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ASSOCIAZIONE EUROPEA DEI MEDICI OSPEDALIERI
DEN EUROPEISKE OVERLEGEFORENING
ASSOCIAÇÃO EUROPEIA DOS MÉDICOS HOSPITALARES
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ASOCIAȚIA EUROPEANĂ A MEDICILOR DIN SPITALE

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1. Current situation in health policies in Austria

On Dec. 13th 2018, the National Council adopted the reform of the social insurance system. The reform envisages the fusion of the current 21 social insurance carriers into five. Statutory health insurance will be provided by three instead of 18 insurance funds, for employees, the public sector and the self-employed sector. The new Austrian Health Insurance Fund (ÖGK) will incorporate the nine regional health insurance funds currently existing at province level and will be responsible for levying insurance contributions and negotiating a nation-wide contract for doctors' fees and services. Until 2021, services covered by statutory health insurance are planned to be harmonised across Austria, i.e. patients in all provinces should receive the same services for the same contributions. The government expects the reform to save one billion euros by 2023 through streamlined administrative structures.

2. Doctor statistics 2018

On 26 March 2019, Dr Thomas Szekeres, President of the Austrian Medical Chamber, and Dr Lukas Stärker, Director of the Chamber, presented the current doctor statistics for 2018 during a press conference. With regard to the age statistics, there is an impending shortage of doctors. Only 18.9 percent of doctors are under 35 years of age and might be on duty for another 30 years. In contrast, 29.7 percent are over 55 years of age and will retire in the next few years. From the 14,581 doctors who will exceed the retirement age in the next 10 years results an annual need for replacements of 1,458 doctors per year in order to guarantee the maintenance of the status quo of the workforce.

The Austrian Medical Chamber emphasizes that the current amount of doctors in training won't cover the future needs. Only six out of ten doctors in training remain in the country. Therefore, the long-standing demands of the Medical Chamber for the promotion of positions with health insurance contracts must finally be met. This is not only a matter of remuneration, but also of reducing bureaucracy and setting up new offers for young doctors in order to convince them to stay in the country.

3. Recognition of training institutions and evaluation of training

In Austria, every doctor in training must complete the medical training at a recognised training position of a recognised training institution. Usually, training institutions are departments of hospitals, university clinics and university institutes that are recognised by the Austrian Medical Chamber based on defined criteria.

Since July 2015, any information (such as start or interruption) concerning basic medical training or training to become a general practitioner or a specialist must be reported to the Austrian Medical Chamber within one month by the provider of the training institution. The notification is made by means of an online application provided by the Austrian Medical Chamber (Ausbildungsstellenverwaltungsapplikation - ASV). It replaces the previous semi-annual reports of the hospital providers to the Medical Chamber and, together with the

certificates of completion, serves as proof of training. Furthermore, through the application every doctor in training has the opportunity to follow the course of the training, eliminate any ambiguities directly during the training period and thus obtain legal certainty regarding the reported training periods.

Additionally, on behalf of the federal body of employed doctors of the Austrian Medical Chamber, the Medical Quality Centre continuously carries out surveys addressed to all doctors in training in Austria about basic medical training as well as general and specialist training. The training evaluation is focused on the specifics of medical training and therefore proceeds methodically depending on the part of the training, e.g. the basic medical training is evaluated as a whole, whereas in general medicine each department is assessed. The survey feedback is used for the political work of the Austrian Medical Chamber and for direct consultations of the Local Medical Chambers with the hospital providers in order to continuously improve the quality of training.

4. Demand for mandatory vaccination in Austria

The Austrian Medical Chamber demands a general mandatory vaccination with regard to the vaccines recommended in the Austrian Vaccination Plan. A corresponding resolution was passed by a majority of the board of the Austrian Medical Chamber on April 10th 2019. In another resolution the Austrian Medical Chamber advocates extending the authority to vaccinate to all doctors with *ius practicandi*, general practitioners and specialists. This includes the abolition of the restriction for paediatricians to vaccinate only those under 18 years of age. Prospectively, paediatricians shall have the authority to vaccinate accompanying relatives as well. The Medical Chamber will soon be submitting a corresponding amendment to the Austrian Medical Act to the legislator.