

Freddie Sloth-Lisbjerg takes the stand

President's perspective

For the 2021 annual report of the Council of European Dentists (CED), Dr Freddie Sloth-Lisbjerg, Denmark, took his stand about the coming three years of his presidency.



"I am happy, proud, but also humble about the trust the CED members have given me by appointing me President for the coming three years. This gives me the opportunity to continue promoting dentistry and oral health as integrated parts of general health and address the challenges, both old and new, that our profession will face.

The issues the CED will be working on in the next months are closely interlinked with the movement of the European Union towards assigning more power to central political and administrative institutions in and around Brussels, including in health. For now, we have an open window in our communication with the European Commission, particularly when it comes to dental education.

In the future revision of the Professional Qualification Directive, we must ensure proper clinical training of the young dentists as key to patient safety. Dental materials and devices have to be safe, easy to handle and in the future also environmentally sustainable. We have to find a way to an amalgam-free future that is payable for the patient without being a challenge to dentistry.

In terms of CED engagement in the European arena, we are excited about working even more closely with the EMA and the ECDC. The relationship with the two EU bodies was strengthened during the last few years and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed us to share our knowledge about infection control in dentistry and demonstrate that dental offices are safe. We will also continue to have a strong relationship with other stakeholders active in EU policy, among other topics on antimicrobial resistance, the "silent pandemic". As part of the Coalition for vaccination we will promote, in cooperation with medical professions, patients and stakeholders,

a science-based approach to vaccination, both against COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

Despite our past successes, we are of course always looking to the future. Apart from continuing to work on the already mentioned issues, we need to follow the development of partial access to the profession of dentist, the impact of corporate dentistry, and the implementation of e-health initiatives and related treatment of sensitive patient data.

Working on the attractiveness of dentistry to young generation

Moreover, we will be dealing with societal trends that affect health and oral health, such as the European ageing population and vulnerable categories of patients. Additionally, the emergence of new technologies requires the development of new skills, digital skills especially, and new ways of treatment delivery. We are also experiencing a decrease in the attractiveness of dentistry as a liberal profession to the younger generation, where we see expectations for a different work-life balance and a preference to work in bigger practices over individual ones.

All this will force us to find new ways to organise dentistry, to use the dental workforce and to collaborate with other health care workers. These challenges present themselves as opportunities to improve our profession and keep safeguarding our patients' health and wellbeing."

Dr Freddie Sloth-Lisbjerg
CED President