

Regional European Organisation of the FDI
NATIONAL REPORT
Baku, Azerbaijan
29 – 30 April 2016

POLAND - Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists

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 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 chambers 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 Polish Dental Society is a scientific association, the membership in the Society is voluntary. The Chamber and Society cooperate in many fields.

There are also other, numerous dental scientific societies in Poland, acting within the specific fields of dentistry.

II. Trends and developments

- in professional politics

No major changes in the reporting period.

- in health politics

After a number of years of continuing efforts of the Chamber to convince the Minister of Health that there is a need to amend the conditions of using the ionising radiation in dentistry, the regulation has been amended in late 2015 and some of the Chamber's arguments have been accepted. The amended limits the scope of tests applicable to dental radiograph, changes the period of tests (every 2 years instead of every year), allows the use of movable dental radiographs and allows internal audits in dental offices to be carried out by one person instead of two.

The next step is implementation of the new directive 2013/59/Euratom and the Chamber will closely monitor these works.

Following publication by European Commission of the proposal for regulation on mercury which includes provisions on dental amalgam, the Chamber adopted a position, indicating that:

- we are of the opinion that an EU regulation is not a correct legal instrument to regulate the use of dental amalgam in the same way throughout the whole territory of the EU;
- we believe that differences between respective EU Member States regarding the use of amalgam (prohibitions, restrictions, mandatory use of separators etc.) are still too big to regulate this issue in the same way in every member state, whereas the Minamata Convention clearly leaves the choice of measures (at least 2 out of 9 proposed) to be adopted to each Party of the convention and that should be based on each party's domestic circumstances; the issue of amalgam should therefore not be a part of this regulation on mercury, but should be left for decision of each Member State;
- we indicate that the proposed regulation envisages taking those 2 measures (out of 9 proposed in the Convention) which are a direct burden on dental providers (and consequently on their patients) and none of the other measures which are directed towards health authorities, healthcare systems, manufacturers and which are in a longer term more effective in reducing the use of mercury in dentistry;
- we are in favour of restricting the use of dental amalgam in its encapsulated form – in Poland amalgam is in fact used this way;
- we are against the mandatory installation of amalgam separators – it is not a method of reducing the volume of mercury used in dentistry, it may only reduce emissions; also we point out that not all dental facilities need to be fitted with separators, e.g. orthodontic, prosthetics or periodontological facilities; we also note

that in Poland fitting of separators might be relatively more costly than in other Member States.

- in educational politics

It seems that the Chamber's demands to drop the idea of cancellation of the postgraduate internship (which is to enter into force already this year) will be accepted by the Ministry of Health and the internship will remain in place. A draft law regarding this issue has already been sent to public consultation and we hope it will be adopted which would keep our educational system as it is: 5-years of dental studies followed by 12 months of supervised internship before the award of full right to practice the profession.

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. A few years ago the Ministry of Health decided to cancel this requirement which was widely criticized by the medical and dental professions. We see the internship as a very important and useful vocational training for graduates that enables them to get valuable experience before commencing independent practice.

Also, being aware of the huge demand, the Chamber is continuing to organize (free of charge) courses for dentists in the field of radiation protection. Completion of this course, followed by an examination, is a condition to use ionizing radiation in dental practice. The course has to be repeated every 5 years.

In 2015 it was organized at the Supreme Chamber for dentists from all regions of Poland and in regional chambers for their members.

The Supreme Chamber completed a series of EU co-funded training courses focused on the so called soft competences (or soft skills) i.e. behavioural competences like communication with patients, also legal knowledge – trainings were conducted by psychologists and lawyers and were addressed specifically to young physicians and dentists.

- in the insurance system

No major changes in the reporting period.

The Minister of Health announced plans to reform the organization of the healthcare system by dissolving the national Health Fund and a shift from insurance type to budgetary type of healthcare financing. The concrete draft regulations however have not yet been published.

III. Further information.

Interview with the FDI President in Chamber's monthly journal

Dr Patrick Hescot, FDI President, shortly after taking over the FDI presidency gave an interview which was published in the Chamber's monthly journal "Gazeta Lekarska".

Also regular information regarding international issues and activities of international organizations are published on "Gazeta Lekarska".

Conference on public trust to medical and dental professions.

On 3 March 2016 the Chamber together with the Senate of the Republic of Poland – the upper chamber of the Polish Parliament – co-organized a conference which took place at the premises of the Senate on the issue of public trust to the medical and dental professions. The conference was attended by representatives of the Chamber, medical universities, Parliament.

One of the guests was dr Patrick Hescot, FDI President, who made a very well received presentation regarding dentistry.

World Oral Health Day in 2016

As in previous years the World Oral Health Day on 20 March 2016 was an occasion for Polish dentists to draw the public attention to the significance of oral health and the role of dental practitioners within primary healthcare.

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