

# **Regional European Organisation of the FDI**

## **NATIONAL REPORT**

**Paris, France**

**11 – 12 April 2014**

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### **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

Within the reporting period there have been no significant changes within the Chamber. Throughout 2013 elections at the regional chambers have taken place and on 20 – 23 March 2014 the XII General Medical Assembly takes place during which there will be elections at the level of the Supreme Chamber.

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

#### **Works on the implementation of the revised directive on recognition of professional qualifications.**

Following adoption of the directive amending the chamber is involved in preparatory works aimed at implementation of the new regulations. The Chamber is in favour of introducing the EPC for the dental profession as we see it as a possibility to speed up the procedures and make it easier for our colleagues, at the same time not infringing the rights to take the final decision by the competent authorities in each Member State.

We are also looking closely at the introduction of the alert mechanism which should not infringe justified rights of the medical and dental professionals, i.e. should be limited to final, enforceable decisions and should respect the protection of personal data.

### - in health politics

#### **The directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare.**

The transposition of the directive 2011/24/EU has not taken place in Poland within the deadline set by the directive (25 October 2013). The Ministry of Health is still working on the draft of the implementing legal act. It is not only detrimental to Polish insured who would want to avail themselves of the possibilities provided for by the directive, but it also negative for Polish providers (medical and dental) who are still not fully sure how to provide services to patients insured in other EU Member States.

### - in educational politics

Following the adoption of the new regulation on the specialist training of physicians and dentists works are under way on the new curricula of dental specialties. Representatives of the Chamber are actively involved.

Continuing dental education, which is obligatory in Poland (a credit points system is in place with 200 points to be collected by a professional in each 48 months reference period), is administered by the Chambers of Physicians and Dentists. The contents and quality of continuing education courses are supervised by the Chambers and they hold the registers of providers of continuing professional education events.

There is a wide offer of courses and training conferences in Poland. Besides acting as a supervisory bodies, the Supreme Chamber and many regional Chambers themselves organize courses and other forms of education, they are generally free of charge for the dental practitioners. The role of the Chamber in organizing continuing

education is significant. Special units called “Educational Centres” are established in many regions, there is also one at the Supreme Chamber.

The Supreme Chamber is currently carrying out two EU co-funded projects aimed at training courses for physicians and dentists – especially young colleagues. These training focus on the so called soft competences (or soft skills) i.e. behavioural competences like communication with patients, also legal knowledge – trainings are conducted by psychologists, lawyers.

Also, being aware of the huge demand, the Chamber is organizing (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 the insurance system**

In November 2013 the new regulation of the Minister of Health on the dental services available under the general health insurance was adopted. The new regulation introduces no significant changes – the list of services covered by the insurance is still relatively limited.

Following that in December 2013 the President of the National Health Fund issued new ordinance on the criteria for assessment of offers made by the dental service providers intending to conclude a contract with the Fund.

The Chamber continued its engagement in negotiations with the National Health Fund, also giving opinions on the drafts of the above indicated regulations and requesting certain amendments. Some of the issues put forward by the dental profession were accepted but generally the regulations are still not satisfactory enough for dentists wishing to conclude contracts with the Fund for provision of dental treatment under the general health insurance.

Many dental practitioners in Poland operate exclusively on the private market, outside the general insurance scheme. Prices at the private dental market are not subject to regulations – they are agreed between the practitioner and the patient, no binding fee schedules are in place.

The Polish Supreme Audit Office has recently published a report on the study regarding dental care in Poland.

The report has confirmed majority of concerns already expressed by the dental professionals e.g.:

*“Ministerial schemes to promote mouth health and hygiene are not effective enough. 92 percent of Polish teenagers suffer from caries and the percentage of toothless adults is growing. Most children in villages and small towns have almost no access to public dental care.”*

*“In 2011, nearly 80 percent of the insured did not use the dentist’s services as part of the National Health Fund”*

*“The services provided in outpatient clinics based on NFZ contracts have a limited scope, some procedures are not subject to refund and most patients do not even know where the nearest dental office contracted by NFZ is located.”*

A short summary in English of the audit's findings is available at: <http://www.nik.gov.pl/en/news/nik-on-dental-care-in-poland.html>.

The subject of the audit was the publicly funded dental care and prevention programs – thus the overall picture is negative.

But at the same time the Supreme Audit Office praised the dental care providers – vast majority of them being private entrepreneurs – for proper delivery of high quality services in accordance with the required standards.

It should be noted that the Chamber, following a request of the Supreme Audit Office, has provided a lot of useful materials for the auditors.

### **III. Further information.**

#### **Conference “STOMATOLOGY 2013 – THE YEAR OF COMBATING HEAD AND NECK CANCER”**

As in previous years the Dental Practitioners' Committee of the Supreme Chamber organized a conference aimed to underline and raise awareness of the importance of oral health and its connection with the general health.

In 2013 the aim of the conference called “STOMATOLOGY 2013 – THE YEAR OF COMBATING HEAD AND NECK CANCER” was to underline the crucial role of dentists in prevention and early detection. The speakers drew attention to the fact that a lot of systemic diseases have oral manifestations, and can be diagnosed at the dental office. It was underlined that dentists are often healthcare professionals of first contact – many people are likely to see a dentist, even just for a check-up, more often than their GP or other specialist.

Attention was paid to proper public dissemination of the information presented at the Conference.

In November 2013 the Senate – upper chamber of the Polish Parliament –organized a conference on the role of professional self-governments in a democratic country. Representatives of chambers, including the Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists, attended the conference, presented their views on the role of the professional self-governments and challenges they are facing and took part in an interesting discussion.

The 6. World Oral Health Day in 2013 that took place with a new date on 20 March was celebrated by the Chamber both on national as well as regional levels, e.g. extensive materials in the Supreme Chamber's monthly journal.

In 2014 the 7. World Oral Health Day will also be actively celebrated.

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