



**Fédération Européenne  
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## **FIDES REPORT FOR FEMS, Palma de Mallorca 5/2023**

As I already mentioned in my last report at the FEMS conference last september, FIDES has decided to intensify trade union activities against the new government, as the health care situation in Slovenia is alarming. The great shortage of doctors and other medical personnel causes overloads for those who work, and unfortunately the trend of doctors leaving for the private sector or abroad is not diminishing. Other healthcare workers even leave healthcare and work in other non-health industries. The system is literally falling apart before our eyes, and all attempts to get together with the government and start talking and solving acute problems have failed at that time.

After the tightening and the announced strike, at the end of September we just got together and started to negotiate. Our strike demand was to withdraw from the single public sector wage system and, as a result, negotiate a new collective agreement.

The government could not agree to the unilateral withdrawal of only doctors. During the negotiations, we looked for solutions and found them just before the announced strike. In the agreement, the government undertook to exclude health care as a whole from the unified salary system in 2023 and to re-establish a salary scale for all profiles in health care in the so-called health pillar. The main strike demand was thus met and the FIDES Main Committee was able to freeze the strike. The government, however, has committed itself to offering, in coordination with the trade unions, a salary increase for certain groups in healthcare (the emphasis should be on doctors' salaries) for the period when the new healthcare legislation is expected to be harmonized with the new salary scale for healthcare within a period of one month. At the same time, it was supposed to alleviate salary disparities, since with unilateral negotiations at the end of 2021, some groups in healthcare with a lower education overtook young and younger doctors in salary. And that's where it got stuck.

At the beginning, the government offered a higher salary increase for young doctors, and for the elderly, who were stuck in the highest possible salary class (some of them have not advanced on the salary scale for fourteen years since the salary system was established!) they reserved crumbs... This would make further compression of the salary scale and dissatisfaction among doctors became enormous. Negotiations went on from week to week, FIDES offered approximate proposals, but the government did not respond to them and everything remained with the original proposal. The annex to the collective agreement was signed by the trade union that represents workers in healthcare and social services, and thus also applied to doctors. FIDES did not sign the aforementioned annex.

In the middle of October last year, in the middle of negotiations with the government, FIDES was left without its president and chief negotiator. Konrad Kuštrin appeared on sick leave, and later informed us at a meeting of the main board of FIDES that unfortunately he had to resign irrevocably from the position of president due to health problems. He expected a longer rehabilitation and for that he would not be able to lead the union in an adequate way. The management of the negotiations was taken over by Vice-President Gregor Zemljič, and three other Vice-Presidents, including me, remained in the immediate leadership.

Due to great dissatisfaction among the membership, FIDES then announced a strike for the beginning of January, this time due to the inadequate resolution of wage disparities among healthcare workers

to the detriment of doctors. This time, too, all that remained was the threat of a strike, as we managed to sign a promising agreement with the government through mediation. Some of the solutions in the agreement should become the basis of the future health pillar, which will define the specifics of health care and also the newly formed wage relations between health workers. The reactivation of the strike at such short notice and the re-cancellation was not well received by some of our members. Some even renounced membership in FIDES. The decision to suspend the strike activities itself was made democratically at the main committee and there is nothing to add to it.

The government's promised negotiations for health care within the framework of the health pillar have been delayed deep into the new year. Only the second signed agreement gave the government obligations to immediately start negotiations. So in the middle of February, we just sat down at the common table. Expectations were high, but unfortunately they did not come true. Meetings followed, but there were no real outlines of the pillar. FIDES has always offered concrete solutions with the concept and, last but not least, with the proposed salary scale, but there was no real response or more concrete proposals from the government. That the health pillar would be completed by the beginning of April, as the government promised and was clearly written in the first agreement from October last year, remained only an illusion. The reactivation of the strike from this title was logical. Quite a few events during this time made us think. FIDES needed an additional legal opinion regarding the resulting situation and after sober consideration we decided to suspend the strike activities from the signed strike freeze agreement. We took extra time for the possible reactivation of the strike. At this point, I must say that in the middle of March, we had a regular election conference, where I was chosen from two candidates as FIDES president for the period 2023-2027. At the conference, we also said goodbye to the long-time president of FIDES, Konrad Kuštrin. The ceremony was accompanied by a video presentation of important events from the history of FIDES and a rich cultural program with invited guests.

I took over FIDES in difficult times, in the middle of negotiations with the government, which, with its moves and inaction, has no promise of fulfilling its promises. This and the escalation of dissatisfaction among the FIDES membership make my job even more difficult. I am an optimist by nature, but this time I am cautious about the exit. The deadline by which all negotiations should somehow be concluded in order for the government to submit the matter to the parliamentary procedure is June 30. There is not much time, and there are too many open questions. That is why we are already thinking about alternatives in order to offer doctors solutions if there is no agreement. That is why we have extended our efforts to all doctors: the Medical Chamber, the Medical Association, the Association of Private Doctors, and Young Doctors. We are trying to gain consensus from everyone for our future activity.

The report was compiled by Damjan Polh, president of FIDES