

Martin Bojar

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Předmět: Czech Blood in the Nineties

Dear dr. Bojar,

Dr. Tuma has asked me to write down a brief note on the Red Cross involvement with Czech Blood program in the nineties. It is easier for me to do it in English and I also am not too sure whether this will be at all helpful. But let me try.

In the early nineties (I guess round 1993) we were approached by the Then Director of was it "SEVAC" (Statni Ustav Ser a Ockovacich Latek) whether the International Federation would be in a position to support Czech Red Cross efforts to modernise and possibly take over parts of the blood programme managed by SEVAC at the time. Czech Red Cross have expressed interest in the venture and requested International Federation for technical advice and support. After consultation with the Government,, interestingly enough at the time, the office of the Prime Minister (I believe Mr. Weigel was in charge of the dossier) the Federation has provided experts to assess the market in the country, carry out a due diligence study of SEVAC and essentially proposed purchase and establishment of a green site facility, for the blood side of the SEVAC business. (The sera and vaccination business, according to the proposal, was to be privatised). Czech Red Cross with International Federation support was prepared to take over the management of the blood programme, providing the Government would ensure through appropriate legislation guaranteed "business environment", essentially implying a monopoly protection for the society. This at the time was a common practice in many countries that pursued Council of Europe recommended blood products self sufficiency guidelines.

We were told, though I believe never formally, that under the then prevailing privatization mood in the country, blood was to be privatised as any other commodity, something we advised Czech Red Cross not to involve itself with. After a while, our offer to the Government was formally withdrawn, and we were told SEVAC was to be sold to an Italian Plasma group whose name I no longer remember. Subsequently, I believe, the Government under some public pressure, blocked the proposed sale. At no stage at the time, was Mr. Stava or Diag Huma involved in any of these negotiations. In fact, Swiss Red Cross and the Swiss Government who at the time prioritised cooperation with Bulgaria, was not party to the Czech Blood support group, that included National Red Cross societies of Austria, Germany and the Netherlands.

Dr. Jiri Prochazka, Secretary General of the Czech Red Cross was much more closely involved in all these negotiations and there will be a fairly detailed file on this at the societies headquarters in Prague.

Should you wish to have additional information feel free to e mail or contact me.

With best regards

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