The Declaration of European Conference on Harmonisation of PhD Programmes in Biomedicine and Health Sciences
Convened in Zagreb on April 24 – 25, 2004

(hereafter referred to as the «Zagreb Declaration»)

After extensive discussion and exchange of ideas and experiences among participants coming from 25 universities and from 16 European countries having different schemes for obtaining PhD degree in medicine and health sciences regarding both form and the way of evaluation, ranging from monograph and evaluation within the same university to high standards of PhD thesis containing four or more papers published in internationally recognized peer reviewed journals, often with high impact factor and the inclusion of evaluators from abroad, the participants of the European Conference on Harmonisation of PhD Programmes in Biomedicine and Health Sciences (hereafter referred to as the «Zagreb Conference» or the «Conference») have agreed on the following:

**Article 1**

PhD programme is intended to enable individuals, after completing and defending their PhD thesis, to carry out independent, original and scientifically significant research and critically evaluate work done by others. To assure the above, the participants of the Conference reached consensus on the following:

**Article 2**

As in any kind of scientific peer review process, the reviewers of PhD thesis should be competent and independent from the PhD thesis, candidates and supervisor. In this sense, the participants of the Conference would like to encourage the inclusion of supervisors from other universities and countries.

**Article 3**

The Conference agreed that a suitable benchmark to describe the necessary achievement is a PhD thesis based on original in extenso publications in internationally recognized scientific-medical journals. The independent contribution of the candidate should be clearly demonstrated (for example the candidate being the first author). The Conference recommends that the minimal requirement for the PhD thesis in medicine and health sciences should be the equivalent of at least three in extenso papers published in internationally recognized journals. In addition to the papers presented the candidate should provide a full review of the literature relevant to the themes in the papers, and, where necessary, a fuller account of the research methods and results. Where the PhD research is presented in other formats, such as the single monograph, reviewers should demonstrate that the contribution is at least equivalent to this benchmark, and should encourage inclusion of publication from the research.
Article 4
While the main demonstration of the achievement should be the thesis and published papers, PhD programmes should include theoretical basis as well as development of technical research skills in taught courses where appropriate.

Article 5
The Conference recommends to all universities to make their PhD programmes publicly available to students, lecturers and tutors from other universities and countries. All medical schools are recommended to create their web pages and written material about PhD programmes in English and to make their programs open to candidates from other universities and countries. The Conference encourages the development of joint PhD programmes in order to enhance the link between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area with a view to ensure higher quality and enable joint degree recognition.

Article 6
The development of well-designed and high-quality PhD programmes requires substantial support by medical faculties, universities, national governments, the European Commission or private sponsors and other institutions in order to engage the best medical students into scientific research so as not to lose our future in medicine and public health.

The Zagreb Declaration was adopted unanimously on April 25, 2004 at 2:00 P.M. by:

Conference participants

Representatives of international and Croatian professional / academic associations and governmental institutions (in alphabetical order)

Association of Medical Education in Europe (AMEE)
   Prof. Jadwiga Mirecka, MD, PhD, Executive Committee member

Association of Medical Schools in Europe (AMSE)
   Prof. Petr Hach, MD, PhD, President

Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region (ASPHER)
   Prof. Charles Normand, BA, DPhil, FFPHM, President

Croatian Medical Association
   Prof. Ivan Bakran, MD, PhD, Vice-President

European Medical Association (EMA)
   Vincenzo Costigliola, MD, President

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), South-Eastern European Cooperation, Curriculum Reform in Medicine
   Prof. Hans Joachim Seitz, MD,

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia
   Prof. Velimir Božíkov, MD, PhD, State Secretary for Health

Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia
   Prof. Pavo Barišić, PhD, Assistant Minister

University of Zagreb, Croatia
   Prof. Aleksa Bjeliš, PhD, Vice-Rector
   Prof. Helena Jasna Mencer, PhD, Rector
Representatives of medical schools and schools of public health (in alphabetical order by country name)

University of Mostar, Medical School, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prof. Filip Ćulo, MD, PhD, Dean
Prof. Mirna Saraga-Babić, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Science

University of Sarajevo, Medical School, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prof. Jadranka Dizdarević, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Undergraduate Studies
Prof. Benjamin Vojniković, MD, PhD, Secretary General of the Medical School

University of Tuzla, Medical School, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Prof. Lejla Begić, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Science
Prof. Osman Sinanović, MD, PhD, PhD Programme Director
Prof. Husref Tahirović, MD, PhD, Dean

Higher Medical Institute of Pleven, Pleven, Bulgaria
Prof. Maria Simeonova, MD, PhD, Head of Medical Genetics Department

J. J. Strossmayer University, Medical School, Osijek, Croatia
Asst. Prof. Gordan Lauc, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Education
Asst. Professor Ante Tvrdić, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Postgraduate Studies

University of Rijeka, Medical School, Rijeka, Croatia
Prof. Andelka Radijić Badovinac, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Postgraduate Studies
Prof. Dragica Bobinac, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Graduated Studies
Asst. Prof. Zlatko Trobonjača, MD, PhD
Prof. Luka Zaputović, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Science

