

# Regional European Organisation of the FDI

## NATIONAL REPORT

Yerevan, Armenia

28 – 30 April 2010

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## POLAND

### I. Changes - in the association and its organisation

The Polish National Committee for ERO-FDI is formed by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists and the Polish Dental Society.

The Polish Dental Society is a scientific association, the membership is voluntary.

The Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists is the main professional organization in Poland. It is the organizational body of the professional self-government of physicians and dental practitioners who are associated in the chambers with equal status.

Membership is mandatory. Every physician and every dental practitioner who holds the right to practice the profession in Poland is a member of the chamber by virtue of the law.

There are 23 Regional Chambers and a separate chamber of military physicians and dentists. The Polish Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists coordinates the work of regional chambers.

The main activities of the Chamber include:

- Awarding the right to practice as a physician or dentist and keeping the register of physicians and dentists.
- Co-operating in matters of professional specialization and continuing professional development
- Information centres for doctors and dentists
- Supervising the professional conduct (acting as medical courts imposing disciplinary sanctions)
- Setting principles of professional ethics
- Representing and protecting the professions
- Expressing opinions on draft legislation and health issues

The majority of Polish dentists are women (appr. 75%).

It has been estimated that approximately 21 800 of all dentists are currently actively practicing dentistry in Poland.

In January 2010 the X General Assembly of the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists took place in Warsaw. As the new President of Supreme Medical Council for the next 4 years' term of office 2010 – 2013 the delegates elected dr. Maciej Hamankiewicz, specialist in internal medicine, formerly Chairman of the Regional Chamber in Katowice.

Following that the elections for other positions in the Supreme Medical Council took place. Dr Anna Lella was re-elected as one of the Vice Presidents and as the Chairperson of the Dental Practitioners' Committee. Dr Lella is still going to be responsible for the matters concerning the dental profession, including international co-operation of the Chamber in the field of dentistry.

## **II. Trends and developments**

### **- in professional politics**

On 2 December 2009 the new law on chambers of physicians and dentists was adopted and entered into force on 1 January 2010 replacing the former law of 1989. The law on chambers of physicians and dentists is a basic legal act establishing the professional self-government of physicians and dentists in Poland and regulating its organisation and tasks.

The Chamber was actively involved in legislative proceedings regarding the draft of the new law which was in majority elaborated by the Chamber and the Ministry of Health endorsed most of our proposals.

Representatives of the Chamber were taking part in all stages of the legislative procedure, including discussions at the Parliamentary Commission of Health. Some of the proposals submitted by the Ministry that were not accepted by the Chamber were eventually deleted. We have been able to defend our position regarding the number of regional chambers (the Ministry proposed to limit the current 24 regional chambers to 16), we have also managed to include a provision that the chambers are successors of the medical and dental chambers dissolved in 1952. This regulation will enable some of the regional chambers to commence proceedings aiming at claiming the properties that have been taken over by the communist authorities without any compensation.

The new law does not introduce major changes regarding the scope of tasks and activities of the professional self-government, but it is going to provide detailed regulations important from the practical point of view and hopefully will facilitate the activities of the Chamber. Especially the disciplinary proceedings are regulated in more detail.

Also this law introduced mandatory indemnity insurance for all physicians and dentists practicing in Poland. The detailed conditions of the insurance are to be determined by the Minister of Finance in agreement with the Minister of Health – the Chamber is in close co-operation with the ministries to ensure that the coverage of the insurance serves well both the professionals as well as the patients.

### **- in health and social politics**

The public expenditure on healthcare in Poland is still insufficient. In 2010 it was lowered even further.

### **- in educational politics**

The discussions related to plans of cancelling the obligatory post-graduate internship announced the Ministry of Health are still taking place. The post-graduate internship in Poland takes 12 months and is a requirement for graduates of dental studies to be awarded the full right to practice the profession in Poland. The purpose of the internship is to deepen the theoretical knowledge and to develop practical skills, the interns carry out their professional activity under supervision.

The arguments of the Ministry are mainly of financial nature - the interns are paid their salaries from the state budget so the cancellation of the internship would save budgetary sources. The Ministry also contends that this would allow young dentists to start their independent professional carrier earlier.

The Chamber is against this plan, as it regards the internship as a very important and useful vocational training for graduates that enables them to get valuable experience before commencing independent practice. Surprisingly, most young dentists who were questioned also declared to be against cancelling the internship.

The Minister of Health set up a committee of experts to elaborate the principles of reform of the under and post-graduate medical and dental education. The representatives of the Chamber are among the members of the committee.

The Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Supreme Chamber elaborated an extensive analysis of the demography related to specialist dental practitioners in Poland. The survey based on the Chamber's Central Register of physicians and dental practitioners indicates the number and age of specialists in each field nationwide as well as in relation to particular regions. The compiled data was forwarded to the authorities and to the national consultants and we hope will be of help in planning the post-graduate dental training in Poland.

Continuing dental education, which is obligatory in Poland, is administered by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists. The contents and quality of continuing education courses are supervised by Regional Chambers.

