

## Review of the 6th International Pharmaceutical and Regulatory Compliance Congress and Best Practices Forum

Budapest, Hungary, May 14th – 16th 2012

The first international Pharmaceutical Compliance Congress and Best Practices Forum was held in Brussels in June 2007 to bring together, for the first time outside the USA, company compliance professionals, regulators, lawyers, and consultants working in this interesting and expanding field. The purpose was to hold a truly global conference, addressing the key issues of the day. As with the US conferences, the first international conference agenda was mainly developed by company compliance professionals around topics that they wanted to know more about, which is one of the great strengths of these conferences, and continues to be one of their key features.

The sixth international Pharmaceutical Compliance Congress and Best Practices Forum focused on anti-bribery, transparency requirements and local / regional industry body code updates, with many sessions dedicated to issues faced within particular geographies. The Hungarian industry body chose to launch their updated code with a press conference during this conference. Delegates also received information on code updates for many of the major markets, Europe and the International codes.

Possibly the most important aspect of these conferences is that there are so many like-minded individuals in one place at the same time, which creates an environment for sharing experiences and gaining support that would otherwise not be possible. Whilst I understand the economic pressures on companies, especially in the current climate, attending these conferences via the video-link really is a poor second-best to attending in person. For this reason, I would urge readers, where possible, to book early to attend the seventh international conference in Madrid next May, especially as one delegate who has attended all six international congresses expressed the view that this conference in particular was superb!

The keynote speaker Christopher A. Viehbacher, CEO of Sanofi Aventis, delivered an interesting and varied speech in which he paid tribute to his former Global Compliance Officer, Gabor Danielfy, especially Gabor's passion and belief in the industry and its reputation. Chris stated that he had hired Gabor because he had wanted a world class compliance organisation and he knew that Gabor would deliver that. He also talked about the evolution of the industry over the last few decades, including one discussion with a former head of Medecins Sans Frontiers who told Chris that our industry has the resources to sort out many of the world's healthcare problems, such as access to medicines in Africa. Chris highlighted that the \$15bn paid out by the industry to the US government in fines from 2006-10 would have gone a long way towards resolving that particular issue. He also cautioned against stigmatising cultures with different standards in particular areas, as compliance infractions can (and do!) happen anywhere in the world. He concluded by saying that if we don't get compliance right, the freedom to operate for the whole industry could be extremely limited by further regulation, thus compliance officers are unlikely to find themselves out of a job in the near future.

A key initiative presented at the conference is the new e4ethics joint initiative from EFPIA (European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations), EBE (European biopharmaceutical enterprises), and European Vaccine Manufacturers. The Educational Events and Ethical Evaluation initiative provides a pre-assessment of events with regard to the EFPIA Code, particularly in relation to the provisions of article 9, which covers hospitality in connection with meetings. Their website [www.efpia-e4ethics.eu](http://www.efpia-e4ethics.eu) lists all events that have been pre-assessed, including whether or not there

would be any concerns in relation to article 9 of the EFPIA Code. This is a valuable initiative that companies will find very useful.

There was also an interesting session on transparency and disclosure initiatives around the world. A future issue of this journal will focus on this particular topic, especially whether or not the existing and proposed disclosures have already given good enough insights to justify the costs, or they are expected to do so.

Perhaps my favourite session of the conference included giving out boxes of chocolate to those audience members who actively participated in the discussion, thus stimulating further participation and giving compliance officers first-hand experience of receiving incentives!

The final highlight of the conference for me was the concert organised as a tribute to Gabor Danielfy, former Vice President and Global Compliance Officer at Sanofi Aventis, who died in late 2011. Gabor's mother spoke to his friends and colleagues (ably translated by Roeland van Aelst) to explain that holding his memorial concert in Budapest was particularly apt as she and Gabor's late father had moved from Budapest to Paris a few years before Gabor was born. I can only describe Csaba Király's Liszt recital on Bartók's piano as an unforgettable and moving experience. I feel privileged to have attended such a fabulously energetic performance.

To find out more about PCF, their website is [www.pharmacomplianceforum.org](http://www.pharmacomplianceforum.org). To find out more about the International Pharmaceutical Compliance congresses, including how to get copies of the congress presentations, the congress website is [www.internationalpharmacongress.com](http://www.internationalpharmacongress.com).

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Sue has been a Compliance Officer at all levels from single marketing company and European Compliance Officer for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) to international VP for AstraZeneca (AZ). At GSK, Sue established the Risk Management and Compliance Board for the UK marketing company under the leadership of the UK Finance Director. As GSK's European Compliance Officer, she gained a reputation for a pragmatic approach by providing practical help and guidance to Marketing Company Presidents who were keen to manage their compliance risks effectively. As VP Compliance for AZ's International Sales and Marketing Organisation, Sue was responsible for ensuring compliance in every country in which AZ had commercial operations except the USA and Canada.

In January 2010, Sue established the management consultancy, Sue Egan Associates Limited, specialising in Corporate Governance, Compliance, Risk Management and Change Management. Sue works with clients in various sectors (life sciences companies, charities, a government agency, and other industries) to help them find innovative ways to conduct business ethically and sustainably.