

# FEMS NATIONAL REPORT – NORTH CYPRUS

---

October 2026

## 1. Working Conditions and Employment Rights of Physicians in Public Hospitals

Physicians working in public hospitals in North Cyprus are employed either as permanent staff or under temporary contracts, including compulsory-service contracts. Physicians employed under temporary contracts have significantly fewer employment and professional rights than their permanently employed colleagues.

These contracts are renewed every two years and are signed directly between the physician and the Minister of Health. This system creates considerable job insecurity and has also been used as a means of pressure on physicians. In particular, physicians participating in trade union actions and strikes have been threatened with non-renewal of their contracts.

Following the fully supported strike organised in February 2026, our union invited the Ministry of Health to collective bargaining negotiations with the aim of improving the employment rights and working conditions of contracted physicians and resident doctors.

Under the Collective Bargaining, Strike and Referendum Law, negotiations were initiated with the Ministry of Health. However, as the Ministry has so far resisted signing a collective agreement, the process has now reached the conciliation stage under the authority of the Ministry of Labour. Conciliation meetings between our union and the Minister of Health are ongoing, with the next meeting scheduled for the coming week.

### Participation of Physicians in Hospital Governance

A further dispute concerns the participation of physicians in the management of public hospitals.

The Ministry of Health introduced new arrangements regarding hospital management board meetings which reduced physicians' representation and influence in the decision-making process. As a result, physicians have effectively been placed in a minority position within these structures.

Our union has challenged this intervention before the High Administrative Court and has initiated legal proceedings against the new arrangements.

At the same time, our members continue to refuse to comply with hospital management board decisions taken under the arrangements imposed by the Ministry. The Ministry has responded by threatening physicians with disciplinary sanctions.

Both the legal and trade union struggle on this issue are continuing.

## 2. New Legislation on the Rights of Resident Doctors

After a long-standing joint struggle by our Union and Medical Association, important new legislation regulating the rights of resident doctors has been adopted by Parliament.

The new law prohibits resident doctors from being required to perform unpaid on-call duties and from being used to compensate for shortages of physicians in emergency departments.

It also regulates their salaries, remuneration and employment rights throughout their specialist training.

The adoption of this legislation has been welcomed as an important achievement resulting from the sustained joint efforts of the medical profession and its representative organisations.

## 3. Specialist Training in Medicine and Dentistry

A large number of medical and dental faculties have been established in North Cyprus, several of which do not even have their own teaching hospitals. For many years, under the leadership of the Cyprus

Turkish Medical Association, the medical profession has been campaigning for the standardisation and effective regulation of undergraduate medical and dental education.

Despite our objections, specialist medical and dental training programmes were subsequently introduced in the country.

We have repeatedly raised concerns regarding the capacity of the country to provide appropriate specialist training, particularly considering the size and structure of the population, limitations in clinical infrastructure and the availability of adequately qualified trainers.

Following these concerns, legislative work was finally completed to establish standards for specialist training, including supervision and accreditation mechanisms, as well as procedures and examinations for admission to and completion of specialist training. The draft legislation was submitted to Parliament.

Unfortunately, following pressure from political and vested interests, the entire section regulating specialist training was removed before the legislation was adopted.

As a result, the fundamental problem of ensuring properly regulated, standardised and supervised specialist medical and dental education remains unresolved.

Our struggle for appropriate legislation and internationally acceptable standards in specialist training therefore continues.

#### **4. Nicosia Declaration on Patients' Rights**

The Nicosia Declaration on Patients' Rights was developed and announced through a joint initiative of the Cyprus Turkish Medical Association and the Universal Patients' Rights Association.

Civil society organisations have been invited to participate in and support the Declaration.

In addition to patients' rights, the Declaration recognises the rights of physicians and healthcare professionals. In developing this part of the Declaration, the FEMS Declaration on Doctors' Rights was used as an important reference.

This initiative reflects our view that the protection of patients' rights and the protection of physicians' professional rights are complementary elements of a safe, ethical and sustainable healthcare system.

#### **5. Participation in the Bicomunal Technical Committee on Health**

Due to the continuing political division of Cyprus, a number of bicomunal technical committees operate between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities in areas where cooperation is important for both communities.

For the first time, a representative of the Cyprus Turkish Medical Association has been included in the Bicomunal Technical Committee on Health.

We consider the participation of the organised medical profession in this committee to be an important development for strengthening professional dialogue and cooperation on health issues affecting both communities.

#### **6. Visit of the President of the World Medical Association**

Another significant development during the reporting period was the visit of Dr Jacqueline W. Kitulu, President of the World Medical Association (WMA), to North Cyprus on 17 July 2026, at the invitation of the Cyprus Turkish Medical Association.

During her visit, Dr Kitulu delivered a presentation at the Cyprus Turkish Medical Association on the role of medical associations in global health and the importance of strong and independent professional organisations.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen international professional solidarity and to exchange views on physicians' rights, professional independence, the right to health, and the role of medical associations in protecting both physicians and patients.

## 7. Current Political and Social Situation

North Cyprus is currently in an intense pre-election period ahead of the parliamentary and local government elections scheduled for 6 December 2026. Political and administrative activity in the country is increasingly dominated by the approaching elections.

In August 2026, a passenger ship sank off the coast of Kyrenia, resulting in the deaths of several passengers, while others remain missing. The tragedy has caused considerable grief and public tension, particularly because of allegations concerning possible negligence and failures in oversight.

Following the incident, the Minister responsible for transport was removed from office.

The subsequent political developments have also resulted in a number of new political appointments. In our assessment, these appointments have become part of the pre-election political process, with the governing parties seeking to derive political advantage from the situation.

Against this politically charged background, major decisions concerning healthcare, physicians' working conditions and structural problems within the health system remain difficult to advance. Nevertheless, our union continues its trade union, professional and legal efforts to protect physicians' rights, improve working conditions and defend the quality and independence of public healthcare.

**CYPRUS TURKISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

**CYPRUS TURKISH PHYSICIANS UNION**