The Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters (MBC) held its biennial meeting this year in Casablanca. This was its 14th congress, in collaboration with the Association Marocaine de Brûlologie (AMB) and the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine (IAHM), under the patronage of the Pan-Arab Association for Burns and Plastic Surgery (PABPS).

The congress was organized by Professor Hassan Boukind, head of the important new “Moroccan Centre National des Brûlés”, with the help of Professor Naïma Bahechar (Casablanca) and Professor Samir Siah (Rabat).

It was the first meeting of the youthful Association Marocaine de Brûlologie, which was created early this year under the presidency of Professor Ihraï, Colonel of the Military Health Services (Rabat), and of which Hassan Boukind is Secretary.

This was a high-level scientific meeting, with perfectly planned welcome and technical facilities which delighted the numerous participants from abroad, who came as always from the Mediterranean periphery and also from even more distant countries, such as Romania and Turkey. Compliments to Saad Lahbadi for all his efforts.

The congress venue, the Royal Mansour Hotel, which welcomed the participants, was extremely pleasant and comfortable and situated in the very centre of Casablanca.

The scientific programme arranged by our friend Hassan had had some difficulties in getting under way and had, it is true, given us some anxious moments, but we were soon reassured. The programme was a very full one, as befitted the spacious conference hall, which accommodated over 200 participants and was perfectly equipped for projection; all went without a hitch.

The congress opened with three conferences: one on humanitarian medicine and burn disasters (Professor Gunn, Honorary President of the MBC), then on organization of burn rescue and first aid in mass disasters (Professor Masellis, President of the MBC), and lastly on personal experience of treatment of burn sequelae in children in Saigon, Vietnam (Professor Michel Costagliola).

The inaugural session was placed under the aegis of the Ministers of Health and of Energy and Mining; from the very first session, considerable importance was in fact given to the theme of hydrocarbons and fire disasters (regulation of the use of LPG, safety and storage of hydrocarbons, the dangers of butane gas bottles).

The presentations were all of high quality and it is difficult to cite them all.

Our Romanian friends (Professors Lascar, Enescu, and Florescu) gave a very interesting presentation on the current state of paediatric plastic surgery, especially burns surgery, in Bucharest.

Professor Kaid-Slimane (Algeria) emphasized the two scourges of Algeria: accidents due to butane gas and electricity. This was a moving and vibrant plea for prevention of these accidents, which exact a heavy tribute, mainly from children. The subject of electrical burns was also addressed by various Moroccan, Greek, and also Albanian speakers (Professor Belba).

An entire session was devoted to infection in the burns patient, with interesting presentations by Professor Deveci of Turkey and Professor Siah of Rabat, and by Dr Messadi of Tunis on antibiotic resistance.

We also noted and appreciated a presentation on rehabilitation, orthotics and prosthetics in the burns patient by Dr Boumahdi (Rabat).

Our friend Hamza Essadam (Tunis) described the interesting “rail plasty” in burn sequelae.

Also noteworthy were the very practical presentations of our Portuguese colleagues, Drs Serafim and Costa, on summer camps for burned children and the value of functional rehabilitation.

The place of skin cultures in the treatment of severely burned patients and the organization of a skin bank were described with remarkable clarity and precision by Dr Aurélie Hautier (Department of Professor Magalon, Marseilles).

“Cutting edge” papers on the cytokine, interleukin, and other growth factors were presented by the Italian team (Dr Conte, Palermo).

They were closely followed by the French team with Dr Stephanazzi (Hôpital Cochin, Paris) on volume replacement and on anaesthesia in severely burned patients, while Jacques Latarjet, President of the Société Française des Brûlures, gave us an update on nutrition in these patients.

We particularly appreciated the remarkable presentation by Dr Yves Lambert on inhalation injury of the lungs (SAMU, Versailles).

The Moroccan team (N. Bahechar, H. Boukind) gave an overview on sequelae of trunk burns and the Rabat team (Professor Belmahi)
reminded us of the value of the posterior interosseous flap in the treatment of post-burn hand contractures.

We must also mention the contributions of our Greek friends (Professor Tsoutsos), always excellent, on electrical burns which are also a calamity in Greece, and on the role of the cardiovascular factor in the prognosis of severe burns.

A full session on resuscitation was, in the opinion of the specialists, perfectly argued and led to fruitful debate between our Greek, Moroccan, Turkish, and Nigerian colleagues.

