

Medical gas systems, electrical grids in Romania's hospitals to be upgraded under funding programme

President Klaus Iohannis said on Wednesday that it is necessary to modernise the gas systems and electricity grids in Romania's hospitals, and a European funding programme will be prepared for that.

"Some concrete solutions have already been identified that will be taken over by the authorities and implemented. First of all, it is necessary to modernise the gas systems, especially oxygen, and the electricity grids. We have found together the solution of preparing a well-developed financing programme using European funds, a very valuable and handy resource for the development of the Romanian medical system. Secondly, it is necessary to rethink the legislative and financial instruments that would allow to support the services system and maintenance of hospital equipment. Human resources play an important role, and when I say that, I am thinking of medical engineers, who need to be capitalised on and more involved in hospital operation. These aspects will be included in the package of laws regarding the healthcare reform, which is in full process of drawing up at the Ministry of Health," Iohannis told a news briefing at the Cotroceni Presidential Palace.

The head of state had a new meeting on Wednesday to evaluate and present measures for the management of the COVID-19 epidemic with Prime Minister Ludovic Orban, Minister of Health Nelu Tataru, head of the Department for Emergency Situations Raed Arafat. The meeting was also attended by vice-president of the Romanian Society of Anesthesia and Intensive Care Dorel Sandesc; head of the Anesthesia and Intensive Care Unit I, of the Carol Davila Central Military Emergency University Hospital Dan Corneci; manager of the Dr. Victor Babes Clinical Hospital of Infectious and Tropical Diseases Emilian Imbri; Elena Ovreiu, lecturer at the Faculty of Medical Engineering with the Polytechnic University of Bucharest.

Iohannis said that specialists presented a national evaluation of the gas network infrastructure in the anesthesia and intensive care units at public hospitals and an analysis of the malfunctions and flaws that may occur during the operation of such devices, with actual examples from various medical facilities.

"In order to have a more accurate picture of the current situation, we asked the Ministry of Health and experts for an analysis of servicing and maintenance contracts for medical equipment and devices owned by public hospitals. It is obvious that, in order to ensure the necessary medicines, materials and the coverage of wage expenses, funds for equipment servicing and maintenance are massively undersized and often insufficient," said Iohannis.

He added that Romania is going through "an extremely difficult period for the medical system that has highlighted all the structural deficiencies neglected for years on end."

"Precisely because we have run into so many problems, we have been working for several weeks on a coherent vision in this field, which should be transposed into clear laws and regulations. Together with the government, I am determined to do what has to be done, what in fact has not been done in Romania after 1989, that is, to rebuild the entire healthcare system from the ground up. It will be a long-term effort that cannot be postponed and that must start as soon as we have a new majority in Parliament that is responsible and fully committed to the good of the Romanians," said Iohannis.