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National Report - Portugal

Politics in General

In result of some political problems, the President of the Portuguese Republic dissolved the Parliament and new elections took place in February 2005, changing the political background with a majority of the Socialist Party.

The new Health Ministry, Prof. Correia de Campos, was again appointed, after a short 6- month mandate in 2001. At the time some conflicts with the doctors were in course. However the relations seems to getting better, due to a broader attitude from his part.

One of his first political measures was to cease the Law-Decree on Health Primary Care, which several medical organizations strongly opposed. The second was the OTC sale liberation, i.e., out of pharmacies. The Pharmacies National Association strongly opposed this decision; however it was very welcomed by the remaining health professional groups.

The change of many Public Hospitals legal statute to joint-stock companies lead to an on-going work collective agreement with the Syndicates, with each the Portuguese Medical Association will cooperate in order to keep the medical career structure and to guarantee the CME.

This joint stock companies established by the former Government will be changed, meanwhile, to Company Public Entities, although keeping the same management core. The new medical Internship regulation, turning a 2 distinct training period (general and specific training) in a single one and reinforcing the role of the Portuguese Medical Association in the medical training was published.

Internal Politics

The election for President of the Portuguese Medical Association took place in December 2004. The new-elected President is now Dr. Pedro Nunes, until then President of the Southern Regional Council.

The Portuguese Medical Association will try once more to persuade the new Health Ministry to publish the "Medical Act", a tool considered essential for the regulation of medical practice as it avoids other health professionals to perform medical acts exclusive to doctors.