

WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

STANDING COMMITTEE OF EUROPEAN DOCTORS

GERMAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

News Release

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MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS CRITICISE GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE
PHYSICIANS' INDEPENDENCE

Attempts by the Albanian Government to undermine the independence and self-governance of physicians in the country have been strongly criticised by the World Medical Association, the CPME (Standing Committee of European Doctors), and the German Medical Association.

In a letter to Albania's Minister of Health, WMA leaders have expressed their concern about the Ministry of Health's involvement in the election for President of the Order of Physicians of Albania by nominating its own candidate. When its candidate lost the election, the Government challenged the election result in court last month.

In their letter, WMA President Sir Michael Marmot and Council Chair Dr. Ardis Hoven write: 'We were surprised to learn of the Ministry of Health's involvement in the election process and the legal proceedings taken against the Order of Physicians of Albania. In order for the OPA to remain effective in accordance with international standards, it must retain its independence. This is essential to the OPA's status as a constituent member of international organizations like the World Medical Association.'

They added: 'On behalf of the World Medical Association, we reiterate our firm commitment to our colleagues in the Albanian medical profession and call upon the Ministry of Health to respect the independence of the Order of Physicians of Albania and to enable the system of physicians' self-governance to flourish in Albania.'

Dr. Katrín Fjeldsted, President of the CPME, said: 'The Order of Physicians of Albania is a valued member of CPME. Across Europe, we see that independent and democratic representative bodies for doctors benefit society as a whole. We hope the Albanian authorities will take note and strengthen the Order of Physicians of Albania.'

Professor Frank Ulrich Montgomery, President of the German Medical Association, also called upon the Albanian government to recognise the essential role played by an independent Order of Physicians of Albania: 'Our organisations are united in our dedication to a system of physicians' self-governance. Because it is proven to enhance professional integrity and to ensure quality care, effective self-regulation is one of the key features of the healthcare systems in our region.'

In a separate letter to Dr. Fatmir Brahima, the newly elected President Order of Physicians of Albania, the WMA leaders write: 'On behalf of the World Medical Association, we would like to assure you of our firm and continued commitment to our colleagues in the Albanian medical profession. We fully support the independence of the Order of Physicians of Albania and have called upon the Albanian Ministry of Health to duly respect the system of physicians' self-governance in your country. We wish you strength and determination in the face of the challenges currently confronting your organization and urge you to continue advocating for that which is in the best interests of physicians and their patients.'

http://www.wma.net/en/40news/20archives/2015/2015_40/index.html