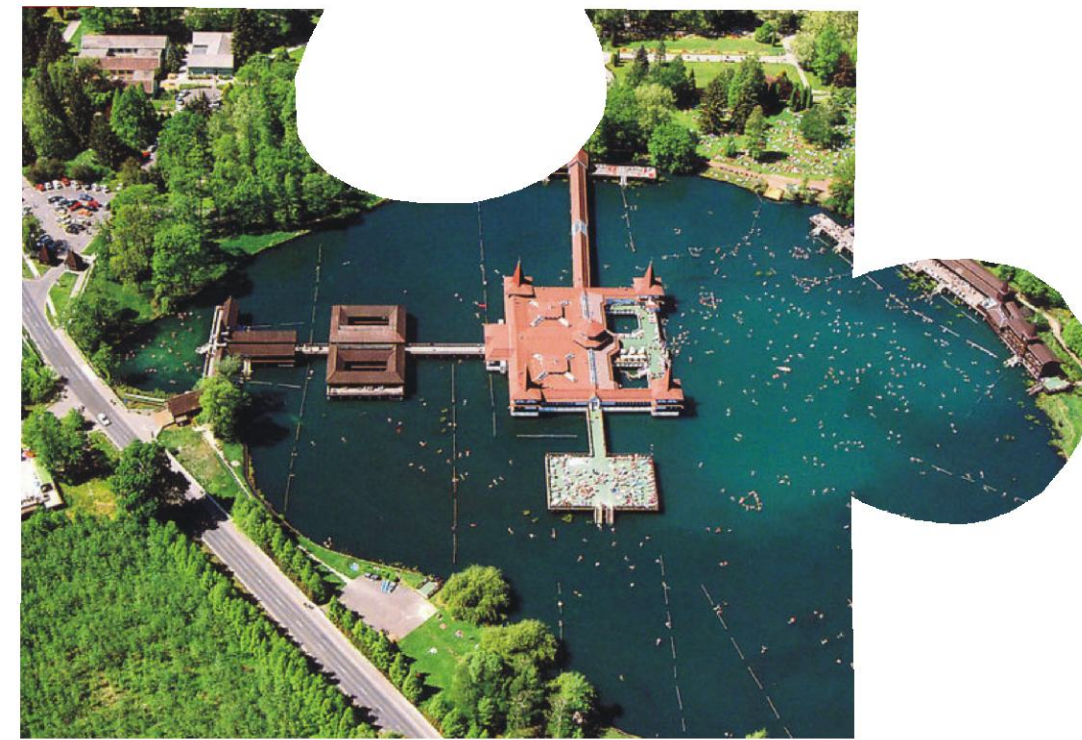


The medical tourism in Hungary

- Legal aspect of the patient mobility and the medical tourism-



The medical tourism is a dynamically developing part of the global healthcare in the 21st century. Traditionally the patients recovered at home but nowadays there is a wide range of health services to choose from not only at home but all over Europe and the world.

The way people travel on medical purposes has also changed recently. Traditionally it was visiting the facilities built over natural resources mainly for rehabilitative purposes - , while nowadays it has become an industry on its own that helps patients to get the most appropriate treatment. The law changed as well, the European and the international social and health law have been improved. The European Court judges as an infringement of rights if a European citizen can not use the health service in any of the Member States of the European Union. However, the economy of the countries can not keep up with the widening rights, facilities and the development of the medical technologies. Consequently, it is urging to create the financial base of travelling on medical purpose, medical tourism and patient mobility, to determine the borderline between social and self support, while protecting the rights of the patients as well.

You can see an illustration of the structure of the medical tourism below:

Explanation of the concepts : (Illustration and concepts: Gyula Kincses, 2009.)

Health tourism: mobility where the purpose of the travel can be therapy, rehabilitation or health improvement (wellness, recreation etc.); includes tourism and catering services.