Lastly, a session on dyschromias and prevention of sun damage was attentively followed (Professor Leguyade, Hôpital Percy, Paris, and Dr Yvon Gauthier, Bordeaux).

To conclude, Professor Kadry (Cairo), Professor Chani (Rabat), and Georgia Koulemrou (Cyprus) each described the organization of burns treatment and prevention in their countries, while Professors Boukind and Siah (Morocco) shared with us their experience of the organization of a national programme for the management of burns patients in Morocco.

We must also emphasize the excellence of the repasts offered by Shell (Morocco) and the “Office National d’Electricité”, and lastly the quality of the gala dinner on the boulevard de la Corniche, when we were able to relax completely and sometimes even to dance to oriental music (thanks once more to Hassan and Saad).

The scientific sessions were highly concentrated and did not allow us to escape often. Nevertheless, we were able to rediscover the charm of the Medina and the beauty of the Hassan II Mosque, whose minaret is the highest in the world (210 m). Built on water, it is impressive in its proportions, covering an area of 12 hectares. It is constructed in the Arab-Andalusian tradition, a jewel of Moroccan craftsmanship with its polychromatic woodwork in geometric designs, the remarkable cedar and beech-wood cupola of the prayer room, and the carved travertine stone and inlaid mosaics of the façades.

Of course Casablanca also came to mind, the legendary film of 1942, and the undying memory of Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. The organizers had had the attractive idea of using this as a delicate filigree background to the first page of the programme.

We will keep excellent memories of this meeting, guided as always by the principles of friendship and tolerance, and of this city which is both modern and traditional. Once again, we are happy to compliment Hassan Boukind and his team.

P.S. Prior to the congress, the participants in the Burnet Project held a working meeting to review the situation and progress of the work of the various partners.

M. Costagliola

President’s Report 2004 – 2006

I am very pleased to open the proceedings of this General Assembly of the Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters, which is being held on the occasion of the Fourteenth Meeting, and I welcome everyone present.

Before starting the proceedings, please allow me to extend the warmest of wishes to William Gunn, who guided the MBC for over twenty years and is still today a point of reference in our never simple action of managing the MBC.

In the last two-year period, the MBC’s activity has developed yet further, not only because all the objectives that our constitution prescribes have been achieved but also because the international programmes initiated in previous years have been brought to a satisfying conclusion and new initiatives have been undertaken.

In this Report I will limit myself to an outline of the activities I have just mentioned and I will make a few personal reflections, leaving to our very active General Secretary the task of going into detail.

World Health Organization

In March 2005 the World Health Organization confirmed the designation of the MBC as “WHO Collaborating Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Burns and Fire Disasters” for the coming period of four years.

This confirmation certainly reflects WHO’s appreciation for the work done in the previous four-year period.

MBC’s activity as a Collaborating Centre has been developed along lines aiming:

- to prepare tests and to implement means and methodologies of health education for the prevention of burns and the reduction of fire disasters: production of videos, CD ROM, pamphlets, television spots, prevention courses, etc.;
- to train burns specialists and to collaborate with fire-fighting authorities for the improvement of burns therapy and humanitarian response in fire disasters: scholarships, instructional courses, collaboration with the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine (IAHM);
- to collaborate with industries and National Civil Defence Departments for the prevention and mitigation of industrial fires, explosions, and toxic accidents for the protection of health and the prevention of industrial and tunnel fire disasters: realization in coll. with the Italian Civil Defence Department of a CD ROM on “Medical First Aid in industrial disasters”, and participation as partner in the UPTUN Project;
- to organize and implement research on potential surgery for newly independent states and developing countries: organization in coll. with IAHM of the international symposia and meetings;
- to prepare, in collaboration with the European Union and the Council of Europe, computerized teaching hypertexts material and telemedical technology for disaster learning and distant management in disasters: see coll. with CEMEC and realization BURNET Project of EU MEDIS Programme;
- to assist WHO by acting as a Coordinating Point for the WHO Collaborating Centres for Emergency Humanitarian Action: Mr. Alessandro Loretti, of the Department of Emergency and Humanitarian Action of WHO, was a speaker at the IAHM-Pugwash Interorganizational Conference on “Current Problems of Health and Society” organized with the participation of the MBC. MBC would like to propose to organize the next Meeting of WHO Collaborating Centres for Emergency Humanitarian Action.
- to implement other terms and programmes of WHO: Annals for Burns and Fire Disasters carries “The WHO Page”, a regular feature that provides international health information to readers who would not otherwise have access.

