

International Conference “Destructive Groups and Youth”

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The Attitude of Government Bodies Towards the Use of Para-Medicine for "Protecting School Children from Pathogenic Radiations"

Public disclosure of the existence of quackery products at an elementary school in Croatia in December 2009 created a unique opportunity to observe the ability of government bodies to deal with such cases. The products were actually just metal plates with "mystical" symbols on them, which were supposed to protect the school children and teachers from non-ionizing radiation and from "negative energy" of human thoughts, magic, spiritual entities, bewitchment, etc.

The head-master organized a press conference where she emphasised that she did nothing wrong because she believed that these items protected pupils and teachers from cancer diseases and she claimed that the whole attack on her was politically motivated.

The Croatian Law clearly stipulates that she was not allowed to buy these products and that this act disqualified her for the job of head-master. Moreover, the Law forbids selling or buying uncertified radiation-protection products or services. But two official investigations by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport (MSES) yielded shocking reports: in both cases the inspectors concluded that the head-master did not break the law because the "inventor" of these products had a certificate issued by HUPED (Croatian Federation for Natural, Energy and Spiritual Medicine).

HUPED is a society of practitioners of 'para-' or 'unconventional' medicine. HUPED is merely a private and not a state body, and its certificates have no legal value. The school board did not accept the Ministry's reports and eventually fired the head-master. This created a legally dubious situation and the ex-head-master sued the school. The school has not received so far any help from the official bodies, while the Minister of Science, Education and Sport claimed that the head-master was removed thanks to the work of its inspectors. Interestingly enough, HUPED members are advertised extensively on the state television (which is also against the Law regulating this media), HUPED conferences have been co-financed by MSES, The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the University of Zagreb, whilst the Croatian Medical Chamber awards points to medical doctors who attend HUPED conferences. The head of the Croatian Society for Consumer Protection is also a member of the HUPED's Steering Committee.

Update, January 2011: The whole case on 'para-medicine' at the school in Šenkovec is still in court. The ex-head-master and the 'para-medical' practitioner sued the school and journalists. No sanctions were taken against the official inspector who accepted a HUPED certificate as a legitimate document. No sanctions have been taken so far against the ex-head-master for breaking the law and no sanctions have been taken against the para-medical practitioner for selling such quackery products. However, the legal battle is still going on and the whole case is expanding in its importance and potential legal consequences.