Medical tourism: mobility for improving the health status (recovery, reducing pain and/or complaints, regaining lost abilities) based on medical treatments

Medical wellness: it comprises measures guided by medical science, for sustained improvement of quality of life, and of the subjective sense of well-being, by means of prevention and health promotion for which the individuals themselves assume responsibility, and motivation for a health-conscious lifestyle. http://www.i-m-w-a.com/medical_wellness.html

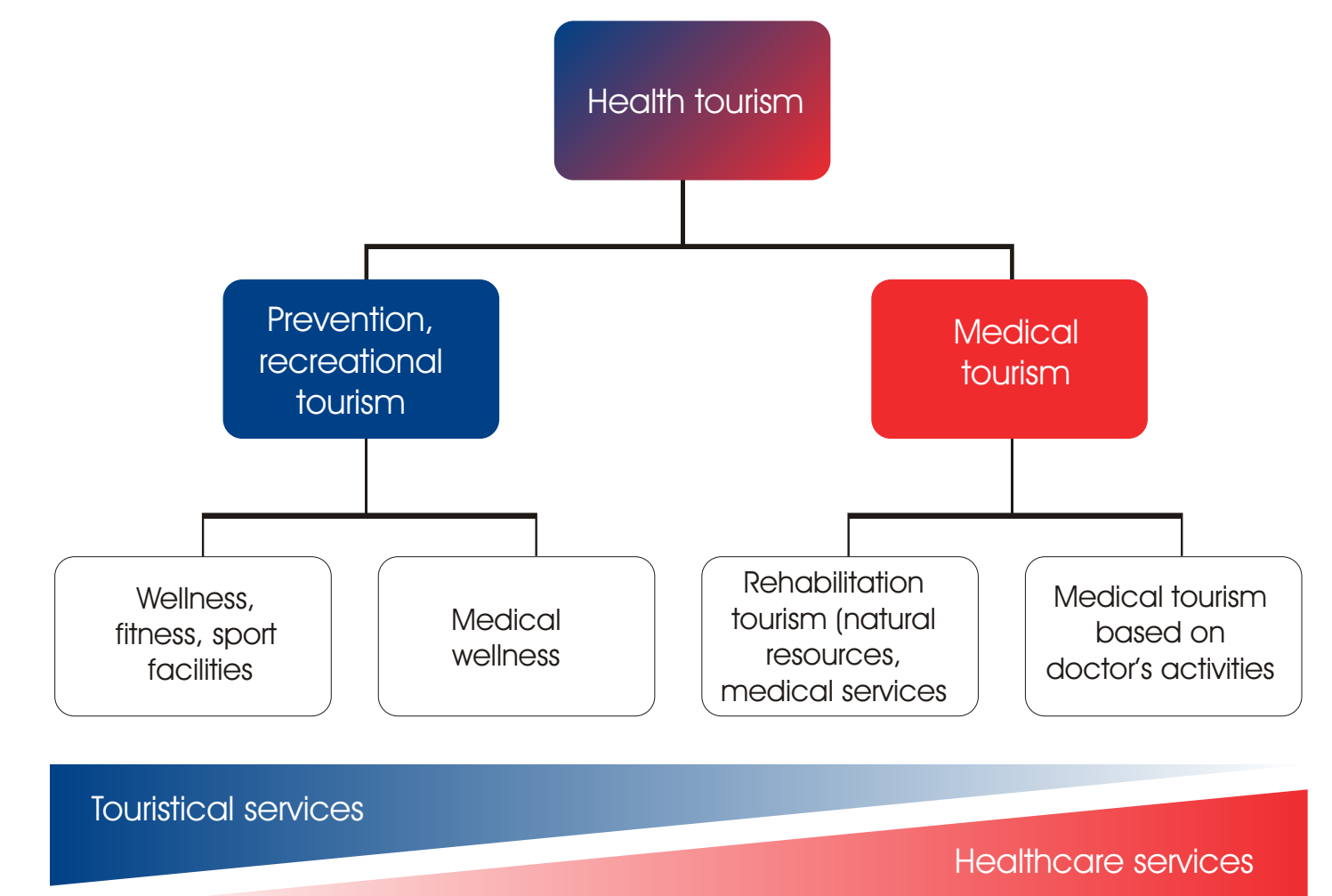
Recreational tourism: it is a complex service to improve and maintain well-being; beside health improving services (e.g. wellness and fitness), it can also include prevention services like medical massage

Patient mobility: the possibility for the patient to choose the place for himself to be treated. Basically this expression is not used regarding health tourism. In the EU terminology it means the possibility of using publicly financed cross-border services.

The foundations of the EU regulation are the predomination of the four fundamental freedoms, steady financial support, quality treatment, and to put down the rights and obligations of patients.

