

THE KDC NEEDS TO BE EMPOWERED AS THE ONLY ORGANIZATION FOR THE DOCTORS PROFESSIONAL BODY



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One of the initiators and contributors to the establishment of the KDC

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Dr. Salih Berisha, a doctor at the Oberarzt, Facharzt für Chirurgie und Gefäßchirurgie in Germany, is one of the first initiators for the establishment of the Kosovo Doctors Chamber. On the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the KDC, he tells about how the idea for the establishment of this chamber was born, the contributors from Germany and the cooperation with the health authorities of Kosovo for the creation of the organization that will represent Kosovo doctors.

Dr. Berisha, with whom was this idea first discussed and what were the initial expectations? Who were the foreign experts who, along with you, helped establish the Kosovo Doctors Chamber?

I have led a very noble and productive professional collaboration project in the field of General Surgery between the University Clinic of Mannheim and that of Prishtina, for eight years. Surgery dominated, but there were also many other medical fields included in the project with a financial volume close to two million Euros.

In 2010 (Deutsche Ärzteblatt, 08/2010) I wrote and published together with my friends and supporters an article about this project, which was also sponsored by the German Federal Foreign Office. A few days after this article was published, I was contacted from Berlin (Bundesärztekammer Berlin - German Medical Association) by Dr. Ramin Parsa-Parsi, head of the Foreign Relations Department, and Domen Podnar, senior referent in this department. We had a long teleconference about the organization of Kosovo doctors and healthcare in Kosovo. They were surprised as to why no representative from Kosovo participated in any of the many international meetings that they organize. The conclusion from the first conversation with them was to understand if there is a KDC in Kosovo and if not, how can we be activated to make something like this happen?

Seeing the substantial importance of the project, I reached out and obtained direct information from the NIPHK, from Prof. Naser Ramadani and Prof. Isuf Dedushaj; from the UCCK; from the MoH; from the Government of Kosovo (from Dr. Shaip Muja, advisor to the Prime Minister for Health at that time); and I learned that there was no Kosovo Doctors Chamber in Kosovo. Following this, I, Dr. Shaip, Dr. Ramin Parsa-Parsi and Domen Podnar, took the initiative to establish a chamber that represents Kosovo doctors. Behind us strongly stood the institutes where we worked at that time: University of Mannheim, Clinic of Surgery with my then boss Prof. Dr. Stefan Post giving me the green light. Berlin took over the coordination of the work. First, we scheduled many meetings in Kosovo for September 2010, such as with the German Ambassador; with Dr.

Bujar Bukoshi, Minister of Health; Dr. Shaip Muja, the Governing Board of the UCCK, NIPHK, the EU Office in Prishtina; Kosova College of Surgeons, etc.

In the meantime, the Government of Kosovo fell and a few months later a new Government was in office (January 2011) and the new Minister of Health was appointed Prof. Dr. Ferid Agani. He promised that the project for the Chamber will be finalized with the establishment of the KDC.

Minister Agani was invited to Berlin (Bundesärztekammer - German Medical Association) and was a special guest at the 114th Assembly of the German Medical Association held in Kiel, May 31-June 3, 2011. There I met for the first time with Minister Agani and as a mediator I communicated to him in a friendly manner all the noble will and friendly German interest, and above all the necessity of a doctors chamber in Kosovo.

2011 and 2012 demanded a lot of work in Kosovo and Germany. Activities peaked with the Symposium at the Emerald Hotel with the presence of Prof. Frank Montgomery, President of the Bundesärztekammer, Prof. Stefan Post, director of the University Clinic of Surgery in Mannheim, University of Heidelberg, Dr. Rudolf Henke, delegate to the German Bundestag and simultaneously chair of the Marburger-Bund - the Union of Physicians in Germany, Dr. Ottmar Kloiber, Secretary General of the World Medical Association in Geneva, many other guests from Germany, the German Ambassador in Kosovo and, of course, Dr. Ramin Parsa-Parsi, Domen Podnar, and Dr. Salih Berisha.

It was an intense period of establishing the legal basis and other documents for the chamber. Here, that is, in Berlin, the Law and the statute of the KDC were drafted. We have studied in detail, with two German lawyers in Berlin, its compatibility with the Constitution of Kosovo and its civil and criminal codes, as well as compatibility with the relevant European laws, leaving no room for misinterpretation.

In June 2013, the Law on Chambers of Health Professionals was approved by the Assembly of Kosovo and then decreed by the President of Kosovo. The rest then continued with the holding of the elections and the founding Assembly of the KDC, holding on October 17 the elections for the Assembly of the KDC at the level of institutions, while on November 10, Prof. Dr. Zylfije Hundozi was elected first president of the KDC by the Assembly composed of members of the Chamber and senior delegations from respective chambers from Germany and many other countries.

Of course, during this time there were also periods of failure and problems in the transfer of

powers, but the Chamber continued and on December 1, 2017, Dr. Pleurat Sejdiu was elected the new president of the KDC, after Prof. Hundozi completed her mandate, and this electoral assembly led to optimism about the further development of the KDC.

How would you evaluate KDC's development so far and, in your opinion, what are its achievements?

I get my insights from the press and public opinion, or through personal contacts. Overall, I like them quite a lot, because a lot of substantial work has been done.

Considering the difficulties faced by an organization born 'sui generis' like the KDC, as opposed to the German Association which is more than 120 years old, it has been a fruitful and impressive collaboration, although much work still needs to be done.

What are, in your opinion, the challenges the KDC faces today, what would you have suggested for the further development of the Chamber, and what should its future be like?

Its stabilization, its perception as the only and most powerful organization for the professional body of doctors in terms of growth, preservation and professional protection of the medical academic identity. Also, its presence in each setting and decision-making meeting that affects the interests of doctors; regulation and complete control of the professional education and training of its members on an ongoing basis; enhancement of infrastructural and human capacities within the KDC; communication with civil society and continuous contacts with them for a healthy and emancipated society...

Being the co-founder of this noble chamber, it would never occur to me not to be willing to cooperate with them. The desire to see the Chamber become highly professional, is so dominant that I don't know what would have to happen to not exchange my/our experience with the KDC.



The first legislature of the Assembly of the Kosovo Doctors Chamber