Euroquan united

Athens was the inspiring venue for a recent meeting of Euroquan representatives, with a wide range of quality issues on the agenda for discussion.

The fifth meeting of Euroquan representatives took place in Athens at the Caravel Hotel from the 17-19 March 1994. The meeting was attended by several Greek officials, including Deputy Minister of Health Manolis Scoulakis, Vassiliki Lanara, President of the Hellenic National Graduate Nurses' Association (HNGNA), Professors of the University of Athens Faculty of Nursing, and Directors of Nursing Services from Athens' hospitals, including the Red Cross, Evangelismos and Onasis Hospitals.

Welcoming the representatives to Athens, Professor Lanara gave an overview of the Euroquan network and its objectives and position within the framework of a united Europe. She went on to stress that Euroquan was now a recognised network within Europe.

Referring to the situation in Greece, Professor Lanara stressed that for the improvement of quality in healthcare, the following objectives were immediate and necessary priorities:

- The Nursing Department of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Social Security must be properly staffed
- New appointments of registered nurses must be made in hospitals and health centres. For the first time in Greek history there are unemployed nurses
- Finally, Professor Lanara outlined the optimism of the Euroquan delegates and the co-operation within the group which, she said, indicated the continuing contribution of nurses to the concept of quality patient care.

In the proceedings of the meeting, representatives discussed the role of education, general health policy and research in improving quality of nursing care. In particular, the need to develop educational programmes which support initiatives aimed at promoting quality of clinical/primary care was stressed. This can be achieved only by organised central supervision of quality assurance, the development of international programmes for related subjects, and by government recognition of the influence of Euroquan in quality assurance health matters.

The meeting also proposed that in relation to the structure of Euroquan, sources of future economic resources must be identified and its functions, work and delegation of responsibilities defined. Successful approaches to quality can be achieved by careful scrutiny and co-operation, delegates at the meeting agreed, stressing the importance of defining quality and identifying measurements and comparisons based on accepted standards. Drastic initiatives to target improvements in health care must be taken. Clinical nurses are crucial in this respect; they recognise the areas where action is needed and the quality assurance tools and nursing care programmes necessary to achieve the best possible quality of health care.

Address to Euroquan representatives by Manolis Scoulakis, Greek Deputy Minister of Health, Welfare and Social Security

Nursing is both a science and an art, concerned with assuring high quality healthcare for individuals, families and the whole population. Nursing care is both for health education and maintenance for the healthy and for providing treatment, care and recovery for the sick.

As many factors are involved in the provision of nursing care, it is essential that standards are maintained at all times.

The quality of nursing care is promoted by establishing standard setting, giving opportunities to intervene where they are needed, either for the improvement of an already existing good nursing standard or for the correction of any faults.

It is important that this meeting to further quality assurance in nursing care takes place at a European level. We are honoured that it can take place in Greece, the cradle of European civilisation and human ideals.

We believe that the conclusions of the meeting will be valuable for Europe and for nurses and patients generally.

The political leadership of our Ministry of Health has fully realised that, without sufficient numbers of well qualified nursing personnel, it is impossible for our national health system to make progress. For this reason, our first priority is the advancement of the role of nursing and I do assure you that we will always support your efforts for the quality of nursing care provided to our people.