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Report of Italian delegation to AEMH meeting 2006-04-12

This year has been dense of events for Italian hospital doctors.

First of all, we almost succeeded in closing our national work contract, that had expired in 2001 without a signal from the Government, in the past four years, of its will of renewing it.

The new contract has been signed concerning the rules and, anyway, it expired again in December 2005; therefore we are again without contract for the next four years. But this is very common in our hospital history.

The economical features have been discussed and solved only for the years 2002-2003: there has been an average increment of our salaries based on the official rate of inflation. For the remanent two years, we agreed on the increment, still based on the official rate of inflation, but we are still waiting for the money.

Among the new rules, we introduced an article that obliges all the sanitary and hospital units to build up local joint commissions to study and prevent the phenomenon of Mobbing. We also obtained (small) increment of the indemnities for night duties.

The renewal of the contract occupied most of the energy of the Italian medical trade unions in the past year.

Problems remain concerning our National Health Service, that, especially in some Regions, faces economical as well as quality problems, among them, the long waiting lists to diagnostic performances, specialist opinions and treatment.

These features are complicated by the co-occurrence with the regular outpatient activity, of private, fee-for-service, professional activities of hospital doctors, the second ones having no or very short queue; there is a wrong, nevertheless common opinion, that the long queue of the first one can be due to the second.

The discussions and the proposals coming from Ministers of Health and local rulers are very numerous but, up to now, with little result.

The second event concerning hospital doctors has been the election of the new board of the National Federation Of Medical Associations (FNOMCeO): after more than 30 years, a hospital doctor has been unanimously elected president of FNOMCeO, doctor Amedeo Bianco, who is well known to our association, as he was for long time head of the Italian delegation to AEMH.

Among the projects of the new board, relevance will have the reform of the Medical Associations, cooperation with the Ministry of Health for CME/CPD, updating of the the Deontological Code, protection of patients through the quality of professional performance.

The political situation, in Italy, has been changing in these days with the national polls; thank to a small difference of votes, the center-left alliance won; the procedures for the new Government will be long and we have no idea, yet, about the forthcoming Minister of Health.

In general, we must say that the attitude of the expiring Government was in favour of more private and market in the health system, compared with the current expressed opinion of the new majority.

Our National Health Service receives a financing/GNP that we consider insufficient for the actual needs, and, anyway, lower than the European average.

We are waiting for the future.