

Dr Enrico Reginato, President

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Slovenian Doctors have been in general strike since 8th November asking for improvement of their working conditions.

In our experience with the behavior of some EU Member States in the field of healthcare and working conditions, FEMS, once again, realizes that doctors are considered more as a cost than a resource for the Country.

Healthcare is a form of protection of the citizen, with daily requests of care and cure by all the citizens. The length of the waiting lists, beyond the organization problems that are not able to reduce them, is the symbol of the need for care by a very wide number of people.

It is well known that bad working conditions reflect on the lowering quality of assistance and low quality of medical care means an elevation of the costs.

Therefore the cut of resources, considered a way of saving money and sometimes the first choice of politicians and healthcare managers, becomes an elevation of costs and, mostly, of social costs.

But the request of Slovenian doctors is not only economical, though widely justified.

It concerns the role of doctors in the Society and the organization of the system.

Though universally considered obsolete and not appropriate, the "Green Book", written in 1982, when the actual technological development was still to come, continues to define the standards of doctors' work and schedules.

Maybe it is used to hide the lack of doctors in Slovenia and, again, we go back to the concept that less doctors is an advantage for the healthcare economy.



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The doctors complain about the inequalities of behavior in different health structures towards their activity and the unequal role of the length of the different medical specialties in the salary levels.

Most of the problems of Slovenian doctors derive from an excess of bureaucracy and lack of organization culture in the complicated world of public healthcare.

In the classification of EU Member States healthcare systems, done by Eurohealth consumers index and updated every year, the Dutch healthcare system has covered the first position for many years. The main reason for their first position is considered to be due to the fact that healthcare is directly managed by doctors, having eliminated from the health system all the different figures like economists, managers and politicians.

FEMS can confirm, from the exchange of information among our members, that where the doctors' decisions in the organization of the healthcare system are more considered, the system works better.

Slovenian doctors are asking for an improvement of the health system in Slovenia removing some unexplainable obstacles, that reflect a scarce knowledge, by the managers and politicians, on how the healthcare really works in the daily practice.

Doctors' activity, beyond the difficult profession, is a complicated one: doctors have a triple fidelity to respect: the fidelity to the employer, the fidelity to the scientific knowledge and, most of all, the very delicate fidelity to the patient and his/her family, in the very tight and particular kind of relationship that can arise when people are sick and need help for their life. Fidelity disciplined by deontological rules that, sometimes, are over and beyond the common law.

These different types of fidelity should not conflict, but often it happens, and the worst thing that may happen is that doctors are obliged to the fidelity to the employer and its economical and, sometimes, unexplainable bureaucratic rules, against the interest of the patient.

We can add the fact that the doctor, being exposed in the first line and in the highest responsibility of healthcare, is seen by the patient as the most responsible for the bad service they receive. While the real responsible people are hidden in their offices far away.

We suggest that the Government considers doctors as a part of the system, not a counterpart, like if they were fighting for interests that go against the general interest of citizens.

The proposal of Slovenian doctors are absolutely logical and tend to the improvement of the service and we think it is unwise to oblige them to a protest that creates great problems to people just to refuse to accept their suggestions.

Enrico Reginato

FEMS President