

experience and qualifications. At the quadrennial meeting of the WPA in Cairo in 2004, I raised this issue for discussion and asked the WPA executive to set up a task force to examine the problem and to see what action could be recommended to introduce some reciprocity into this situation, recognising that individuals are free to make their own decisions about where they live and work, subject to different countries' immigration rules. The task force held its first meeting in April 2007 under the chairmanship of Professor Oye Gureji.

Conclusion

As I left our annual meeting this year I was thanked by an African psychiatrist for making it possible for him and some of his colleagues to join us in Edinburgh. He said he wanted the College to know just how important it is that we do offer this kind of support to colleagues from Africa. He said, 'You can't know just how important your interest and support is to us'. This is a good enough reason for me to continue my listening perambulations!

NEWS AND NOTES

For contributions to the 'News and notes' column, please email ip@rcpsych.ac.uk

European Division

The European Division of the College contributed to the 1st Psychiatric Congress of Eastern Europe, organised by the Psychiatric Association for Eastern Europe and the Balkans (www.paeeb.com), held in Thessaloniki, Greece, 21–23 September 2007. We arranged two courses, one on organisation of psychiatric services, chaired by Anne Lindhardt, and one on forensic psychiatry, chaired by Athanasios Douzenis and Christos Tsopelas.

During the General Assembly representatives from 13 countries passed the Declaration of Thessaloniki, which urges the international scientific community, the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), the World Health Organization, the political leadership and all other relevant organisations to contribute to the reconstruction and advancement mental health services in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The full text of the declaration is available on the PAEEB website.

Professor George Christodoulou

Western Pacific Division

The Western Pacific Division continues to promote the aims of the College in its vast region, with over 700 Members and Fellows but also one-third of humankind. We believe that organising training in services and research is by far the greatest priority, where this is practicable. In this context, the Division is eager to support and contribute to activities of the College in the Western Pacific, including the proposed Royal College Membership Examinations in Hong Kong. There is interest in identifying similarities and differences between the RCPsych and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) in relation to training, examination and accreditation, and whether these are likely to change.

The Division is most grateful to Professor Bruce Singh for his assistance in organising a symposium held at the WPA conference in Melbourne in November 2007, jointly with the RANZCP and the Australasian Society for Psychiatric Research.

Professor Scott Henderson

College international travel

The WPA Regional Conference and the Chinese Psychiatric Society Annual Congress were held in Shanghai, China, 20–23 September 2007. The College delegation included

Professor Sheila Hollins, President, Professor Sue Bailey, Registrar, Dr Tony Zigmond, Vice-President, and Joanna Carroll, International Manager. In addition to presenting a session on mental health legislation around the world, our main objective was to initiate contact with psychiatrists in mainland China and to meet representatives of relevant organisations with a view to discussing collaboration. We had a very fruitful meeting with the British Council. Our public education materials and the volunteer programme were of particular interest to them and we will be exploring this further with the Chinese Health Bureau in Shanghai. Our impromptu visit to the Shanghai Mental Health Centre gave us a valuable overview of Shanghai mental health services. The formal business at the Congress included a poster presentation about the College's international work and a College symposium on developing and implementing mental health legislation around the world. The full post-conference report is available on the College website (<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/college/internationalaffairsunit/westernpacificdivision.aspx>).

UEMS Section and Board of Psychiatry

At the Section and Board of Psychiatry autumn meeting held in Geneva last October, Dr Kari Pykkänen, of the Finnish Medical Association, was elected President of the Section of Psychiatry; Dr Brigitte Mauthner, of the Austrian Medical Chamber, is the new Vice-President of the Section, and Dr Brendan Cassidy, of the Irish Medical Organisation, was elected Treasurer of both the Section and the Board. Dr Joseph Saliba, from Malta, continues in his final term of office as Honorary Secretary, and Professor Slavko Zihel was re-elected Vice-President of the European Board of Psychiatry.

Bobby Somasunderam memorial

The South Asian Federation (SAF) has joined forces with the WPA Section on Psychiatry in Developing Countries to launch a fundraising project for the Bobby Somasunderam Memorial at Government Mental Hospital in Angoda, Colombo, Sri Lanka. A ward at Angoda Hospital for patients with intellectual disability will be named after him; the project will also offer training for the staff. For further details please contact Dr Afzal Javed, email afzal@afzaljaved.co.uk.

Dr Afzal Javed