



The European Midwives Association together with Bund Deutscher Hebammen e.V. hosted the 2nd conference on the Education of Midwives in Europe in Berlin on 7th and 8th December 2007.

The conference entitled 'Reconciling the Standards' brought midwives from 26 countries together to discuss and debate all issues affecting the education of midwives in Europe. The conference's key note speaker, Ms Pamela Brumter-Coret, Head of European Commission Unit for the Regulated Professions, DG Internal Market, demonstrated why a European perspective is essential for midwifery in Europe in 2007. Other conference topics included: Improving women's health in Europe through midwifery competencies; the EU Directive on Midwifery; the Bologna process and the Regulation of midwifery in Europe.

Whilst midwifery education throughout the European Union is at differing levels of academic standing, it was unanimously agreed that university level education is essential if midwifery education and practice are to generate knowledge and research that will contribute to improving women's health preconception, during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Midwifery, as a university based profession, has been realized in many European countries and the attainment of such graduate status permits midwives to further enhance the health benefits to women through the provision of evidence based care and the generation of research that directly and positively impacts upon women's perinatal health.

Midwives and midwifery in Germany have a strong and proud history and it is apparent that many women in Germany benefit from a high quality midwifery care that offers women a range of options including choice of place of birth. The European Midwives Association believes that midwives can be more influential in enhancing all aspects of pregnant women's health if midwifery education is transferred to the university sector.

Transferring midwifery education to the university sector would further enhance the status of midwives and midwifery in Germany and permit midwives in Germany the opportunity to take and share the lead in the education of midwives within Europe. This would be a welcomed transition to the provision of midwifery education in Germany and would ultimately positively contribute to the perinatal health of women accessing midwifery services.