United Nations

The Economic and Social Council, at its Organizational Session of May 2001, decided to grant Special Consultative Status to the Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters—WHO Collaborating Centre. The MBC designated official representatives to the
United Nations at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and the United Nations offices in Geneva and Vienna. The regular presence of the MBC implemented effectively and fruitfully the provision for this consultative relationship. The MBC is the only professional organization concerned with burns and fire disasters in the world with such a UN accreditation and its activity is much appreciated; Mrs. Hanifa Mezoui, Chief NGO Division, UN Economic and Social Council, participated as a speaker in the IAHM-Pugwash Interorganizational Conference on “Current Problems of Health and Society”, held in Palermo in October 2005.

The MBC is also an institutional member of ACUNS – the Academic Council on the United Nations System.

European Union

In 2001 the MBC was the winner of the prestigious BURNET Project, announced and 80% financed by the European Commission in the framework of the vaster EUMEDIS Programme.

This Project, now in the concluding stages, will make available an operative instrument that can be used by all burns centres in countries belonging to the MBC in order to develop, in a more exhaustive and coordinated manner, the activity of collaboration in the sectors of prevention, treatment, the functional and psychological recovery of burn patients, and the management of fire disasters. The seventeen countries stipulated in the original announcement that set the Project into motion in 2002 may now be joined by other MBC Member Countries not initially included (Libya, Portugal, Albania, Croatia, Slovenia, Republic of San Marino), plus three other non-MBC Members (Palestine, Austria, Romania) that have applied to join.

I firmly believe that the fulfilment of this Project has placed the MBC in a prestigious position in the sector of this specialization. At this point in time no other international professional societies appear to possess a similar instrument of connection and coordination of their institutional activities.

International Association for Humanitarian Medicine

Brock Chisholm (IAHM)

The ties of collaboration between the MBC and the IAHM are based on a common set of ideals, i.e. a strictly humanitarian vision of medicine intended not as an act of pity towards people who are suffering but as the “duty to help those who have the right to ask”. More concretely this means: respect for human dignity according to the principles of the World Health Organization.

These ties have been strengthened by the organization of various meetings with close collaboration between the two societies and by the active participation of the MBC in congresses organized by the IAHM, and vice versa. In October 2005 in Palermo, the IAHM and Pugwash Conference, with the participation of the MBC, organized the IAHM-Pugwash Interorganizational Conference on “Current Problems of Health and Society - The Right to Ask, the Duty to Help and the Resurgence of Nuclear Violence” and in November 2005 in Beirut our General Secretary Bishara Atiyeh, in collaboration with the IAHM, organized the “Basil Fuleiham Seminar for Burns”.

Also this Fourteenth Meeting of MBC sees the active participation of the IAHM.

The Journal of Humanitarian Medicine has the Honorary President and the current President of the MBC as its editors and is published as a supplement to Annals of Burns and Fire Disasters.

International Federation of Surgical Colleges

The MBC has been a specialty member of this prestigious federation since 1992. Each year the MBC provides one IFSC/MBC scholarship to a deserving young surgeon. The MBC has twice hosted the IFSC Executive at its headquarters in Palermo. The Honorary President of the MBC is Secretary General of the IFSC.

Whitaker Foundation

Though a completely separate organization/foundation, the Whitaker Foundation has close ties with the MBC. It celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in 1998 and the MBC, as always, takes part in the prize-giving of the International G. Whitaker International Burns Prize. The winners of this important award were present and lectured at the Second International Conference on Burns and Fire Disasters. In 2005 the Prize was awarded to Prof. Michel Costagliola, Chairman of Coordination of Scientific Activities Committee of the MBC, on the occasion of the IAHM-Pugwash Interorganizational Conference.

Pan-Arab Society of Plastic Surgery, Reconstructive and Burn Surgeons

The collaboration between MBC and PABPS continues to be active. Many members of MBC are members of PABPS and often are invited to participate in seminars, meetings and courses respectively organized. The PABPS gave its special endorsement to our 14th Meeting.

Other International Relations

Since 1970 the MBC has collaborated with CEMEC-Centre Européen pour la Médecine des Catastrophes, based in the Republic of San Marino. The MBC has participated in the organization of training courses on burns disaster management. The Honorary President and the President of the MBC are on the CEMEC Scientific Committee.

