



Expert Meeting for EU NMFR Project on 13 November 2009.

On 13 November 2009, Ambulancezorg Nederland [Ambulance Care Netherlands (“AZN”)] held an expert meeting in response to the EU Project entitled ‘Identifying the needs of Medical First Responders’ (“NMFR”). The meeting was organised for partners in the acute care chain. The goal of the meeting was to exchange ideas with chain partners about possibilities for implementing conclusions and recommendations for the project, on both the national and international levels. Representatives from the ambulance care sector, the National Association of Trauma Centres [*Landelijke Vereniging van Traumacentra*], the Netherlands Association of Off-Hour Healthcare Centres [*Vereniging Huisartsenposten Nederland*], Netherlands Medical Assistance in Accidents and Disasters [*GHOR Nederland*], the Red Cross, and the Ministry of Defence attended the meeting. After a brief explanation of the EU project, Wiro Gruijters, AZN’s programme manager, specifically discussed the conclusions and recommendations in the area of Training and Education, the skills profile of a first responder and the role of volunteers. Based on a number of propositions, the participants discussed which subjects would need to be more detailed and what priority they would be assigned. The outcome of these discussions is summarised below.

The development of a generic profile of a medical first responder would have definite value. First responders’ roles and duties can vary, but they all have a basic skill set in common, such as safety consciousness, communication skills and the capacity for command and control. What must be clear at the outset is who the medical first responder is and what he is supposed to do. The first step would be to define this at a national level, and then to take stock of the situation at the European level.

There is very little available research into the benefits of trainings for medical first responders. This is absolutely vital and the participants feel it to be of crucial importance for an international cooperative effort. Standardisation and development of a national and international quality mark are things the participants see as being goals for the future.

The participants recognise that volunteer participation in emergency medical services is under development. Framework conditions need to be established, possibly with the details being worked out at the collaborative level. Subjects that need to be included are such things as the duty to assist, liability, necessary competencies, and expectations regarding volunteers in the system.

The development of an international knowledge portal is not as high a priority. This could quickly become an objective in itself and would require an enormous amount of time and energy to maintain. The participants saw more value in jointly developing a quality structure that would integrate lessons learned into the training and education structure.

Ambulancezorg Nederland will contribute the input from the expert meeting at the NMFR Project consortium. From Ambulancezorg Nederland’s perspective, any new project proposals that arise from the NMFR Project must focus on these themes. At the national level, Ambulancezorg Nederland would very much appreciate exchanging more ideas with its chain partners for implementing the suggestions made during the expert meeting.

For more information about the NMFR Project and the expert meeting, please contact Margreet Hoogeveen, AZN programme manager, on +31(0)38- 422 57 72, or at m.hoogeveen@ambulancezorg.nl.