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HRVATSKI LIJEČNIČKI SINDIKAT - CROATIAN MEDICAL UNION

Zagreb, Šubićeva 9, Croatia

REPORT FOR THE FEMS MEETING IN PORTO 3-5th October, 2013

On the first July this year, Croatia was granted the full membership in the European Union. At the very beginning, Croatia is facing problems. When we deal with the issue of medical doctors, we can say that the Government has started to cut back on our acquired rights that are guaranteed by labor regulation, by international conventions and by good business practices. The Directive on working time is being violated, the right to a daily and weekly break is being breached, the call duty has been introduced due to which the medical doctors must be available, at home, all the time, in order to render urgent medical help. Certain medical doctors must make them available on a monthly basis for a period longer than 15 days around the clock and have no right to decline their duty.

The County court granted the claim of one of the trade unions being a non-signatory of the Collective agreement and passed a ruling cancelling the valid Collective agreement for the health care workers signed in October 2011, allegedly due to an alleged technicality. HLS filed an extraordinary remedy at the Superior Court, with the respective proceedings still going on. As a consequence, the salaries have been lowered. Thereafter, many negotiations between the medical unions and the Health minister took place in order to regain the cancelled rights but the Health Minister refused to agree. The reaction of the Medical doctor union and the Nurse trade union was the commencement of the strike that started on the 18th of September. The nurses broke off their strike on the 26th September, 2013 while the strike of the medical doctors is still going on. This is already the third strike of medical doctors within the past 10 years.

The Health Minister is trying to break the strike in various way: he is threatening with firing people, he is revoking the appointment of department chiefs that have supported the strike, he is manipulating the public audience through the media by releasing false information regarding very high salaries of medical doctors, and by reporting on the allegedly low number of medical doctors taking part in the strike. The Strike Board chaired by the doctor Babić invited all the medical doctors and nurses participating in the strike to gather in a great number on Friday, the 20th September, at 5 minutes to 12 o'clock, in front of hospitals to show to everybody to which extent they are ready to defend their rights. Some TV cameramen and journalists were invited too to record this massive manifestation. It was a great decision, since we have made it clear to everybody in the country that the strike is massive and that the Minister is not telling the truth.

From the newspaper polling of the citizens and patients, it can be seen that most citizens support the requests of medical doctors and nurses.

The strike shall be continued for the time being according to the law and the prescribed protocol according to which only urgent cases are being treated according to the weekend protocol at hospitals. So far, during the strike, there have been several new negotiation attempts between the Ministry and the Union, but no final agreement has been reached on the new Collective agreement.

Zagreb 29. September 2013

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