WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

STANDING COMMITTEE OF EUROPEAN DOCTORS

News Release

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PHYSICIAN LEADERS WARN GOVERNMENTS OVER AUTONOMY OF MEDICAL PROFESSION

A warning to governments around the world not to try to dismantle medical

professional self-governing bodies has come from the World Medical

Association and the Standing Committee of European Doctors.

Following the dismissal last week of the case brought by the Turkish

Government to dismiss the governing bodies of the Ankara Chamber of

Medicine, WMA leaders issued a statement today saying that the importance

of this case extended far beyond Turkey as attempts to dismantle

professional self-governing bodies were occurring in many countries and

many forms around the world.

They declared: ‘The case in Turkey has been a shame for a democratic

nation with a rich cultural heritage. It has been an assault on humanity

and an attack on the autonomy of our profession. On the other hand, this

case and others have proven that there are still judges that have remained

independent and brave enough to exercise their duties loyal to the law and

not the aspirations of the government.

‘The Turkish people can be proud of their doctors, lawyers and judges who

live up to values of justice and humanity and who withstand the forces of

intimidation and segregation.'

Dr. Xavier Deau, President of the WMA, added: ‘It is highly regrettable

that medical bodies around the world are experiencing threats in many

different ways to their independence or even existence. We believe that a

self-governing medical profession is in the best interests of patients

around the world and the WMA will continue to support any medical

association whose independence is being threatened'.

Dr. Katrín Fjeldsted, President of the Standing Committee of European

Doctors (CPME) pointed out: ‘The CPME strongly condemns any measures

undermining international standards of medical neutrality. Physicians are

united by their professional ethics which require them to provide medical

care for those in need, independent of the administrative or political

status of the patient.'