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On 2nd April 2019, Bojan Popovič, FEMS secretary general, joined the the representatives of the Croatian medical union HLS in Zagreb, Croatia, to visit the Croatian minister of health dr. Milan Kujundžić who used to be the Croatian FEMS delegate for years. Even the Croatian prime minister Plenković was informed about our meeting but was "too busy" to receive us at his premises.

The minister strongly supported FEMS motion on the right of HLS to negotiate directly with the government and (co)sign the collective agreements (currently, the law enables them only to negotiate via a proxy through big unions). The legislation is supposed to be changed in July 2019, but we said that FEMS will monitor the process and if there is no substantial progress, we will file a complaint with the ILO supervising bodies. So we suggested them to speed up the process.

Secondly, I expressed FEMS support for the protest of the Croatian Supreme Court criticizing the Croatian Ministry of Health which had tried to influence a district court's judge in the Croatian city of Bjelovar to decide in favour of the ministry in the case of inadequate payment of on-call duties. Otherwise, several hundreds of cases have been decided in favour of doctors by first and second instance courts across Croatia, so minister's counsellors obviously became a bit nervous.

Thirdly, we pointed out that Croatia should be more concerned about their doctors' emigration trend and that they are lagging behind countries like Czech Rep., Poland and Romania. Minister asked us if we could provide him some good examples to keep doctors in the country or to motivate expatriates to return home. Therefore, we emphasize that FEMS WG on specialist trainees issues is an important one.

Then we had a very well attended press conference with all major national media present, so we even needed to take a larger press room. We had the opportunity to repeat what we had said to the minister, and media were quite supportive.

As FEMS Secretary General, I would like to express the appreciation for HLS president and delegate to our GA dr. Renata Čulinović-Čaić and her colleagues for organizing the visit perfectly and for revitalizing HLS into an important stakeholder in Croatia.