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Dear colleagues,

Since our last meeting in Porto, BgMA has continued to work in all the areas set in its Statutes. Although the intensity of the political protests abated during the cold winter days, tension and disorder in healthcare remained ever so “hot”.

The economic crisis showed no sign of getting to an end; the overall decline of production, consumption and foreign investments in the country didn't allow increase of any kind of expenditure, including healthcare expenditure. This led to adoption of a restrictive budget limiting not only the investments and growth abilities of the hospitals but even the simple planning of the near future. The prognoses of the Bulgarian Medical Association about running out of financial resources for the healthcare long before the intended end of the budget period unfortunately started to come true. At present, after the first quarter of the year the deficit in the hospital care is 20% and is expected to reach 40% by the end of the year. And, at that, in the same time the staff is paid salaries of just several hundred euros.

We should also add here the unfavorable trends in the healthcare to which we draw the attention again and again:

- the accumulated financial reserve in healthcare is used to balance the general budget of the country thus taking away the possibility it to be used for health purposes,
- poorly organized system for postgraduate training,
- unchanged negative trend of young and well qualified doctors and nurses leaving to work in Western Europe.

The political situation during the past period is characterized by low management capacity in healthcare, lack of experience and political will to adopt difficult decisions which are inevitable when trying to come out of the trap of populism. The bubble of political promises has been incessantly expanded for years, and that mainly at the expense of healthcare – impossibilities are promised, including extremely facilitated and free access to healthcare, treatment abroad without control, reduction in the user fee (co-payment), unlimited access to expensive medicines for large population groups and other similar measures, leading to uncontrollable financial pressure on the medical establishments and decapitalization of the system.

Restoration of the system for postgraduate education is progressing. The Accreditation Council established at the Bulgarian Medical Association operates successfully. A large part of the necessary amendments for optimal performance in this area were adopted in the Statutes of our Association.

Regarding the incomes in the healthcare system, there is no positive change, except perhaps the fact that the healthcare professionals haven't seen the huge reduction in their incomes that happened in some other sectors.

In organizational terms, the Bulgarian Medical Association implemented some new and powerful ideas with regard to strengthening the management structure, development of rules for the operation of the Accreditation Council for postgraduate training and improvement of the expert staff of the Association.



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