

Character assassination of a whistleblower

|By Bert Lauwers

The controversial Trends magazine article with EHFCN President Paul Vincke has raised some eyebrows from within the Belgian healthcare system and has led to Mr. Vincke for his remarks that 7 billion Euro, or 30 percent of health expenditure is at risk of abuse, whether consciously or inadvertently.

Despite stating that this figure was used in its broadest sense to encompass all misuse or abuse, his comments have nonetheless been described as “surrealistic” by Belgian Minister of Health Laurette Onkelinx.

While Riziv publicly distanced themselves from the statements made by their former board member, following pressure from at least one doctors union, they did admit that a lawful definition of ‘fraud’ was missing.

Nevertheless it is certain that the abuses in the health sector are much greater than thought. Courageously Mr. Vincke was the first to make the calculation complete for every area of the healthcare sector where savings can be delivered.

It is unfortunate that Mr Vincke has been tackled because of semantic beliefs. Although the dictionary states that ‘social fraud’ is a synonym of ‘misuse of social services’, Minister Onkelinx sees a big difference between fraud and misuse.



By shooting the messenger, Onkelinx has practically destroyed a useful debate about the massive loss of funds in the health sector.

It is now feared that this open condemnation of Mr Vincke has ended the short life of the whistleblower in Belgian healthcare. ■