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SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT FOR FEMS GA, Brussels, October 2025

The FIDES union has been on strike since 14 January 2024. An agreement with the government has still not been reached, as it continues to ignore signed commitments, and our respective sides remain fundamentally opposed.

The strike is taking place only formally, without concrete effects on the functioning of healthcare or patient care, as it was effectively prohibited by the amendment to the Medical Service Act. The law has been awaiting constitutional review for more than a year, despite the announcement that it would be treated as a priority.

In May, an amendment to the Healthcare Services Act entered into force, causing significant unrest among both professional and general audiences even before its implementation. The amendment was prepared without the involvement of the medical profession, and doctors' comments were disregarded in the legislative process. The stated aim of the law was to draw a strict line between public and private healthcare, prohibit doctors from working for multiple employers, impose obligations to ensure continuous healthcare coverage, and enable the reassignment of staff between public institutions under less favourable conditions.

Although the act foresees a one-year transition period, the trend of doctors leaving the public system for the private sector or abroad has already been observed since it came into force. While the numbers are not large, in a country like Slovenia—where doctors and other healthcare workers are already in critically short supply—every departure represents a serious blow. In cooperation with the FIDES legal service, we have submitted several provisions of the amendment for constitutional review. Here too, despite being marked as a priority case, no progress has been made after several months.

Three months after the law came into force, doctors in leading positions were forced to choose between their role as directors of public institutions and their work in private practices. In October, department heads will be required to terminate their dual practice. We expect this will create further gaps and deepen the shortage of doctors.

Despite the summer period, traditionally reserved for rest and holidays, FIDES remained active. We called on union representatives to report on the consequences of the amended Healthcare Services Act in their institutions. We were strongly engaged in correcting injustices suffered by individuals under the new public sector pay system. With the government's negotiating team, we agreed on ways to address these issues in a straightforward and lawful manner. While partial success was achieved in talks with government representatives, implementation stalled at the level of individual healthcare

institutions, most often under the pretext of lacking funds or unclear instructions from the ministry.

In parallel, we continued negotiations and, in our view, prepared a solid document that would allow performance-based pay for doctors who exceed normal workloads in both quality and quantity. The problem remains that the government's negotiating team does not have the mandate to sign such a document.

During this period, in cooperation with a colleague researching the history and development of healthcare in Slovenia, we also prepared an overview of FIDES's activities from its founding to the present. With the help of our PR service, we compiled written records and visual documentation. In this way, the role of FIDES in the fight for doctors' rights will be secured a place in an official publication.

The report was compiled
by Damjan Polh, president of FIDES