



**ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS DES HÔPITAUX  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SENIOR HOSPITAL PHYSICIANS  
EUROPÄISCHE VEREINIGUNG DER LEITENDEN KRANKENHAUSÄRZTE  
EUROPESE VERENIGING VAN STAFARTSEN  
DEN EUROPÆISKE OVERLÆGEFORENING  
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΝΟΣΟΚΟΜΕΙΑΚΩΝ ΙΑΤΡΩΝ ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΤΩΝ  
ASSOCIAZIONE EUROPEA DEI MEDICI OSPEDALIERI  
DEN EUROPEISKE OVERLEGEFORENING  
ASSOCIAÇÃO EUROPEIA DOS MÉDICOS HOSPITALARES  
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EUROPEISKA ÖVERLÄKARFÖRENINGEN  
EVROPSKO ZDRŽENJE BOLNIŠNIČNIH ZDRAVINIKOV  
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ΕΒΡΟΠΕΪΣΚΑ ΑΣΟCΙΑCΙΑ ΗΑ ΣΤΑΡΣΗΤΕ ΒΟΛΗΙΧΝΗ ΛΕΚΑΡΗ  
ASOCIAȚIA EUROPEANĂ A MEDICILOR DIN SPITALE**

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# What has happened since last meeting?

## National report from the Norwegian Association of Senior Hospital Physicians (Of)

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### **Norwegian Labour Court rules in favour of NMA – new collective agreement is reached with Spekter**

As mentioned in our national report for 2017, the Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations (Akademikerne), including Of and other associations within the Norwegian Medical Association (NMA), have for the last few years been involved in a conflict with the employer organization Spekter regarding shifts and working hours for doctors in Norwegian hospitals. The conflict and the failure to reach a new collective agreement during the negotiations in 2016 eventually lead to NMA' members going on strike in September-October 2016. The strike was stopped by the Norwegian government after 5 weeks due to concerns that a continuance potentially could impose a risk to the health and safety of patients. Through legislation from the Norwegian Parliament it was decided that the conflict was to be decided and resolved by the Norwegian tribunal for labor disputes (Rikslønnsnemnda), which is an independent arbitration tribunal established by law. In February 2017, the tribunal reached a decision where it decided to prolong the existing collective agreements without any alterations or adjustments in the sections concerning shifts and working hours, thus ruling in favour of Spekter.

The Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations and NMA decided to bring the question of the validity of the ruling, especially the decision to prolong the extensive exceptions from the working time limits in the Working Environment Act without the consent of NMA, before the Norwegian Labor court. After oral proceedings took place during the first week of October, the Labour court in November reached a verdict where it ruled in favour of NMA. The decision from the Tribunal for Labour disputes was set aside as void, as the majority of the members of the Labour court came to the conclusion that the tribunal did not have sufficient legal basis for its decision.

The case was accordingly referred back to the tribunal for renewed handling and consideration, and another round of oral hearings was to take place in February 2018. However, in January 2018, after several weeks of informal talks and negotiations, NMA and Spekter finally managed to reach an agreement over the difficult questions regarding shifts and working hours for hospital doctors, thus entering into a new collective agreement and avoiding further legal proceedings.

Through the terms and conditions of the new collective agreement, Spekter has generally and by most accounts agreed to and accepted the principle of so-called collective protection

through rotating shifts and work schedules, provided that certain but limited exceptions can be made during vacation periods and in case of long-term absence. This means that NMA, including Of, finally has obtained very significant concessions from Spekter on a matter of great importance to our members. This will hopefully result in fewer conflicts and more stable and secure working conditions for hospitals doctors in the coming years.

### **Labour contract negotiations for hospital doctors**

In addition to the substantial efforts and extensive time spent on reaching a new collective agreement with Spekter and thus completing the negotiations for 2016, 2017 was also a so-called bi-annual negotiation year where the only topic in the negotiations was wages. The negotiations for Of's members was carried out by our representatives at each local hospital. The negotiations were completed without much conflict, and the general assessment is that our members overall were given a yearly salary increase in accordance with other sectors of working life in Norway.

### **New rules and requirements regarding education of specialists**

#### **Education program for hospital managers**

In the autumn of 2015, OF started an education program consisting of sessions with lectures and discussion for doctors entering the role as hospital managers. These sessions have become very popular among our members and are now regarded as an important meeting place for doctors taking on management roles at Norwegian hospitals.

Three such sessions were held in 2017. Several new sessions will take place in 2018.

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