ET Log hosts first project co-ordination meeting in Berlin

After the project kick-off meeting in Largs, Scotland it was the turn of ET Log from Germany to host the first project co-ordination meeting. On 1st and 2nd September the project partners met in the beautiful city of Berlin to discuss project outputs and to define the work programme for late 2014 and first half of 2015. This period would mark the end of the first formal reporting period of the project.

The Italian and Spanish partners had concluded their first phase of reporting and each gave comprehensive presentations on the situation in those member states. They also highlighted the difficulties faced in undertaking the work associated with the production of the National reports. Both partners also highlighted some excellent examples of the best practice they had found while undertaking the HCWM assessment and in this issue the best practices from Spain have been highlighted.

The co-ordination meeting covered a range of project issues with an agreement to make better use of Skype conferencing calls to ensure better communication between partners on a two monthly basis.

There was also broad agreement in postponing the National workshops in each project partner member state until February to May 2015. This would ensure that such workshops would have a content better reflective of project outputs and of sufficient interest and innovation as to warrant such National workshops. The ability to present a draft qualification framework at these events was seen to be imperative to facilitate optimum participation.

The meeting was punctuated by a visit to the German Bundestag. The guided tour of this wonderful piece of architecture was an excellent experience and the project would like to thank Jan Gerd Kuehling for doing a splendid job in organising both the meeting and the tour of the Bundestag.
EU-HCWM Professional Networks - UK

As we move into year two of the project it is important that the individual partners develop their professional networks in order that project outputs can be disseminated to them for comment.

The professional networks play an important role in ensuring that key stakeholders are fully engaged in the project, its activities and outputs. The project outputs will only have any real value if they have been the subject to peer review by hospital environment and waste experts.

In the UK ICERMS is exploring the possibility of formalizing the professional network into an Institute for Hospital Environment & Waste Managers. The concept of having such a sector specific institute to recognize the specifics of environment & waste management professionals in the healthcare sector may have broader relevance across the EU and perhaps could be a mechanism through which formal; qualifications as the one being worked on by this project are formally recognized.

ICERMS are currently preparing a proposal in this regard for presentation to the NHS National Performance Advisory Group in February 2015.

NPAG first established benchmarking clubs in the mid 90s, to facilitate networking and benchmarking activities. These clubs have developed into Benchmarking Clubs, Best Value Groups and Shared Networks. There is now a total of over 20 successful clubs focusing on specific NHS service specialties.

NPAG Best Value Groups provide national forums for peer group managers to meet, network, critically compare and review services and seek continuous improvement in terms of quality, fitness-for-purpose, performance and value for money. Facilitated by the NPAG, this national network of Best Value Groups enables members to share experience, identify good practice, innovation and information to assist individual managers develop their own service improvement action plans. NPAG group members will be a valuable addition to the UK professional network.

At the moment the UK professional network has around 50 members with efforts to improve this figure currently ongoing across the UK. The LinkedIn group has been the focus of the English language version of the professional network however this has been slow to grow with a current membership of 39 registered participants. The project partners will endeavor to improve this figure in the coming months.

EU-HCWM Knowledge Base

Over the next few months, the partners will be building the knowledge base, which will be launched on the EU-HCWM website early next year. The knowledge base will highlight good practices, as well as any information concerning knowledge, skills and competences in the field of healthcare waste management & vocational training. Additionally, other European and international competent bodies will be invited to add their work.

Each project partner will have their own knowledge base and in their own language in order that the knowledge base contains information relevant to partner member state. Knowledge base items with a broader interest in a Pan European context will be summarised and translated into all partner languages.

If you would like to contribute to the knowledge base, please contact us with your information at: scott@icerms.com

EU-HCWM Web Update

The HCWM website has been receiving a steady stream of just under 150 unique visitors per month. With traffic generally falling on working days and being higher between 9-5, this would be indicative that visitors are more likely to be working professionals viewing the site in a professional capacity. This is a very positive sign, coupled with the amount of newsletter subscriptions requested, it seems as though the website is gaining traction. It is also clear that there is content on our site that people are finding useful and interesting as 10% of all visitors stay on the site for 15 minutes or more.

