Estoril, Portugal.  
With the presence of all the members

## Activities for the period 2008 - 2010

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### Overview of “projects” and distribution of responsibilities

At the first meeting, in Wien, the Working Group discussed the nature and scope of the various projects and decided their distribution to the members of the group. For each project the appropriate goals and actions were identified.

Considering that some of the projects were interlinked and needed some coordination to avoid duplication of work, the various projects were grouped regarding their connections and leaders (underlined) were assigned to each of the groups:

#### Group A

- Follow up the implementation of the European Physiotherapy Benchmark Statement – Camilla Wikstrom, Grahame Pope and Sonia Souto
- To renew the EPBS with emphasis on physiotherapy specific knowledge, skills and competence as well as on the independence of the profession and its knowledge development –Camilla Wikstrom, Grahame Pope and Sonia Souto

- Updating of the Policy Statement on Physiotherapy Education since Education is evolving quickly due to the Bologna Process – Grahame Pope and Antonio Lopes
- Monitor education and research developments in Physiotherapy within the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area (EHEA/ERA) and their relationship to other world areas – Camilla Wikstrom and Antonio Lopes
- Identify issues related to research in Physiotherapy that might be addressed by the ER-WCPT / Formulate policy recommendations regarding the role of ER-WCPT in promoting and supporting physiotherapy research, research careers and development of the profession – Charlotte Hager-Ross, Grahame Pope and Antonio Lopes
- Gather information on quality assurance measures in Physiotherapy education and monitor the involvement of the Member Organisations in quality assurance activities – Grahame Pope, Charlotte Hager Ross and Camilla Wikstrom
- Monitor and promote the use of Evidence Based Practice in Physiotherapy education at all levels (Life Long Learning) and support efforts to embed EBP in clinical practice – collaborate with the PI WG. Charlotte Hager-Ross, Camilla Wikstrom, Sonia Souto and Grahame Pope
- To investigate the relationships between MO's, the education providers, and their practice providers/partners – Antonio Lopes, Nina Holten, Grahame Pope and Camilla Wikstrom

#### **Group B**

- Follow up the activities on Continuous Professional Development within the Member Organisations, and continue to monitor developments in re-registration, re-certification in collaboration with the Professional Issues Working Group
- Monitor the developments in re-registration, re-certification in all the ER-WCPT countries, in collaboration with the Professional Issues WG
- EQF and non formal and informal education validation
- Continuation of the Project on Specialisation  
– Nina Holten and Emil Igelsböck

### **Group C**

- Address education issues for Member Organisations involved in the Enlargement process and cooperate with the EU Matters Working Group in Accession facilitating;  
Monitoring and reacting to issues as they arise from enlargement – Antonio Lopes

### **Group D**

- Identify information to be included on the website under the button of education relating to basic education, post basic education, and research – Sonia Souto
- To create a button on the ER-WCPT website for the Education Congresses – Charlotte Hager Ross and Emil Igelsböck
- Maintain Glossary of key terms of the ER-WCPT to reflect all the documents produced by the Region – Sonia Souto

### **Group E**

- Common Platform and Internal Market Information (IMI) project – collaborate with the EU WG on Educational issues with implications for migration of PTs within Europe. (Activities / Delivery of services) – Antonio Lopes

### **Group F**

- Continue facilitating closer links and cooperation with ENPHE. – Antonio Lopes, Nina Holten, Grahame Pope and Camilla Wikstrom

### **Group G**

- Contribute to the completion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Congress on Physiotherapy Education – Nina Holten and Charlotte Hager Ross
- Prepare the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Congress on Physiotherapy Education to take place in 2012 – Emil Igelsböck

### **Group H**

- To complete the Pain in the back project and make recommendations for its implementation. – All WG members

### **Group I**

- To explore the possibility of a European Master programme - Education – All WG members

### **Main outcomes / achievements**

As many of the tasks have an ongoing nature, some historical notes have been included to facilitate the understanding of the continuity of the actions.

- Follow up the implementation of the European Physiotherapy Benchmark Statement
- To renew the EPBS with emphasis on physiotherapy specific knowledge, skills and competence as well as on the independence of the profession and its knowledge development

The European Physiotherapy Benchmark Statement (EPBS) was approved at a General Meeting in Barcelona (2003), with the agreement that its implementation should be monitored by the Education Working Group, and the issue should be kept under discussion at the following General Meetings.