The MBC has maintained a relationship of collaboration with the Department of Italian Civil Protection and with the National Group for Defence from Chemical, Industrial, and Ecological Risks of the Italian National Research Council. In 2005, on behalf of these organisms, the MBC produced (in Italian) a “Teach yourself multimedia module of information and training in the management of primary health action in industrial fire disasters”. This instrument will be translated into English and will be available to all those who apply for it.

The MBC was a partner in the UPTUN Project (Cost-Effective, Sustainable and Innovative Upgrading Methods for Fire Safety in Existing Tunnels) financed by the European Community in the framework of the European Programme “Competitive and Sustainable Growth – GROWTH 2001”, developing the topic “Human Response”. This Project terminated in 2006. The material produced will also soon be available.

In 2005 the Italian Society of Burns applied to become an Associated Society of the MBC.

In November 2005 the MBC was officially invited to participate in the International Symposium on “Actual concepts in burns treatment” organized by the Romanian Association of Plastic Surgeons. The RAPS has applied to become an Associated Society of the MBC.

On 25 February 2006 the President of the MBC was invited by the Hellenic Society of Plastic Surgery to participate in a postgraduate seminar in plastic surgery on “Modern trends in the surgical treatment of burns”.

In 2006 the MBC established links with the Jordanian Society of Plastic Surgery and on 30 March 2006, in Amman, it organized an “MBC Instructional Course on Burns” in collaboration...
Publications

Annals of Burns and Fire Disasters, the MBC’s official organ, is now in its nineteenth year of publication, appearing regularly as a quarterly with an average run of over 3000 copies per issue. Annals includes “The WHO and UN pages”, an instrument of dissemination of important information regarding these two international organisms, as well as the Journal of Humanitarian Medicine, the only journal in the sector and now in its sixth year of publication, having reached vol. VI, no. 1.

March 2006 saw the publication of vol. XIX, no. 1, of Annals. As the Editorial Board has a large number of articles to publish, some years ago it set up a specific session called “Medit Line” in the site www.medbc.com, presenting the articles in their entirety, pending publication in Annals.

For years now, the site www.medbc.com/annals has made it possible to read, free of charge, all articles published in Annals.

The publication free of charge of Annals of Burns and Fire Disasters has provided all Members of the MBC with an instrument with which they have been able to make their voice heard and thus enter the field of international science.

The complete collection of Annals of Burns and Fire Disasters is present in the Alexandrine Library in Alexandria (Egypt) and is continually updated.

Finances

Thanks to the particular wisdom of the Parliament of the Sicilian Region, which appreciates programmes of close collaboration on the cultural, scientific, and cooperation level between countries in the Mediterranean area, united by ancient bonds of friendship and civilization, the MBC has since the year 1985 enjoyed financial support decreed by Act of Parliament. It is with these funds that the MBC, every year, makes available to young doctors and nurses from Member countries ten scholarships to enable them to attend Centres of Plastic Surgery and Burns Therapy with the intention not only of helping them to further their technical and scientific training but also of strengthening the ties of friendship between single countries and peoples, which is a fundamental instrument of reciprocal understanding and respect.

The same funds have been used to develop the campaign to arouse public awareness to burns prevention and to organize the numerous training seminars.

The work developed by the MBC in these last years has been considerable and the prestige acquired by our Association has notably risen, as confirmed by the various recognitions obtained: WHO Collaborating Centre, NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC of the United Nations, and last but not least the assignment of the BURNET Project by the European Community.

I firmly believe that with everyone’s participation the MBC will be able to attain yet more achievements. And for that, I thank you in advance.

Respectfully submitted

Michele Masellis
President

General Secretary’s Report 2004 – 2006

Since the last meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus, October 2004, during which a new Executive Committee was elected, progress in all areas of interest related to prevention and public education, disaster and emergency, cultural exchange, promotion, study and research, promotion of cooperation, and dissemination of MBC activities continued to be pursued. New projects have been implemented as well.

1) Cooperation with International Association for Humanitarian Medicine – Brock Chisholm – IAHM

Cooperation with IAHM is a major priority for MBC particularly since MBC has been appointed as a WHO Collaborating Centre. Journal of Humanitarian Medicine is being published as an integral part of Annals of Burns and Fire Disasters. MBC was also invited to actively participate in the Inter-organizational Conference on Current Problems of Health and Society organized by the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine Brock Chisholm and Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs in Palermo, Italy, October 7-8, 2005. Plans for establishment of a conjoined MBC-IAHM trust fund for humanitarian field action are being investigated.

