

# **Austrian National Report 2018**

## **EANA Autumn meeting – Luxembourg, 29.11.-01.12.2018**

### **1. Current situation in health policies in Austria**

The current reform plans of the new Austrian Federal Government envisage a fusion of the current 21 social insurance institutions into five. The government expects the planned reform of the social insurance system to save one billion euros by 2023. The Austrian Medical Chamber regards the argument of cost savings as highly critical and sees the nationalisation of the health insurance system as the primary motive of the government, which would make it easier for politicians to take influence. In addition, the reform plans include the elaboration of one nationwide “overall-contract” for doctors. In consequence, the current contracts will only be valid until 2020. These plans are causing great concerns and uncertainty among doctors, as it is completely uncertain what will happen afterwards.

### **2. No possibility for doctors to employ other doctors**

Another controversially discussed topic is the proposal by the Austrian Medical Chamber to allow doctors to employ other doctors. This model is particularly interesting for young doctors. The prospect of gaining initial professional experience with a self-employed doctor in the form of an employee relationship appears to be an attractive alternative to an early commitment to the profession of a self-employed doctor. Additionally, with the option of an employment offer doctors already being self-employed would have the opportunity to increase the scope of their (contractual) medical activity and thus expand outpatient medical care. Nonetheless, it has now to be awaited how the government will further deal with this issue.

### **3. Lack of doctors in Austria**

In Austria, there is a certain number of positions available in each federal province for doctors who plan to work self-employed in their own practice with a contract with one or more health insurance funds. Based on the so-called overall contract (“Gesamtvertrag”) the social insurance funds and the local medical chambers are responsible for announcing these positions. However, currently 129 of them are vacant, 61 positions for specialists and 68 for general practitioners.

### **4. Masterplan for General Medicine**

In August 2018, the Master Plan for General Medicine was published with the aim of increasing the attractiveness of general medicine. The Austrian societies for general medicine, in cooperation with the Federal Section for General Medicine and the university institutions for general medicine, have defined those measures in the master plan which appear to be necessary on the basis of the available data from current Austrian and international studies and on the basis of existing expertise. The paper is intended to serve for further discussions with health policy representatives.

### **5. Survey about the perception of health in Austria**

Health has a very high value in the Austrian population. Three quarters of Austrians between the ages of 16 and 49 say that they feel good about their health. Medication and medical care close to home is very important to Austrians, and in the case of chronic illness, they prefer to be treated by the same doctor. These are the main results of a survey on the perception of patient care in Austria, which was carried out on behalf of the Austrian Medical Chamber with more than 1000 Austrians between June and July 2018.