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Report on the fourth meeting of
the European Advisory Committee for Medical Research.

Copenhagen, 18-20 October 1978

ICP/RPD 001(4)Rev.1

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Research, Medical - Europe

PARTICIPANTS

Participants are listed in Annex 1.

DOCUMENTATION

Distributed reports and other background material are listed in Annex 2.

OPENING SESSION

Dr Leo A. Kaprio opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

In his address he outlined the present situation of the biomedical research promotion and development programme of the European Region.

An important target was reached with the adoption of the report on the progress of the programme (document EUR/RC28/8) by the Regional Committee for Europe at its twenty-eighth session, (Resolution EUR/RC28/R4)

The next step will be to strengthen contacts with and between national and international bodies in the field of research. Issues to be dealt with are:

- research centres
- coordination at national levels
- strengthening management of research components of WHO programmes
- information system
- contact with other coordination bodies

In his welcoming address Professor C. Burg stated that the Advisory Committee had fulfilled its mission so far, and that a future task of the Committee would be to translate the resolutions of the Regional Committee into concrete action.

It was important to ensure close involvement of those responsible within national research bodies in future activities.

The long list of research items and the limitation of financial resources would have to be taken into account as well as the fact that research is undergoing constant modification.

It would probably be necessary to select a limited number of priority research areas.



IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE
ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE FIVE
PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

General

By way of introduction a limited number of priorities could be selected in order to cover problems of interest to most Member States, e.g.

- hypertension
- information systems
- coordination at country and regional levels.

Planning Group on Evaluation
of Drugs and other Therapeutic
and Diagnostic Substances

The following proposals were made:

- (a) Select "hypertension" as a priority area. Convene a meeting on this topic before summer of 1979. Establish a subgroup to implement particular items related to other subgroups (economics, prevention, etc.)
- (b) Establish a subgroup to discuss further studies of other types of drugs (psychopharmacology). Establish a subgroup to implement particular items related to other subgroups (economics, methods of therapy, etc.)
- (c) Select "psychopharmacological drugs" as priority area, because of the increasing variety of such drugs being developed, the dangers of over-consumption and the rising expenditures in this area.

Planning Group on Problems in
Health Care Delivery

The following proposals were made:

- A. Effectiveness and efficiency of health services
 - (a) Make cost/benefit calculations for various patterns of service.
 - (b) Develop indicators for need and capacity.
 - (c) Develop methods for evaluation of outcomes and innovation in health care delivery.
- B. Determinants and effects of the behaviour of consumers and providers
 - (a) Study the predisposition factors that influence consumers' behaviour.
 - (b) Study medical decision-making, its compatibility with the stated objectives of health services and its relation to health manpower education programmes.
- C. Establishment of one or two working groups with the following objectives
 - (a) Identify topics which are being or have been investigated in the Region.
 - (b) Identify existing institutions in the field of interest.

- (c) Make recommendations on further detailed projects and their possible implementation at the national level.

Planning Group on Economic Aspects of Health Care

Attention should, in general, be paid to the provisions of the report on the progress of the programme (document EUR/RC28/8).

Particular note should be taken of Annex II, section 6.3(4) of the report, recommending that research be conducted on the development of techniques to evaluate innovations in treatment and other procedures.

Cost-benefit analysis calls for a clear understanding of output indicators in treatment performance, both in detail and overall.

The Second meeting on Economics and Health, London, 25-27 September 1978, which could be classified as "macro-level", should be followed by a "micro-level" meeting.

Planning Group on Standardization of Methods, Measurements and Terminology in Biomedical and Health Services Research

The report on progress of the programme (document EUR/RC28/8) in Annex II, section 2.3, outlines seven research areas without giving an order of priority.

It was suggested that special attention should be paid to adopting an appropriate countrywise standardized approach to vital and morbidity statistics, the aim being not to impose standards but to identify those that are in existence and eventually to establish WHO reference standards.

The following points were also mentioned as fields of interest:

- (a) Study of perinatology (premature births, stillbirths, live births).
- (b) Improvement of methods for recognizing risk-groups.

It was emphasized that the cost of standardization could often be very high and that it was frequently considered impossible to standardize each aspect of an operation (laboratory routines, clinical systems, etc.).

