

Volume 14, Issue 5, 2012 - Editorial

OUR EUROPEAN RESPONSIBILITY

Today, Europeans do not have it easy. The various consequences of the economic and financial crises are obvious. Erroneously, these problems are associated with the union. Moreover, there is an increasing trend of countries moving back to nationalism and particularism. Even on a national level we cannot ignore endeavours to separate.

Therefore it is all the more important that Europe is further developed in its responsibility. There are institutions for this and these institutions are there to be used. Europe is there for the people. It is therefore important that all of us, every man in his own sphere of activity improves the conditions for a common Europe. We do this in the EAHM through exchanging dialogue and experiences in our hospitals for the good of the people: patients and staff. To quote the philosopher Karl Raimund Popper:

"We are all responsible for what is coming. So it is the duty of all to predict something bad and to work for those things that can make the future better" Like last year, the EAHM held a seminar during Medica in Dusseldorf, the world's largest medical trade fair. It was again about the European Directive on Cross border Healthcare.

Last year's seminar focused on the various expectations of the Directive, examined from the different factors perspectives. This year it was time to question the actual implementation from the perspective of management in the hospital. Of particular importance is the quality of the structures, processes and outcomes. The definition of standards and comparability is one essential requirement for health services offered in Europe. Based on the results of our survey, this process will be further discussed within the committees of the EAHM.

The work of our association was not left unharmed by the financial crisis. All countries in Europe have been forced to economise and this has had considerable effects on the national budgets. In Europe, the financing of hospitals is partially or entirely a public responsibility. The effects can be dramatic. In this context, we believe it is our duty to work for the success of those hospitals and to stress the importance of healthcare as a social pillar. In addition, hospitals are always recognised as a regional economic power, employing a considerable number of people.

The activities of the association have also been directly affected by the crisis. The cancellation of this year's EAHM Congress in Athens was painful but inevitable in view of the situation in Greece. The effects of this decision will remain with us for a while. We will look together with our Greek colleagues to support Greece and bring the congress there some time in the foreseeable future.

Nevertheless, we will hold a congress in Luxembourg 28-29 November 2013 and we are very grateful that our colleagues in Luxembourg have offered to organise this at such short notice. We will then move back to our regular rhythm with the 2014 Congress in Germany. The German Association of Hospital Directors are hard at work organising the conference taking place in Berlin on 10- 13 September 2014.

This issue of (E) Hospital includes many interesting topics for you to enjoy. Our cover story reports on the recent EAHM seminar in Dusseldorf and other articles include business performance, the nursing environment and a specialist supplement on information technology. The country focus introduces us to healthcare in Romania.

Heinz Kölking
President EAHM

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