University of Split, Medical School, Split, Croatia
Prof. Mladen Boban, MD, PhD, Dean
Prof. Željko Dujić, MD, PhD, Coordinator of Postgraduate Studies
Prof. Stjepan Gamulin, MD, PhD, Head of Postgraduate Studies Committee
Prof. Marijan Saraga, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Science

University of Zagreb, Medical School, Zagreb, Croatia
Prof. Nada Čikeš, MD, PhD, ECTS Coordinator
Prof. Marija Dominis, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Postgraduate Studies
Prof. Boris Labar, MD, PhD, Dean
Prof. Zdravko Lacković, MD, PhD, PhD Programme Director, Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Studies

University of Zagreb, Medical School, Andrija Štampar School of Public Health, Zagreb, Croatia
Prof. Jadranka Božikov, PhD, PhD Programme Deputy Director
Prof. Luka Kovačić, MD, PhD Deputy Director
Prof. Stjepan Orešković, PhD, Director

Charles University in Prague, First Faculty of Medicine, Prague, Czech Republic
Prof. MUDr. Stanislav Štipek, DrSc., Vice-Dean for Pedagogical Affairs

University of Helsinki, Faculty of Medicine, Finland
Prof. Seppo Meri, MD, PhD, Head, Committee for Postgraduate Scientific Studies in Medicine

University of Hamburg-Eppendorf, Germany
Prof. Dr. Hans Joachim Seitz, MD, Director of the Institute for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology III - Biochemical Endocrinology

University of Szeged, Albert Szent-Györgyi Medical and Pharmaceutical Centre, Faculty of General Medicine, Szeged, Hungary
Prof. László Vécsei, MD, PhD, DSc, Director of the Experimental and Clinical Neuroscience PhD Programme

University of Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
Prof. Charles Normand, BA, DPhil, FFPHM, Edward Kennedy Professor of Health Policy and Management
University of Pavia, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, Pavia, Italy
   Prof. Alberto Calligaro, Deputy Dean

University "St. Cyril and Methodius", Medical School, Skopje, R. Macedonia
   Prof. Magdalena Žanteva-Naumoska, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Postgraduate Studies
   Prof. Ljubica Georgijevski-Ismail, MD, PhD, FESC, Member of the Postgraduate Studies Committee

Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Faculty of Medicine, Trondheim, Norway
   Anne Britt Storeng, Senior Executive Officer, Research Administration
   Prof. Alf O. Brubakk, Professor of Environmental Physiology

University of Oslo, Faculty of Medicine, Oslo, Norway
   Sigrid Bergseng, Senior Executive Officer and Head of PhD Programme University Administration

Medical Centre of Postgraduate Education, Warsaw, Poland
   Zbigniew Wegrzyn, MD, Department of Education and Quality Assessment

Jagiellonian University, University Medical College, Kraków, Poland
   Prof. Jadwiga Mirecka, MD, PhD, Head of the Department of Medical Education

Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poznan, Poland
   Prof. Maciej Zabel, PhD, Head of PhD Program

Iuliu Hatieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
   Prof. Petru Adrian Mircea, Vice-President of the University

University of Niš, School of Medicine, Niš, Serbia and Montenegro
   Prof. Goran Nikolić, MD, Vice-Dean

University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Medicine, Novi Sad, Serbia and Montenegro
   Prof. Nevena Sečen, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Foreign Communication and Foreign Students

Comenius University, Jessenius Faculty of Medicine, Slovak Republic
   Prof. Kamil Javorka, MD, DSc, Vice-Dean for PhD Study

University of Navarra, Medical School, Navarra, Spain
   Prof. Alfonso Sánchez Ibarrola, MD, PhD, member of University PhD Committee

List of other invited lecturers not listed above (in alphabetical order):

Tina Dušek, MD, PhD student, University of Zagreb Medical School, Croatia

Dr. Guy Haug, Expert on the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process), Bruxelles

Alena Kavalírová, graduated pharmacist, PhD student, Faculty of Pharmacy in Hradec Králové, Charles University in Prague

Dr. Cees C. Leibbrandt, MD, Former Secretary General (1999–2002) of the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS)

List of observers (in alphabetical order)

Sandra Belko, BA (English), PhD Programme Secretary, Medical School, University of Zagreb;

Kristina Fišter, MD, Research Fellow, Andrija Štampar School of Public Health, Medical School, University of Zagreb; Asst. Prof. Ileana Linčir, MD, PhD, Vice-Dean for Postgraduate Education, University of Zagreb School of Stomatology; Prof. Josip Madić, DVM, PhD, Vice-Dean of Science and International Cooperation, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb; Prof. Albert Marinčulić, DVM, PhD, Vice-Dean of Education, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb; Anita Putrić, BA (Political Science), Senior Executive Officer of PhD Programme Administration, Medical School, University of Zagreb; Marita Mimica, BA (psychologist), Head of Postgraduate Studies Department, Medical School, University of Split, Miroslav Sabolek, BA (economy), Head of PhD Programme Administration, Medical School, University of Zagreb; Assoc. Prof. Velimir Sušić, DVM, PhD, ECTS Coordinator, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb; Tea Vukušić Rukavina, MD, Research Fellow, Andrija Štampar School of Public Health, Medical School, University of Zagreb.