A report on the implementation of the EPBS, based on a questionnaire sent to the MO's, was presented at the General Meeting in May of 2004 (Cyprus), and at the Congress on Physiotherapy Education in Estoril (November,2004) there were several opportunities to analyse the relevance of the document, at academic and political levels.

A new questionnaire, based on the previous one, was circulated to the MO's, and the correspondent report was prepared by the Working Group, and approved at the General Meeting of 2006 (Croatia).

The same questionnaire was circulated in 2007 and the correspondent report was prepared for discussion and approval at the General Meeting of 2008 (Greece)

During the period 2008 – 2010, the WG followed up which MOs were using the EPBS and how they were using it. In order to do that, the same questionnaire as in 2007 was used since it allowed comparison of results. 22 answers were received from the MOs to the questionnaire sent to them. Based on the answers a report has been prepared as a picture of the trends of the Member

Organisations compared with the results gathered by a questionnaire in 2004, 2006 and 2008 and containing also conclusions from the gathered information.

The WG also has made also three recommendations regarding the update of the EPBS as follows:

1. No further updating of the Benchmark Statement based on the following assumptions:
  - The EPBS was developed before the Bologna process and it would be difficult to align the document with the process. The EPBS does not have the same language use for the European Qualification Framework (EQF)
  - The EPBS does not show the Physiotherapy profession as a science health discipline
  - The EPBS is a dated document and does not have a vision about the future of the profession.
2. The Benchmark Statement should remain accessible and as a reference document aligned with more contemporary documents.
3. No further monitoring of the implementation of the Benchmark Statement.

- Updating of the Policy Statement on Physiotherapy Education since Education is evolving quickly due to the Bologna Process

Having in consideration the developments of the Bologna Process, adding areas not included such as research and the mentioned above references about the EPBS, the Working Group has prepared a reviewed version which have been circulated for comments among the MOs and its presented to the GM of 2010, for approval.

- Monitor education and research developments in Physiotherapy within the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area (EHEA/ERA) and their relationship to other world areas
- Identify issues related to research in Physiotherapy that might be addressed by the ER-WCPT / Formulate policy recommendations regarding the role of ER-WCPT in promoting and supporting physiotherapy research, research careers and development of the profession

The WG has started the development of a Policy recommendation regarding the role of the ER-WCPT in promoting and supporting physiotherapy research, research careers and development of the profession, and produced

a draft of the document, that needs further work and the consultation of relevant key informants.

It is proposed to continue this work in collaboration with the Professional Issues WG, in order to present a proposal at the 2012 GM.

- Gather information on quality assurance measures in Physiotherapy education and monitor the involvement of the Member Organisations in quality assurance activities

During the period 2008 – 2010, the WG in order to gather information on Quality Assurance measures in Physiotherapy Education and monitor the involvement of the Member Organisations in quality assurance activities, sent a questionnaire to the MOs. The same questionnaire as in 2007 was used since it allowed comparison of results. 18 answers were received from the MOs to the questionnaire sent to them. Based on the answers a report has been prepared and presented to the 2010 GM for approval with the some recommendations.

- Monitor and promote the use of Evidence Based Practice in Physiotherapy education at all levels (Life Long Learning) and support efforts to embed EBP in clinical practice – collaborate with the PI WG.

The information on the ER-WCPT website under the button named Evidence Based Physiotherapy has been updated.

- Follow up the activities on Continuous Professional Development within the Member Organisations, and continue to monitor developments in re-registration, re-certification in collaboration with the Professional Issues Working Group
- Monitor the developments in re-registration, re-certification in all the ER-WCPT countries, in collaboration with the Professional Issues WG
- EQF and non formal and informal education validation

In collaboration with the Professional Issues Working Group an updated/revision of the Informative Paper with recommendations on Continuous Professional Development has been prepared and circulated with the papers for the 2010 General Meeting.

- [Continuation of the Project on Specialisation](#)

In order to continue monitoring the situation in the Member Organisations, regarding the Specialisation for Physiotherapists and identifying the existing areas of specialisation within the countries, a reviewed questionnaire was sent to the MOs. The questionnaire and the recommendation on specialisation have been reviewed taking into consideration the national developments, re-education and health policies.

