

Dr. Jacques de Haller:

- **Firstly, could you please talk about yourself and CPME?**

I'm a general practitioner (GP) from Switzerland. I have practiced more than 20 years in Geneva, as a GP, and then was elected president of the Swiss Medical Association, for eight and a half years. After this, I remained active within health politics, and was elected president of CPME in 2016. This is a part time job, with the office in Brussels. We are representing more than 1,5 million doctors, all over Europe – including many European countries which are not member of the EU but are in relation with it, like Turkey, Norway, Switzerland, Israel, Georgia, Ukraine, etc. We have an office in Brussels, 8 people work there. And we do lots of lobbying with the European Commission and with the European Parliament, on health policy questions.

- **Would you please tell us the reason of your visit? Is it just for the meeting organised by the TMA or is there anything else besides that?**

I'm here because I offered TMA a long time ago to come when it would be helpful – because I think it is important for all European doctors to defend appropriate working conditions. This is not only about money, it is the freedom to be doctor, the freedom to remain ethical, the freedom to be creative, to be true with the patients, with all patients. It is important for doctors all around the world to defend a good medicine and normal working conditions everywhere. So this is why I offered TMA to be here when they would need support. Because I know it is a difficult time for them.

- **We know that you supported us from the beginning very strongly. We appreciate and are very thankful for that. What would you say about the detaining process of the TMA Central Council members?**

It is an attempt by the government to canalize, to put limits to medical activities, to the freedom and liberty of doctors to observe their ethical rules, with what doctors consider a normal working environment. It is an attempt by the government to hamper this. And we cannot accept this, because exactly what the TMA Central Council said about war is something that we have mentioned in our own policies for a long time. It is something that we have had in our policies for at least 10 years, that war is threat to public health, to ethics, to life, and that peace is the only option. This is something we have in our own papers.

- **Why are professional autonomy and professional self-regulation so important? Would you please elaborate?**

Medicine is based on human relationship. I mean, medicine is not only about pills and medications and blood pressure, medicine is also a relationship which carries the treatment. And this relationship must be a free relationship, otherwise it does not work. So doctors have to be free to be themselves and creative in this relationship. And this is one reason why putting limits on their freedom is not acceptable. Doctors also have a huge experience, they meet thousands of people every year in a very close relationship, and they do this for years and years. Doctors have a very important, irreplaceable experience of people and of society. And with this, they have to

be free to say what their vision is for the healthcare system, for the patient, and for public health, it is their role. So if you limit their autonomy you limit this right and the duty they have to speak about healthcare, public health and patients.

The question of the autonomy and self-regulation of doctors has very much to do with the quality of the medicine and the access to healthcare. Therefore, in this meaning, I consider physicians' autonomy and self-regulation as a right of the patients. Not only a privilege for the doctors, but primarily a right of the patients. Patients have the right to have independent, good doctors, a good healthcare system, and access to the necessary healthcare.

- **What is the meaning of the existence of professional organizations/national medical associations in this context?**

National medical organizations are the democratic expression of the profession to represent our vision for medicine and healthcare. It is a political tool for doctors, not only for internal politics, but mostly for health politics. As we usually say, we want "health in every policy": this is about healthcare and health policy.

- **How would you describe the working conditions of physicians in Europe and in the world? Is there any special trend? Would you describe some changes or trends?**

There are many different political situations of course. Turkey is an example, Italy is an example where the government is maybe changing and a more difficult situation for doctors may develop. Poland, Hungary, Israel, among our members, have difficult political situations. But I would say that everywhere the problem is the autonomy of doctors. Almost all governments want to put hand on doctors and use them or canalize them. This is one thing.

And the other trend everywhere is the economization of medicine. This is something that we see in the whole world. Everywhere medicine is becoming an economic field: people want to make money with medicine. And to invest, to make money, for instance you operate as many hips as you can. This economisation of medicine is a problem everywhere.

- **How could we struggle against this privatization and economization?**

CPME works by elaborating ideas first, and then documents like policy papers, and then lobbying for that. It's an important point that we first have to know what we base upon, having a clear idea of which principles we build our policies upon, before we tackle concrete problems. We base upon human respect for everybody, we base upon access to quality healthcare for all who need it, we base upon this special relationship I mentioned between doctor and patient, and we have to be clear with these principles.

(Birincisi, temel kavramlar üzerinde hepimizin aynı şeyi anlamamız ve uzlaşmamız gerekiyor. Somut bir şeyler yapmadan önce, soyut ilkeler üzerinde anlaşmamız gerek. Bunların birincisi saygı, ikincisi sağlık hizmetine erişim, üçüncüsü hasta hekim ilişkisinin özellikleri... Soyut kavramlar üzerinde uzlaştıktan sonra, elbette somut şeyler tanımlanabilir. Biz örneğin CPME'de fikirler ve belgeler üretiyoruz. Bunun üzerinden lobi faaliyeti yürütüyoruz. Olabildiğince yaygın iletişim kuruyoruz. Ama önce kendi içimizde soyut bir uzlaşmaya ihtiyaç var.)

- **As you know, possibly a decree will be issued about TMA. Would you please tell us your general ideas?**

Maybe two levels of answer; first for CPME: the CPME Statutes allow the membership of one association for each country, and this association has to be the most representative of the medical profession in this country. We think that nowadays you are the representative democratic medical organisation in Turkey, and the Turkish physicians and the profession are represented by this organisation in Brussels, within CPME. That's an institutional level.

But on another level, I have mentioned already the necessity of freedom for doctors, as the necessity to be able to be himself or herself: this relates of course also to their organisation. An national medical organisation must base on the experience and vision of its members to contribute to the healthcare system, to the quality of medicine and to the sustainability of the healthcare system, and therefore such an organisation must be able to freely elaborate its policies, its visions, according to the ethics of the profession. Otherwise it is just not a medical organisation. Of course, this is important for all European doctors. It's not just in your country, it's important for all European doctors.

- **What is the relationship between human rights, peace and health?**

I think that it is an illusion of people who lose contact with reality to think that these elements can be separated. You do not have peace without human rights, and you do not have human rights without a proper economic context and equality. It really is connected all together, and on the long term, you need all three to achieve a sustainable society, a sustainable societal organisation. If you don't have human rights you get war, if you have war you get economic tragedies. If you have economic tragedies you don't have human rights. It goes all together.

- **Do you have any message to political leaders of Turkey, and secondly what's your message to Turkish doctors?**

I'm here as CPME president. This is my message to the TMA, that I came here to be with the TMA. Indirectly of course, this is also a message to the government. But my prime message is to the TMA, saying that we stand on your side. As I said, it is important for all European doctors that medical associations and doctors are free, that they have freedom to be doctors. This is my message to the TMA: we stand with you. My point is that you're not alone, because you are defending principles which are our principles. And defending these principles, we stand side by side. This is really my message here to the TMA.