

Vasco da Gama Movement firstly got its name and its main aims were accordingly decided in Lisbon, on January 2005, after starting its existence in Amsterdam 2004 as a primitive idea. This is where our real international trip began, Lisbon, and this last weekend we took another huge step forward, in Lisbon again. This massive project unavoidably (and very fast) keeps growing during these first years of sweet childhood, and Istanbul after Lisbon will be the main scenario of VdGM development over this 2008 year, apart from the virtual mailing work that we run during our everyday lives.

The Portuguese Association of General Practitioners (APMCG) kindly hosted the VdGM Europe Council Informal Meeting and invited Europe Council members of VdGM to attend the event. The meeting took place in the APMCG head office on June 2008 from the 13th to the 15th.

During Europe Council Meeting in Paris came up the idea of organizing an extra meeting between Europe Council ordinary meetings that used to take place once a year during the WONCA Europe conference. After the great success of the meeting in Lisbon that the Portuguese Association friendly offered us, VdGM has unanimously decided that this is the way we must keep working, and our wish for the Europe council is getting to have these two meetings per year that will allow the movement to keep developing on its natural velocity and not cutting it back.

Almost all of us arrived on Friday the 13th, and we were given a guided trip over the place where we were supposed to meet and work the following two days. After the warmth of the Portuguese people, the delicious dinner and an introductory, easygoing and welcoming evening, we went to have a rest as the hard work waited for us the following morning.



On Saturday morning we had a very productive work session, and we have to highlight the Educational training group presentation (Frank, Germany) of the survey about “Motivation in general practice trainees”, which has been so hard work so far (and the huge work that is left yet....) We also discussed about the problems and solutions to the Basle preconference (which we have to say, it is almost completely organized in spite of having one year ahead, good work, Monica, Switzerland!) and we unfortunately lacked of Fatma, Turkey, the preconference manager for Istanbul, which kept us from working too hard on this subject as we lacked of important details and clarifications.

We had lunch in the Hotel with some nice Portuguese trainees and after this we all went to work in an innovative way, a “promenade work” as it was baptized, which allowed us to discover the marvelous city and surroundings in front of us, then we admired the beautiful view from the Castle of St George, and finally we met sitting on the grass near to the Belem Tower, in a very relaxed way, where we tried to give solutions to some other questions in the schedule, such as the collaboration with other organizations, mainly the WONCA World next collaboration.



We were offered a typical sweet, “Pastel de Belem”, and eventually a very Portuguese dinner, where codfish and Fado’s songs were the main protagonists. We finished dancing Spanish music to celebrate all the success where Tiago, Portugal, showed us “how to keep GP sexy”.

The final meeting that would take place on Sunday morning. Even after not enough hours of sleep and without some of our members that had left, we finished our work with an interactive session, where matters as the website and the Hippocrates program were the main topics of discussion.

The ones who were left, Christian (Austria), Magda (Poland), Birgit (Denmark), Lidia (Sweden) and me were given a taste of the “butterlike” flavor of the Portuguese meat in the arena’s restaurant.

And then, time to go... Time goes by, so fast...

Thank you Joao. Thank the Portuguese Association of General Practitioners.

Thank to all of you. Tania (Portugal), Vicky (Greece), Chantal (Holland), Jasna (Croatia), Darach (Ireland) and the rest I mentioned above. It has been a real honor to start to know you and it is a pleasure to keep on working in this beautiful young project.

And congratulations for the excellent work!

Your friend from Spain, Sara del Olmo Fernández.