2) Public education and prevention

A major effort has been exerted in this domain. An information and prevention campaign addressed to the public was organized with the help of the leading television station in Lebanon. TV burn awareness and prevention advertisement spots have been produced and broadcast for one month both on local and satellite channels. We were also allowed prime time television appearances to talk about burn prevention and treatment on a live morning talk show for five consecutive days.

A new pamphlet in Arabic has also been printed with the support of a major pharmaceutical company and distributed at a special MBC stand set at the International Beirut Marathon Village which coincided with the Instructional Seminar organized in Beirut in November 2005. In this stand, 2000 pamphlets were distributed by volunteers from the American University of Beirut (nurses and medical students). This community service was highly appreciated and yielded several invitations by schools and various organizations to hold special meetings about burn prevention and treatment in their respective premises. For maximum benefit, the pamphlet has been made freely available on the BURNET web site.

3) Cultural promotion, study and research

a) BASIL FULEIHAN SEMINAR FOR BURNS Beirut – "STATE OF THE ART IN BURN TREATMENT", Lebanon Nov. 11-12, 2005
This is one of the main fields of interest of MBC. The “BASIL FULEIHAN SEMINAR FOR BURNS – STATE OF THE ART IN BURN TREATMENT” was held in Beirut, Lebanon on November 11-12, 2005. The seminar was conjointly organized by the Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters – MBC, the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine – IAHM, and the Lebanese Society of Plastic, Reconstructive, and Aesthetic Surgery – LSPRAS. The seminar faculty was composed of prominent world renowned specialists. More than 500 participants attended the scientific sessions practically overwhelming the local organizational capacities. Participants were from Italy, France, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, UK, Turkey, Germany, Cyprus, USA, Australia, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, UAE, Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Afghanistan, Kenya, South Africa, and Lebanon. A special Civil Defence session was also included in the seminar program and was attended by a large number of civil defence and fire brigade personnel. Civil defence officials from Saudi Arabia and Lebanon addressed the audience presenting the Lebanese and Saudi experience in that domain. To gain maximum benefit of this seminar, all lectures were video-taped. A DVD has been produced and is available on request. PDF files of slide presentations were also produced and uploaded on the BURNET web site. These files could be used freely for educational purposes and are available for inspection at www.burnet.org. Interactive Section.

b) MBC ITINERARY INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE

An MBC Itinerary Course has also been set. The Course is offered upon request by National Societies, Organizations, Schools and Universities. It may be held separately or integrated in the program of a wider scientific meeting. The course may be also offered during special events organized by pharmaceutical companies provided the course contents are not altered in any way, with full understanding that MBC does not endorse any parallel promotional presentations. The course faculty is composed of 4 visiting professors appointed by MBC in addition to 2 local professors chosen by the host provided they abide by the presentation topics assigned to them by MBC. The hosts will cover travel and accommodation expenses. Under certain conditions, some expenses may be covered by MBC.

The first such course was organized in Amman, Jordan, on March 30, 2006 with the participation of the Jordanian Society of Plastic Surgery and funding from Gulf Pharmaceutical Industries.

Plans for future probable courses in India (January 2007) and in Qatar (April 2007) are at present in progress.

4) Cultural exchange and cooperation

a) SCHOLARSHIPS

Cultural exchange between member countries has been continued. The Council’s Scholarships were again awarded in 2005 to physicians and nurses to enable them to attend Burn Centres and Plastic Surgery Departments in the various countries of the Mediterranean area for a period of 1 month. Scholarships were awarded to the following physicians and nurses.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED YEAR 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICIANS</th>
<th>NURSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAYRAM YALCIN</td>
<td>COLUCCI VILMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANKARA</td>
<td>BRINDISI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSAGARAKIS MYRONA</td>
<td>TUZI SILVANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHENS</td>
<td>TIRANA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOYAJIAN ARTOUR</td>
<td>FRASCONA’ M.GRAZIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEPPO</td>
<td>PALERMO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMEO GIANFRANCO</td>
<td>ERARIO GABRIELLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>TORINO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAMAL OSMAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSIUT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFANDI OUBEID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALEPPO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM “ACTUAL CONCEPTS IN BURNS TREATMENT” 25-27 NOVEMBER 2005, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

