



Europäische Regionale Organisation
der Fédération Dentaire Internationale



Regional European Organisation of the FDI

National Report

Country: SPAIN

Association: Consejo General de Odontólogos y Estomatólogos de España (Spanish Dental Association)

Venue: Madrid - Spain

Year: 2010

Please classify your national report by following subjects:

I. Changes

- in the Association and its organisation

We have not had any changes in the political organisation of the Association. Dr. Alfonso Villa Vigil, our actual president, has recently summoned elections for next 15th October. We have recently hired a new director for communication, as we consider we need to improve our image and ways of communication with our patients, the general public, the administrations and organisations and also with our dentists.

II. Trends and developments

- in professional politics

- The number of registered dentists continues to increase (**26.725 in January 2009**). Considering that at the beginning of the year the official number of inhabitants in Spain was 46.745.807, we have a ratio of **1/1750** dentists per inhabitant. However, according to the Eurobarometer, which has been recently published, Spain is a country of low demanding assistance (with only Latvia, Hungary and Rumania having even lower demanding assistance in the UE), which worsens the ratio dentists per inhabitant. We still have a growing professional plethora and we now have noticed of unemployed dentists.
- Our Association website: Last year we launched a new website (www.consejodentistas.es) which is still growing and improving. The online Continuing Education system is a big success. In Spain, this kind of education is not compulsory



but our dentists usually attend courses and lectures. Each month we are offering more and more courses via our website and we usually have to repeat the courses as we have more solicitors than the availability we offer.

- Dental Technicians: we are still fighting against the intrusion of the dental technicians. We aware inform the general population in the media to attend only dentists to make their oral rehabilitations.
- Our Association's Congresses: In September 2009 the "XXXI National and XI International Dentistry Congress" was celebrated in Sevilla with excellent results, not only for the very interesting scientific and political-professional programme, but also for its very affordable inscription fee for professionals. We can already announce that the next Congress will be held in Barcelona in April 2011.
- Maxillofacial Surgeons: The EU has issued a Report against Spain, with a deadline of two months before being taken to the EU Court of Justice. Although the Report has not yet reached the Spanish Ministry of Health, the EU press release has apparently caused many consultations and interviews in the health press. The literal text of the Additional Regulation of the Spanish Law 10/1986 seems to imply that all doctors, including the specialists in maxillofacial surgery (and not only in stomatology), are conferred the functions of dentists. Initially, the interpretation of the Law had been correct: the doctors (excluding stomatologists or odontologists) who practiced Dentistry, would be condemned for practising the profession without proper qualifications. However, in 2001, the two sentences from the High Court of Justice against the Statutes of the Spanish Dental Association, and promoted by the Spanish Medical Association, were based in the literal text of the Additional Regulation of Law 10/1986 to infer that the stomatologists had more functions than the odontologists and, consequently, had to be considered as different professions. Subsequently, in February 2006, the same High Court of Justice accepted the change of name of the medical specialization in Maxillofacial Surgery for that of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (which we had impugned considering that one could not be a specialist in surgery of the mouth if he was not a dentist: how can the Preprosthetic Surgery be understood without a knowledge of Prosthesis?). The base was the literal interpretation of the mentioned Additional Regulation, which undoubtedly confers the functions of the odontologists on the maxillofacial surgeons. Finally, the September 2007 Sentence of the High Court of Justice, which recognized the right of a maxillofacial surgeon to apply for a public position of Odontologist in Navarra, without being a dentist, was the last straw. For this reason, in a General Assembly of our Association we decided by a proposal of the Board, to denounce Spain to the European Union, regardless of a previous warning to the Government. We did it this way, and the Subdirector of the Ministry at that time, admitted the convenience of the abolition of the Additional Regulation, given that the stomatologists' rights were safeguarded by the Law 44/2003 of the Health Professions Regulation. But the General Director, advised us to appeal the formal complaint to Europe to facilitate the beginning of the legal reform, being much more difficult to justify it by an Association's request (which will undoubtedly find opposition in the Medical Association). We did it this way, and found the initial support of the EU, which requested explanations to Spain. The problem was that the Ministry, following one of its legal advisers' recommendations, opted for a more comfortable solution than the abolition: that the Interterritorial Council of Health should adopt a Resolution in which the



mentioned Additional Regulation would be interpreted in the sense that the maxillofacial surgeons could not apply for the dentists' positions. This is an incorrect solution since any maxillofacial surgeons could appeal to the High Court of Justice, which doctrine does not depend on the government interpretations. Therefore, we decided to insist in our claim, although we only did it by telephone because the civil servant dealing with this matter had to have an operation some days before the arranged interview with her. However, even without this interview, the EU has resolved the mentioned motivated Report, which we are confident will end up with the abolition of the Regulation in which it has been based, among other things, on the division of our profession in two Organisations: odontologists and stomatologists.

- in health and social politics

- Closure of dental surgeries: As we informed last year, private and franchise dental surgeries are closing, with many patients affected by the credit facilities taken to pay for their treatments. This situation is worsening due to the terrible economic crisis. We are worried because the insurance companies are purchasing some of these clinics, making them even bigger. Our association offers free legal advice for the patients who have been affected by the closure.
- Dental Patient Advocate: The Spanish Dental Association has promoted the creation of the Dental Patient Advocate. It is intended to be a protection for the dental patient being 100% free for the patients. It will attend claims, complaints, suggestions and observations of the patients, dentists, dental clinics and professional associations. The dental patient advocate will annually inform our association of the type of claims to have statistics and suggestions for actions.

-in educational politics

- Continuous Education: The Spanish Dental Council continues offering courses to the professionals of the Colleges interested in receiving Continuous Education. Clinical lectures about a specific subject are also organized, being a great success. All the courses are duly recognized by the Administration. Last year we started offering on-line courses, which have an enormous success, as well as recognized credits through on-line tests about questions of the articles appeared in our scientific journal.
- Early diagnostic on oral cancer Campaign: During the last week of October and first week of November, free dental examinations have been carried out in dental surgeries, with the purpose to early detect oral cancer and precancerous lesions, and to make aware the patients about the healthy habits to prevent these illnesses. It is the second year that this Campaign is run due to the success of the first one. It has been a great success with a lot of repercussion in the media. A very famous person in Spain, a couple of weeks before the beginning of the campaign appeared in a very popular TV show talking about her oral cancer and awaring the population to go to the dentist. This was a total surprise for us and helped to the huge repercussion of the campaign. Actually this lady is collaborating with our association in oral cancer matters. This year we will repeat the campaign in June.



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III. Changes in the insurance system

We are worried about the insurance system in our country. We have a contradictory situation as these companies are not offering real insurances but discount plans. We consider this is fraudulent. Besides these companies are growing enormously each year. Traditionally, they provided services in the private clinics of private dentists. But now they are cessating these contracts and they are opening their own clinics.

IV. Changes in fees

According to our current Law for Professional Associations, the Associations cannot establish minimum fees even if they are orientative. This is the reason why we don't have reliable data about fees. But we are aware of the tendency of a decrease in fees due to the big franchises and the opening of the insurance clinics.

V. Further new information

No further information.