It was suggested that the Regional Office should endeavour to establish rules on how to achieve standardization.

Planning Group on Prevention Prophylaxis and Early Detection

The following proposals were made:

- (a) Research should be carried out with a view to determining the best techniques for the evaluation of toxicological risks related to chemical products as well as risks related to modern technology.

This proposal applies more specifically to tests for chronic and subchronic effects as well as tests for mutagenicity, teratogenicity and cancerogenicity.

- (b) Public attitudes towards preventive measures in general should be analyzed.

The reversal of the importance of acute versus chronic diseases and exposure of mankind to harmful and increasingly complex factors in the Region provide further justification for such research.

- (c) Better control systems should be developed to obtain evidence of side-effects of specific drugs or the use of various drugs (interaction).

IDENTIFICATION AND PROMOTION
OF RESEARCH COMPONENTS WITHIN
THE MAJOR REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

Medium-term programming

Dr J.E. Asvall made a presentation on the general structure and dynamics of the programmes and activities in the Region.

Promotion of environmental health

Mr J.I. Waddington made a presentation on the programmes in the field of promotion of environmental health services. He outlined the history and some future aspects of the programmes, which calls for close cooperation with WHO headquarters, FAO and other international organizations.

Health manpower development, Nursing

Miss D. Hall made a presentation on the medium-term programme on nursing/midwifery in Europe, 1976-83, which covered the first outline (document EUR/RC27/7) and the revised issues of the programme.

Prevention of road traffic accidents

Dr C. Romer discussed the programme on the prevention of road traffic accidents.

The Regional Office is responsible for both the European and the global programmes in this field.

The programme has highlighted the importance of prevention within the total field of interest.

At national level there are difficulties in implementation of the programme which, because of its multi-disciplinary nature, concerns various government departments and hence contact with health authorities is limited.

At the regional level the OECD road research programme is of special interest, and close teamwork with this body is called for.

Contacts must be strengthened with other inter-governmental organizations such as EEC and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

Mental health

It was anticipated that the next EACMR meeting will include a presentation of the mental health programme.

ROLE OF WHO EXPERT ADVISORY
PANELS AND COMMITTEES AND
COLLABORATING CENTRES IN
MEETING THE NEEDS OF WHO
REGARDING EXPERT ADVICE AND
IN CARRYING OUT TECHNICAL
ACTIVITIES OF WHO

Professor K. Spies presented the report he had prepared for the WHO Advisory Committee on Medical Research concerning the role of WHO expert advisory panels and committees and collaborating centres in meeting the needs of WHO regarding expert advice and in carrying out technical activities of WHO, which was distributed at the meeting (see Annex 2).

Professor Spies was complimented on his presentation; but as his request for comments could not be fitted into the schedule of the meeting, it was decided that he should have an informal meeting with a number of the participants on 20 October 1978. It was also agreed that members of the EACMR would provide him with comments and/or suggestions, if any, in writing, direct or through the Regional Office.

RESEARCH TRAINING GRANTS

It was emphasized that the future development of research within the medical field would much depend on the future provision of research training grants, for which funds are not currently available.

One possibility would be to reduce the present fellowship budget in order to make funds available for research training grants but this would only help a fraction of those seeking grants.

Since this area of activity was considered to be of direct interest and concern for the Member States, it was agreed that the Regional Office would approach them on the question of support for the programme.

INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR
RESEARCH

Planning Group on Information
Systems for Research Promotion
and Development

The Second Meeting of the Planning Group on Information Systems for the Research Promotion and Development Programme was held in Copenhagen on 11-12 September 1978.

A draft report of the meeting was distributed (see Annex 2) and its Chairman, Dr H. Stein, provided a short commentary.

The main conclusions of the report were to:

- (a) Start collection of data from Member States, outlining the present situation.
- (b) Ask the secretariat to study, possibly through an ad hoc group, the type of information on planned and ongoing health research required.
- (c) Recognize that there is common understanding that the basis of this system is a network of national subsystems.

Information retrieval
systems

Notwithstanding the benefits of an effective information system with access to extensive data storage, it should be remembered that the maintenance of large quantities of data is often very costly, especially when their true utilization is considered (avoid "data graveyards").

