

PROPOSAL FOR AN IMIA PERMANENT OFFICE

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Since a new international foundation has been set up in Geneva, May 8th, 1996, denominated: "*Health on the Net - HON*", that also has the goals of promoting the development and the application of new information technologies in healthcare as our IMIA association, it has been explored whether the sharing of a joint office in Geneva might be considered.

There are obvious complementary aspects between IMIA and HON and also a common ground:

1) IMIA activities are basically dealing with Conferences, like the MEDINFOs, working conferences organised by working groups and then extending to publications including the IMIA Yearbook.

2) HON, as a foundation, is vocationally raising money for supporting projects of R & D. In article 3 of the Statutes it is stated:

"The foundation will be empowered, in Geneva, in Switzerland, and within the world to support or hire researchers as well as people in charge to develop or create, manage or participate to research projects public or private or also to operational activities or to invest in enterprises already existing or brand new with the reservation that their activities are closely related to the Foundation's goals.

The selection of the means will be done by the Council of the Foundation"

Besides fund raising, HON is also dealing with the world problem of Web sites validation in healthcare using its own server for this purpose.

3) The natural links between IMIA and HON will be related to exchanges especially of experts and expertise for or with the industry. It is already recognised that both IMIA and HON share an "electronic awareness" about the needs for validation and reviewing efforts to invest onto Websites about easy to access bio-medical information.

4) Consequently there is a common interest to explore ways to share a common ground that is to say the facilities of a common permanent office that has to be seen twofold:

- a) the address and space for an executive office related to clerical tasks;
- b) a partly shared director or two directors: one nominated by HON and another one by IMIA.

5) There is no need to return here to the debate of having or not having an IMIA permanent office. The questions are when, where and how! The sooner there will be an experience the better it will be. The intent is to evaluate the benefits for, and arguments against, at the end of the three-year experience.

6) The decisions to be taken might be regrouped by the following options to be presented to the IMIA Board and General Assembly for Votes:

Option 1:

No joint office between IMIA and HON but an IMIA separate office now!

(YES NO)

Option 2:

To organise an IMIA and HON joint office in Geneva mostly devoted to clerical tasks but without sharing the HON nominated executive director.

(YES NO)

Option 3:

Same as Option 2 but in addition to that to nominate an IMIA-Executive Director (on a part-time basis) that could assume the responsibilities of the executive office but collaborating closely with the HON Executive Director.

(YES NO).

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