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In the period from the last meeting of FEMS in Porto until today, no encouraging political actions have been taken in the Republic of Slovenia, which is still suffering from economic decline. Although GDP has stopped falling, it is impossible to speak of any economic recovery yet as the country is export-oriented. The halted fall in GDP may mainly be attributed to increased exports due to growing demand and the end of the recession for Slovene foreign trading partners.

On the other hand, the Slovene Government is imposing new taxes to fill the huge hole in the budget and borrowing money abroad at an expensive rate by selling government bonds. As a result of this, the borrowing rate of the state, currently amounting to about 90 % of GDP, has doubled over the last year. In view of the weak economy, this figure is an onerous burden on the future generations of the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia. The country's health care is no exception, stagnating and being faced with heavy losses of health establishments. All the aforementioned seriously threatens the functioning of the health care system as a whole. We are facing corruption in the health care system and the inability to carry out public procurement according to the prescribed procedures, while health establishments are poorly organised and managed, showing no competitiveness in the area of health insurance. Last but not least, the employment of young doctors has been stopped although Slovenia is at the bottom of the European scale as regards the number of doctors. The Government is folding its arms and failing to take on the much needed health care reforms. Furthermore, it is unable to ensure the leadership of the Ministry of Health as the position of the Minister of Health has been unoccupied for half a year already, the last one having resigned due to the incapacity and lack of support on the side of the Government to take on the necessary reforms.

Surrounded by such a national climate, we doctors cannot remain indifferent. At all times, FIDES has been active. In cooperation with other health organisations which form part of the so-called Coordination of health organisations, it prepared a document entitled "The Strategy of the Slovene Health Care System to Overcome the Crisis". The document took slightly more than a year to come into existence and serves as a proper basis and a starting point to draft all legal acts for the implementation of the health care reform. Currently, we are organising meetings and informing the interested political and other public, in particular wishing to present the document to the broader public (users), so as to be able to reveal, in a direct dialogue, the sincere intentions that we as doctors have with regard to the health care system's problems, and to offer acceptable solutions. We are also willing to cooperate in the drafting of final documents; however, the Government has no interest in listening to this initiative.

As regards the Union, FIDES is in favour of changes to be made to the Public Sector Salary System Act. We believe that greater flexibility needs to be ensured, especially in rewarding those that are more efficient and hardworking, and to encourage those that do not meet the demands, if need be. We are in favour of enforcing standards and norms for the work of doctors, which would become a basis for remuneration and immediate employment of young doctors waiting for work, and the regulation of certain other rights that are currently frozen or have been shelved (the length of doctors' holiday leave, promotion of doctors, revised assessment of medical professions, etc.). Although discussions are being held with responsible persons, solutions seem very distant and mostly fall on deaf ears. We have been paying ongoing attention to these problems and are exerting increasing pressure on the persons responsible. We will use the Action Day to draw even more attention to this. Harsher Union actions in the near future can also be expected.

As if this alone were not enough, we are currently witnessing another Government crisis which will postpone the much required solutions and reforms until an uncertain future. In the meantime, we can only hope that the health insurance fund will not go bankrupt as this would lead to the collapse of the health care system.

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