Other than the home page, there are no individual pages which receive higher traffic than the others, indicating that visitors to the site are looking to learn about the project and read through several pages, rather than visiting the site to view just one particular page and then leaving. This is supported by the fact everyone, without exception, is arriving to the site by entering in the web address, rather than finding it in a search engine or linking from another website out of curiosity.

While these are all positive signs, the recent analysis of the web statistics also tells us areas that we need to improve upon. The lack of visitors from other sites indicates that we need to work better to strengthen our networks and ensure that people who may not be aware of the project can find it and get involved. Also, the stats tell us that we are getting people’s attention and people are willing to read the information we are publishing, so we want to work to add more web content so that when people visit they continue to spend longer on the site learning about the project activities.

Over the coming weeks we will be re-evaluating our digital dissemination strategy and will look to improve on these statistics. We aim to publish our next web update showing an improvement in traffic, view times, and network linking.

Also, the website has established its first multi lingual areas, with site translations in Italian and Polish. Over the next few weeks, more sections will be added to represent the languages of all project partners. We will also be looking at the statistics of these language sites to get a better understanding of the interest in the project from different countries.
Scottish Qualification Authority/Waste Management Industry Training & Advisory Board For a Event - Glasgow

The SQA/WAMITAB jointly hosted their annual assessor/verifier forum event at the SQA headquarters in Glasgow on 12th November 2014.

The forum is an excellent opportunity to meet the key stakeholders from the sector and from both the awarding body for qualifications in Scotland (SQA) and the UK waste industry training body (WAMITAB).

In addition there is the opportunity to meet the VET centres for the waste industry from across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The event was split into two sessions, the morning session was hosted by the SQA and chaired by Gina Wood from the SQA. There were presentations by the Energy & Utilities Sector Skills Council; Skills Development Scotland & Zero Waste Scotland as well as SQA updates from External Verifiers, David Goodenough (pictured below) and Alasdair Meldrum.

The afternoon session was hosted by WAMITAB and chaired by Chris James, WAMITAB with excellent presentations throughout the afternoon by Ray Burberry, Qualification Manager, WAMITAB. Ray covered a diverse range of subjects from Health & Safety to quality assurance.

Scott Crossett, ICERMS, (pictured below) presented the EUHCWM project as part of the afternoon session.

The ISWA Working Group on Healthcare Waste met in Casablanca, Morocco from the 16-18 October for the first Working Group Meeting to take place in North Africa, the event was kindly hosted by ATHISA Morocco. The Meeting was chaired by the new chair of the Working Group Anne Woolridge and attracted participants as far afield as Brazil and Nigeria.

The Meeting involved discussions on current projects and activities, with one of the key discussions being on the critical role that safe and effective Healthcare Waste Management plays in combating the current spread of Ebola. Highlights of the event involved a visit to the spectacular Great Mosque and a site-visit to the Centralised Medical Waste Facility of ATHISA.

The Working Group have recently finalised two publications

ISWA Guidelines for Preparing Tenders for the Provision of Healthcare Waste Infrastructure

These tender guidelines have been prepared by the Working Group on Healthcare Waste to provide guidance to international organisations and local governments to provide neutral and fair specifications when preparing a tender for Healthcare waste projects.

ISWA Guidelines on Training Strategies for Healthcare Waste Management

A high awareness of risks and issues associated with healthcare waste and up to date knowledge on how to manage healthcare waste from the point of generation until final treatment and disposal is key for successful and sustainable healthcare waste management. This set of guidelines developed by the Working Group on Healthcare Waste provides advice on what is needed to implement effective training across the healthcare sector.

To learn more about ISWA and the working group please visit: www.iswa.org
Healthcare without Harm Europe had their final workshop of 2014 in Budapest, Hungary on 25 November 2014. We co-hosted this event with Semmelweis University, Hungary’s oldest medical university and largest healthcare institution. The focus of the workshop was environmental sustainability in the health sector: European practices and Hungarian potential.

Fifteen speakers in total presented their work on sustainable practices from all areas of the health sector. The audience heard about a wide range of topics, including green building design, sustainable procurement and energy efficiency. Three panel discussions followed: ‘Energy management in healthcare’, ‘Environmentally-friendly healthcare facilities: Design, procurement and management’ and ‘EU Funds at the Service of Healthcare Energy Investments in Hungary’.

