



AIM

Healthcare and
social benefits
for all

**SPECIAL
BRIEFING**

Vienna
June 2022





Dear members,

You have in front of you the special briefing on our General Assembly Meeting in Vienna. It was good that members from all regions could meet each other again in person. And in such a special city, in the heart of Europe and with such a rich history! So here is another word of thanks to our Austrian member SVS, SVS Chairman and Chairman of the Conference of the Social Security Institutions, Mr. Lehner and Dipl. Ing. and Director General of SVS, Mr. Aubauer and all SVS employees who helped make this meeting a success.

In Vienna - after careful preparation - we agreed to amend the Statutes and Internal Rules of AIM. For a number of reasons, this is of great importance for the future of AIM. First, while maintaining our central values of solidarity and not-for-profit, we make it possible for organizations that are not themselves mutuals to become members of AIM. This can strengthen our international base and our position in Brussels. We have also brought our statutes into line with the criteria of an international organization such as the WHO in order to comply with the anti-tobacco rules of WHO, so that nothing stands in the way of good international cooperation. Finally, we have streamlined our administrative structure to increase efficiency without compromising the democratic procedures of our association. This provides a good basis to further strengthen our role and position in the interests of our members.

In addition, we had an interesting and highly topical substantive program in Vienna, focusing on issues such as the role of digitization in healthcare and the impact of platform work for a solidarity-based social system. And above all, as you can see from the photos in this briefing, after all this time there was again plenty of room for personal meetings and networking! In Vienna I also indicated that we live in difficult times. The war in Ukraine, the COVID pandemic and the climate problems present us with enormous challenges and have a great impact on all of our lives. Especially in these circumstances, it is very important that AIM and its members stand for our common goal: to develop and defend universal access to high-quality, affordable healthcare along with social protection, based on solidarity and democracy.

Loek Caubo



Africa & the Middle-East Committee

Members discuss Emmaüs International, Lebanon and the Dakar conference



On 8 June, AIM's Committee on Africa and the Middle East held its meeting in Vienna, Austria. The agenda included a session on the operation of mutuals of Emmaüs International, the outcome of the Dakar conference as well as next steps, the situation of Lebanese mutuals as well as on relying on the diaspora to finance healthcare mutuals.

After a welcome address by Loek Caubo, President of AIM, Thomas Bodelet, Policy Officer at Emmaüs International, opened the session presenting Emmaüs' work in relation to healthcare mutuals. Emmaüs launched its mutuals development programme in 2002 in an attempt to improve access to healthcare to Emmaüs members. Mutuals were launched in 2002 in Burkina Faso and Benin and in 2011 in India and Bangladesh. These mutuals have enabled the Emmaüs Movement to provide access to quality care to more than 5,000 people, while involving the populations concerned in the construction of their tool and federating the skills and energies of a multitude of actors. Areas of action for the future include: improving the tracking, collection and levels of subscription; taking stock of 10 years of partnership with care structures, as well as the improvement of the skills of mutuals managers.

Then, Thomas Kanga-Tona presented the outcome of the Dakar Conference. The event took place on 15 and 16 March 2022 after two preparatory workshops organised by PASS/FNMF and MASMUT. The Dakar conference itself was held under the High Patronage of the Ministry of Community Development and Social and Territorial Equity of Senegal and the CMU Agency of Senegal, along with the Union Nationale des Mutuelles de Santé du Sénégal (UNAMUSC) as national partner. The event was hybrid with 40 participants on site and 100+ participants online. The event culminated in the adoption of the Dakar Declaration - "Achieving health coverage for all - For a common vision between mutuals, social movements, public authorities and economic actors". Now the AIM Secretariat and African Steering Committee are busy developing a work plan to promote the Dakar Declaration. The Work Plan will be presented to the members at the November meeting. Lastly, the members heard about two reports about the situation of Lebanese mutuals. The first, presented by Ghassan Daou, President of the Union Des Mutuelles Santé - Lebanon, explained the overall healthcare system in Lebanon. In the country, the economic and financial situation leads to increasing difficulties for mutuals members to renew their contributions. Mutuals have decided to use their accumulated reserves, in order to support the members who cannot afford to pay their contributions and thus ensure the permanent social protection which remains UTMS's priority. Then Joseph Akiki, President of Caisse Mutuelle Laïque (CML), presented CML as a way to have access to healthcare beyond private for-profit health insurers. Mr Akiki targeted the 15 million Lebanese outside of Lebanon in order to have them contribute to paying for the healthcare of Lebanese. CML put together an international support platform, that it would put to the availability of AIM's members. In addition, he suggests to conduct re-insurance activities in order to help Lebanese mutuals that encounter difficulties.

