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### **Country Report Hungary May 2013**

The Hungarian State has taken over all hospitals. They are financed on DRG basis by the one and only state owned health insurance company. However, due to the low level of the DRG basic fee, caring patients increases the indebtedness of hospitals. Suppliers are only willing to deliver to the institutions for cash; therefore the lack of medicaments, technology and medical appliances are a constant phenomenon.

Although migration has slightly decreased, still about a thousand doctors leave the country each year. There is a constant lack of doctors and nurses, thus the burdens of those staying have significantly increased. The number of on-call duties is high, waiting lists are long, and the aggression of dissatisfied patients often affects physicians.

A new law further worsens the Human Resources situation, which on the one hand makes it possible to retire at the age of 63 in the public sphere, on the other hand forbids the payment of salaries and pensions at the same time. Physicians may ask to be released from these measures, if granted, their salaries could be raised with the amount of their previous pensions. Though the conditions are still not clarified, the actual consequences will be visible from 1<sup>st</sup> July.

There have not been any further steps taken in eliminating the system of gratuity money, which is a more sophisticated form of corruption, and is frequent in the manual medical professions. Those doctors who do not work in these areas – like anaesthetists, radiologists, pathologists, infectologists or laboratory doctors – utilising the demand of market circumstances, are able to negotiate higher wages and receive their income as self-employers in entrepreneurial fees. According to a new law it is feared that these contracts might be violently terminated. The majority of doctors affected might try to find a job abroad since there is a danger of not being able to make a living.

There is a continuation of pay-rises that was started in 2012, negotiations are under way and physicians may receive a pay-rise of 100,000 HUF (330 EUR) monthly within the two years. However, even with this sum Hungarian doctors stand as one of the lasts in the European wages list, since only Rumanian and Bulgarian doctors earn less than us. In the popular target countries our colleagues earn five to ten times the Hungarian salaries. The situation is especially critical in terms of General Practitioners. Their wages fall behind the salaries of hospital doctors, there is no new blood and their average age is 57 years. Although there was a pay-rise of 14 % in this area, it is way behind the sufficient level.

The Hungarian regulation of work organisation more or less corresponds to the European Work Time Directive, and the trouble is that the severely indebted hospitals do not count the doctors' wages according to the law, therefore regularly harming them.

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Budapest, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2013