Sharing experiences from the HCWH Europe network
Two speakers from Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) Europe took part in the opening session of the workshop. Executive Director Anja Leetz spoke about environmental sustainability in the health sector and HCWH Europe’s work. Climate Policy and Membership Officer Kornelia Bagi then gave a presentation on the effect of sustainable public procurement on reducing the carbon footprint of the health sector. Several of HCWH Europe’s members also presented their work.

The following speakers took part: Ann Marie Cross, Health Executive Ireland; Anna Palminger, Region Skåne, Sweden; and Annegret Dickhoff, BUND-Berlin (Friends of the Earth Germany).

Best practice from across Europe
The truly international nature of the conference proved to be an asset. Attendees heard presentations by speakers from organisations based in 8 EU Member States. As a result, examples of best practice in the health sector from across Europe were shared with the predominantly Hungarian audience.

The day was split into 4 sessions covering a wide range of issues including; green procurement; sustainability in healthcare; energy management and EU funding opportunities. All presentations from the event are available to download at:

www.no-harm-europe.org/articles/news/europe/sustainable-practices-healthcare-presented-budapest

HCWH Europe would like to thank all the attendees and speakers who joined us in Budapest. We would also like to thank our co-hosts the Health Services Management Training Centre of Semmelweis University for their invaluable help in organising this workshop.
The Institute of Environmental Protection - National Research Institute was appointed by virtue of the Order of the Minister of Environmental Protection on 1 April 1986. This was, in principle, a reactivation of the Institute, which was established in 1973 and in the following year, along with three other institutes: the Institute for Municipal Management, the Institute for Urban Development and Architecture and the Institute for Housing Management, it was incorporated into the newly established Institute for Environmental Development.

The latter ended its activity when the Institute of Environmental Protection was reactivated. The subject and scope of the present Institute’s activity is determined by its statute, which has been approved on 26 January 1995 by the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry. In 2010 granted the status of National Research Institute.

The major activity area of the Institute is to develop scientific and technical basis for environmental protection and relevant national policies. The Institute of Environmental Protection is a ministerial/governmental institute, supervised by the Ministry of the Environment. The development of state policies at national and international levels provides the Institute a special place among various other research and development institutions involved in environmental protection. Special areas of activity such as integrated environmental studies contribute significantly to the integration of work carried out under other research fields.

The Institute is involved in the following research activity fields:

- Development of the principles of Polish environmental policy and strategies, and participation in international activities; Integrated environmental studies, especially on environmental processes and effects of degradation with particular consideration of industrial contaminated sites; Air protection against pollution; Climate protection; Noise and vibrations control; Conservation of landscape and nature; Protection and restoration of biologically active land surface; Protection and renewal of water resources; Protection of the Baltic Sea and its coastal zone; Waste management; Environmental impact assessments of substances, products and installations; Integrated environmental monitoring.

The Institute carries out research and application studies in accordance with its statutory scope of duties and tasks under the fields mentioned above.

The scope of research under the above fields includes:

- Economic and legal basis for environmental protection, including Poland’s international cooperation; Standards, levels and indices of environmental quality and pollution emission; Environmental monitoring (assessment of the state of the environment and its changes); Methods and systems used in documenting and projecting changes in the environment; Documentation and databases on protected areas; designing protected areas and their management plans; Measurement and analytical methods in environmental pollution; The principles, concepts and programmes used in environmental management; Environmental impact assessments of economic facilities and undertakings; Environmental impact assessments of substances, products and installations; Protection of the environment and nature resources in spatial planning; Methods and techniques used in environmental protection with the consideration of degraded land reclamation and evaluation of the effectiveness of protective measures; Integrated environmental monitoring (Integrated Monitoring Station “Puszcza Borecka” operating under GEMS and EMEP).

In addition the Institute is involved in:

- International and national cooperation in the field of environmental protection; Environmental education; Granting technical approvals for facilities used in wastewater treatment and sewage sludge processing; Providing opinions on plant protection products intended for registration in Poland with regard to their environmental safety; Implementation and dissemination of the results of studies obtained at the Institute through its own publications, and by organising countrywide meetings, conferences and seminars; Bibliographic and informative activity.