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH
INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
(Ethical Review Committee)

Human experimentation in
Member States of the Region

Dr A.H. Wahba presented a report on the subject.

A series of principles related to medical, ethical and legal responsibilities has already been developed by many Member States, always with the backing of adequate legislation.

Ethical review committees at national, regional or institutional levels should analyse and advise on all questions of ethics.

A WHO European Regional Secretariat Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (SCRHS) was established on 20 February 1978 for liaison with WHO headquarters in this field.

Study on the ethical and
legal protection of human
subjects involved in medical
research in thirteen European
Member States

Miss G. Pinet presented a draft report on the study, which was distributed at the meeting.

The study, based on questionnaires, was carried out in collaboration with the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS)

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT
MEETING

It was decided that the next meeting of the EACMR would be held on 17-18 October 1979.

Professor J. Prokopec extended an invitation from his Government to host the meeting in Czechoslovakia. Detailed arrangements are to be made by the Regional Office.

CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

General

Considering that two of the four years scheduled for the EACMR's work have now passed, it was felt that the Committee should now enter a phase in which it would provide the Regional Office with more specific advice.

Limitations of time and funding necessitate a reduction in the sphere of action, with emphasis on a few priority areas of common interest to all Member States (eg. hypertension, economic aspects)

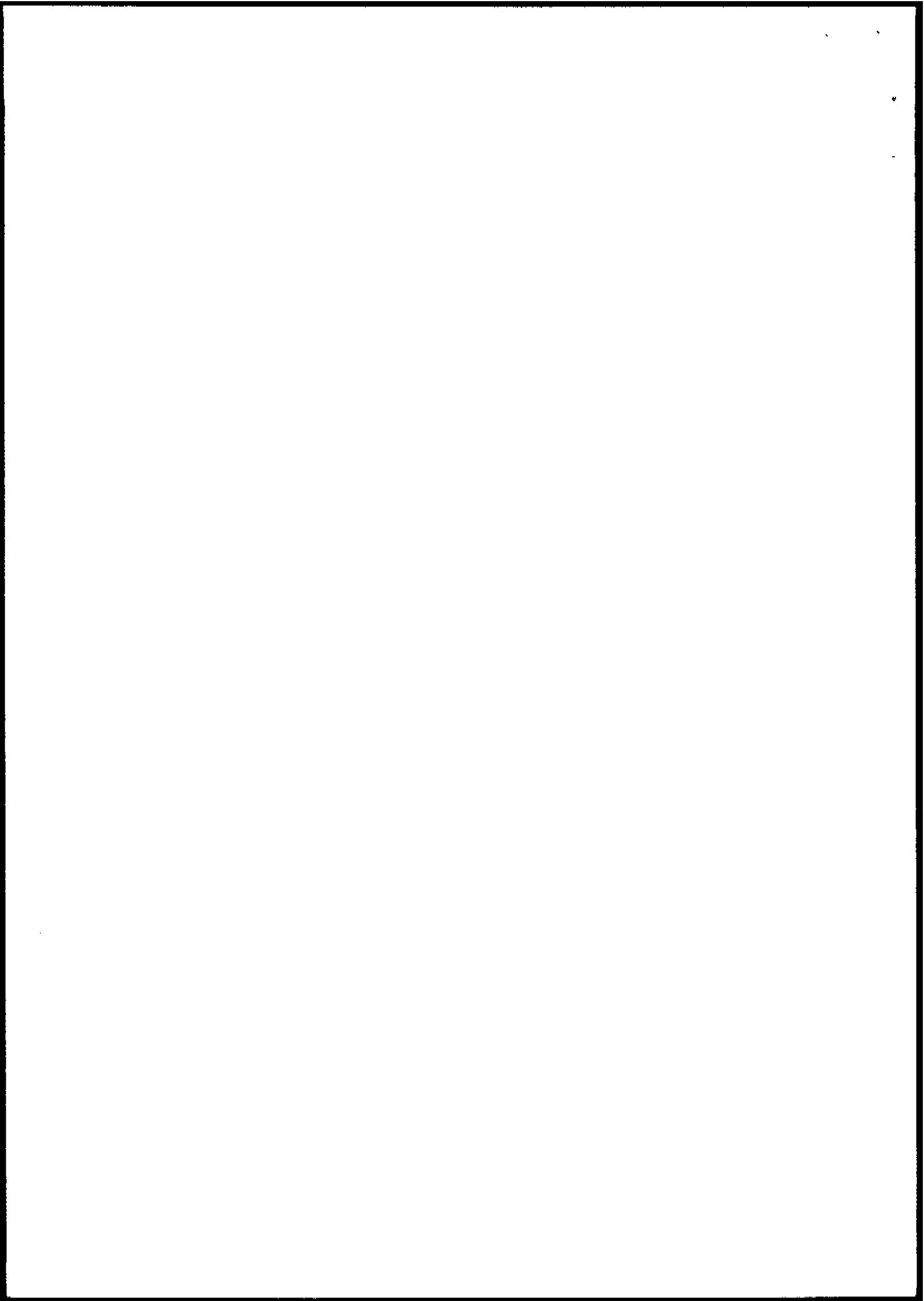
On the other hand, the plan of action must reflect the needs and the capacity of all Member States and conclude with an overall evaluation of the health situation as a basis for further action. This calls for dialogue between the Member States and the Regional Office on the basis outlined in the report on the progress of the programme submitted to the Regional Committee (document EUR/RC28/8). The suggestions made should then be acted upon using an intercountry team approach for the benefit of the entire Region.