The background of patient mobility and medical tourism regulation is the regulation of cross-border health services. This area is controlled by the regulations of the coordination of the social security schemes (1408/71/EEC and the new regulation of 883/2004/EC from 2010). Based on the practice of the European Court, the European Committee started to establish the legal certainty of cross-border health services and in the summer of 2008, the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on the application of patients' rights in cross-border service was published. The proposal belongs to the codecision procedure and was accepted with modifications by the European Parliament on April 23rd, 2009. Recently, the European Council has been working on have a common stance accepted by all Member States.

The table below shows the differences between the two regulations:



Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 of the Council of 14 June 1971 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons and their families moving within the Community	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on the application of patients' rights in cross-border service
Its principle is that the Member States must provide healthcare service for their citizens.	Its principle is that EU citizens have the right to choose the place of their healthcare service in case of sickness.
Material scope: if someone is temporarily staying in another country and not travelled there for the purpose of medical treatment but comes to need it, the patient has the right to get the necessary service by using the European Health Insurance Card or the equal form if the patient is sent to another member state with the permission of its competent institution to get treatment there and this treatment available in his home country but cannot be provided in the time limit needed for effective treatment regarding the state of the patient and the characteristic of the illness (it requires permission in advance-form E112	Material scope: non hospital services, services which are not defined as hospital services by the directive; these do not require permission. hospital services, when the patient has to spend at least one night in hospital and those services that are high cost, demand special infrastructure or equipment (like PET) and those services that cure high-risk diseases (either from the patients or the society's point of view, infectious diseases for instance); these services require permission.
In both cases the Member State must cover those costs of the treatment that the country that provides the treatment would cover for its own insurers, i.e. it does not pay the cost-sharing.	The costs are refundable in the same extent as the costs of the service in the own Member State, but if the costs are lower in the Member State which provides the treatment, then the insurer pays that lower amount. However if the bill is bigger, the patient has to pay for it, that is the cost of the choice of freedom.



The medical tourism in Hungary

Hungary has long traditions, outstanding conditions and internationally acknowledged achievements in the field of medical tourism. As for the future, the Hungarian National Tourist Office decided to call the year 2011 the year of medical tourism.

Hungary has acquired significant international reputation in the field of health care. The outstanding personalities of the Hungarian medical science like Semmelweis or Szentgyörgyi are well-known in the world. In Hungary, health care is of high-quality. In respect of technical equipment and applied methods, the country belongs to the forefront of Europe. At present, Hungary is one of the market leaders of Europe in the field of medical education.

Our supply of medicinal waters is unique, and medical tourism based on it has a good prestige and long traditions. The rehabilitation based on the therapeutic factors of medicinal waters and the related establishments are well-known in the world. Our natural resources allow complex therapies (covering the whole spectrum of treatments) in certain disease groups. There are 13 Hungarian settlements with „health resort” qualification which are the followings: Balf, Bük, Kékestető, Lillafüred, Balatonfüred, Debrecen, Eger, Gyula, Hajdúszoboszló, Harkány, Hévíz, Parádszabolcs, Zalakaros. Thermal or medicinal baths can be found in 385 settlements, there are 66 certified medicinal baths as well as some medicinal caves, sites of therapeutic mud and mofettes (dry baths). Wellness tourism in Hungary is a dynamically developing branch with an already existing infrastructure. Medical tourism has also a significant economic impact in Hungary. The registered market of tourism based on medicinal waters or wellness including the domestic and international turnover is estimated about 147 million EUR in 2008. Dental tourism itself yields a similar sum of revenue. At present, health tourism with its all branches yields an income of 368 million EUR for the country.

Hungary holds good positions in health industry: our pharmaceutical industry is regarded as leader in the region, and we have a very good research background from genomics to infobionics. In the field of innovative rehabilitation, the Pető Institute and the Pető-method brought reputation and acknowledgement for Hungary all over the world.

In Hungary, in the field of medical tourism the market of dentistry, aesthetic surgery and ophthalmological operations attached to special technologies is dominated by private providers. Rehabilitation, joint surgery, ophthalmology (crystalline lens and eyeground operations), care for people suffering from cancer diseases or autoimmune diseases and IVF are dominant in the private services of publicly financed institutions.

