



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

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Authors:	Dr Damjan Polh, FIDES		



FIDES, Dunajska 162, 1000 Ljubljana; Tel.: +386 (0)1 43 25 028, +386 (0)1 43 01 914
E-mail: info@sindikattfides.si;

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The winter period in Slovenia was also marked by the Covid 19 epidemic. The state announced the second wave of the epidemic on 18 October 2020, and unfortunately this period is still going on. We are now in the period of the so-called third wave of the epidemic. Presently, the number of newly discovered infections and active infections is declining. This is not yet known in the number of hospitalized, but the trend is favorable. The third wave of the epidemic was contained during the Easter holidays, when the country had a strict eleven-day "lock down". In parallel with the reduction of the infected, the state began to release measures. Currently, catering activities and limited accommodation capacities are opening up in epidemiologically more favorable regions. Schools are open. Sports halls, stadiums, cinemas and theaters are still closed. There can be up to ten people in total. We have a good reason to think optimistically, as we have so far vaccinated 400,000 people out of 2 million with at least one dose of the vaccine, and by the end of June, half of the population is expected to be vaccinated. This would already ensure a calmer continuation into the summer and a more normal daily life.

In healthcare, we had a short, fourteen-days break in early March when we closed the Covid 19 ward in peripheral hospitals. With the advent of the third wave, the department reopened. I am happy to report that the health care system in our country did not break down, it went through difficult times, especially in December and January, but we did not reach the planned maximum capacities. All infected who needed hospitalization were cared for. It should be emphasized, however, that we achieved this at the expense of other patients who were deprived of the planned examinations and procedures. Waiting periods have thus been extended.

In the political field, it was varied all the time. In my opinion, the center-right government successfully led the country in these difficult times, but the opposition of the left (mostly post-communist) parties did not miss a moment to tarnish the government's reputation and in one way or another try to overthrow the government and regain power with a technical government or early elections. . The opposition acted extremely destructively and did not care about the consequences of non-cooperation in the fight against the epidemic. They went so far as to even encourage protests against the current government, falsely report on the repression and authoritarianism of the current government, and slander the current government with false reports of media repression. In doing so, they were supported by the public media, which are mostly anti-government. Unfortunately, they were also successful in this, and these lies were "caught" in Brussels. Slovenia will hold the EU presidency in the middle of the year, and there will be an opportunity to prove and restore its reputation.

As far as trade union action is concerned, I can say that the current government has listened to us and supports our efforts to get doctors (healthcare) out of the single wage system in the public sector. In the meantime, we had a few joint meetings of the union's leadership in the narrower composition, otherwise the communication is mainly via videoconferencing. We also prepared a new collective agreement for doctors and submitted it to the ministry for examination. Unfortunately, the epidemic has hit us and moved the time to start negotiations with the government. It was promised that these will start at the end of April, but so far nothing happened. During the epidemic in the fall, the former Minister of Health resigned. He has been temporarily replaced by the Prime Minister, and now we have a new minister coming from the medical ranks. He is not unknown in healthcare, as he comes as a former director of the University Clinical Center in Ljubljana, and even before that he successfully managed the Jesenice General Hospital. We have immediately established contact with him and expect correct cooperation to achieve our many years of exit efforts. There is a problem here, as other unions that represent

other health care workers and employees do not support the exit from the single pay system.

Coordination of medical organizations (Medical Chamber, Medical Association, Association of Private Physicians, FIDES trade union) is still active. Like everyone else, we meet here at regular monthly meetings via video conference and propose common solutions to health problems and try to improve the working conditions of doctors. As of this year, the chamber has a new president, a doctor specializing in infectology, who has always been active in the fight against the epidemic at the head of an expert advisory group. With it, the chamber is supposed to get a new wind and momentum in its operation.

Damjan Polh, vice president FIDES

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