The Institute manages two environmental monitoring stations:

- Automatic Station for Measuring Air Pollution in Warsaw & Integrated Environmental Monitoring Station “Puszcza Borecka” in the Masurian Lake District.
Sigma Consultants is an independent engineering and consultancy company with a long standing activity within Greece and European market. It was founded in 1992 in Thessaloniki, by a team of highly qualified professionals specialized in the fields of strategic planning, implementation of development projects and environmental management, aiming to support the efforts of private enterprises, local authorities and sector based organizations at innovative, specialized and multi-disciplinary projects domestically and internationally.

Today company is active in the fields of:
- Project planning and Management of National and European funded projects,
- Environmental Management, pollution prevention and waste management,
- Health and Safety Studies, Emergency Response Plans and Risk Management
- Energy conservation, Renewable Energy Sources and Third Party Financing Schemes,
- Applied Research, Technology Transfer and Technical and Economic Studies
- Creation of Educational Material Using Multimedia and Dissemination Actions.

Sigma’s staff comprises of experts in various technical disciplines including chemical, mechanical and electrical engineering as well as environmental sciences and economics. Sigma’s personnel in collaboration with a well established network of associated experts enhances the company’s effectiveness in fulfilling specialized tasks, thus ensuring high quality standards in the implementation of a variety of outstanding projects owning considerable managerial, technical and services’ application expertise.

During the past years, Sigma has acquired a unique combination of project management experience and cross-cultural communication skills and is familiar with the EU initiatives through successful completion of numerous complex and particularly demanding projects for the European Commission.

At present SIGMA is the Project Coordinator of the relative sister project "Towards a European qualification for Solid Waste Facilities’ Managers – Acronym: SWFM-QF” been funded within the framework of Lifelong Learning Programme under the action of LEONARDO DA VINCI Multilateral Projects for Development of innovation (Project no 528022-LLP-1-2012-1-GRC-LEONARDO-LMP). Other projects that SIGMA has elaborated the last years, either as Project Coordinator or Partner, include: THESEIS, GAME4MANAGER, COASTANCE, FLINKMAN, CIVILARCH, RISK OUT SOURCE, WMIN, RIVER SHIELD.

Sigma has developed and implements within its operational procedures a Quality Management System (QMS) in compliance with the International Quality Management Standard ISO 9001:2008. Documentation and operational control of the QMS (including the financial and operational management of EU projects) is provided by the Quality Manager, ensuring that the procedures used by Sigma are effective, efficient and subject to constant scrutiny and total quality control.
HCWH Europe - Inspiring sustainable practices at Bologna workshop

Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) Europe co-hosted a workshop in Bologna, Italy on 'Sustainability in the Healthcare Sector: Public Procurement, Energy and Mobility in the Italian Health System and Beyond'. This took place on Friday 7 November 2014 and was organised by our partner the Health Service of the Emilia-Romagna Region (Servizio Sanitario Regionale Emilia-Romagna).

Over 15 speakers gave presentations on the work of their organisations in implementing sustainable solutions in healthcare settings. The morning sessions were devoted to sharing European experiences. The afternoon session then focused on Italian local and regional experiences.

Presenting HCWH's work to an Italian audience

HCWH Europe's Executive Director Anja Leetz (pictured left) presented our work to the largely Italian audience as a speaker at the session on European experiences. Attendees heard about all aspects of HCWH Europe's campaign, from our beginnings as opponents of mercury to our current work on climate change, pharmaceuticals, safer chemicals, sustainable procurement and more. The audience also learned about the Global Green and Healthy Hospitals Network and its new social platform, GGHH Connect.

This was a great opportunity to spread the word about our campaign for environmentally responsible healthcare in a country where we do not currently have many active members. We certainly hope to welcome new Italian members in the future and support them in their mission to achieve sustainable change in healthcare.

Spreading the word about EcoQUIP

The workshop also proved to be an ideal venue in which to discuss the EcoQUIP project, which was presented by Prof. Simona Agger (pictured left).

This encourages innovation in procurement as a means to improve the efficiency, quality and environmental sustainability of the healthcare sector.

The audience also heard about various models of best practice such as the fully automated bedwashing facility at Erasmus University Hospital in the Netherlands. This was developed under EcoQuip as a means to help the hospital reduce its energy use and overall carbon footprint.

