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Germany: Hospitals Caught Between Public Expectation And Political Cost-Cutting

'Hospitals: caught between public expectation and political cost-cutting': this was the central topic of the 20th Leadership Training jointly organised by the German Association of Hospital Managers (VKD), member of the EAHM, and the Association of Diagnostica-Industry (VDGH) in Berlin. Germany may well top the list of European states when it comes to economic growth, but the political pressure to cut costs has not spared German hospitals either. Smaller institutions in particular are feeling the heat and might no longer be able to fulfil their obligations to the public, signifying that the complete territorial coverage might soon falter.

However, all hospitals are affected by cost saving measures and structural deficits such as a lack of trained personnel. With the help of some wellgrounded examples, Dr J. Düllings, President of the VKD, was able to show exactly how negative framework conditions undermine patient-centred hospital politics, and with it social politics as a whole.

□ Other expert speakers then broached the subject of several other priorities against the backdrop of rationalisation measures: e.g. the competence of hospital laboratories, implications and possible approaches regarding the lack of trained personnel, performance and quality demands on hospitals and ensuring medical advances in basic care.

Like all meetings before, this 20th session proved its worth by relying on the tradition of exchange and discussion amongst representatives of key organisations of medical technology and hospital associations, of course including the patient representative of the Federal Government as well as health insurance representatives. We laud this instructive initiative in cooperation with the VKD, which clearly demonstrated how actors in the hospital sector could and should take on responsibility, especially in times of crisis such as these. Certainly it has set an example to follow, for all of us hospital colleagues in each and every European country.

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