



Migration of Doctors Continues to Grow

- **New OECD study shows considerable migration to the West**
- **Numerous countries now dependent on migration of foreign doctors**
- **CEE faced with growing problems**

Perceptible growth in the migration of highly-qualified medical personnel was shown by an OECD study presented at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) in Bad Hofgastein. EU enlargement and the associated simpler emigration and immigration to European states have fostered the development in the last few years. By long-term comparison the development is dramatic: in the last 30 years the number of doctors who do not work in the country in which they were educated has risen 240 percent and therefore has far more than tripled.

By far the biggest “winner” of this migration is the USA. More than 200,000 doctors who were born abroad work there. This is equal to 25 percent of all doctors employed in the USA. The highest share of foreign doctors is represented by New Zealand, however, at 34 percent and in Europe by Great Britain at 33 percent. Health care systems in numerous countries are already dependent on the migration of doctors and “if no adequate measures are taken, this number could still substantially increase,” says the author of the study, Jean-Christophe Dumont.

Globally there are several migration patterns which can be ascertained: the migration of doctors from developing countries in the South to industrialized nations is already traditional. Migration from the western countries of continental Europe to Great Britain, the USA and Canada has considerably increased. At the same time, a large number of Central and Eastern European doctors are “on their mark”: unlike with nurses and allied health professionals, the wave of migration for them has yet to begin. There is great interest in employment in the West, which ultimately can be mitigated only by a substantial increase in the level of income in the countries of the East.

Former Lithuanian Minister of Health Zilvinas Padaiga formulated the concerns of Eastern European countries at the EHFG: “So far three percent of Lithuanian doctors have requested documentation for recognition of their diplomas abroad, but surveys show that more than half of all Lithuanian doctors have at least considered migrating abroad.”

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Additional press information and photographs concerning the EHFG can be found at
www.ehfg.org.

Links:

OECD study: International Migration of Health Professionals and Nurses
www.oecd.org/health
www.oecd.org/migration