Inspiration from across Europe

The workshop proved to be an excellent opportunity to learn about sustainability projects underway across Europe. Overall, the event provided proof that environmental sustainability can go hand in hand with social and economic considerations. With HCWH Europe's members from five different countries in attendance, in addition to three of our board members, we were pleased to use this opportunity to connect with our healthcare counterparts in Italy and share news about our work in this area.

We would like to congratulate the Emilia Romagna Region for a successful workshop. We would also like to thank all the speakers for sharing their experiences and providing inspiration for us all as we continue to work towards our goal of making healthcare more environmentally sustainable.

For more information on Healthcare Without Harm Europe please visit their website - www.noharm-europe.org
Hospital Environments Around the Block: Best Practice in Spain

1. User friendly communication tools at all levels: a key aspect in the implementation of good waste practices.

   The capacity of improving waste management in healthcare facilities is directly influenced on the knowledge, competences and awareness level of the staff, the waste manager and both medical and non medical staff. In fact, taking into account the whole waste cycle, all members of the staff are involved in waste management at least in relation to all the activities carried out within the site from prevention, to segregation, internal transport, intermediate storage and transport to final storage; while the waste manager is also involved in the extra-site activities (contracting procedures, management of authorized waste management companies and waste transport companies, operational controls, waste monitoring, legal aspects related to waste management, control of legal documents related to waste management, management of waste budget, etc.).

   As the first phases of the waste management process, such as use of materials and waste segregation, depends mainly on the medical staff (medical doctors and nurses) they have a significant capacity to condition positively or negatively the outputs of the whole process in terms prevention and quality of the sorted waste. Cleaning, waste and maintenance staff has a relevant role in the following phases (internal transport, storage, relationship with waste transportation contractors), but if the waste is not sorted correctly in the first phases, they will not be able to improve it. Other functions such as procurement manager and the head of medical departments can have a significant role when considering waste prevention practices and the adoption of less hazardous and complex materials. Pharmacy and warehouse can influence the quantity of generated waste due to the stocks management and procurement activities, products' traceability and storing conditions.

Taking into account these considerations, it’s easily understandable why involving all interested parties is relevant in order to obtain a good performance in waste management. Whether you deal with a small HC Centre with a limited capacity of beds or a big HC centre with more that 6.500 employees and more than 1000 beds – as it is the case of biggest Hospital in Catalonia, an efficient communication is a key aspect in order to involve the staff and reinforce awareness and training activities.

   During the waste audits carried out this summer in Spain within the EU-HCWM project activities, the Club EMAS has detected interesting examples of internal communication. The following images are an example of the waste posters used by the Hospital Universitari Germans Trias i Pujol in Badalona near Barcelona (Spain), (above left) which is a university hospital with more than 2.600 employees and by smaller centres like the Consorci Hospitalari de Vic (Spain) (above right) or the Hospital de Palamós. This practice have been observed in many of the audited hospitals, they usually have an attractive appearance and provide key information for waste sorting in a user friendly way.

   They are used directly in the areas where waste is generated and also attached to specific containers as is the case of the big label attached to the pharmaceutical products container (right) at Hospital Vall d'Hebron in Barcelona (the biggest hospital in Catalonia) that provides specific instructions for the staff.
2. A holistic approach in HC waste management

Another output from the waste audits carried out within the EU-HCWM project in Spain, have identify a need in relation to the Health Care Waste Manager competences.

The study has detected that the HC waste manager should have a wide and holistic approach to waste management; this means that not only the waste generated strictly from healthcare activities should be considered, but, generally speaking all the waste generated by the facility (including the waste from kitchens and canteens, maintenance, etc.).

Indeed, other non HC areas, such as kitchen and maintenance are also involved in waste management due to the fact that they generate important amounts of urban waste (kitchen) or smaller quantities of hazardous waste (mainly in maintenance).

Even if each type of waste could have different risks and different impact on the environment, if a HC Centre requires the staff to correctly sort and manage waste from the HC activities, then all waste flows of the facility should be managed consistently.

The “Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau” in Barcelona, has implemented in November 2013 – within the European Waste Prevention Week - a communication campaign at the hospital’s canteen. The Hospital has more than 3.000 employees and many of them regularly use the canteen. It’s not easy to separate waste left on the trays when the numbers are so high.

