

Athens, April 27th, 2020

To the Board of the European Union of Medical Specialties (UEMS)

Attention to: Panhellenic Medical Association

Subject: Specialty of Rare Adult Solid Cancers

Priority: High

Dear Members of the Board of UEMS

We were, sadly, just the day before yesterday, informed about a matter of outmost importance, regarding the Rare Adult Solid Tumors effort of becoming a specialty, through the UEMS' suggestion to the Panhellenic Medical Association. We studied thoroughly the relevant files that were sent.

The boards of the four main Oncology Societies in Greece (meaning, the Hellenic Society of Medical Oncology-HeSMO, the Hellenic Society of Radiation Oncology-HSRO, the Hellenic Society of Haematology-HSH and the Hellenic Society of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology-HeSPHO as well as the Hellenic Union of Medical Oncology-HUMO), have concluded the following:

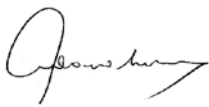
1. The detailed learning objectives of the “proposed new specialty” are covered thoroughly by the objectives and the clinical practice of all the above mentioned specialties. This is a common European practice for many years, since Oncology specialties were established in most (but not yet all) European Countries. There is a well documented need of capturing rare tumors special needs through the Medical, Radiation and Haematology Oncology specialization and training, and this is reflected in the specialties' training programs. The obvious necessity of improvement in the education and management of the rare tumors cannot justify the splitting up of the existing medical specialties. Rare situations and rare diseases exist in the field of every Medical Specialty but this has not led till now in the creation of corresponding new specialties. There is absolutely no need, or space for a separate new Rare Adult Tumor specialty in Europe, or globally, mainly because scientists practicing in this field, should have a complete and thorough Medical or Radiation or Haematology Oncology training. Thus, we are opposing to this proposal. We evaluate the creation of such a specialty as non-applicable and irrelevant, since the Rare Adult Tumors section is covered in the already established Oncology/Hematology Specialties.

2. We absolutely disagree with the emergency procedure that the Board of UEMS follows in this occasion. Now that the whole continent has been struck by the COVID-19 pandemic, with unprecedented casualties in most European Countries, we find it irrelevant and inelegant that UEMS wishes to proceed in this way, with such a matter, based on the sole argument that the UEMS committee has been postponed due to the pandemic.

3. According to our opinion, this is a matter that should be definitely thoroughly discussed, in a convenient for all parties, time and place, when this pandemic is over or at least well controlled (in any case not earlier than the next UEMS meeting on October 2020).

Remaining yours

Dr John Boukovinas



President of HeSMO

Dr Vassilios Kouloulis



President of HSRO

Dr Meletios-Athanasios Dimopoulos



President of HSH

Dr Antonios Kattamis



President of HeSPHO

Dr Nikolaos Androulakis



President of HUMO (a UEMS member)