An exchange followed on all the topics above. Mr Daou and Akiki further explored the relevance and importance of supporting Lebanese mutuals. Mutualists from the Democratic Republic of Congo and of Burundi explained the challenges that they all face. Lastly, the committee agreed to discuss the idea of a global fund for social protection at its next meeting.



Latin America Committee

Gender & Youth High on the Agenda



The Committee met to discuss gender and youth, two central issues for the region and the mutualist movement in general.

Nora Landart, Coordinator of the Gender Commission of the Latin American Network of Women in the Social and Solidarity Economy, presented the activities of the Network, which established gender equality for the sustainability of life as its main focus of work, and which currently covers the following issues: financing for the development of autonomy, tackling violence, equivalent participation, integral sexual health and good masculinities, consumption, integral and care economy, and regional and global integration.

Alexandra Arguedas then presented the gender guide developed by WSM. The guide is divided into two sections. The first is a critical gender analysis of the organisations and their activities. The second stage is the elaboration of an action plan, for which it is necessary to set clear objectives and foresee financial resources for implementing the actions. It is equally important that men are also trained on gender issues.

Verónica Sandoval (CAM), Darwin Cerizola (UMU), María Marta Zuliani (CAM) then joined the first two speakers in a round table discussion, the conclusions of which included the need for a diagnosis and mapping of the activities being carried out by the different networks. The importance of generating training with co-responsibility was also underlined, as well as of reviewing the contents that are communicated institutionally. They also called for the allocation of specific resources in the organisations to work on gender issues, and the recognition of the over-represented participation

in administration and management and under-represented in decision-making spaces. According to the speakers, it is necessary to make visible the care responsibilities in sustaining life, which are currently invisible, and to address the redistribution of spaces in order to access equal opportunities. It was concluded that the role of AIM can be to achieve a greater and better representation of women, articulating all collective efforts and establishing a single agenda that puts women's networks in contact and in articulation to close gaps and move towards equality.

After the round table, the topic of school mutualism was discussed. Hector Acosta (CAM) described CAM's national meeting of young mutualists "Youth and associative integration". With this meeting, CAM is fulfilling its commitment to set up participatory workshops for young people and to surf the militant wave, which is part of the mutualist commitment to greater involvement of young people, developed by AIM. Gisela Carrizo (CAM) presented how they managed to unify the two axes gender and youth with a direct strategy, implementing at an early age the approach of girls, boys and young people to mutualism and cooperativism from and within the school institution.

Finally, Elisa Torrenegra (Gestarsalud) invited the members of the Committee to participate in the Mont Blanc meetings in Colombia, Cartagena de Indias from 17 to 19 October. The participants were informed that a delegation from AIM would visit the Latin American members on the occasion of the encounter.



