

## MBC NEWS

### **1<sup>st</sup> EUMEDIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DEAD SEA RESORT - JORDAN 17-18 APRIL, 2005**

#### **REPORT**

After four years of sustained EUMEDIS activities, the European Commission's EuropeAid Co-operation Office and the European Commission Delegations in Cairo and Amman organized the 1<sup>st</sup> EUMEDIS International Conference under the title of "Closing the Digital Gap in the Mediterranean Region" on 17-18 April 2005, in the Dead Sea Resort - Jordan. The conference gathered representatives of all 22 Pilot Projects that have been operational involving more than 400 partner institutions from 23 countries and territories. This conference provided the opportunity to discuss the dissemination of project results as well as to exchange experiences and results. Invited prominent speakers and local and international policy makers helped to stress the importance of the EUMEDIS program as well as of all pilot projects. A presentation by Mr I. Serageldin, Director of Alexandria Library, Egypt, under the title of "Inter-cultural Dialogue around the Mediterranean Sea" was particularly interesting as he emphasized the historic, cultural, economic, and political bonds among all Mediterranean people and societies.

Special workshops about the five major groups of interest of the EUMEDIS initiative, namely, tourism and culture, e-commerce and industry, health, education, and interactive communication technology (ICT), were organized. The health workshop was moderated by Dr Giorgio Macor from the EUMEDIS MDP team, Italy. This workshop grouped together with BURNET, representatives of EMPHIS, EMISPHER, PARADIGMA, and EUMED CANCER. EMPHIS project concentrated on three categories of infectious diseases namely, leishmaniasis, tuberculosis, and nosocomial infections. Of particular interest was the utilization of satellite positioning systems for epidemiologic survey of leishmaniasis in Jordan. EMISPHER is a satellite platform extending access to e-learning which will eventually result in the development of a virtual university for exchange of high-level medical knowledge. PARADIGMA concentrates on four areas: prophylaxis of thromboembolism and monitoring of anticoagulant treatment, infant death reduction, colorectal cancer, and evaluation of intensive care. EUMED CANCER aims at the creation of a network leading to advanced professional education in genetic medicine and tumour prevention. The BURNET project was presented by Dr Alessandro Masellis detailing its various phases and presenting the web system already developed.

The discussion that followed the presentation of the five projects centred mainly on the need for a second phase EUMEDIS sup-

port to secure continuity: otherwise all efforts may be wasted and the projects stopped. Dr Macor was clear in his reply, stating that most probably there will be no more second-phase financial support for the projects and that each project should find its own means for continuity. It was clear that, with the exception of BURNET, all other projects will come to an abrupt end without continued support and that the bond created among the partners was not strong enough to keep the group working together. Some projects are even self-centred with major activities concentrated within one centre and some partners have a marginal participation and importance. All the other four groups were formed by the EUMEDIS initiative. BURNET, on the other hand, is driven by an already compact and structured organization, the Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters - MBC, which will not be affected by the interruption of financial support. Whatever funds were provided by EUMEDIS were judiciously spent to develop the BURNET network and acquire the technological kits. From now on, continuity of the project can be guaranteed. Unlike other projects, continued communication among partners with equal participation and importance is secured, as all are members of MBC. Data collection, telemedicine consultations, continued education, and promotion of high-level burn care will continue to be provided by all partners, even voluntarily, as these activities are the essence of what MBC is all about. Funds, however, may still be required to maintain the network. Continued cohesiveness of the working partners as well as the full support of MBC as a recognized organization will be major factors to secure in the future these necessary funds from other sources than EUMEDIS. It is worth mentioning also that only BURNET has received demands from new partners to join even after it has been established.

Despite the delay in the BURNET project, fully justified by the lengthy discussions with the commission about the futility of the mirror equipment, Dr Macor highly appreciated the efforts made by the BURNET group and, as I understood from my later meeting with him, he values very much what has already been achieved and is confident that, unlike other projects, BURNET will continue to function and develop even after the unfortunate interruption of the EUMEDIS initiative.

Prepared by  
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Secretary General, MBC



# Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters (MBC)

WHO Collaborating Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Burns and Fire Disasters



## Membership Application

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1<sup>st</sup> MBC Member referec \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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**Annual fee:** U.S. \$ 10 or Euro 11 **Several years' fees:** U.S. \$ 10 or Euro 11 per year

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Return form to:

Secretary of Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters (MBC) c/o Divisione di Chirurgia Plastica e Terapia delle Ustioni - Azienda di Rilievo Nazionale e di Alta Specializzazione - Via C. Lazzaro 90127 Palermo - Italy - Tel. 39-091 666 36 31 - Fax 39-091 59 64 04 - E-mail: [mbcpa@medfbc.com](mailto:mbcpa@medfbc.com)