

Bribes remain prevalent form of corruption in Croatian health sector - watchdog

Text of report in English by Croatian news agency HINA Zagreb, 1 February:

Seeking bribes from patients remains the most prevalent form of health sector corruption in Croatia, **Transparency International** Croatia (TIH) representatives said on Wednesday [1 February] presenting the latest global corruption report, which this year focuses on health.

Apart from bribes, the Croatian health sector is also corrupted because of embezzlement, theft and irregularities in payment and procurement, notably of medicines, said TIH president Zorislav Antun Petrovic.

He recalled that TIH researches conducted last year showed that nearly 80 per cent of the public thought the Croatian health sector was seriously corrupted. In 2003 about 70 per cent of the public felt that way, which Petrovic said pointed to the need of increasing transparency in the sector. Two-thirds of Croats feel corrupted physicians are to blame for the situation, while slightly over one-third believe nurses and other medical staff are subject to corruption.

As the first step in curbing corruption TIH suggests the introduction of public waiting lists for health services. The report also notes some steps forward in Croatia, such as the passing of a law on the financing of presidential campaigns, the adoption of conflict of interest provisions, the digitalisation of land books and the fact that the National Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organized Crime has been given greater autonomy.

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