



## The European Council for Classical Homeopathy

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*Representing Homeopaths in Europe*

### **Presentation to the EEN Capacity Building Workshop 31 1 05**

#### **Introduction**

The European Council for Classical Homeopathy represents the interests of the homeopathy profession in Europe. Created in 1990 it now has a membership of 26 professional associations in 22 countries. The individual members of these associations are mostly practitioners whose primary healthcare education has been in homeopathy and who practise it as their main therapeutic modality. The basic education undertaken is the equivalent of an undergraduate university degree. There are also many thousands of doctors in Europe who have studied homeopathy as a post-graduate specialty and practise it under their medical title. They are represented by their own European organisation.

Homeopathy is the most widely practised and used modality within what is popularly called complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). ECCH has recently collaborated with other members of EPHA in founding the European Forum for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (EFCAM) in order to raise the issue of CAM higher and wider on the EU agenda.

Across Europe a significant and growing proportion of the public, and increasing numbers of health care professionals, are actively choosing to integrate various forms of CAM into their health care provision and practice. Interventions such as acupuncture, homeopathy, phytotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic, shiatsu, reflexology, anthroposophical medicine, ayurvedic medicine, and traditional Chinese medicine are being chosen by increasingly well-informed patients and health care professionals as either alternative or complementary approaches to the mainly technological and pharmaceutical based interventions of mainstream medicine. Rather than directly treating diseases and their symptomatology these therapies aim to stimulate and support the patient's own defense system to successfully manage and adapt to overcome disease with the objective of restoring the patient to health.

#### **The Impact of the Environment on Health**

As with our conventional medical colleagues, despite the many advances of modern medicine, we are being increasingly faced with the rapid growth in the number of patients suffering chronic conditions such as allergies and asthma, chronic fatigue syndromes, cancers, etc. many of which are being linked directly to the impact of lifestyle and environmental factors on our health. Of major concern is the impact of environmental factors on the health of our children. As pointed out by the Commission in its Health Action Plan communication document of June last year as many as one sixth of the total burden of death and disease for children can be attributed to environmental factors. We suspect it may even be more. Many of the patients that consult CAM practitioners do so because conventional medicine does not help them or they do not want the conventional treatments on offer. Many of the parents that consult us about their children do so because they do not want their children condemned at an early age to a dependency on steroid creams and inhalers and other pharmaceutical supports.

Pharmaceuticals themselves have their own environmental impact. Overuse and mis-use of antibiotics have given us the problem of anti-biotic resistance and so-called superbugs. In the UK patients are now increasingly frightened to go into hospital for fear of contacting MRSA. The release of hormones into the water supply through mass consumption of the pill and HRT is another factor that is having an effect on animal endocrine systems. We welcome the recent moves in EU legislation to address these problems but feel more should be done. From recent cases where drugs such as Vioxx have been withdrawn from the market, despite their being

placed on it as products of evidence based medicine, we know that some pharmaceutical companies are not always honest in their sharing of research data.

As the REACH directive has made us all so aware we are daily in potential contact with thousands of industrial chemicals that permeate the air, water, food, clothes, furniture, cars etc. we use. For this reason we welcome the REACH directive and are submitting amendments to it. Because chemicals are so widely used throughout industry it is only the EU that successfully regulate in this area because only it can set a pan-national level regulatory playing field for all of industry.

### **What can homeopathy contribute?**

As homeopaths we know we have something to contribute to the debate. Four principles are fundamental to our therapeutic practice and are implicated in the human response to chemicals in the environment and other factors such as climate change,

- i) each patient's illness is viewed as a disturbance within the context of the patient as a whole system and the patient is viewed within the context of their physical and social environment
- i) each individual has their own unique susceptibility, partly based on their genetic make-up - which explains why some people react to certain chemicals and others do not
- ii) we understand the profound effect that even small amounts of certain chemicals can have on certain people because of their susceptibility –this after all is the basis of homeopathic treatment
- iii) the human organism is a homeostatic and reactive system that can be assisted to respond to initially adverse stimuli and adapt successfully if treated appropriately.

Furthermore homeopathy has an additional contribution to make. Research has show that homeopathically prepared remedies of toxins can directly stimulate living animal organisms to excrete those very same toxins.

### **In summary**

We welcome the Commission's growing sense of responsibility for, and expressed intention to act, in this extremely important area of policy that connects the impact of the environment on the health of each member of the EU population. We will do all that we can to support the admirable efforts of the newly created EEN in reflecting back to the Commission on its legislative initiatives and in proposing new ones.

All other factors pale into insignificance besides the goal of a healthy population living within a safe and sustainable environment. Health, happiness and sustainability should be the main drivers of the European agenda and economy and these factors should not be secondary to the goal of competitiveness.

Currently we are confronted with the latest predictions of a planetary climate meltdown in just a few decades time. On the brink of becoming an irreversible juggernaut, if we don't do something now it will be too late. We are the generation who are now consciously witnessing it and contributing most to it, our children will suffer its consequences. If we do not address the issue of climate change NOW issues such as the REACH will be of secondary importance and SCALE will have failed. Waiting for further research evidence to confirm what we already know may in the very near future be equated to Nero fiddling while Rome burned.

The planet was a healthy, homeostatic, mechanism until two hundred years ago when humankind initiated ed an increasing state of dis-ease through the environmental impact of the industrial revolution. What will all the advances that revolution has brought us mean if we are responsible for our own self-destruction?

ECCH and EFCAM are committed to

- supporting EEN in its endeavours to raise the health and environment issue high on the EU agenda
- having health and environmental sustainability as priorities in revising the Lisbon Agenda and EU Treaties
- communicating directly with the Commission, Parliament and Council on the relevant issues
- raising the importance of the role of CAM as part of the wider agenda of developing an awareness of the whole and interconnected nature of the human economy both intrinsically and extrinsically.
- doing what we can to raise awareness that NOW is the time to act to protect the lives of our children

As we are meeting here today in the Goethe Institute I would like to end with a quote from Goethe “

*If I accept you as you are, I will make you worse. However, if I treat you as though you are what you are capable of becoming, I help you become that.*

**Stephen Gordon**

**ECCH General Secretary 31 January 2005**