Fédération Européenne
des Médecins Salariés
European Federation
of Salaried Doctors

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FEMS 2025 AUTUMN BRUSSELS GENERAL ASSEMBLY-NORTH CYPRUS COUNTRY REPORT

(Presented jointly by the Turkish Cypriot Physicians' Union (TCPU) and the Cyprus Turkish Medical Association (CTMA))

1. Recent Developments in Education and Secularism

In recent months, the government introduced an amendment to the secondary school dress code, allowing the display of religious symbols. This initiative was widely perceived as an attempt to inject political Islam into schools. The decision triggered strong opposition and protests, supported not only by unions and civil society organizations but also by the broader public. As physicians, we actively participated in these demonstrations and contributed to the public debate by publishing a report grounded in scientific evidence. Our aim was to both raise social awareness and provide scientific support in the legal process. Eventually, the Constitutional Court annulled the regulation, following a case initiated by the teachers' unions. This outcome represented a moral victory for organized struggle and for the defence of secular principles in education.

2. Our Organizations; CTMA & TCPU

The Turkish Cypriot Physicians Union (TCPU) represents doctors employed in the public sector, while the Cyprus Turkish Medical Association (CTMA) is the professional body for all physicians. In recent years, the deepening social, political, and structural problems in the country have underscored the necessity of broadening our struggle and strengthening cooperation with other unions and professional groups. For this reason, on 4 July 2025, the TCPU General Assembly decided to join the Cyprus Federation of Workers' and Labour Unions.
Both our organizations continue to act in close coordination to defend physicians' rights and safeguard the health of the population.

3. Medical Education and Legislation

Despite repeated warnings and ongoing structural challenges, the government approved the establishment of a new Faculty of Dentistry. We exert both political and legal pressure to improve standards in medical and dental faculties and admission processes. However, the decline in the quality of medical education and the lack of oversight in student admissions have become major concerns. In response, we are pursuing legal initiatives to establish a mandatory licensing examination for medical graduates to ensure professional standards. Our organizations also actively supported the drafting of a new law regulating essential issues such as the standardization of medical and dental education, workforce planning for physicians and specialties according to national needs, and organizing continuous professional

training in health. Unfortunately, at the final stage, political support was withdrawn and the law was not enacted.

4. Health Policy and Governance Problems
Seriou's infrastructure problems in the health system persist, while shortages in several medical specialties continue to grow. Nevertheless, the Minister of Health and the government exclude health organizations from the formulation and implementation of health policies. The Minister, in violation of the law, frequently relocates physicians according to political interests, often transferring doctors to his own electoral district.

5. Resource Allocation and Health Reform
Although new public hospital buildings are urgently needed, the government continues practices that divert public health funds to private hospital owners. While there is broad consensus on the urgent need for reform, the Minister of Health has failed to take any concrete steps beyond political showcases.

6. Corruption and Legal Struggles
Numerous allegations of corruption and unlawful practices have recently emerged. Instead of initiating investigations, the government has chosen to cover them up. During this period, illegal appointments were made in public hospitals, and competitive examinations required for doctors' advancement to managerial positions were disregarded. Our Union has filed multiple lawsuits against these practices, won them, and secured favourable outcomes for physicians.

7. Upcoming Presidential Elections
The presidential election in Northern Cyprus, scheduled for 19 October 2025, now dominates the agenda of both the government and the public. The outcome of this election will be crucial, as it may prove decisive for the future course of the Cyprus problem — an unresolved issue that continues to shape our political, social, and economic reality.

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