INITIATIVE - RESOLUTION

FROM:
THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE BALTIC MEDICO-LEGAL ASSOCIATION

TO:
MR. FRANCO FRATTINI, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND SECURITY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

GOVERNMENTS OF THE BALTIC STATES


Date: June 16, 2007.

An Appeal Regarding the Directed Attention to Different Levels of Forensic Science and Legal Medicine Service Institutions in European Union Countries with Special Emphasis on New Member States – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Global processes of integration, free migration, rapid technical development and more influence all spheres of social life including criminality. Some issues become a global problem – drug trafficking, terrorism, Disaster Victim Identification (DVI), Missing Person Investigation (MPI), etc.

Forensic science and legal medicine expertise is a vital instrument for the detection of crime and the administration of justice. The Forensic Science and Legal Medicine Service Institutions play a critical role in the delivery of forensic medicine services to the criminal justice system. In this appeal we seek to direct attention to the different level of Forensic Science and Legal Medicine Service Institutions in European Union Countries with a special emphasis on New Member States.

Today all documents of the EC are on based on recommendations. We see as critically important the need to investigate the Government’s action plan by the mandatory Resolution of the European Commission Directorate General to develop the Forensic Science and Legal Medicine Service Institutions as to the needed basic level which has to be recognized as a priority.

We identify a need for the Government to implement measures to ensure that the criminal justice system could have an uninterrupted access to the full range of forensic and legal medicine services of the required quality standards.

We additionally note the need for a better management of the technology transfer process to facilitate exploitation of academic research with potential for application to crime prevention and detection technologies.

We recommend various measures to improve the handling of expert evidence in court, including better provision of training for expert witnesses, lawyers and judges. It’s critically important to promote
communication between the scientific and legal professions and to provide for ongoing scientific scrutiny of the expert evidence.

One of ways to solve this problem is to combine the powers of law enforcement institutions, including forensic science laboratories and legal medicine institutions which provide irreplaceable means for solving questions which may only be solved using special knowledge.

Unification depends on several aspects:

1. The joint EU and State (National) politics regarding forensic medical examination.
2. The equal basic level of forensic medical experts in all EU Member States.
3. The scientific level of the forensic medical examination institution in all EU Member States.
4. The joint EU and State financial support.

The framework and network of cooperation has to be foreseen as the degree of progress varies and the gaps should be reduced. The areas where considerable efforts are still required are notably those related to the use of EU and State funds.

Signed by: