

Spain Country Report May 2026

CURRENT INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN SPAIN

Most of CESM's efforts over the last six months have focused on the industrial actions taken against the implementation of the reform of the Health Care Framework Statute. All across the country, demonstrations, one-week-per-month strikes, as well as press and media appearances, have been organized by each of the regional branches under CESM's supervision.

Right now, this draft law is waiting for approval by the Council of Ministers, and subsequent endorsement by Congress of Deputies if it secures parliamentary support. All of the above, has been taken place without participation and decision capacity of doctors' representatives.

These, by no means exhaustive, are our main demands:

- The establishment of a legally recognized framework where doctors can design and negotiate their own working conditions. By doctors, for doctors.
- 35-hour working week hours, with the pay rate of on-call hours higher than the rate of ordinary hours and fully counted for pension/retirement purposes.
- A fair classification of health care professionals, in which doctors' training and clinical responsibilities are fully recognized.
- Flexible retirement conditions without penalties, and recognition of arduous occupation where applicable.

Doctors' comprehension of the problem is unanimous. Support for recent strikes has been no less than 80% in hospitals and 50% in primary care. No less than one million medical acts have been cancelled or postponed.

The main challenge right now is to keep morale high, whereas all contacts and meetings with the administration has produced no positive results whatsoever, and industrial action must therefore be continued.

CESM can't miss this opportunity to thank all of you for the support given in this conflict. Thank you all.

RECOGNITION OF NON-EU DOCTORS' MEDICAL DEGREES/ QUALIFICATIONS

It is now in the minister of health's plans to boost the process of recognition of non-EU doctors. 30.000 new applications have been approved in 2026. Comparing this figure to 2023 and 2024, when 8845 and 8865 were approved, raises suspicions for the CESM.

The shortage of doctors, due to the lack of proper planning of the medical workforce, is pushing the administration to find new approaches to the problem.

In the interest of maintaining high standards of health care and our newly arrived colleagues in Spain, CESM will keep a close eye on the entire recognition process. Not to mention its future consequences to the rest of EU countries.

REFORM OF THE LAW REGULATING HEALTH PROFESSIONS

We are deeply concerned as well about the proposed reform of the law regulating health professions, which is now under public consultation and CESM has submitted its formal objections.

Any changes in this reform that involve concessions to non-medical health professionals will be firmly opposed by CESM.

NEW LAW OF PATIENT ORGANISATIONS

The draft of the new Law of Patient Organizations has been recently approved. This new law will give a voice to different associations and organizations of patients that did not have one in the past. Whether this new law will be for the real interest of the patients or will be used for political interest is something CESM will closely monitor in the future.

The issues presented above are all highly interconnected and related to something CESM is currently defending, clinical governance.

We believe that any ethical, quality, security or scientific measure related to the medical profession must be supervised and shaped by medical organizations of all kinds and must not be influenced by ideologies or political parties.