

# European midwives: Tackling the challenges ahead



MIDWIVES came from 25 European countries to discuss matters relating to their education, research and practice at the general meeting of the European Midwives Association (EMA) hosted by the Croatian Chamber of Midwives recently in Zagreb. Time was also spent considering possible solutions to the challenges currently facing the profession. It is the first time that Croatia has hosted an EMA meeting; a fitting event in the year that it joined the EU.

In his opening address, Marijan Cesarik, Deputy Minister of Health, noted the well-established co-operation between the Ministry and the Croatian Chamber of Midwives. Following the meeting, Mr Cesarik and his department expect to receive further information and recommendations on the application of best midwifery practice to the Croatian situation.

In her address at the event, Barbara Finderle, president of the Croatian Chamber of Midwives, remarked that the absence of a midwifery school in the University of Zagreb adversely affects the possibility of higher education for midwifery graduates throughout Croatia.

"The consequence for our healthcare system is the departure of midwives to other related professions and a consequent decrease in the number of practicing midwives."

Mervi Jokinen, EMA president, underlined the importance of open dialogue and the exchange of experiences between delegates. She praised the Croatian Chamber of Midwives for the active role it plays in EMA.

## About the European Midwives Association

The European Midwives Association (EMA) is a non-profit and non-government organisation of midwives (over 100,000 members) representing midwifery organisations and associations from the member states of the EU, members of the Council of Europe, the European economic area and EU applicant countries.

The EMA provides a forum for European midwives to meet and discuss issues concerning midwifery and women's health. It promotes minimum standards of midwifery education and practice within the EU and maintains a presence and contribution at venues affecting health policy and midwifery within the EU.

## About the Croatian Chamber of Midwives

The Croatian Chamber of Midwives was established in 2009 with the vision of accomplishing independent midwifery in Croatia and developing the profession in general. The Chamber protects the rights and interests of midwives, promotes the identity and the dignity of the profession, and progresses midwifery through the improvement of education and legislation.

Its strategic goals are: informing, educating, empowering and connecting midwives; strengthening the Chamber as a relevant body through promoting its work and the rights and interests of midwives; encouraging the harmonisation and improvement of the legislative environment in midwifery with other Croatian and EU legislation; encouraging the development of a corresponding midwifery education system and strengthening the institutional and financial capacities of the Chamber.

## About the Croatian Association for Promotion of Midwifery

The Croatian Association for Promotion of Midwifery was established with the purpose of protecting and promoting midwifery and parenting. Its main goals are: advocating for the dignity of women and newborns; the promotion of the right of choice in pregnancy, child birth and breastfeeding; promoting, supporting and protecting breastfeeding; educating pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and all parents; and commitment to the possibility of choice in maternity care.

Among the topics discussed at the meeting were the inadequate utilisation of midwifery personnel, the low level of continuity of midwifery care for women, limited choice for childbearing women and restricted opportunities for midwives to work independently.

Midwives throughout Croatia and their European colleagues are actively

seeking solutions to these problems and it is worthwhile noting that the implementation of the EU Directive relating to personal indemnity insurance will be a further challenge for European midwives.

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