



**Fédération Européenne  
des Médecins Salariés**  
European Federation  
of Salaried Doctors

<b>Date:</b>	<b>26-09-2019</b>	<b>Document:</b>	<b>F19-054 EN</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>National Report Austria</b>		
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## **AUTUMN REPORT AUSTRIA – FEMS SEPTEMBER 2019**

### **1. Survey among hospital doctors**

Since 2003, the federal body of employed doctors of the Austrian Medical Chamber regularly conducts a survey among hospital doctors. The topics of this year's survey include in addition to workload, working hours and administration, also verbal and physical assaults. In recent years, there has been an increased tendency to violence in everyday hospital life. According to the Vice President of the Austrian Medical Chamber, Dr Mayer, one reason for the increased violence is the lack of resources. The number of outpatient cases in Austria rose by 34 percent between 2005 and 2017. Therefore, the Austrian Medical Chamber demands not only structural relief, especially for outpatient departments, but also a safe working environment and higher penalties.

In addition to outpatient services, patient documentation has been perceived as a heavy burden for years - more than half of the respondents stated this in 2016. For this reason, this year's survey was supplemented by the question of whether there are any assistant services available in the department to handle doctors' documentation activities.

However, the regularly conducted survey by the Austrian Medical Chamber also shows positive results: the average weekly working time fell from 59 hours in 2006 to 48 hours in 2016. Since the implementation of the amended Hospital Working Hours Act, the highest number of hours in a working week has decreased significantly: while the doctors interviewed stated in 2006 that they had worked up to 75 hours per working week, the highest number of hours fell to 62 hours in 2016. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement: in the last survey, hospital doctors stated an average desired working time of 41 hours.

The results of the survey will be presented in October 2019.

### **2. List of demands to the future government**

On 10 September 2019, the Austrian Medical Chamber presented a comprehensive list of demands to the future federal government during a press conference. In view of the impending shortage of doctors and the Europe-wide competition for doctors, the Austrian Medical Chamber calls, among other things, for less bureaucracy, more delegation to other health, social or administrative professions and protection of the doctors' profession and other health professions against violence. Another problem is the increasing interest of private investors in medical centres, the primary goal of which is to maximise profits. In order to guarantee the best possible patient care in view of these developments, politicians must legally restrict the acquisition of companies.

Additionally, an increasing number of young doctors are deciding to take up training as general practitioners, and more and more graduates of medical studies are not taking up medical activities in Austria. It is therefore necessary to start at the training stage. In addition to an expansion of the basic medical training positions, this also includes training coordinators in all hospitals, an upgrading of the trainers and more simulation possibilities.

Moreover, hospitals must finally be disburdened - the focus here is on outpatient clinics. These should only be consulted in emergencies and only if care cannot be provided by self-employed doctors. The Austrian Medical Chamber therefore demands more freelance structures in or near hospitals, more acute ordinations in general practice and medical centres. Additionally, to ensure adequate health care for patients, 1300 new positions for self-employed doctors with a health insurance contract for individual and group practices are necessary throughout Austria.

For the purposes of providing adequate hospital medical care, the Austrian Medical Chamber also demands that the currently valid provisions of the KA-AZG (Hospital Working Hours Act) be fully preserved without any further discussion of amendments.

In order to meet the presented demands, the Austrian Medical Chamber calls for an increase in the share of GDP for the health sector to 12 percent - based on Germany and Switzerland. Furthermore, irrespective of the savings or additional costs actually realised through the creation of the Austrian Health Insurance Fund, the announced patient billion must flow into health care for the Austrian population.

### **3. Austrian legislative election 2019**

Early elections to the 27<sup>th</sup> National Council will take place in Austria on 29 September 2019. The elections are held every 5 years and the last National Council elections took place on 15 October 2017 - the next official date would have been autumn 2022. However, due to the collapse of the ÖVP-FPÖ government following the “Ibiza affair”, new elections were called for 2019. A total of eight parties are running nationwide, including the ÖVP (Austrian People's Party), SPÖ (Social Democratic Party of Austria), FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria), NEOS (The New Austria and Liberal Forum), JETZT, Die Grünen (The Green Alternative), KPÖ (Communist Party of Austria Plus) and WANDL (The Change).