



Български лекарски съюз

BULGARIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION was created in 1901 which made it the second professional doctors' union in the world. At the beginning the task of the organisation was to guard the interests of the doctors and determine their fees. Gradually its role and functions expanded and it developed into an important factor for promoting of medical aid in the country. At the time, BMA even determined health politics as there was no Healthcare Ministry.

The first BMA President is Dr. Dimitar Mollov. During the period until 1947, a lot of important rules on practicing medicine profession, moral and ethic standards and financial relations between a doctor and a patient were adopted. There and then, membership was obligatory. In 1947 BMA is closed down by the new communist rule. During the time of non-existence of the association, the authorities did heavy damages on the doctors reducing the free creative person to a state employee at the lowest step of the social ladder. Private Practice abolishment followed in 1971 and during the next 20 years the doctors are not members of a professional organisation of their own but are parts of the so called Health Workers' Trade-Union.

The gradual reunification of the guild began already after the democratic changes in 1989, 28 self-dependant regional societies were founded which became the basis of national-scale restoration of BMA. In the beginning of 1990, BMA was restored and Prof. Dr. Ivan Kirov became the first elected leader at the 27th Restoration Convention. At first, interim Vice Presidents were elected – Prof. Dr. Dimitar Radonov, Dr. Trias Mavromatis and Dr. Emil Peychev. In November 1990 other Vice Presidents were elected – Dr. Ivan V. Ivanov, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Milan Milanov and Dr. Atanas Shterev. Two years later, Dr. Dimitar Ignatov, a surgeon from ISUL, was put up for BMA President. He was at the head of BMA for a total of 10 years (1992 – 2002). In the course of the mandates in succession Vice Presidents were Dr. Anton Vazharov, Dr. Drago Zhelev, Dr. Ilko Semerdzhiev, Dr. Petko Kasabov, Dr. Milan Milanov and Dr. Andrey Kehayov. All through this period doctors and dentists were members of a united organisation registered after Person and Family Law.

The establishment of BMA identity as independent legitimate organisation occurred after adoption of the LPODS in 1999. According to LPODS, the Bulgarian Medical Association (BMA) and the Bulgarian Dental Association (BDA) were created as professional organisations of doctors and dentists; their structure, management and activity as well as stipulations for practicing medicine and stomatology and responsibility for breach of professional ethics were settled. By law it is accepted that all doctors and dentists practising their profession are members of BMA, respectively BDA. These associations prepare Professional Ethics Code for Doctors, respectively Dentists, monitor observance of its rules and use sanctions provided by this law. Membership in BMA and BDA is regularised and begins by registering in the respective regional professional college. The conditions are also indicated and entered in the respective register. Provisions of law

stipulate that doctors and dentists bear responsibility for malpractice done at implementation of their professional obligations. The respective penalties are also specified. An obligation of the Council of Ministers, governors and municipalities within a fixed period of time to place state or municipal property at the disposal of BMA and USB for realisation of their activity is regulated, too. In conclusion it is admitted that the Bulgarian Medical Association is the rightful successor of the 1901 founded Bulgarian Medical Association and the Bulgarian Dental Association is a successor of the 1905 Bulgarian Dentists' Union. This law is considered the greatest success of the then leaders of the Association since actually it puts up the organisation on a high level and transforms it into an institution with new image and legal power.

Save BMA President, Dr. D. Ignatov was a Member of Parliament, too. At the regular Convention in Sunny Beach in April 2002, the delegates adopted a new text in the Statute according to which no MP was admitted to apply for the authorities of the Association. Hence, Dr. Andrey Kehayov was elected new BMA President. He had worked surgeon in Rudozem and had private businesses in the spheres of oil trade, printing services and hotel keeping. He had been an ex-President of RDC of Smolyan and a BMA Vice President. Dr. Georgi Sakakushev (vascular surgeon) from Plovdiv and Dr. Ivan Galbov (paediatrician) from Varna were elected his Vices. The first mandate of the Board under the Presidency of Dr. A. Kehayov expired in 2005 and at the regular Convention held in Sofia in June 2005, with no alternative candidates, he was re-elected President. His Vices were Dr. Georgi Sakakushev and Dr. Tsvetan Raychinov (gynaecologist) from Ruse.

Three years after, the Board didn't follow the Statute and the LPO and hadn't convoked the regular Convention to elect new governing bodies for more than 5 months since expiry of the mandate. This called for an amendment in LPO. A text was added according to which if a convention was not convoked within the set time period its date was fixed by the Healthcare Minister. The amendment was unanimously voted for in the Parliament. Hence, as he had been charged to fix the date of the Convention by the Parliament, the Healthcare Minister Dr. Evgeniy Zhelev issued an Ordinance for convocation of a regular BMA Convention in Sofia on 9-11 January 2009. Doctors from all over the country attended this Convention and a new Board with Dr. Bojidar Naney (a doctor with three surgery specialties) from Varna as President was elected by absolute quorum. Dr. Tsvetan Raychinov and Dr. Stefan Konstantinov (gynaecologist) from Kyustendil became Vice Presidents.

On 18-21 January 2009 Dr. Andrey Kehayov convoked an alternative convention in Sandanski where there was just a symbolic attendance and the convention cannot be identified as legal. Report for the past mandate was delivered then but there were no elections for new governing bodies. Meanwhile the newly elected BMA Board was recognised by all the authorities – Parliament, parties presented in the Parliament, Healthcare Ministry and National Health Insurance Fund. As sound practice, the media officially present BMA by its new Board.