



Newsletter No 10 - 09

October 29th, 2009, Schoeneck

Dear CAM – supporters,

under the patronage of the Indian Ministry of Health's department AYUSH (=Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy), the "who's who?" in the world of Ayurveda met in Baden-Baden, Germany, Oct. 10-12, for the "1st World Ayurveda Congress". At the conclusion of the congress, the organizers of the event, EuAA (European Ayurveda Association), invited representatives from the business world, politics and health care to a political round table for a meeting with the motto: "**A voice for Europe**".

During the presentations it became obvious how difficult it is for the various therapeutic disciplines practiced in CAM (in this case, Ayurveda), to live up to complex EU-structures and regulations... even more so, when cultural differences play a role in the background. A fundamental mistake seems to be the desire to put CAM-disciplines on a 1:1 scale with modern academic medicine. Medication guidelines, food stuffs, cosmetics, training, health education, prevention and strict capitalistic economic structures have a tough time doing justice to a system of treatments based on tradition, experience, individuality, spirituality, cultural and regional differences. **For that we would first require the worldwide recognition of traditional Medical/CAM as an independent system.** To do this, criteria, training and guidelines should be developed on an equal footing with academic medicine in order to establish a second pillar in a common public health care system for Europe.

As became quite clear in Baden-Baden, at present old paths are not being avoided; they are instead being reused with abandon. As called for by the Indian government, a group of European Ayurvedic doctors have founded an organization, that supports making Ayurveda an academic profession. **An official expressed a future goal as being the exclusive practice of Ayurveda through doctors.** Based on the experiences of Italy, Sweden and France in other CAM disciplines, this development appears entirely realistic. No one seemed to notice that the discrimination towards Traditional Medicine/CAM is hereby not ended, but merely continues at a high academic level: **On the one hand, we have an immaterial cultural heritage of CAM worldwide, but on the other hand, we have healing professions and educational systems. These are two different things!**

A representative of the world's largest producer of Ayurvedic products made a point of saying he didn't have a bad conscience. For years it has been totally legal to sell Ayurvedic remedies as foodstuffs and cosmetics, since there is no distinction between food and remedies anyway... and it is not the company's fault (?) that Ayurveda today has not one single medicine that has been recognized.

With a great deal of positive energy, the organizers succeeded in providing an atmosphere for dialogue. Unfortunately, the political powers did not make use of the opportunity in order to work together on developing new starting points.

Many greetings,
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