

Document AEMH 10-033 “Motion on Compulsory Registration” adopted at the 63rd AEMH Plenary meeting in Lisbon 8 May 2010

Motion submitted by the Spanish Delegation on Compulsory Registration

Introduction:

On the basis of the Internal Market Services Directive, from which health care services are excluded, the Spanish government is considering the possibility of eliminating the compulsory nature of physicians’ registration.

Medical chambers (orders/colleges) are an ethical, democratic forum for professional freedoms for the purpose of regulating exercise of the profession in order to protect patients’ interests and the quality of health care. Registration with such orders should therefore be a right for patients and an obligation for physicians.

In Spain, the government plans to use the law transposing the Service Directive (*Ley Omnibus*) to modernise professional associations with the aim of improving their efficiency and, in the case of medical associations, preserving patients’ safety.

This law covers aspects such as the point of single contact, on-line registration, membership dues in line with associations’ costs, etc.

The General Council of Spanish Medical Colleges agrees with all this. But it disagrees and is concerned by the legal possibility that registration may become voluntary.

Registration should be compulsory to ensure that the whole profession is regulated on the basis of the same criteria for control and the same medical ethics, this being a profession that is at the service of patients and one that should be united, responsible and autonomous.

Physicians must be competent and honest with their patients, they must guarantee confidentiality and professional secrecy, endeavour to improve the quality of health care and access to the system, and be responsible in their commitment towards patients and in the way they administer resources.

The advantages of professional self-regulation include more active participation in the system by professionals, greater capacity considering the complexity of specialist knowledge, and better professional acceptance of internal regulations, all at lower, socially acceptable costs.

Moreover, self-regulation helps physicians adapt to the situations that arise in the exercise of their profession, assists in the detection and penalisation of professional sanctions and mitigates political confrontation.

MOTION BY THE AEMH

The Plenary Assembly of the European Association of Senior Hospital Physicians urges the Spanish authorities to respect self-regulation by Medical Associations in defence of patients’ interests, and considers, within the EU area of freedom and democracy, that compulsory membership should be a right for patients and an obligation for physicians.

The AEMH is a professional association of and for European hospital physicians, who have final responsibility for the patients, with the primary goal to improve all aspects of hospital life in Europe.