Cultural exchange has also been extended beyond the Member countries. The Romanian Association of Plastic Surgeons officially invited the Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters – MBC to actively participate in the International Symposium “Actual Concepts in Burns Treatment” in Bucharest on 25-27 November 2005. Honoring this invitation were Prof. M. Masellis, MBC President, Prof. B. Atiyeh, MBC General Secretary, and Prof. M. Costagliola, MBC Scientific Coordinator, joined by Prof. N. Le Floch from Nantes, France, in place of Prof. J. Latarjet who could not attend because of personal reasons. Lectures by the 4 guest speakers were given during the morning sessions on November 25 and 26. The afternoon sessions were reserved to presentations by local burn surgeons and physicians. All presentations and discussions were extremely appreciated and were of high quality. All through the proceedings of this meeting, it was evident that the numerous local Romanian participants and all attendants had great expectations from this Symposium, demonstrating an enormous desire to catch up with the progress made in burn management over the years during which Romania and its people were held isolated and were prevented from having any meaningful contacts with the rest of the world. Prof. I Lascor, President of the Romanian Association of Plastic Surgeons - RAPS, expressed openmindedly a real determination to embark on a new endeavour of fruitful cooperation with MBC by making RAPS an Associated Member of MBC. The Romanian hosts were also grateful to the offer made for them to benefit from the BURNET project and to gain access to the Annals of Burns and Fire Disasters web site.

A tour of the Paediatric and Adult Burn Centres was organized to the MBC visiting professors. The newly built facilities of the paediatric centre “Emergency Children Hospital, Grigore Alexandrescu” were highly valued noting the enormous efforts and sincere dedication to burn management of Prof. D.M. Enescu, head of this unit. On the other hand, despite the precarious conditions and outdated facilities of the Adult Burn Centre and Plastic Surgery Department headed by Dr A. Botan, we were impressed by Dr. Botan’s optimism and courage as well as the dedication of all his team and their determination to overcome what seemed to us unsurmountable obstacles and desperately poor working conditions.

The general impression we had from this symposium and tour of the burn centres in Bucharest is that of great content and satisfaction. Our Romanian colleagues have asked for MBC’s help with their coming conference on October 15, 2006. We were impressed by Dr. Botan’s optimism and courage as well as the dedication of all his team and their determination to overcome what seemed to us unsurmountable obstacles and desperately poor working conditions.

In order to encourage the MBC visiting professors to report back to their MBC colleagues and societies, it was decided to organize a special scientific evening at the Romanian Academy in Bucharest.

A special evening was held at the Romanian Academy to bring together the MBC visiting professors, the Romanian Association of Plastic Surgeons – RAPS, the Romanian Ministry of Health, and other interested authorities.

The speaker of the evening was Dr. Botan, who was grateful to MBC for the opportunity of visiting his country and his team.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the experience gained at the Symposium in Bucharest will be a catalyst for MBC to actively promote and support the development of burns care in Romania. Additionally, the visit to Bucharest was an opportunity to deepen the ties between MBC and the Romanian Association of Plastic Surgeons – RAPS, and to extend the MBC presence in Romania and the Greek speaking countries, setting the stage for future cultural and scientific exchanges.
this course was composed of Dr M. Masellis, Dr B. Atiyeh, Dr M. Costagliola, Dr. M. Benyamina, Dr. M. Jarar, and Dr. A.S. Abul Failat. Invited speakers were Dr. R. Dham, Dr. M. Batainah, Dr. Kh. Haddadin, and Dr. B. Salah. 55 participants attended this course. Lectures were followed by fruitful discussions demonstrating the interest of the participants in the topics discussed.

Presentations given in this course were converted to the PDF format and posted in the Burnet web site. Moreover, the presentations were also included in a special CD that was distributed to medical and paramedical personnel interested in Burn Prevention and Treatment in Jordan.

The course was fully funded by Gulf Pharmaceutical Industries. It was attended by participants from the 2 major burn centres in the country with active involvement of the military health services. The feedback comments about this course were extremely positive. In fact it has stimulated the local physicians to start a campaign of awareness by the distribution of special educational leaflets. It is worth noting that the Jordanians have utilized the same material of the leaflet printed in Beirut and posted on the Burnet Web site.

5) BURNET

BURNET has been a major MBC project for the last few years and has demanded a lot of efforts and recourses. The project is supposed to be completed in June 2006. Recently, contents of the Interactive Section have been increased by including several articles and presentations.

MBC was officially invited to attend the 1st Eumedis International Conference in Jordan. 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 1st 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. The 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.

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. 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 5 projects centred mainly on the need for a second phase EUMEDIS support 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 other 4 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 technologic 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 EU-MEDIS. It is worth mentioning also that only BURNET has received demands from new partners to join even after it has been established.

