



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

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FIDES REPORT FOR FEMS, Austria 5/2022

After the FEMS meeting in Dubrovnik in September 2021, a period of intensive work began for FIDES. In the meantime, the Minister of Health quietly and without our knowledge signed an annex to the collective agreement for raising the salaries of healthcare workers and associates (except doctors) by two to six salary grades (8-24%). By doing so, he has finally demolished all comparable wage ratios in healthcare and allowed some of the lower-ranked salary profiles to rise sharply and dig deep into doctors' salaries. As the single wage system does not allow us to exceed the 57 wage class (€ 3,960.00), there has been a breakdown in relations: lower wages have risen, high wages have remained there and this has upset young doctors in particular, as many of their colleagues from non-medical types exceeded their modest salaries.

In such an atmosphere, talks began between the Government and the Ministry of Health on the one hand and FIDES on the other. The basic goal of FIDES was and remains the same, the exit of doctors or even better, the entire health care system from the uniform wage system. Unfortunately, representatives of other health professionals and associates did not stand by us. In addition, the general atmosphere among politicians in the National Assembly was unfavorable for the withdrawal of doctors from the uniform wage system, and as a result, we played with the Government on scenarios on how to increase salaries. These were the last months of the mandate of this Government and there was no will for radical changes in the legislation in the National Assembly. Nevertheless, at the end of the year we managed to agree with the Government on a favorable annex to the collective agreement, including tariff part of the contract. However, the implementation of this annex, which was adopted by the National Assembly in a package of other laws was stopped. At the initiative of other public sector unions, the Constitutional Court suspended the entry into force of this law and finally decided that implementation could not take place.

To sum up, FIDES has had and still has in its desires and demands to leave the uniform wage system both the Government and the Ministry of Health as well as public sector unions as well as public opinion supported by our mass media.

Dissatisfaction among doctors is great, and in such an atmosphere we have witnessed many calls to strongly resist in the context of trade union activities. Due to the period when the National Assembly is no longer active before the elections and the Government is only doing current business, we have postponed the protest until a new Government and a new National Assembly are formed. To this end, we have signed a petition for doctors to withdraw doctors from the uniform wage system. The signed statements collected in this way will be officially handed over to the new National Assembly, thus imposing a moral obligation on it to complete the matter as soon as possible.

It is now clear that the mandate of the successful government of Janez Janša is over and will be replaced by a new face of Slovenian politics, who ran for prime minister without a program and with empty promises in less than two months when he founded the party. It is difficult to say anything more about a possible new prime minister, Robert Golob. People wanted to see a new face in the election. They have large succeeded in this, but it is difficult to comment on how this will affect the country's leadership. According to some clearly expressed thoughts, we doctors will find it difficult to express our wishes and expectations, and thus the entire health care system will suffer.

As far as the COVID epidemic is concerned, it has somehow watered down under the weight of political propaganda, and the war in Ukraine has turned the epidemiological situation away from the main news reports. We are currently living without any prescribed measures, masks are still mandatory in medical institutions and nursing homes, and are recommended elsewhere indoors. Slovenians have not strictly followed all the rules before, but this came as a great relief. Now it is rare to see anyone wearing a mask. Nevertheless, the winter

period was very difficult for all of us, the hospitals were full of patients, intensive care units as well, and with the general lack of doctors and nurses, work with other patients was very limited. The epidemic has left a strong mark, and the already long queues have been extended.

The fact is that there is a shortage of both doctors and nursing staff in Slovenia. While doctors go to private clinics or abroad, nursing staff leave the profession and go to services that have nothing to do with medicine. Health care system needs urgent reforms: financing health care, running public institutions, a modern salary system in health care system.

Healthcare professionals responded well to the epidemic. All the efforts were transferred by doctors and other medical staff and proved that citizens can count on them at any time. Unfortunately, things turn around when, for example, doctors express a desire to improve working conditions and reward work. With the support of the mainstream media, individual cases of high medical salaries are coming to light. Of course, this becomes a model for all doctors. However, these salaries are not fully analyzed and the public does not actually get clear information on how such a payment came about. Manipulations are regular companions of public reporting on our work and salaries!

Ljubljana, 25th of April 2022

Damjan Polh, vicepresident of FIDES