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ASOCIAȚIA EUROPEANĂ A MEDICILOR DIN SPITALE**

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COVID-19 continues to be the dominating healthcare problem.

This report will focus on the current situation regarding the pandemic in Portugal.

Current pandemic status and statistics

- After some early “not so bad” results, the situation in Portugal is rapidly deteriorating.
- Although the sanitary authorities are reticent in using the term "second-wave", the fact is the number of new cases is rapidly increasing.
- On this day (22/10/2020) we have registered the highest number of cases since the beginning of the pandemic. This included 3.270 (three thousand two hundred and seventy) new cases, and sixteen deaths. At the moment we have a total of 109.541 (one hundred nine thousand five hundred and forty-one) confirmed cases, where 42.765 (forty-two thousand seven hundred sixty-five) are active cases, and a total of 2.245 (two thousand two hundred forty-five) deaths. Also the number of patients hospitalized raised to 1.365 (one thousand three hundred and sixty-five), where 200 (two hundred) of them are on Intensive Care.
- Health professionals represent about 7.5% of all cases (government numbers)

Country economic status

- This is a serious situation that is pushing the country's resources beyond its limits, both in terms of health resources and in economic terms.
- The unemployment rate grew to 8,1% (July).
- A strategic plan is being devised regarding priorities of investment, but unfortunately, healthcare human resources don't seem to be on the agenda.

Government and health authorities measures

- After a summer attempting the return to "normality" in a phased manner, there are now new measures announced, that try to contain the growing infection, and at the same time keep the economy moving, namely:
 - Masks are mandatory in all public places, but not in the outdoor.
 - Students returned to their classrooms, with preventing measures in place.
 - There are rules limiting gatherings and agglomerations, but some mass events are allowed,
 - Public transportation, restaurants, shopping malls... are functioning, with some limitations.

Health professionals reward/compensations

There's a planned reward for health professionals "who have performed, in a continuous and relevant manner, acts directly related to suspects and patients infected with Covid-19". Until now, no one knows the exact criteria, though.

There's also a proposed increase of one vacation day for every 80 hours worked under the supra mentioned conditions.

The planned reward consists of a single extraordinary payment corresponding to 50% of the regular salary.

Regarding the difficulties that doctors and health services are going through in this pandemic

- The National Health Service has limited resources, the result of chronic underinvestment. Only the extraordinary effort of doctors and other professionals are making it possible to sustain this situation.
- The situation in nursing homes remains particularly worrying with several outspreads of the disease.
- Although there's some investment it seems to be focused on more ventilators and SARS Cov2 testing capacity, forgetting the rest.
- The treatment of "non-COVID" patients has been very compromised and the return to the assistance activity is revealing to be quite complicated. Family and hospital doctors struggle to keep the minimum assistance to their patients.
- There's been no increase in medical doctors in the NHS. It constitutes no surprise since there's no improvement in working conditions, quite poor even before COVID pandemics.
- It's impossible to maintain the current work rhythm, and it is imperative to attract more doctors and other health professionals to the Portuguese NHS.
- The Portuguese health minister continues to refuse to meet with the medical unions.
- The pandemic situation is leading to an increase in conflicts between patients and doctors and there are reasons to believe that violence against doctors can increase. The Portuguese doctors will keep doing their best, but the current situations of abuse are leading to increased dissatisfaction and harder measures of protest may arise. Both Portuguese Medical Unions and the Portuguese Medical Board continue to demand the resources necessary for the best possible outcome in this complicated situation.