Recommendations

The EACMR recommends that the Regional Director should contact all Member States of the Region in order to:

- (a) indicate the need and importance of implementing the Resolution EUR/RC28/R4, taking into account the strategy required in priority areas, as discussed.
- (b) discuss the needs for WHO research grants as well as possibilities for their provision.

Finally, it was recommended that the various research components of the major regional programmes be further delineated and be coordinated with the relevant research priority areas.



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name and title	Address	Country or organization	Participation		
			Meeting days		
			18.10.1978	19.10.1978	20.10.1978 (informal)
<u>Temporary Advisers</u>					
Bergström, S. Professor	Karolinska Institute S-10401 Stockholm	Sweden	*	*	
Buller, A. Professor	Department of Health and Social Security Alexander Fleming House Elephant and Castle GB-London SE1 6BY	United Kingdom	*	*	*
Burg, C., Professor Director-General	National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM) 101 rue de Tolbiac F-75645 Paris, Cedex 13	France	*	*	
Chernukh, A.M. Professor, Director	Institute of General Pathology and Pathological Physiology Baltisskaja Ul.8 Moscow A-315	USSR		*	*
Dorossiev, D. Dr	Department of Cardiac Rehabilitation Sanatorium of Cardiovascular Diseases BG-1720 Bankja	Bulgaria	*	*	*
Häfner, H. Professor	Central Institute for Mental Health J5 Postfach 5970 D-68 Mannheim	Federal Republic of Germany			
Kalimo, E. Dr Director	Research Institute for Social Security Social Insurance Institution of Finland Box 920 SF-00101 Helsinki	Finland	*	*	*
Kostrzewski, J. Professor, Head	Department of Epidemiology State Institute of Hygiene Ul. Chocimska 24 PL-00-791 Warsaw	Poland	*	*	*
Krassnigg, A. Dr Director-General of Public Health	Federal Ministry of Health and Environmental Protection Stubenring 1 A-1010 Vienna	Austria	*	*	
Lafontaine, A. Professor, Director	Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology 14 rue Juliette Wytsman B-1050 Brussels	Belgium	*	*	
Mork, T. Dr Director-General	Directorate of Health P.O.Box 8128 Oslo-Dep. N-Oslo 1	Norway	*	*	