6) Dissemination of MBC’s activities

Annals of Burns and Fire Disasters, the official organ of MBC remains the main tool to disseminate MBC activities and publish increasingly valuable work in the field of burn prevention and treatment. The BURNET web site at present is strengthening this dissemination by making information and education material available to a wider audience. Most presentations of the Beirut Symposium and the Amman Course have been posted in the PDF format on the Burnet Web site / interactive section / documents repository.

7) Editing of Instructional CDs

PDF format of presentations given in Amman on March 30, 2006, was included in a special CD produced with full financial support of Gulf Pharmaceutical Industries, and distributed to medical and paramedical personnel interested in Burn Prevention and Treatment in Jordan.

The CD Rom produced by MBC some years ago will be updated. A special faculty for that regard will be formed.

8) Future MBC activities

Completion of the BURNET project remains a major goal. Future Itinerary MBC courses are being contemplated. Special effort to extend MBC activities beyond the Member countries is being exerted.

Of special concern is the establishment of a GULF MEDITERANEAN HUMANITARIAN FUND. This fund will invariably open new horizons to MBC field action and strengthen its association with IAHM.

Efforts are being made also to establish a sustainable and durable relationship between MBC and pharmaceutical companies to assure their continual support to MBC activities.

Future Instructional Courses similar to the one held in Amman will be organized. Potential hosting countries and pharmaceutical companies will be contacted for support. Some courses may even be integrated within the wider spectrum of Humanitarian Medicine in collaboration with IAHM. A course will be organized in Muscat, Oman, on 21-22, February, 2007.

Casablanca, May 19, 2006

Bishara Atyieh, MD
General Secretary, MBC
Minutes of General Assembly

Meeting convened at 7:00 PM to discuss items of the Agenda as distributed before the meeting

Prof. Maselli presented the President’s report

Prof. Atiyeh presented the General Secretary’s report

Dr Costa presented the final balance and the budget for the coming year

All approved unanimously without any modification or objection

Portugal, Austria, Palestine and Libya invited to join the Burnet Project and benefit from the web site already organized

Athens as venue for the 15th MBC meeting approved unanimously after withdrawal of Malta due to anticipated financial difficulties and small local attendance opting for a lesser scale Burn Course to be organized in 2007 directed towards information and teaching of nurses and paramedical personnel

Reports of National Representatives

Lebanon (G. Ghanime): activities of MBC and Burnet overlapped over the last 2 years. Prevention Brochures were printed and distributed, TV prevention campaign and special civil defence orientation session organized. Schools have been contacted for future educational sessions for children of all ages and levels

Egypt (M. Kadry): Concurred with opinion expressed by Dr Ghanime regarding overlap between MBC and Burnet activities. Suggested that date for next MBC meeting not coincide with other major regional meetings

France (M. Costagliola): Participated in the Burn meeting in Lille and will participate in the next meeting in Metz

Morocco (H. Boukind): Few months ago a major step was undertaken with the creation of AMB – Association Marocaine de Brûlologie, including not only Plastic Surgeons but other specialties and all personnel interested in burn treatment and prevention. New Burn Unit inaugurated in Casablanca, this has delayed activities related to Burnet, but this will be corrected soon

Tunisia (A. Messadi): New centre of traumatology is being put in place and will be functional soon. For its institutionalization 1 day scientific activity involving MBC is being contemplated as well as a campaign of prevention. 4 new members of MBC from Tunisia have registered

Slovenia (A. Bricic): Pessimistic about status of burn treatment in his country due to large decrease in the number of burn victims referrals after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia

Israil (L. Rosenberg): There is an overall decrease in interest regarding burn treatment resulting in great difficulties recruiting young physicians and nurses. Suggested widening the scope of Burn Societies including MBC to encompass Soft Tissue Injuries. The Burn Unit he directs has been converted to a Burn and Soft Tissue Injuries Unit

Portugal (Z. Serafim): Pleased to be invited to participate in the Burnet program. Was engaged in many meetings and courses for nurses and paramedical personnel

Albania (G. Belba): In a state of transition with net decrease in available beds and resources and decrease in financial support. Pleased by the assistance offered by MBC to attend the scientific meeting and the opportunity offered by Annals of Burns and Fire Disasters to publish work from Albania

Bosnia Herzegovina (M. Begovic): Has been outside the country for 4 years in addition his main interest is haematology not burns. Has made several unsuccessful contacts to find his replacement. Now that he is back home, he will work harder to find a new National Representative

