

**Regional European Organisation of the FDI**  
**NATIONAL REPORT**  
**Prague, Czech Republic**  
**27 – 28 April 2012**

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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 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 Polish Dental Society is a scientific association, the membership in the Society is voluntary (it has currently appr. 5 900 members). 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

#### **Extraordinary General Medical Assembly.**

In February 2012 the Extraordinary General Assembly of the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists took place in Warsaw. The discussion was focused on the condition of the Polish health and dental care system and the medical and dental education.

The Minister of Health and other key persons of the Polish healthcare participated in the Assembly. The Assembly was also attended by Colleagues representing medical and dental organizations from other countries.

### - in health politics

#### **New legal regulations related to the exercise of the dental profession and dental education.**

A set of laws regulating organisation of healthcare in Poland, the exercise of the dental profession and dental education entered into force in 2011.

The Law on medical activities is a new legal act that regulates setting up and functioning of facilities providing health and dental care in Poland. Its provisions apply to all public and private facilities, including dentists exercising profession in a self-employed capacity, and to all kinds of health and dental care services. The Law introduces one common register of healthcare facilities (incl. individual and group practices of dental practitioners).

The new law is a complex regulation, intended to unify the legal forms of facilities providing health and dental care in Poland.

One of the issues since long advocated by the dental profession is to allow self-employed dentists working in their own dental practices to employ another dentist. This, unfortunately, has been realized only partially – another dentist may be employed but only in order to undergo postgraduate training (internship or specialist training) and only for the period of this training.

The Law on reimbursement of medicines, foodstuffs intended for particular nutritional uses and medical devices, which entered into force on 1 January 2012, set a number of administrative and financial responsibilities on medical professionals who issue prescriptions for products subject to reimbursement within the frame of the general health insurance in Poland. Under this law the professionals were to verify whether the patient is insured and whether the patient has any additional rights under the insurance. On each prescription they also had to indicate in detail the level and scope of reimbursement for the prescribed products.

From the very beginning of the legislative procedure the medical doctors were strongly against this kind of regulation, indicating that these kind of responsibilities are on the one hand going far beyond the scope of medical activities and on the other hand impose liabilities based on issues that are out of their control. In fact, the new law shifted on doctors a large part of administrative tasks related to the provision of reimbursed products. Dental practitioners, who are also covered by these regulations (even though to a lesser degree, in practical terms) in their majority supported physicians and joined their actions.

The Chamber, in cooperation with other professional organizations of doctors, took up several actions against the new law. This resulted in some amendments, however the issue is still not fully resolved.

Support and solidarity for our actions expressed by numerous Colleagues from other countries, including a letter to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland sent by the ERO President, was very important and contributed to the development of the situation.

Amendments to the Law on the professions of a physician and a dentist cancelled the 1-year postgraduate internship for those students who will commence their dental studies in 2012 and provided changes regarding the State Dental Exam and related to specialist training (introduction of a modular system of training).

The amended Law on the professions of physicians and dentists no longer requires completion of the postgraduate internship in relation to those students who will commence dental studies in 2012 (that means that the last internship will be organized in 2017).

The profession was against this proposal, 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. Therefore, the professional self-government strongly opposed the cancellation of the mandatory postgraduate internship. It was clear that the reason of the proposed cancellation of internship was of a financial nature – it was intended to bring savings for the state budget (the interns are paid their salaries from the state budget).

Unfortunately, the amended law does not require completion of post-graduate internship anymore, despite the fact that majority not only of dental practitioners, but also dental students, were against it.

### **Use of ionising radiation in dentistry.**

A new regulation of the Minister of Health on the conditions of using the ionising radiation in medicine and dentistry was adopted on 18 February 2011.

However, dentists have a negative opinion on the regulations that apply to dentistry. Dental radiological equipment is treated – especially in regard to maintenance and testing of the equipment - almost in the same way as radiological equipment used for other medical purposes, even though dental radiographs pose much lower risk. In

result, should a dental practitioner thoroughly comply with all the requirements, the use of radiation by dentists would become unproportionally and excessively costly and time consuming.

The Chamber has indicated a list of issues that should be changed in order to facilitate the work of dentists, without endangering the safety of both patients and dental staff. Initial works have been commenced within the Ministry of Health and we hope that the regulation will be soon amended in accordance with the proposals of the dental profession.

### **Medical devices**

In 2010 a new Law on medical devices was adopted in Poland in order to fully transpose the directive 93/42/EEC

The Law – at least in the part regarding custom-made devices manufactured by dental laboratories - turned out to be vague and is a source of misunderstandings and lack of certainty due to contradictory interpretations as to how it should be realized by dental care providers.

Representatives of the Chamber cooperate with the organizations of dental technicians in order to gain unequivocal interpretation of the legal provisions and the procedures that should be followed by dental laboratories and dentists and to elaborate recommendations for both professions.

### **- in educational politics**

As mentioned above the obligatory post-graduate internship is to be cancelled as of 2017.

Currently the post-graduate internship for graduates of dental studies in Poland takes 12 months and is a requirement 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 cancellation of the internship will result in a necessity of changing the curriculum of and structure of the dental studies 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.

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

- **in the insurance system**

The current state of the Polish general health insurance in the field of dentistry is still unsatisfactory state. Due to the limited scope of the services covered by the general health insurance and financial limitations and taking into consideration all the bureaucratic burdens related to contracting with the Fund, the majority of dental practitioners in Poland operates exclusively on the private market, outside the general insurance scheme.

**V. Further information.**

**Conference “Stomatology 2011” and World Oral Health Day 2011**

The Dental Practitioners’ Committee of the Supreme Chamber has been continuing activities in connection with the World Oral Health Day. As in previous years, a special conference was organized. “Stomatology 2011” which took place on 28 September was devoted to epidemiology, diagnostics and organization of dental care in Poland. Many renowned dental practitioners as well as researchers had presentations at the conference. It was attended by representatives of mass media, health administration and many dental practitioners. It was followed by many press publications.

**Conference of professors and deans of Dental Faculties**

Each year representatives of the Dental Practitioners’ Committee 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 spring.

Participants of the Conference 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 and its results are often basis for future changes.

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