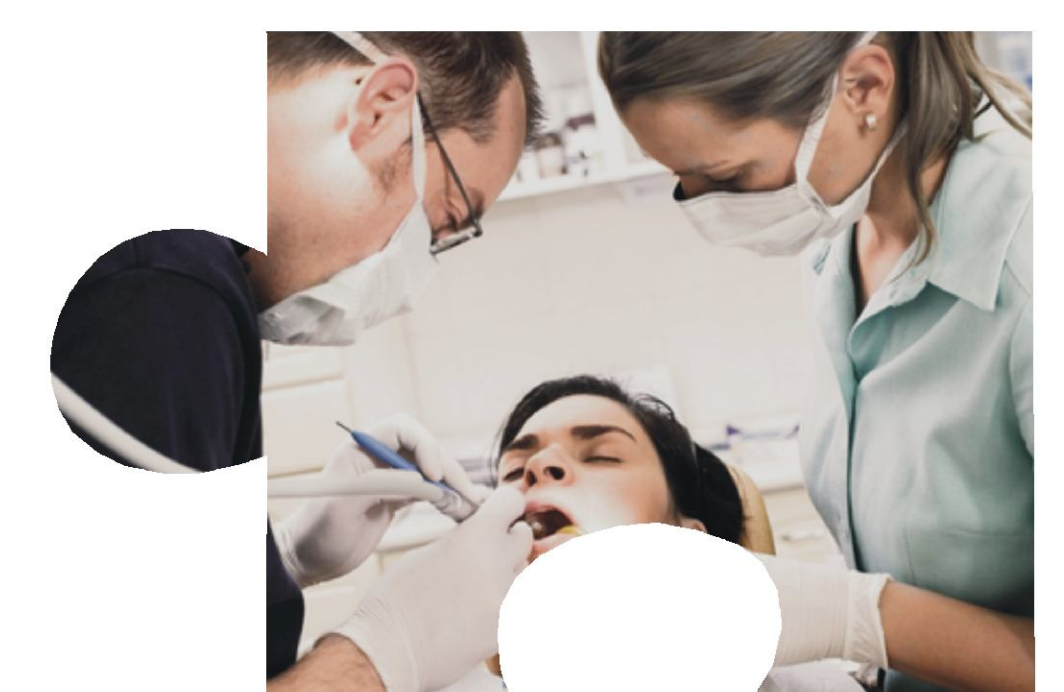
The „flagship” of Hungarian medical tourism is dental tourism, which looks back to a past of many decades. Towns at the Western border (Sopron, Győr, Szombathely, Mosonmagyaróvár) were the starting points, where primarily Austrian patients came in large numbers. At present, the focal point of dental tourism moved to the centre of the country, and the group of sender countries and territories has also expanded. The driving force of patient flow is a much cheaper - and at the same time - high-quality care, where the prices are about one-third of those in the Western European countries. In the past decade, the number of patients coming from more distant countries for Hungarian dental treatments has also demonstrated an increasing number. The latter primarily visit polyclinics in Budapest. The overwhelming majority of patients comes from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, but visits by Italian, Dutch, Russian patients and clients from overseas countries proves to be more and more frequent.

Although dental treatment is the primary aim of the visits, a great proportion of patients, arriving with family members, benefits from complex hotel and other touristic services and visits cultural programmes. The tourism of Hungary is transforming as traditional hospitality based tourism has been accompanied by „event tourism” (festivals, conferences, competitions) which becomes also more and more significant. The publicly financed health care providers (especially university clinics, national institutes for a certain profession) receive non-Hungarian patients as well. The most popular services among non-Hungarian patients are ophthalmologic operations, spine surgery and gynaecologic interventions. In chronic care, most foreign patients take part in the rehabilitation of the diseases of skeletal muscles and connective tissue with medicinal waters. For instance in Hévíz, a bath built on a worldwide unique medicinal lake, receives 1.200.000 visitors every year. Half of the visitors come from other countries, half are Hungarians. On the therapeutic part 700-800.000 treatments are performed yearly. The prices in this area are also considerably lower than in Western Europe.

Hungary is a hospitable country with generally well-developed touristic services. Good accessibility and infrastructure: main destinations have their own airports and the motorway network is well-developed. Hungary (and Budapest) can be reached within 1-2 hours from any point of Europe.

Hungary

The recent Hungarian legislation basically deals with the issues of medical tourism and patient mobility in two regulated areas. In the one hand, in the healthcare legislation, on the other hand in the tourism and development policy. The regulations of health tourism are limited to the development of the natural medical factors, the baths and medical institutions from a touristic-medical touristic point of view. In Hungary, the law that regulates medical services contains the rules of reimbursement of necessary healthcare for foreigners who stay in Hungary and Hungarian citizens who stay abroad.



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