

Dear all,

One year ago nobody could have imagined that in 2020 the most heard words in our medical practice would have been “corona” and “Covid-19”. The pandemic is still ongoing, and healthcare is under pressure in all our countries. Especially our vulnerable senior citizens are hit hard, either when they contract the disease and become seriously ill, or when they suffer from social isolation and limitations in care due to the lack of staff or imposed isolation. Everyone hopes that the vaccines will bring relief to all of us, and that life returns to some sort of normal, although normal in 2021 and beyond will differ from normal in 2019 and before. For our own work as Full Board members of UEMS section Geriatric Medicine changes are visible too. In 2020 we did not have live meetings. The spring meeting in Helsinki had to be cancelled, and because there were no agenda items that had to be discussed plenary we chose to skip the meeting altogether. We have worked on the European Training Requirements for our specialty for several years now, and the plan was to present this in the UEMS Council meeting in April, but because this became a virtual meeting and there was a call to submit only urgent agenda items, the discussion was postponed till October. For obvious reasons this was a virtual meeting too, but videoconferencing had become the new normal so most were used to it. And the good news is that our ETR was adopted by UEMS. All specialties agreed with our ETR and only small adjustments had to be made. For unknown reasons (because there were no questions or remarks during discussion) 1 country (Germany) was against our ETR, and there was 1 abstention. The ETR can be found on our website.

In October we had our own FB video conference , after the virtual EuGMS congress. It worked well, although some members had difficulties joining the meeting. Hopefully these were start-up problems, and future meetings will go smoothly. We decided that the new normal for us in 2021 will be a live meeting after the EuGMS congress, and 2-3 shorter video meetings in between. The positive side-effects are a reduction of cost and travel, and hopefully an even greater attendance of the meetings. But I certainly will miss the hugs and kisses, the hospitality of the organizing country, the site visits and dinners with all of you.

Now we have to focus on the preparation of a voluntary European examination, and the upgrade of the pregraduate curriculum. I hope that we can again count on your cooperation so that this will be a joined effort and not a “one man show”. We are all volunteering as representatives from our countries, and for everyone EU exam, or pregraduate training, is a too big task to complete without support from others. Together we are stronger!

Our next virtual meeting is scheduled for 16 January 2021, 10 a.m. Brussels time zone. The agenda will follow shortly. Save the date!

May I conclude with thanking you for your input in the Full Board in 2020, and wishing you a Merry Christmas and a healthy 2021! Stay safe!

Jaap Krulder,

President UEMS section Geriatric Medicine