



FDI European Regional Organization (ERO)

Focus on dental chains

Led by Dr Simona Dianiskova (Slovakia), the ERO meeting of the European delegates of the World Dental Federation (FDI) took place in Geneva. The meeting had been called to define the positions of the European dental associations and organisations within the World Parliament of the FDI.

ERO's collaboration with the European Dental Students Association (EDSA), which is active in 33 countries, is beginning to bear fruit. Initiated by Past President Dr Michael Frank, its science award was offered for the first time. Twenty papers were submitted on topics such as antimicrobial resistance, the digital transformation and equality of status of dental students at universities, with awards presented to three entrants.

Reports were also received from the various working groups that form the backbone of ERO. The "Aging Population" working group briefly presented its toothbrushing app, aimed at caregivers pre-trained in dental care. The app can be downloaded from the website and is ready for translation into other languages. ERO will shortly send the pertinent link to all members so that country-specific versions can be produced locally. The new ERO Chair Dr Jean-Philippe Haesler (Switzerland) was confirmed in office.

Dr Gerhard Seeberger (Italy), FDI Past President, reported on the achievements of the "Liberal Dental Practice" working group. The ERO meeting in Geneva confirmed his appointment as Chairman of the working group, succeeding Dr Ernst-Jürgen Otterbach. Seeberger reminded the attendants of the Liberal Dental Practice survey, urging them to participate; in this he was strongly supported by the ERO President. Seeberger paid tribute to Otterbach's work as exemplified by an article published by Quintes-

sence, which reflects the position of the German Dental Association on the delegation of tasks within the dental practice: yes to delegation, no to substitution.

The ERO's position on dental care centres was discussed at length. The meeting unanimously held that investor-driven dental chains were not a desirable option and further supported this stance by referring to the ERO's critical evaluation ahead of the Geneva meeting: "Enterprises not owned by dentists are increasing their stakes in the dental sector day by day, and unfortunately it has been observed that they act based on profit rather than promoting health. This situation threatens independent therapeutic choice and endangers the high quality of dental treatments that forms the basis of free dentistry." The ERO sees the practice of dentistry as such as the sole responsibility of dentist(s) and works to facilitate independent, non-commercialised treatment supervised by dental professional organisations.

Other working groups also delivered their reports, including "Relation between Dental Practitioners and Universities", "Continuing Medical Education in Dentistry" and "Digitalisation in Dentistry". The "Integration" working group is currently creating an overview showing the cooperation of national dental associations with dentists, ministries of health, continuing education and the different billing systems. Initially designed to work at the

EU level, it is envisaged to include non-European FDI countries as well. The Chair of this working group is Professor Vladimer Margvelashvili (Georgia). The "Continuing Medical Education in Dentistry" working group is working on a survey that will put dental students in focus. The expected findings will help to find ways to compensate for theoretical and practical gaps in dental education. The "Dental Team" working group called on member countries to update the professional and training standards of dentists and their teams in order to meet the challenges posed by the ongoing digital transformation in dental practices.

Conclusion

The way the ERO sees it, maintaining the liberal-profession status and self-administration and safeguarding of the high standard in Germany is the most important objective. This task is supported by the Council of European Dentists (CED), working in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office. Past President Dr Michael Frank (Germany) had described the cooperation between ERO its superordinate organisation FDI in an interview as follows: "Among the various regional associations under the umbrella of the FDI, ERO is among the best in terms of structure and organisation. This makes our actions effective and gives us



The European Regional Organization (ERO) within the World Dental Federation (FDI) in Geneva.

an opportunity to bring European concerns and proposals to bodies such as the General Assembly in a way that ensures that we are heard, understood and, in many areas, listened to, with a view to achieving agreement." This will require further work, as ERO President Dr Simona Dianiskova emphasised in her closing remarks, calling for ever better cooperation with the FDI.

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The ERO Board (left to right): Monika Lang, ERU head office; Oliver Zeyer, board member; Taner Yücel, Secretary General; Dr Simona Dianiskova, President; Dr Edoardo Cavalle, President-elect; Paula Perlea, Board member.