



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

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## PORTUGAL SITUATION- COVID-19

### FEMS GA- May 2020

First of all, we want to express our solidarity on behalf of the Portuguese doctors to our European colleagues here represented. We hope that the situation will improve soon and that Europe will be able to return to normal.

#### **Current status:**

- The situation in Portugal is, at this point, relatively controlled.
- We have a total of 26,182 cases and 1089 deceased (approximately 100 deaths per million inhabitants).
- Health professionals represent about 13% of all cases. Approximately 400 being medical doctors. Fortunately, there's no record of fatalities amongst doctors.
- The curve of cases and deaths was kept flattened within the maximum response limits.

#### **Why "not so bad":**

- Portugal has a National Health Service that tries to ensure equality and high levels of quality in the treatment of all patients. We believe that was the cornerstone for enabling better results.
- Health professionals showed great effort, flexibility, and commitment.
- The population was rather compliant with the measures requested by the government.
- Portugal had the good fortune of being one of the last European countries to present COVID-19 cases. Although we didn't take full advantage of this circumstance to prepare properly, it contributed to measures being taken somewhat earlier.

Even so, this is a serious situation that is pushing the country's resources to the limit, both in terms of healthcare and economic resources.

Particularly worrying is the situation in nursing homes, where more than a third of deaths came from

#### **Government and health authorities measures:**

- A state of emergency has been decreed, with restrictions on freedom of movement, closure of schools and non-essential companies, the prohibition of all agglomerations, sporting events, etc.
- All non-urgent health care has been temporarily suspended.
- Extended criteria were established for testing for COVID and a daily epidemiological surveillance procedure for all those infected.
- Social support is in place for the infected and for the prophylactically isolated.

Now there's an attempt to return to "normality", which is being carried out in a phased manner and with the mandatory hygiene and personal protection measures.

Teaching maintains mostly done at a distance and large agglomerations are still prohibited.

#### **Regarding the difficulties that doctors and health services are going through in this pandemic:**

- Doctors had great difficulties in having access to personal protective equipment, as the stock was not reinforced in time.
- The National Health Service has limited resources, that results from chronic underinvestment. Only the extraordinary effort of doctors and other professionals made it possible to sustain this situation.
- The treatment of "non-COVID" patients has been very compromised and the return to the assistance activity will probably be very complicated.
- There are few doctors in the NHS. Holidays are suspended and the limits to overtime work will also be impossible to maintain the current work rhythm, and it is imperative to attract more doctors to the Portuguese NHS.

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Sindicato Independente dos Médicos (SIM)  
Ordem dos Medicos Portugal (Portuguese Medical Association)