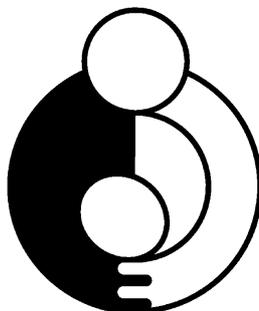


**EUROPEAN
MIDWIVES
ASSOCIATION**



**ASSOCIATION DES
SAGES-FEMMES
EUROPEENNES**

Press statement from European Midwives Association Annual General Meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 25th-26th of September 2009

The European Midwives Association (EMA) welcomes the address given to their annual general meeting by the Slovenian Member of the European Parliament Lojze Peterle, and endorses **all** the points identified in his speech.

The Slovenian Nurses and Midwives Association section of midwives is concerned that the midwifery practice and professional autonomy supported by the Slovenian regulation framework is not fully realized. The shift in the educational programmes during mid 80s-90s to exclude midwifery programmes resulted in erosion of midwife's role; a role that has existed in Slovenia since 1753. The new education programmes are in line with the Bologna Declaration and fit for purpose in preparing midwives for the full role.

Mr Peterle continued the theme set by previous speakers, who had addressed the delegates, Miss Darinka Klemec President of the Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia and Mr Peter Požun, Vice-chairman of Commission for Social care, Labour, Health and the Disabled National Council, Republic of Slovenia. They all praised the important role midwives have in public health. However, they also acknowledged the failure within current health system of supporting the full function of the midwife as set by the EU Directive. The absence of midwives' involvement in the provision of antenatal and postnatal care, an activity legislated for in Article 42 of the Directive 2005/36/EU, is unacceptable.

Mr Peterle commended the role midwives have in society, working in harmony with women. He noted that the development of primary care services requires the full utilization of midwives alongside other health care professionals. This would make sense financially and professionally as midwives' practice crosses boundaries of tertiary and primary care.

He voiced his concern of health crises across Europe which in his view will exist longer than the financial crises. He supported EMAs activities in advocating that countries like Slovenia, where midwife's full role is restricted due to health and policy systems must be reviewed and changed.

His vision is to harmonise health policies, agree on health related objectives, reduce inequality of access and focus on prevention instead of cure across Europe. He also encouraged the Slovenian Midwives Section in their continued efforts to implement changes within the health system.

EMA urges the Ministry of Health to hear the voices of Slovenian women and midwives in securing access to midwifery care in order to maximize the health outcomes for women and their families.