



**FEDERATION EUROPEENNE DES MEDECINS SALARIES
EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF SALARIED DOCTORS**

**Registered Office/Siège
Social :**
39, rue Victor Massé
F-75009 Paris/France

<http://www.fems.net>

Presidency:
Dr. Claude Wetzel
Hôpitaux Universitaires
F-67098 Strasbourg/France
Tel +33 3 88 12 70 75 ou 76
GSM +33 6 60 55 56 16
Fax +33 3 88 12 70 74
claudewetzel@chru-strasbourg.fr

Permanent Secretariat:
Mrs Brigitte Jencik
Rue Guimard 15
B-1040 Brussels/Belgium
Tel. +32 27 36 60 66
Fax +32 27 32 99 72
e-mail: info@fems.net

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Authors:	FNAM		

PORTUGAL REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2011

Following the parliamentary elections last June, the Government took office a center-right coalition that has been striving to be more "troikista" than the troika. Budget cuts imposed by the IMF, European Central Bank and the European Union, the Government have imposed more austerity, mainly in the social sectors - Health, Education and Welfare.

Instead, it leaves untouched the income from capital, including stock gains, corporate profits and the wealthy.

The National Health Service is the most affected and will see its 2012 budget declined by more than 7%.

However, already cut overtime by 10% and announced cut of over 20% in 2012, new hiring of staff in health services are frozen.

Since 2004, doctors have had no career progression, even in 2010 saw their salaries reduced by 10% and, like the rest of the employees, will further decrease of 50% at 14 months (Christmas bonus), 2011.

Also the general population will be hit hard with the measures already announced in Health savings - reduced the reimbursement of medicines and complementary means of diagnosis and treatment, were introduced severe restrictions on the share in the transportation of patients and will increase user fees when seek health services; on the other hand, the government prepares to impose restrictive standards to doctors for prescribing drugs and supplementary diagnostic and therapeutic.

Every day the media publishes news about spending "excessive" health, raising fears it is being prepared the ground for the short term, various structures come to be privatized, although half of today's hospitals with business management are technically bankrupt, a clear demonstration that there is no longer for public services that control costs.

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