With the campaign “At Sant Pau as you do at home”, the hospital aims to implement the same good practices that people should already have at home, i.e. to separate organic waste and packaging, as well as to make a rational use of glasses and napkins (to promote an efficient use of resources).

Nice and colourful posters have been placed at the canteen next to the waste containers in order to provide information on waste sorting and a table has been customized (see image 9) and placed near the containers to facilitate people placing the tray and collecting the waste before putting the tray in the canteen’s conveyor belt.

The Hospital has been carried out control and monitoring activities to check waste containers and to assess the results of the campaign. The results will be presented at the end of the year, from the available data, it seems that it will provide an encouraging result.
3. Involvement of HC centre staff in waste management

It’s not easy to involve staff in waste management, particularly if the HC centre is big and busy. One of the audited hospitals during the summer was the Hospital de Vall d’Hebron, with a staff of more than 6,500 people.

The hospital has implemented an interesting and well structured system in order to involve the staff in waste management and its results are also very positive.

A well structured and participating system has been necessary in order to reach all the areas and a great number of people. Similar experiences can be adopted in other HC centres regardless of the size of the facility.

The main characteristics of this system are:

- The hospital has an Environmental committee (with participants from all the areas of the hospital). Some of the members are at the highest level of the organization. This means that environmental issues are recognized as strategic issues and that the teams will receive the support of the top management.

- Within this committee there’s a Waste commission. It’s interdisciplinary, it is composed by representatives of different areas and thanks to this the commission is able to offer a wide range of competencies and special skills on which the Waste Manager can count. The Waste commission has a direct link with the Environmental Committee.

- The Waste commission is partly composed by fixed commission members and partly by newcomers. Each time a member leaves the commission, the hospital offers the opportunity to others to participate. If there are more people applying than the expected, then the hospital accepts all the candidates. The system is very participative and open.

- The Waste commission has appointed in each area/unit - or even floor - key persons for waste management (mainly nurses). Each of these people receives a specific training course on waste management and then it’s this person that will be in charge of training the rest of the staff working in the same area/unit or floor. This people are the “local antennas” for the HCWM.

- This staff has direct access to the Waste Manager and to the Waste commission, so it is supported in terms of information, data, training, wastes logistics, waste operational controls, etc.

- During the worldwide environment day, the hospital takes the opportunity to give recognition to the waste reference staff and to make aware all the hospital staff and visitors how important is the activity carried out by these people.

- The Waste commission carries out waste audits periodically in all the areas.
Macedonia networking in the world’s solid waste flows

The General Assembly of the International Solid Waste Association approved the application of the Macedonian Solid Waste Association MaSWA as an official National Member for Macedonia on 7 September 2014 in Sao Paolo, Brazil. In accordance with this mandate, starting from 1 January 2015, MaSWA will become an active National member of ISWA, and the Regional Development Network- RDN ISWA which focus on South East Europe, Middle East and Mediterranean countries.

MaSWA was presented to the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Prof. Gjorje Ivanov who has shown great interest for MasWA’s activities. The President’s Cabinet also expressed interest to follow MaSWA’s future activities.

The Inauguration celebration lasted for three days, and it enabled direct link to the Macedonian authorities and practitioners with the world’s best solid waste practices. The first Inaugural Conference of the Macedonian Solid Waste Association in the topic of “Macedonia networking in the world’s solid waste flows” took place on 28-30 October 2014, in Skopje. MaSWA’s inauguration ceremony followed a predetermined scenario in this order: reception, museum tour for foreign guests, official event, and cultural part. Affirmation and Inauguration ceremony of MaSWA as a National Member in ISWA took place on 28 October 2014 in the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle in Skopje.

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and ISWA representatives from three countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia participated at the first Inaugural Conference. International guests from the EU and the Region were present at the ceremony as well as Representatives of Macedonia’s central and local government, Academics, EU Projects representatives, public enterprises (waste management utilities), socially responsible companies, students.

The whole event was followed by few National Media representatives. Ms. Ana Karanfilova- Mazneva addressed the audience on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. A short promotional movie on ISWA was broadcasted for the audience. The President of the Regional Development Network (ISWA-RDN), and a Member of the Board, Aleksei Atudorei PhD., handed the acceptance letter to MaSWA’s President.

Informal contacts between participants, which were used for the exchange of contacts and experience, coupled with promotional materials provided by companies participating further contributed to an improved networking.

