

countries.

In general, austerity measures seem to have accelerated the rate of modernization of the health system and, as a consequence, drastic changes are being made. Local pharmaceutical industries are being privatized, new products are being introduced, and public enterprises are being converted into shareholding companies.

### *Opportunities and Constraints*

The region could benefit from strong Canadian capabilities in the health sector. Canadian experts could assist by participating in the transformation of the overall health care system, by providing consulting services in hospital management, where Canadians enjoy an excellent reputation, by supplying various diagnostic and therapeutic devices, including hearing aids, and by improving hospital information systems. Demand exists for cardiovascular and gastrointestinal drugs, medications for the central nervous system, antibiotics, and oncology and anti-allergy pharmaceuticals. Hospital waste management and the supplying of hospital furniture for the regional market offer further commercial prospects. In addition, Canadian companies can continue to play a vital role in the privatization of pharmaceutical companies.

Foreign competition is exceptionally strong in Hungary where large multinationals and many smaller

companies, mainly from the EU and US, have established a presence through local representatives or have set up local manufacturing plants. Once again, this reinforces the need to have a Canadian presence in the market.

In most CEFTA countries, austerity measures have made obtaining financing more difficult, a fact which may affect the business plans of foreign companies. In the medical field, projects financed by the World Bank offer business opportunities in management consulting, training, information systems, and institutional devices.

### *Activities*

- Magyar Medica, Magyar Pharma, Magyar Dent, Magyar Optica, and Magyar Regula held their annual show in Budapest last February.

- mediKAL + dental BUDAPEST is a biennial show last held in Budapest in November 1996. It covers hospitals, doctors and laboratories, pharmaceuticals, rehabilitation, and dental services.

- International Exposition and Symposium is an annual event held in Budapest in the last week of January. It covers diagnostics, software in health care, laboratory, hospital, and dental equipment, etc.

- Hungary is host to many international conferences, seminars and workshops.