The Chamber holds the register of providers of continuing professional education events.

There is a wide offer of courses and training conferences in Poland.

Many regional Chambers organize courses and other forms of education, they are generally free of charge. The role of the Chamber in continuing education is increasing. In Regional Chambers "Educational Centres" are being opened in many districts.

The e-learning is rapidly developing in Poland, even though this form of education is still not as wide as we could wish.

### **III. Changes in the insurance system**

The expenditure of the National Health Fund (the organization administering general health insurance in Poland) on dentistry is going to be limited in 2010, even though it had already been insufficient for the dental needs of the society. The prices offered to dental professionals by the Fund are still underrated and often do not cover the real cost of treatment, despite an agreement between the Chamber and the Fund to raise the prices so that they meet the real costs.

Representatives of the Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Chamber are meeting the representatives of the National Health Fund on regular basis. Recent limitation of funding devoted to dentistry has been strongly criticized by the dental profession. We demand urgent action in this field and we point out that should the situation remain as it is now, most dentists will likely refrain from concluding contracts with the National Health Fund.

### **IV. Changes in fees**

The membership fee for the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists is currently 40 (appr. 9 EUR) PLN a month, it was raised by the Supreme Medical Council from 30 PLN with a recommendation for the Regional Chambers to allocate the additional income into educational events organized by the Chambers and available for free for the members.

The membership fees are paid to the Regional Chambers which then transfer 15% to the Supreme Chamber.

## V. Further information

### 2010 Pan European Dental Congress

The Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists was happy to accept the proposal to organize the 2010 Pan European Dental Congress in Poland. We felt it would be an important contribution to the already wide range of dental educational events available in Poland. The Chamber was co-operating with the Polish Dental Society, which was also interested in co-organizing the Congress.

A number of meetings with Patrick Hescot, Gerhard Seeberger and Vladimir Sadovski devoted to the organization of the Congress have taken place (e.g. in Rome at the ERO Plenary Session and in Singapore during the FDI Congress).

It was agreed that ERO and IADP would provide the draft agreement that should be signed by the Local and the International Organizing Committees, so that we could analyze it, adapt it to our mutual needs and proceed with the formal arrangements. It was clearly indicated that considering the time schedule and the large amount of organizational issues to be taken care of, it was very important to commence the drafting of the agreement as soon as possible.

However, due to the fact that the Chamber has not received the draft and in connection with other problems regarding the 2010 Pan-European Dental Congress on the side of ERO and IADP, the organization of the Congress by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists had to be cancelled.

### Events

- In 2009 the professional self-government of physicians and dentists in Poland celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its re-establishment. The celebration events took place in Poznań on 30 – 31 May and were attended by many foreign guests, including ERO-FDI President, dr Patrick Hescot, ERO-FDI President-Elect, dr Gerhard Seeberger, FDI Past President, dr Michèl Aerden, President of the German Federal Dental Chamber, dr Peter Engel and Barbara Bergmann-Kraus from the German Dental Chamber. Representatives of international and national medical organizations, including the Standing Committee of European Doctors, the European Union of Medical Specialists, Medical Chambers from Germany and the Czech Republic, also took part. The celebration events were a good occasion for summing up the 20 years of self-government's activities and discussing the future actions regarding the medical and dental professions, as well as the entire healthcare system in Poland.
- Following the activities related to the first World Oral Health Day in 2008, also in 2009, the World Oral Health Day was celebrated by the Chamber. Information about the World Oral Health Day and related materials are on the website of the Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Chamber and have been disseminated to the Polish dental professionals. A number of articles related to the World Oral Health Day have been published in the magazine of the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists – Gazeta Lekarska, which is a monthly journal published by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists. A free copy is sent to all doctors and dentists in Poland. The readership of the journal includes also other healthcare personnel, pharmacy staff, health-care administrators and medical and dental students. The print run is 149,500.
- Following seminars regarding professional illnesses and other professional burdens in dental practice that have been initiated and organized by the Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Chamber, a book on this subject was published in 2009 with useful information for the dental practitioners.
- The Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Chamber is actively taking part in the largest Polish dental congresses and exhibitions during which special workshops devoted to the

role of professional self-government are taking place. Especially important are KRAKIDENT Dentistry Trade Fair taking place each March in Cracow and CEDE Central European Dentistry Exhibition taking place in September in Poznań (formerly in Łódź).

- In June 2009 the XI Congress of Polish Stomatologists took place in Wrocław. It is an important event organized every 5 years by the Polish Dental Society. The Supreme Chamber prepared a session about the role of the professional self-government in legal and ethical aspects of exercising dental profession.
- Representatives of the Supreme Chamber attend the annual Conference of professors and deans of Dental Faculties at the Polish Medical Universities which is held in Nałęczów in April. Participants thoroughly discuss the under- and postgraduate dental education, especially specialist training. This meeting is an important forum of discussion and presentation of opinions and ideas related to dental education in Poland.

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