The project “Developing an EU Standardized Approach to Vocational Qualifications in Healthcare Waste, which is supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union, was introduced to the participants. Project Leaflet and first Newsletter was publicized as well. Among others, promotional materials were provided by sponsors: Enviropian SA Greece, Polyeco Greece, RADCOM, Nula Otpad, and Pakomak.
Industry News

In each issue of *The Hospital Environment & Waste Manager* we will endeavour to bring you the latest industry news from around the EU and across the world wide web. To contribute to this section please email articles or links to Scott Crossett by email to scott@icerms.com

**European report focuses on workplace safety and health in the healthcare and home and community care sector to ensure high-quality patient care**

EU-OSHA, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, has published a report on current and emerging health and safety issues in the healthcare sector which focuses on home and community care in particular and highlights the risk of sharps injuries to patients and workers in these settings. In particular, pages 56-60 of the report identifies the risk of sharps injuries and its elimination with reference to the European Sharps Directive, including improving work organisation, safe systems of work, control of medical waste, PPE and procuring and using engineered safety devices.

Health and social care is one of the main sectors in Europe, employing approximately 10% of the EU workforce, with women representing 77% of healthcare workers. It is a sector that is expanding rapidly, and will provide increasing employment opportunities for the foreseeable future, as a result of Europe’s ageing population, the expansion and development of services to meet the demand for better quality care and an increasing demand for personal care services.

Because of the many different, and sometimes uncontrolled, settings in which they work and the range and type of tasks they carry out, healthcare workers encounter a wide range of risks. These include biological and chemical risks (such as infections from needle-stick injuries and handling hazardous substances), ergonomic risks arising from patient handling and psychosocial risks resulting from working unsocial hours, emotionally draining work and exposure to aggressive behaviour.

All this adds up to make health- and social care a high-risk sector. Although technological advances have helped to reduce or remove some of the traditional risks in the sector, the number of work-related accidents and diseases is still unacceptably high. In addition, these technological advances bring with them new hazards that need to be addressed.

The fact that people are living longer and increasingly needing long-term care shifts the emphasis from the controlled setting of acute hospital care to care in the community and people’s homes. The home care setting presents a particularly difficult work environment owing to small work spaces, lack of training, lone working, little or no supervision and having to face the same hazards as those encountered in, for example, hospitals but with insufficient measures in place to control the risks.

By combining a state-of-the-art literature review and a survey that was developed and sent to OSH professionals in all Member States, this report allows the findings in the literature to be compared with those from the ‘front line’. The results provide guidance for policy-makers, researchers and OSH professionals in terms of improving workplace safety and health in this sector. Something that is essential if the healthcare sector is to meet the challenges it faces and provide high-quality patient care well into the future.

**European Bio-Safety Network**

NHS National Performance Advisory Group Event - Birmingham

The NPAG (National Performance Advisory Group) is an NHS organisation that promotes Benchmarking and Best Value within the NHS, throughout the UK. The key objective is to assist NHS and other public sector managers in the continuous development of their services, in terms of quality, fitness-for-purpose, performance and value for money.

NPAG is a self-financed trading division of the East of England Ambulance Service, offering a range of management services to both public and private sector clients.

**Best Value Groups**

NPAG facilitate over 20 Best Value Groups (BVG) covering a broad spectrum of subject matters of specific interest to NHS organisations. Each BVG provides a national forum for peer group managers to meet, network, critically compare and review services and seek continuous improvement in terms of quality, fitness-for-purpose, performance and value for money.

Scott Crossett, ICERMS took the opportunity to promote the EUHCWM project at a meeting of the NPAG in Birmingham on 6th November 2014. The NPAG members were interested to hear about the new project and many of them have contributed to the questionnaires and the healthcare waste management audits.

Scott has agreed to update the group on the progress of the project at the next NPAG meeting in February 2015.
Resource Pack for training on hazardous waste management

The TRP+ is a work in progress to further develop the popular 2002 resource package that assisted educators in organising comprehensive training programmes on hazardous waste. Professionals can also use the material for briefing notes and project summaries.

Like its predecessor, the TRP+ aims to provide a structured package of notes, technical summaries, visual aids and other training material concerning the hazardous waste cycle from generation to disposal.

