

FEMS-AEMH

NATIONAL REPORT SPRING 2025 AUSTRIAN MEDICAL CHAMBER

1. Evaluation of medical training in Austria

In March 2025 the evaluation of medical training in Austria went into its third year. As in 2024 the evaluation was carried out in cooperation with the ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich).

Last year the response rate was 53% (compared to 44% in 2023), a higher response rate is hoped for this years' evaluation.

The basic questions on training are identical to last year, i.e., global rating of the training center; professional competence; learning culture; leadership culture; error culture and patient safety; decision-making culture; operational culture; evidence-based medicine.

Additional questions refer to “satisfaction with the specialist exam/GP exam and CME/CPD” as well as to “clinical practical year (during medical studies) and basic medical training (first 9 months of postgraduate training)”. The last question came up due to a change in the Medical Act, which will come into effect on June 1st, 2026. Based on the new regulation certain contents from the clinical practical year might be accredited towards basic medical training, which is undergone at the beginning of postgraduate medical training.

In a press release Vice-President and Chairman of the Federal Council of Employed Doctors, Dr. Mayer, stressed that it has been already 10 years since the so-called basic medical training was introduced in Austria with the Medical Training Regulations 2015, therefore an evaluation is urgently needed.

The results of this years' study will be presented in October 2025. The study does not only focus on quality assurance, it is also a decision tool for doctors in training to decide on the hospital where they might take up their postgraduate training, as the complete results can be found online for every Austrian training institution.

2. Austrian Government takes on office on March, 3rd, 2025 – Health Programme

Five months after the elections to the national council, which took place on September 29th, 2024, a new government was sworn in on March 3rd, 2025. For the first time in history the Austrian government is constituted by a coalition of three parties (ÖVP – People's Party, SPÖ – Social Democrats and Neos – liberal party).

As for health issues Korinna Schumann (Social Democrats) leads the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. She is accompanied by state secretary, Ulrike Königsberger-Ludwig (Social Democrats).

The government programme contains quite some positive measures for salaried doctors. Plans include mandatory patient guidance to relieve hospital outpatient clinics. The strengthening of the ambulant sector is also a core topic. Also, the government intends to introduce a uniform law for physicians and healthcare professionals in hospitals including a uniform salary scheme, as currently there are 9 different laws for every Austrian province. Further - among other things - an Austrian wide study on the demand of physicians and health care professionals is also planned.

3. Planned Hospital Mergers in Austrian provinces

In the Austrian province of Lower Austria plans for restructuring hospitals have been presented. In Lower Austria this will result in hospital specialization and fewer emergency medical centres. Three hospitals are to be consolidated into new hospital. A further four hospitals will be assigned new tasks focussing for instance on geriatric medicine or primary care. Lack of medical workforce, the ageing society and higher costs for medical care were given as a reason for this development.

Other Austrian provinces, like Styria also have plans to consolidate hospitals, while in some provinces specific departments even had to be temporarily closed due to staff shortages.

These developments always lead to great insecurity among the population who fear to not receive necessary medical care close by.

4. Panel Discussion on part-time work, 12th, November 2024, Graz

In November 2024 the Federal Council of Employed doctors held a panel discussion on the increasing trend of part-time work in hospitals.

The reason for part-time are many: For one, the number of women in medical work is increasing, as in general they still bear the major part of family management – combined with a lack of kindergartens (24/7). Therefore, the demand for part-time work increases. For the other, many physicians are willing to work beyond the retirement age or self-employed if they can count on attractive part-time models.

However, the burden of bureaucracy and administrative tasks often lead to the fact, that medical work stays behind. In addition, due to the lack of medical personnel, physicians often work more than the hours fixed in their contract. Stable work schedules are essential. Vice-President and Chairman of the Federal Council of Employed Doctors, Dr. Mayer also pointed out, that part-time work is often the solution to a very high workload. It is up to politics to change the situation, especially when it comes to patient guidance in the health system, thus ensuring functioning health care.

5. Hospital Doctors Survey

An IMAS survey commissioned by the Austrian Medical Chamber found that for 60% of the 3.600 participating hospital doctors, the working situation has become more unpleasant compared to

five years ago. 19% even stated that they would refrain from medical studies with their current experience. Vice-President and Chairman of the Federal Council of Employed Doctors, Dr. Mayer, sees the results as an “unmistakable alarm signal”. The results are even worse than those of the comparable study from 2019. Staff shortages are perceived as the most serious problem, followed by the effort required for patient documentation and increasing time-pressure. Almost two-thirds also see the increase in outpatient cases as a major problem. According to the Chamber’s view, mandatory patient guidance would solve the problem immediately. Patients should no longer be able to visit a hospital outpatient clinic without a referral from a GP. The 1450 health hotline should also play an important role. Consultation documentation should also be entered into ELGA. This would allow the hospital to verify whether the patient was actually recommended to visit the clinic.

6. Private Medical Universities in Austria

As the number of private medical universities in Austria is growing (4 public universities vs 4 private universities)– currently even the smallest of the nine Austrian provinces is planning its own university - the Federal Council of Employed Doctors will hold a panel-discussion on the pros and cons of private medical universities on May 7th, 2025. The event will also provide for live-stream.

Mag. CM/Dr. CS/ April 7th, 2025