European Affairs Committee

With one Click to Health and Social Insurance

The European Affairs Committee on the topic “With one click to health and social insurance”, took place in Vienna in the framework of the AIM General Assembly, on 9 June. After the welcome of the AIM President, Loek Caubo, and the SVS Chairman, Peter Lehner, Head of Department, Jürgen Meindl from the Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Public Service and Sport, spoke about the challenges artists like theatre actors and opera singers were facing during the pandemic and how the ministry in collaboration with the SVS managed to get them access to social security. Afterwards, Peter Lehner, SVS-Chairman & Chairman of the Conference of Social Insurances and Dr. Hans Aubauer, SVS-General Manager introduced the achievements of the SVS with regards to digitisation during the pandemic. They presented tools such as the vaccination certificate, ePrescription, sick leave by telephone and telemedicine.

In the second half of the meeting, Andrzej Rys, Director of the European Commission presented the new Commission proposal on the European Health Data Space. It was followed by a panel discussion on “Access and reimbursement of digital solutions in Europe”. Although COVID-19 has accelerated the digitisation on the healthcare sector, health insurance funds and health mutuals still face some challenges. Some lack of the infrastructure, others fight internet access gaps between underserved population. Andrzej Rys, European Commission, Emma Stone, Good things Foundation, Wouter Kniest, ZN, the Netherlands, Rain Laane, Estonian Health Insurance Fund and Frederico Santos, Residencias Montepio, Portugal, were discussing of how to achieve equal access to digital healthcare:

Internet use - not always self-evident

Although one might think that almost everybody has access to internet, Emma Stone demonstrated that 1.5 million UK households, are 6% of all households don't have home internet access. 2 million UK households struggle to afford connectivity via broadband or mobile data and 10 million adults don't have the most basic digital skills. The pandemic has made a difference in digitisation in healthcare but how? Internet use has indeed increased but mostly among people who already used internet on a regular basis. It declined among some groups, especially older people and people with disabilities. There is a growing desire for a “return to normal” feeling. There is a lack of standardisation or inclusive design as well as in person support. And there is a lack of basic digital skills among workforces – especially in front line roles.





Trust as a major component for the up-take of digital tools

All participants agreed that a major component for the up-take of digital tools in trust of the citizens. Rain Laane explained that digital saved information is sometimes more embedded in safety measures than paper lying around. Andrzej Rys underlined this statement by saying that the European Health Data Space has the potential to allow individuals to safely access their data, ensure a proper framework for the use of data for research, innovation, and policy making, and to foster a genuine single market to make digital tools available across the union and make them “workable” for patients, payers, and professionals.

Importance to see the bigger picture – beyond health

Participants concluded that person-centered support and systems are needed when it comes to digitisation. It's the job of people to deliver an inclusive design of digital services, meaning, tailor-made systems that address as well vulnerable groups. In this respect, Frederico Santos underlined the need to integrate digitalisation into homes for elderly, thus improving the service provided to them. It is necessary to deliver an excellent user experience for all. Wouter Kniest stated that cooperation between AIM members and sharing information and experiences is important to learn from each other. Other measures were to invest in community social infrastructure, in the workforce - access and skills and to build evidence of what works and what doesn't.



General Assembly

AIM's General Assembly on June 9th paved the way for AIM's future. With unanimity both the new Statutes as well as the new Internal Rules were adopted. The objectives of the organisation have been reinforced while striving for better health for all without inequalities. To achieve this, AIM has aligned its statutes with the principles followed by the World Health Organisation, thus guaranteeing that it is free of any links to the tobacco industry.

In the future, AIM will also be able to welcome a wider variety of members, while remaining faithful to its core values: solidarity, democracy, and non-profitability. Overarching guiding principle of AIM is still solidarity. It is a tool for reducing inequality and social injustice, objectives, AIM is fighting for over 60 years now.

At the same time, the governance of AIM has been streamlined from a three tier to a two-tier governance, while ensuring that





members have the possibility to continue to actively participate to the life of the association.