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<u>Temporary Advisers</u>					
Pauli, H.C. Professor, Director	Institute for Research in Education and Evaluation Bern University Medical School Inselspital 14c CH-3010 Bern	Switzerland	*	*	
Prokopec, J. Professor, Minister of Health	Ministry of Health of the Czech Socialist Republic Trida Wilhelma Plecka 98 CS-Prague 10 - 12037 Vinohrady	Czechoslovakia	*		
Siderius, P. Dr, Secretary-General	Ministry of Public Health and Environmental Protection Dokter Reijersstraat 12 NL-Leidschendam	Netherlands	*	*	
Violaki-Paraskeva, M. Dr, Hon. Director- General of Hygiene	2 P. Dimaki Street GR-Athens	Greece	*	*	*
Winter, K. Professor, Rector	Academy for Postgraduate Education Nöldnerstrasse 32-34 DDR-1134 Berlin-Lichtenberg	German Democratic Republic			
<u>World Health Organization</u>					
Kaprio, Leo A. Dr Regional Director	WHO/EURO	WHO/EURO	*	*	*
Minners, H.A. Dr	Office of Research Promotion and Development	WHO/HQ	*	*	*
Nizetic, B. Dr Regional Officer	Office of Research Promotion and Development	WHO/EURO	*	*	*
Spies, K. Professor	c/o WHO/HQ	WHO/Executive Board	*	*	*
<u>Observer</u>					
Stein, H. Dr	Federal Ministry for Youth, Family Affairs and Health Deutschherrenstrasse 87 D-5300 Bad Godesberg	Federal Republic of Germany	*	*	*

WHO/EURO		ANNEX Page 2 1
EUROPEAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH (EACMR)	FOURTH MEETING Copenhagen, 18-20 October 1978 LIST OF DISTRIBUTED REPORTS AND OTHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL	ICP/RPD 001(4) December 1978
Title	Issued by/for - date	Reference
Advisory Committee on Medical Research Report to the Director- General	Advisory Committee on Medical Research 20th session, Geneva, 19-22 June 1978	ACMR20/78 Report
A Plan for the Management of Research in WHO	WHO, Geneva, August 1978	DGO/78.2
<u>Economics and Health</u> Draft report Second meeting on Economics and Health, London, 25-27 September 1978	European Medical Research Councils (EMRC) and World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO) 27 September 1978	ICP/SPM 002(2)
Human Experimentation in EUR Member States	Dr A.H. Wahba, WHO/EURO	
<u>Medium-Term Programme in Nursing/Midwifery in Europe (1976-83)</u>		
1) Twenty-seventh Session Munich, 6-10 September 1977	European Regional Committee 7 June 1977	EUR/RC27/7
2) Implementation of phase 2	Nursing Unit WHO/EURO, 2 June 1978	EURO/NURS/78.2
3) Revised Outline of the Programme (1976-83)	Nursing Unit WHO/EURO, May 1978	ICP/HMD 034
<u>Planning Group on Information Systems for Research Promotion and Development Programme</u>		
Draft report Second meeting of the Planning Group Copenhagen, 11-12 September 1978	WHO/EURO 28 September 1978	ICP/RPD 002(2)
<u>Primary Health Care</u> International Conference on Primary Health care, Alma Ata, USSR 6-12 September 1978	Joint report by the Director-General of the World Health Organization and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund Geneva/New York 1978	ISBN 92 4 154128 8
<u>Randomized Trials in Preventive Medicine</u> Report on a Study Group, Copenhagen, 8-12 December 1975	WHO/EURO Issued 1976	ICP/SHS 006(9)
<u>Report of the Regional Director for the European Region, World Health Organization</u> Meeting/ Alma Ata, USSR, 6-12 September 1978	WHO and UNICEF 1 April 1978	ICPHC/ALA/78.7

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LIST OF DISTRIBUTED REPORTS AND
OTHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL

Title	Issued by/for - date	Reference
<u>Research Promotion and Development Programme</u> Progress Report from WHO/EURO to the Regional Committee at its twenty-eighth session, London 19-23 September 1978 Report on the Organizational study on the Role of WHO Expert Advisory Panels and Committees and Collaborating Centres in Meeting the Needs of WHO Regarding Expert Advice and in Carrying Out Technical Activities of WHO	Regional Committee for Europe 26 June 1978 The Chairman of the Executive Board Working Group on the Study	EUR/RC28/8
<u>Resolution</u> Regional Committee for Europe Twenty-eighth Session, London, 19-23 September 1978	Regional Committee for Europe 21 September 1978	EUR/RC28/R4
Draft report Study on the Ethical and Legal Protection of Human Subjects Involved in Medical Research in Thirteen WHO/EURO Member States	Consultant, Miss G. Pinet (WHO/EURO, Health Legislation) 18 October 1978	ICP/RPD 001(4)/5