



World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) featured two dedicated symposia on the Virtual Euro-Mediterranean Hospital – VEMH.

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In the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Tunis on November 16-18, 2005 (<http://www.smsitunis2005.org/>), two official symposia were dedicated to the development and implementation of the Virtual Euro-Mediterranean Hospital – VEMH.

The VEMH was first proposed by the President of the Republic of Algeria during the EUROMED Conference on Health 2004 as key structure for future international cooperations in Health. Subsequently, a number of productive meetings and successful workshops were held in various international contexts, all dedicated to the VEMH:

- Round tables on VEMH during 3rd EMISPHER International Dissemination Conference, June 24-26, 2004 in Algiers;
- Workshops on Infrastructures for the VEMH, during 4th EMISPHER International Dissemination Conference, September 16-18, 2004 in Istanbul;
- EMISPHER Meeting of the Deans, December 3-4, 2004 in Berlin;
- VEMH workshops and round tables, April 8-10, 2005 in Algiers.

On November 16, 2005 more than 120 international leading experts and high-level decision makers gathered following the invitation by the Tunisian Ministry of Public Health in support of the VEMH initiative by the Algerian Government to discuss the various aspects for the next steps towards the implementation of the VEMH.

After the official welcome address of the Tunisian Minister of Public Health, Dr. Mohamed Ridha Kechrid, international experts gave their view and discussed with the experts in the audience on key topics such as the general requirements for global healthcare provision, the role of the medical experts in the VEMH, the means of integration, technological innovation as well as the best strategies for effective and efficient implementation of the VEMH.

The VEMH builds on the successful implementation of various EUMEDIS Pilot Projects in the Health sector, like EMISPHER (www.emispher.org/) and EMPHIS (www.emphis.org/), as well as in the Education sector, like ODISEAME (www.odiseame.org/). The VEMH will be the key structure for lasting and sustainable international cooperation for the improvement and globalisation of Health care (see www.rrk-berlin.de/op2000/). It will establish and integrate the communication and Grid infrastructures (based on EGEE-Grid: <http://public.eu-egee.org/>, GÉANT(2): <http://www.geant2.net/>, EUMEDCONNECT: <http://www.eumedconnect.net/>, etc.) required for the deployment and implementation of Evidence-Based Medicine as basis for equal access to best medical expertise. This will also boost the establishment and spread of best medical practise throughout the EU and its neighbours, not only in the South (Mediterranean, Adriatic and Black Sea) but also in the East (New Member States, New Independent States).

On November 17 the Faculty of Medicine of Tunis, together with the Tunisian Medical Informatics Society and the Tunisian Society of Telemedicine invited for a scientific symposium on "Telemedicine and Medical E-Learning". This symposium was attended by more than 100 experts and focussed on the role of the VEMH in Telemedicine and medical E-Learning services.

Both symposia contributed to the next steps in the successful realisation and implementation of the VEMH as tool for improved global healthcare.

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