



Vasco da Gama Movement: The voyage continues

Like the many journeys of Vasco da Gama, the Vasco da Gama Movement (VdGM) has had an intrepid and eventful year. At the start of 2017 I was honoured to take over the helm of this vibrant movement of new and future family medicine doctors and general practitioners from across Europe.

What a year we have had! Our Executive met face to face in London in early February and set the pace for a year of reflection, development and growth. We went back to our roots and reviewed our core aims and objectives:

- 1) To provide opportunities for all European NFGPs/FPs to meet, learn from each other, and gain collegiate support.
- 2) To be the voice of European NFGPs/FPs.
- 3) To improve education and research opportunities for NFGPs/FPs in Europe.
- 4) To promote the discipline of general practice / family medicine (GP/FM) and to enhance the position of NFGPs/FPs in the medical world.

Our goal was to review where we are actively meeting our objectives, where we have gone off course and where we needed to increase our focus. This process led to the creation of new Executive roles to focus on Policy, Awards & Fundraising and Events coordination. In addition, we removed middle management filters between our Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and Liaisons, bringing them to report directly to our Council of members. All of this has been done in an effort to increase communication, collaboration and accessibility of activities. The Executive, Council, SIG Leads and Liaisons collaborated together to produce a [bright and colourful annual report](#) detailing all the hard work carried out across the network.

In April, our colleagues from the French St Exupery Network hosted us in Strasbourg for the 4th VdGM Forum and a successful preforum exchange program. It was a fantastic event, with 13 workshops delivered by our members and special guests, alongside over 15 oral presentations and 13 posters. Plenaries covered important topics such as vaccinations and physical activity, with a keynote from Prof Amanda Howe, WONCA World President, on "Doctors as Patients". The team was rewarded for their efforts to include patients in the design and delivery of the program through achieving accreditation as a "Patients Included" event.



Following just a few months later we held another fabulous event in Prague with the VdGM Preconference and Preconference exchange ahead of the annual WONCA Europe Conference. Keynotes were delivered by Dr Jo Buchanon of EURACT and myself as the new VdGM President. The theme matched the main conference theme of Growing together in Diversity. This was held in parallel with our Annual Council Meeting, where we made several important adjustments to our constitution to reflect our changing needs. During the Council Meeting we were delighted to hold one of the most energetic and well subscribed Executive elections in VdGM history with many positions hotly contested. All the candidates were of a very high standard and in the end we added 6 newly elected members to our Executive:

- Berk Geroglu, Turkey - Relected as Secretary
- Nicholas Mamo, UK/Malta - Treasurer
- Nina Monteiro, Portugal - Exchange Officer
- Vera Pires da Silva, Portugal - Awards & Fundraising Officer
- Elena Klusova, Spain - Events Officer
- Kristina Ziuteliene, Lithuania - Image Officer

July and August saw our new executive meet in London to begin the important process of handing over and planning for the coming year. Plans are in place to strategically review our awards and bursaries, strengthen the quality of our events and the support we offer our host organising committees and to begin exploring policy topics with our membership to feed into wider WONCA policy debates.

Council has voted that this year's policy topics will be Education and Training and Workforce Planning.

Whilst the year may now be winding down, VdGM continues to move at full speed ahead, preparing for our upcoming [Forum in Porto this January](#), where we have had over 250 subscriptions to date and over 100 abstracts submitted.



It has been a thrilling year and we invite you all to join us in 2018 for our Forum in Porto and our Preconference in Krakow.

Claire Marie Thomas
Chair, Vasco da Gama Movement