The Vice-Presidents and the Special Advisor talked about some of the major activities in Africa and the Middle East, Europe, Latin America as well as Communication and the Mutuals Working Group. There was a major conference in Dakar in March where a declaration was published of how to increase the universal health care coverage and the role of mutuals therein. The European Commission has published a communication on a future European Health Data Space which entails a huge potential accompanied with the right ethical framework and an ecosystem of trust. Latin America focused on activities to implement a Youth Pledge in order to attract young people to the mutualist model. AIM is also working on a new communication strategy as well as the modernisation of its communication tools and its presence on social media. Finally, the French Presidency together with the City of Strasbourg has organised a major event on Social Economy and AIM was represented with a seminar on the demographic and green transition.

Dieter Bösch and Erich Koch were appointed honorary members of AIM, as they both retired from their previous functions and were active and important members of the association.

The General Assembly also was a chance for AIM members to actively participate in the shaping of AIM's future strategy. In a so-called world-café, AIM's members discussed about the priorities, growth as well as services to members. The results of the world café will feed into a strategy that will be presented to the General Assembly of AIM in November.



Seminar

Access to Social Protection for Platform Workers and other "non-traditional" forms of work

Christian Saggartz, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), welcomed the participants of the seminar and explained that the political conservative group (EPP) has put forward amendments to change the Commission proposal regarding platform workers. The European Commission had launched proposals for a rebuttable presumption that a platform worker will be classified as employee, if 2 of 5 conditions are fulfilled. The EPP wants to have collective bargaining instead. MEP Saggartz invited AIM and its members to get into contact with him and to submit their proposals. He would have an open door.

Professor Dr. Brameshuber from the University in Vienna presented in her keynote speech that in 2025, 43 million people will work as a platform worker coming from 28 million today. The





number is not expected to decline. She explained that everything that is discussed is based on the European Pillar of Social Rights, a set of 20 key principles that are supposed to be implemented in 2030. Thereafter, self-employed (as which platform workers are often classified), have a right to have access to the social protection. However, it is only soft law and it cannot be claimed. Professor Brameshuber mentions European legislation for part-time workers, fixed-term employment as well as for temporary agency work and raises the question, whether platform workers shouldn't get similar treatment. Professor Brameshuber mentions draft guidelines on collective bargaining for the self-employed as a possible alternative in the future. The only risk might be that these collective bargaining might be seen as cartels.

Ludovig Voet, Confederal Secretary of the European Trade Unions (ETUC), says that he expects around five million platform workers to be reclassified as employees. Most of them count as employers which gives them a hard time to finance social protection, including health insurance. These are the reasons, why a correct framework is needed. According to him, every digital platform can be classified as an employer. If a worker wants to be recognised as an employee, he is obliged to go to court, which cost a lot of money. He would even broaden the criteria for the status of an employee. Platform work should not open a third category of workers.

Mira-Maria Kontkanen from the Federation of Finnish Enterprises explained that a framework is needed to encourage workers to work. It is normal to expect a different kind of work and social entrepreneurship always comes with risks. The discussions as they are now in the European Parliament are not acceptable for the Finnish Enterprises. She also raises the question, whose responsibility it is to explain that social security is important. AIM members discussed later on that their organisations follow an old model and that discussions about how to include youth better in health insurance are certainly needed.

Kroum Markov from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) stated that things are moving but that it will still be a long way. He said that Europe is a leader in that respect. The ILO will host a conference next year with experts to develop guidelines, international labour standards as well as labour conditions. He also mentioned adapted social protection systems and invited AIM members to participate.



Cocktail Reception

AIM members had the pleasure of being invited to a reception at the National History Museum of Vienna. Networking in such a setting was a real chance that was made possible by AIM Austrian member SVS. Warm thanks to them!





Special Thanks

AIM warmly thanks SVS for welcoming its members in Vienna and for ensuring a smooth and efficient running of our meetings. Thank you very much, dear SVS Chairman and President of the Conference of Social Insurance Institutions Mr. Lehner, dear SVS Director General Dipl.-Ing. Mag. Dr. Aubauer and dear SVS team.

Upcoming Statutory meetings

AIM will hold its next General Assembly virtually on 8 November 2022.

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Presentations available upon request.



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