

Bruxelles, 26 October 2016

Dear Colleagues,

The European Union Treaty, concerning the health sector, allows free circulation of people and professionals.

The education and training of European doctors and specialists follow common rules that bring to their full recognition all over the EU, and this is a positive feature of being member States.

On the other side, the same treaty gives full autonomy in the organization of the National Health Services.

There are still some common rules, the first of them is that the Health Services in EU respond to the criteria of a welfare state; besides, general working directives exist, like the European Working Time Directive, but what concerns organization, and, of most interest for us, the working conditions, depends on the national decisions.

The European Commission calculated that, by 2020, there will be, in Europe, a lack of doctors, dentists and nurses reaching 13%, but already now we know that some member States, in particular, have a long time need for doctors and nurses due to insufficient national production of graduates.

Therefore the migration of doctors from EU areas where working conditions are worse, towards better ones, is a known phenomenon, because of which some EU member States suffer the leave of professionals, who will never go back.

This migration has a double cost for these countries: first of all, the cost of the education and training, sustained by the national finances, goes in favor of other, wealthier, EU member States.

The second, and higher cost, is the lowering of the quality of care in these countries, due to the lack of professionals.

According to the actual research data, the highest number of professionals leaving their country is a middle-age population of doctors, that is a population of the most expert and skilled professionals, obtaining very convenient contracts, depriving their country and people of their competence.

These data should induce the policy of the EU member States to contrast the phenomenon: elevating the number of graduates where there is an evident lack, and improving the working conditions to contrast the professionals' migration.

But, if some Member States have an economical interest to attract doctors, rather than spending money to empower their universities, it is a primary interest of the countries that are victims of migration, to enforce their organization to keep their professional at home.

It will be a great advantage for the country, as the low quality of healthcare means more, though late, economic costs and immediate social costs. The idea that cuts to the Healthcare System will favour the national economy is proved to be wrong.



*Dr Enrico Reginato, President*

The EU Commission recommended the Member States, in times of economic crisis, not to reduce the resources to the health systems, because in periods of crisis there is still more need for healthcare.

It is equally obvious that professionals prefer to remain home, with their families, traditions, homes, friends, social relationship, language.

FEMS has always underlined this problem and sustained this position with Member States facing this problem and we recommended the Bulgarian Authorities, on the 4th of April 2016, not to exclude the Bulgarian Professionals from the reform of the NHS.

If the EU Treaty and rules cannot prevail on the national autonomies, it is a big challenge for the national doctors' associations and organization to struggle to defend the health of their citizens and the working conditions of their members.

The union of all the Bulgarian Doctors can have a strong influence on the Healthcare System if the professional status prevails over the employee condition.

We wish all the success to your action.

Best regards

Enrico Reginato

FEMS President