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The Stara Planina Regional Association of Hospitals

Interviewee:

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When and Why was the Association Founded?

The association operates primarily in the Stara Planina region of Bulgaria as an organisation of hospitals and institutions professionally involved in healthcare as well as active physical entities supporting and contributing to the ideas of the association.

The Stara Planina Regional Association of Hospitals was established in 1997 as a Bulgarian not-for-profit organisation. The association was created as a result of a Swiss programme for supporting healthcare providers in region of Stara Planina, which the Swiss government has been implementing since 1992.

How Long has the Bulgarian Association Been a Member of the EAHM?

In September 2004 we became an active member of the European Association of Hospital Managers.

What is the Role of Your Association and What are its Main Activities?

The association supports hospitals in the region to improve the access to quality health services by optimal usage and development of resources, by attracting new partners and by being flexible to respond to the changing healthcare needs. Our efforts are focused on innovative and flexible approaches that pay special attention to the responsibility of individuals and groups of people, to new ideas and new actions as well as to the utilisation of resources available. The programmes of the association are based on the principle of communication and cooperation at local and international level as a means of speeding up progress towards a better health for all the people.

The main activities are:

- Participation in national health policy formulation and implementation through the organisation and initiation of public discussions, roundtables, forums, etc.
- Supporting hospitals and their evolution by organising national and international conferences
- Increasing the medical staff training by organising specialised training sessions, workshops and working visits of medical doctors and nurses
- PR and media campaigns, advocacy

Are There Any Particular Important Achievements or Developments within the Last Few Years that You Would like to Share with Your European Colleagues?

For the last few years the association has participated in a number of national, European and international projects such as:

- A complex educational programme for early diagnosis of breast and cervical cancer initiating public participation;
- Women Better Health by involving the public in the seriousness of the illness and increasing the personal responsibility for one's own health by improving the health awareness of all age groups;
- In Form – Campaign against obesity in children and adolescent financed by EU framework program for public health; and
- Medical European Mobility financed by Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo Da Vinci

Members of the Board of the association actively participate in the formulation of the national health policy as members of the working committees.

Do You Offer Training Programmes for Hospital Managers?

The association is an information, consultation and training centre supporting the efforts of hospitals for a more efficient activity in the area of management, organisation, financing, administration and quality of healthcare by improving the coordination and cooperation among the various providers of medical care, institutions, NGOs, media and international partners.

The Association provides training for hospital managers on specific subjects that are closely related to the association's objectives, which are to:

- Support management capacity development for health providers in the framework of healthcare reform;
- Support the improvement of the quality of care through exchange of theoretical knowledge and practical experience;
- Contribute to reforming the healthcare system and harmonising it with the European standards; and
- Improve the coordination and cooperation among the separate providers of medical care, health institutions, and representatives of healthcare and pharmaceutical industries.

Finally, What Does the Future Hold for the Association?

The association will continue to provide professional support to its members and to the health professionals in the region as well as to mobilise financial and human resources for supporting projects and programmes relevant to the health system on both a national and international level.

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