24 answers were received to the questionnaire. Based on them a report with recommendations is presented to the 2010 GM.

- [Identify information to be included on the website under the button of education relating to basic education, post basic education, and research](#)

The Education WG has continued keeping update the Education button on the ER-WCPT website, posting information for politicians, students, researchers, teachers, the press and public in general.

- [To create a button on the ER-WCPT website for the Education Congresses](#)

The Education WG has created a button on the ER-WCPT website for the Education Congresses. This button includes information from the two previous congresses (Estoril 2004 and Stockholm 2008), such as programme, participants, abstracts and presentations, and the latest news of the next one (Wien 2012).

- [Maintain Glossary of key terms of the ER-WCPT to reflect all the documents produced by the Region](#)

The WG has reviewed and updated the glossary of terms according to the following recommendations:

1. To cluster the terms to do a more user friendly version of the document.
2. To add references to the key definitions if appropriate.
3. A few changes about the format of the document.
4. Add some more terms and definitions.
5. A list of terms to be deleted.
6. The purpose of the regional glossary is to include the definitions needed for the regional documents. It is not a dictionary.

7. The WCPT is also developing a common glossary for use across all regions and the draft regional glossary has been aligned according to it.

- [Collect data from the Member Organisations regarding Information on Education](#)

The Education WG has worked with the General Secretary in order to elaborate and to update a database of information related to Physiotherapy education and specially about physiotherapy education entry level.

The WG has also prepared a report to identify the MO's that have implemented the recommendation adopted at the General Meeting in 2004, regarding the display in English, on the home page of the Member Organisations, of the relevant information about physiotherapy education.

A report was presented at the General Meeting 2006 (Croatia) and 2008 (Greece). A similar report has been prepared to be presented at the General Meeting 2010.

- [Continue facilitating closer links and cooperation with ENPHE.](#)

The cooperation with the European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education has been maintained, and the delegations of the two organisations have met in 2010, to plan further common activities.

- [Contribute to the completion of the 2nd European Congress on Physiotherapy Education](#)

- [Prepare the 3rd European Congress on Physiotherapy Education to take place in 2012](#)

The Working Group has been highly involved in the conception and organisation of the second congress (Stockholm, 2008) and as well in the Post Congress Seminar to evaluate the results and approve the main conclusions.

The second congress was considered a great success, and the conclusions approved at the Post Congress Seminar have already been circulated and posted on the ER-WCPT website.

The Working Group has given continuity to this work with the preparation of the third congress to be held in 2012 in Wien.

Together with the Chairman of the WG that will maintain the liaison with the Executive Committee of the European Region, Nina Holten, Emil Igelsböck and Charlotte Hager-Ross were appointed by the WG as the members responsible for this issue. Nina Holten and Emil Igelsböck have been working with the Organising Committee and Charlotte Hager-Ross with the Scientific Committee.

The Working Group held two meetings in Wien in order to facilitate the contact with the hosts, and offer an international advice.

- [To complete the Pain in the back project and make recommendations for its implementation](#)

The European Region of the World Confederation of Physical Therapy (ER-WCPT) presented the Project “Pain in the Back” - Avoiding back pain in children and teenagers” on 21 – 24 April 2009, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France.

The WG has agreed to refer this work on the Policy recommendations regarding the role of the ER-WCPT in promoting and supporting physiotherapy research, research careers and development of the profession

- [To explore the possibility of a European Master programme - Education](#)

Base on the conclusions from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Education Congress, the WG has evaluated this possibility and an information paper has been presented to the 2010 GM on this matter

### **Closing remarks**

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The Working Group has done the best efforts to address all the activities recommended by the General Meeting in 2008, and to follow the priorities decided by the Executive Committee.

Some of the activities are ongoing projects and will be proposed for continuity. But new ones have been identified and will be proposed to the General Meeting to be included for the next period of action.

As chairman of the group I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the members of the Working Group, and as well to the General Secretary, David Gorria, for their work, commitment and friendship, and stress my pleasure to work with this team.

António M. F. Lopes

Chairman of the Education Matters Working Group of the European Region of the WCPT