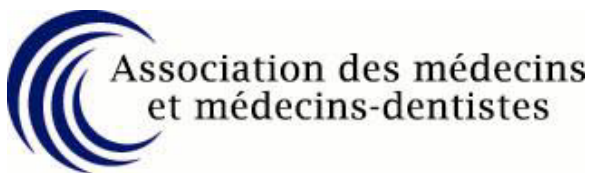




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## **National Report 2004. Luxembourg**

The Luxembourg's medical and hospital sector is, as well as the whole country, waiting for the result of the next national elections of June the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Since our last meeting in Copenhagen, it becomes more and more evident that in Luxembourg the problem of financing the health sector is real. The evident signs of a lack of money can be observed daily, especially by analyzing the reactions of the representatives of the national health insurance company during the budget negotiations with the hospital representatives. It is obvious to say that after the elections the new government will have to make proposals how the deficitary evolution in the health care sector can be stopped.

The reasons of the problem are known by nearly everybody involved in the process and therefore I think that solutions can be found.

First, it is evident that the social contributions as well on the patients' than on the employers' side must be rised because since several years this has not been done. On the other side the salaries in the hospital sector, nearly 75% of the budgets, continue to rise according to the collective contract's stipulations. During the last months, a strike in the hospital sector was even announced by the syndicates because the representatives of the hospitals did not agree the demand of the trade unions to create new rights for the nurses, especially the right for unpaid leave, the right for partly work time and the right for early retirement at 50 years.

Another explanation of the decreasing of the financial means is the global economic situation which did follow even in Luxembourg the European trend. On the other side it is clear that the improvement of the hospital sector (building of several new hospitals and acquirement of new medical technologies) could not be realized without high financial burdens : Real quality is mostly linked to higher costs.

Nevertheless in this difficult economic field, the AMMD could assure a 6,7% rise of the price of especially the medical consultation in the negotiations with the national health insurance company.

Compared to the global economic situation, this rise is nearly insufficient.

In the European context, it is important to stress out some significant evolutions .

1. **Luxembourg as “border country”** continues to be considered as some “Eldorado” for physicians, and daily hospital directors are in front of numerous demands of accreditations of doctors coming from all the old and new European countries. On the other side the trans-border activities in the medical sector are increasing, as well on the doctors’ than on the patients’ side.

Therefore it is obvious to say that a European regulation must be installed in the near future. “Schengen II” is not far away!

2. The new “**Règlement Grand-ducal**” concerning the running of the **Medical Council in hospitals**. Since Augusts 2003 this law has become a reality in the Luxembourg hospitals and the activity of the Medical Council is more adapted to a modern running of quality improvement and economic considerations. Legally the medical council must now be more and more involved in administrative, financial and structural questions. Nevertheless, it is quite difficult in the context of our liberal system to interest the physicians in the management and also in the economic discussions of the hospitals. I think in one year I can give a better report about the consequences of this new implication of the physicians in the management and the quality improvement of the hospital field.

3. The recent involvement of the Luxembourg hospitals into the **EFQM (European Forum Quality Management)** induces automatically the participation of the physicians in this procedure. At the first time however one important condition is not yet solved to guarantee the success of this quality management system. Indeed, the financial basis has not yet been determined by the National Health Insurance and therefore the doctors are in the most hospital still in the starting boxes. During the next weeks the hospitals federation “Entente des hôpitaux EHL” will have discussions with the representatives of the National Health insurance.

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