

EUROPEAN MIDWIVES ARE MEETING IN PARIS

Midwives across the Europe are getting together in Paris on Friday and Saturday 28-29th September 2012 for the European Midwives Association (EMA) General meeting. The French National College of Midwives and the National Conference of Midwife Teachers as the hosting organisations will welcome around a hundred selected participants, who will address issues relevant for midwifery education and practice as well as agenda around women's reproductive health over the 2 days.

French midwives provide the antenatal and intrapartum care for healthy women, as well as the gynaecological follow up of healthy women in the context of prevention and screening. Although, they have one of the highest academic level of training in Europe, the French midwives regret that as their education is not integrated with university training, it is not given the same recognition as other medical professions training and lacks any statutory acknowledgement. Furthermore it hinders the development of midwifery research and growth of evidence based care that benefits mothers, their newborn babies and families' health.

Midwives work closely with women and these two days will allow the exploration of the initial results of the study undertaken by the lobby group CIANE (Collectif Inter-associatif Autour de la Naissance) on what French women expect from the maternity services. Other topics discussed and covered by different working groups include the evaluation of the EU Directive on the freedom of movement of health professionals within the EU/EEA; public health issues such as obesity, alcohol abuse and support offered to women and their families. The role and place of midwives in the French perinatal system will be explored, shared and compared with information from other EU countries.

It is believed that outcome from this meeting will support the recognition of indispensable day to day work of midwives in French maternity units. It will acknowledge that the independent or territorial midwives being the worst paid health profession in France reflects the low value given to their contribution to nation's health. The French health system focusses on hospital approach meaning that French women have no other alternatives for the birth of their children. Therefore the women are denied the benefits that different birth environment and midwifery-led care has on their health outcomes and the midwives are denied their autonomy in providing this care.

Notes to Editor:

European Midwives Association (EMA) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation representing the voice of over 100,000 midwives in Europe. EMA has membership associations and contacts in over 30 countries covering the member states of the European



Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA), EU candidate countries and the Council of Europe.

One of EMA's objectives is to influence the development and the implementation of EU wide legislation on midwifery education and practice.

Through member associations, EMA listens to women's voices and acts as an advocate and lobbyist on issues that affect the health of these women and their families. European midwives: touching lives of over 4.5 million women, babies and their families

Midwifery is an autonomous profession and should be recognised as such.

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The French National College of Midwives and the National Conference of Midwife Teachers are organising the annual general meeting (AGM) of the European Midwives Association and therefore welcome about a hundred participants on Friday and Saturday 28-29 September, 2012.

This Association is made up of the main professional organisations and associations of midwives in Europe. The AGM provides an opportunity to share their experience of providing care to mothers and their babies whilst ensuring the safety of childbirth. EMA's activities aim at improving the quality of perinatal care through, amongst other things, the setting of minimum standards for the education of midwives.

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French midwives provide the antenatal and intrapartum care of healthy women, as well as the gynaecological follow up of healthy women in the context of prevention and screening. Although they have one of the highest academic level of training in Europe, they bemoan the fact that their education is the only medical training provided outside a



university set up. This is a major problem in the development of midwifery research and the growth of evidence-based care for all women and their newborn babies.

This medical profession is indispensable for the day to day work of French maternity units and yet it lacks any statutory acknowledgement. Independent or territorial midwives are not much better off as they are the worst paid health profession in France. Furthermore, the systematic hospital approach means that French women have no other alternatives for the birth of their children.

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