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### **National Report SLOVAKIA – from November 2012 till May 2013**

During this period, especially in 20th of November 2012, all V4 countries organised a common protest action called „Sick health care system is threat for everyone“. In this day, protest action was organized in the hospitals in V4 countries. A lot of doctors and other health care workers had been demonstrated in the front of their own hospitals.

In Slovak republic, the main city in this protest action was Žilina city, which is located in the north part of Slovakia close to the border line with Czech Republic and with Poland.

In this day, in Žilina Hospital, after end of protest action, directory of Faculty Hospital with Policlinics (FHwP) Žilina had given dismissal to 18 doctors – to 7 doctors from Orthopedic department (4 doctor specialized in an adults orthopedy, 3 doctors specialized in paediatrics orthopedy ) and also to 11 doctors from „department for long term sick patients“. All these doctors were signed by the director of Fhwp Žilina like „redundant“. In the same day, director of FHwP asked all trade unions organisations functioning in FHwP Zilina for consent to give a dismissal from an employment (based on slovakian Labour Code) for Peter Blasko, M.D, also for „redundancy“. P. Blasko is a chairman of LOZ in FHwP Žilina, simultaneously he is a vice-president of LOZ in Slovakia and he is also a official delegate in FEMS from Slovakia. It was unprecedented attack at trade union representatives.

After this dismissals for 18 doctors through the „redundance“, the situation in hospital began to be very serious. „Redundant“ doctors from Orthopedy depart. disapproved to accede to overtime and stand-by duties – they hade been by identified by director of hospital like redundants. After this, director of FHwP was not able to compensate breakdown of all these doctors in overtime and standby duties ! and therefore, the military doctors were called by ministry of defence to Žilina hospital!

The others doctors, from collegiality to their colleagues, in December 6th 2012 announced to directory of FHwP that they had not signed any accordance with doing overtime and standby duties over limits of the Labour Code- 134 doctors announced this fact ! But ministry of health and media presented this fact as „denial of services“, but it’s not true ! Doctors announced this reality only. And it is important to say also, the minister of health of Slovak republic was acquainted about this situation with overtime and standby duties - in accordance with Labour Code in Žilina hospital in the end of June 2012 already ! That majority of doctors which perform overtime had not signed agreement with the overtime over limit of Labour Code since May 2012.

So, on the day „D“ - the 7th of December 2012, first day after annoucement from 134 doctors they had not signed opt out over the limit of the Labour Code, minister of health had arrived to the hospital for „calm down the situation“. Till this time she was talking that in Žilina hospital is everything OK and the director was doing his job very well. The president of LUP in Slovakia – Peter Visolajský sent the central lawyer of LUP with mandate to do all for finding final resolution between directory of FHwP and protesting doctors.



After 6-7 hours of very hard discussion the solution was „on table“- doctors which took notices as „redundanced“ and their other colleagues announced to do overtime and standby duties over the limit of The Labour Code. Dismissals for doctors were abolished. So, owing to big action of all doctors have been working in Žilina hospital and because of solidarity of these ones, we saved all doctors which had got notices and saved all departments to cancellation.

But till beginning of February 2013, trade union representatives admitted to long negotiation process for finding a new deal about:

- a, direct conditions about payment of overtime work and standby duties
- b, working conditions compliance with the Labor Code and EWTD

So, nearly all autumn 2012 and early winter 2013 was about FHwP Žilina :-)

But what about slovak health care system, we are still in the same point like one year ago. Slovak healthcare system is still waiting for meaningful reform. Reform, which would take into account the needs and demands of patients as well as healthcare professionals. Unfortunately, politicians still prefer cater to the financial and interest groups. This leads to the persistence of non-transparency, abuse of public resources, abuse of health workers, their working conditions and professional development.

The fundamental problem of the current system is still inadequate payments by health insurance companies for health care. There is no established legal obligation for health insurance companies to pay for care. Although the patient is adequately treated by the medical facility, the insurance company does not pay a fair price that reflects the actual cost.

Cataloging of performance is still not done. There is no price for performance determined in accordance with the law on prices. The classification system simply does not work. This broken system has existed for over 20 years.

Spending on healthcare per capita is insufficient and well below the EU average. The serious problem that causes a lack of funding is inadequate payment for state insured - economically inactive people (children, students, pensioners, the unemployed). It is also the population with the largest share in the volume of health care. While "non-state" insured (economically active citizens) pays an average for healthcare 100 € per month, state for "its" insured pays an average of 30 euros. This payment is insufficient to cover the total cost of healthcare.

It is not intended the range of basic health care paid from compulsory public health insurance system and the superstructure above standard health care financed by commercial insurance or direct payments, based on expert medical arguments.

The role of professional and trade unions organizations is marginalized. Healthcare professionals who work directly in the system and know its shortcomings and possible improvements have no real chance to impact the system. Persecution of trade union representatives in hospitals. Efforts to criminalize doctors.

Postgraduate medical education is often at substandard levels. Employers often obstruct compulsory circulation, professional training, there is a lack of clear and binding rules for the authorization of compulsory circulation before attestation. The role of the University and Faculty Hospitals is in this process unresolved.

The number of staff is inadequate, there is the violation of the Labor Code and the minimum personal norms. Salaries of employees in health care are not adequate for their work. There is a continued exodus of health care professionals abroad for better working conditions. Slovakia is the country where in the past 8 years, the number of doctors decreased.  
([Http://www.vpl.sk/files/image/praktik% 201\\_11% 20obrazky/obalka\\_3s\\_ubytok\\_lekarov% 20.jpg](http://www.vpl.sk/files/image/praktik%201_11%20obrazky/obalka_3s_ubytok_lekarov%20.jpg))

The directors of state hospitals which are publicly funded are not subject to public scrutiny, and public and employees do not participate in the control of fair operations of hospitals. Contracts with health insurance companies are really nonpublic, and often unfair to the medical facilities. Hospital directors - political appointees - agree with them annually.



Outpatient network of physician-specialists is not open. Entering the outpatient network is not based on equality of opportunity. Decisions are often made on the basis of lobbying and political influence. Also in this sector, this is manifested by limitation of insurance companies and unequal access to individual providers and applicants without clear rules. Patients' waiting times for treatment are often excessive because of this.

It occurs because of the linking between owners of insurance companies, networks of health care providers, laboratories, pharmacies, hospitals. The insurance company reports favorable to "its" facilities at the expense of others. This conflict of interest is obvious.

Unfortunately, the healthcare system, its development and stability is still not a priority of the governments for years. Many politicians understand health care in Slovakia only as a source of funds to pay their sponsors. Instead of respecting agreements and finding solutions governments focus on suppressing the rights of healthcare workers, there is the escalation of political pressure, long-term ongoing negative campaign against health professionals in their requirements for fair working conditions.

And in the end, is still unwillingness of politicians comply written commitments – still unfulfilled government's commitments in the Slovak Republic called „Memorandum“.

Now, we are facing another very dangerous situation- ministry of health via member of Parliament Jozef Valocký from the ruling party SMER- Social democrats- is proposing a law on „criminalisation of doctors“. By this law it will be possible in Slovakia to give to doctors fines and send them to a jail in case of emergency situation which can be announced by a government. The problem is that the government can announce a state of emergency in the situation which is clearly caused not by natural disaster or war but by government's idleness like it was in november 2011. It will be a tool how to revoke all future movement of doctors. In additional there is proposed of right of ministry to withdraw the registration in chamber without a trial in court only upon a decision of the Ministry for 10 years, it means the cancelation of the practice. We want to talk about this proposal of the law in a special separate item on the agenda of FEMS GA and ask for FEMS GA support.

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