The updated version aims to provide a more flexible structure, allowing easier access to and downloading of the information, and creates linkages to sources of information held in partner institutions. The TRP+ is more network-oriented, providing access to other professionals and trainers and facilitating user feedback. While it contains useful technical information also for professionals, the TRP+ is not designed as a practical manual for solving waste problems. The focus of the discussions is on training needs - i.e. bringing out key principles and approaches rather than fine detail.

The interactive Forum allows on-line discussion and exchange of ideas and sharing of information. Space limitation in this TRP+ means that some subjects have not been comprehensively described because they are covered by other manuals. We hope to add some of this material at a later date.

Some chapters reflect waste management experiences that may not be equally appropriate in all countries, emphasising either high or low technologies, rigorous or flexible regulation. This is inevitable in a document for worldwide use. The TRP+ is a basic resource package that trainers adapt, augment and adjust to their circumstances. By adding further knowledge and experience as it becomes available, practicing trainers can make this package remain up to date and relevant in more countries as waste management evolves further everywhere.

http://www.trp-training.info/

Industry News

Healthcare Waste Conference 2015
June 3-4, 2015, Las Vegas Convention Centre, Las Vegas, NV, USA

Join the healthcare waste industry’s most powerful leaders to learn, network, and do business in a forum that’s intimate by design. The Healthcare Waste Institute’s Annual Healthcare Waste Conference is an unrivaled educational event that zeroes in on the most critical legislative, regulatory and technical issues that affect the healthcare waste industry.


2015 Conference on Environmental Pollution and Public Health (EPPH 2015)

The conference will be held from April 10-12, 2015 in Beijing, China. This Conference will cover issues on Environmental Pollution and Public Health. It dedicates to creating a stage for exchanging the latest research results and sharing the advanced research methods.

http://www.engii.org/epph2015/

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SWFM-QF Project—Mission Accomplished

One of the projects funded by the Leonardo Da Vinci programme and in the field of waste management has come to a successful conclusion this month and with broad agreement that the mission was accomplished.

The project—Towards a European Qualification for Solid Waste Facilities’ Managers—SWFM-QF was implemented over a two year period with project leaders SIGMA Consultants pleased with progress and the outcomes.

The core results were as follows:

COMPARISON REPORT:

The SWFM-QF Comparison report analyses and compares the qualifications, national vocational education and training (VET) systems and the labour markets in the field of waste management in the eight EU SWFM-QF project partners’ countries.

THE HARMONIZED QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK:

A harmonized qualifications and training frame for managers employed in different types of solid waste management facilities, was developed, in alignment with EQF and ECVET tools, supporting to the recognition and adoption of the necessary qualifications of solid waste management occupation, across the European Union countries. The respective identified qualifications are presented in the form of a matrix according to EQF level 6 knowledge, skills and competences descriptors.

A suite of qualification modules was developed by the project partners:

Generic Modules

Solid Waste Facility Operational Management; Human Resources Management; Financial and Contractual Management; Environmental Aspects Management; Health and Safety Issues Management; New Projects Management

Waste Treatment Specific Modules

Transfer and Waste Sorting stations; Sanitary Landfills; Incineration Plants; Anaerobic Digestion Plants; Mechanical Treatment Plants; Recycling Facilities; Composting Facilities.

All the developed qualifications are uploaded and can be accessed via SWFM-QF webpage at:


THE INFO-TRAINING TOOLKIT

For each developed qualification module the requirements for a training course were determined. All the training courses information were organised in order to have the format of an e-toolkit, the SWFM-QF Info-Training Toolkit. Info-Training toolkit contains a course concept and structure for each qualification module and requirements for trainers’, trainees’ and training facilities and infrastructures.

Info-Training toolkit contents are uploaded and can be accessed via SWFM-QF webpage at:


THE SWFM-QF NETWORK

The multi-national Network was created, with the engagement and active involvement of key stakeholders from all project’s short and long term target groups. SWFM-QF members along with the experts from the waste management and VET sectors evaluated and validated all the developed qualifications modules and the contents of the Info-Training Toolkit. At the moment, the SWFM-QF Network numbers more than 350 members at 10 European countries.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Grant Agreement Ref. No. 2013-4928/001-001 Project Ref. No 541982-LLP-1-2013-1-UK-LEONARDO-LNW