Libya (R. Franka): Thankful for the permission to use the Burnet web site same as other partners. Large burn centre in Tripoli with 170 beds already engaged in treating soft tissue injuries, however, increasing referral of soft tissue injuries is draining the resources of the centre available for burn treatment. Experiencing same shortage expressed by Dr Rosenberg regarding recruitment to young physicians for burn treatment

Malta (F. Darmanin): Shares same problems regarding soft tissue injuries. In the process of moving to a new hospital in 2007 with 5 burn beds. Original plan was to host the 15th MBC meeting for the occasion of inauguration of the new hospital. Instead will try to organize a Burn Course for nurses and paramedical personnel. Thanked MBC for giving scholarship to 1 physician from Malta

Cyprus (G. Koulermou): “Involving” is an advisory committee for prevention of children accidents involving 6 ministries. The strategic plan formulated by the committee was accepted by the government and will start working to set proper legislation

Syria (A. Dayoub): Several activities for Burnet and MBC. Western Asia Association for Plastic Surgery formed

Spain (F. Martelo Vilar) and Yugoslavia (S.C. Vidosova): Not present

Algeria (S. Jouedar): Could not attend because of last minute health problems. Dr K. Sliman from Algeria asked for MBC help to overcome their difficulties hoping to be able to organize a burn course or congress soon in Algeria

Countries without National Representatives: Italy, Greece, and Turkey

Romanian Plastic Surgery Society admitted as Associated Member

Scholarships awarded: 3 physicians and 2 nurses

Dr Galea Laurence Malta

Dr Nardi Kola Albania

Dr Topakas george Greece

Ms Christofioud Mina Cyprus

Ms Kara Sevgi Turkey

Appointment of new National Representatives

President and General Secretary expressed the need to involve more the National Societies by sharing with them the nomination of their representatives without, however, changing the essence of MBC by transforming it into a federation. Opinion shared by the Honorary President, Prof. S.A.W. Gunn, stressing also the need that present representatives start looking in good faith for their replacement. Dr Rosenberg stated the 2 available solutions. Either ask each National Society to name its representative or name the representative then ask his National Society for approval. Seconded by Drs Koulermou and Franka. Prof. latarjet expressed fear that rigid rules intended to solve the problem of representation would create even more problems, seconded by Prof. Kadry. Dr Ghanime stressed the need for real representatives not only inactive figureheads

- General Secretary suggested to nominate Dr D. Tsoutsos representing Greece, Dr. Maurizio Stella representing Italy, Dr Deveci representing Turkey, and Dr N. Abu-Shaban representing Palestine. S.C. Vidosova will be representing Serbia since the state of Yugoslavia in fact no longer exists. All approved unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Prepared by B. Atiyeh
MD, MBC General Secretary
The Final EUMEDIS International Conference “Closing the Digital Gap in the Mediterranean Region” was held in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt, on June 10-12, 2006. The conference was attended by a large number of participants representing all EUMEDIS Pilot projects as well as various Egyptian private and public organizations and agencies interested in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). BURNET was represented by the project leader and administrator, Prof. S.A.W. Gunn and Prof. M. Masellis, by members of the technical team, Eng. G. Perricone and Dr A. Masellis, and by Prof. B. Atiyeh, MBC General Secretary and Prof. M. Kadry, Burnet partner from Egypt.

Contrary to the previous EUMEDIS conference held more than one year ago in April 2005 in Jordan, which concentrated on the progress achieved by the 22 various pilot projects, the Alexandria meeting was more focused on explaining the new EU Neighbourhood policy and the new EU Research Framework Programme (FP7). It focused also on the latest Egyptian ICT achievements particularly in the field of tourism, culture and antiquities. Needless to say that the latest ICT applications in the Bibliotheca Alexandria were most appreciated.

Mr F. Badioli, Mr Ch. Masson, and Mr K. Pendl explained the new alternatives to EUMEDIS and encouraged the various consortia to take advantage of the new opportunities by presenting to the EU commission in due time ideas for new research projects that may not necessarily completely separate from the previous EUMEDIS Pilot Projects. These new proposals, however, should fit the directives of the new programme and abide by the new policy.

The EUMEDIS Team Leader, Mr Badioli, has specifically expressed his great satisfaction with the BURNET achievements and pledged his personal support for further MBC projects in the future.

B. Atiyeh, MD, FACS
MBC General Secretary