

Regional European Organisation of the FDI

National Report

Country: *Poland*

Association: *Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists*

Venue: *Bucharest* **Year:** *2022*

Changes in the association and its organisation

The Polish National Committee for ERO FDI is formed by the Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists and the Polish Dental Society.

The Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists is the main professional organization in Poland. It is the organizational body of the professional self-government of physicians and dental practitioners who are associated in the chambers with equal status. Membership is mandatory. Every physician and every dental practitioner who holds the right to practice the profession in Poland is a member of the chamber by virtue of the law. There are 23 Regional Chambers and a separate chamber of military physicians and dentists. The Polish Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists coordinates the work of regional chambers.

There were no major changes regarding the organization and tasks of the chambers during the last year. In 2022 elections at the regional chambers are taking place and on 12 – 14 May 2022 the XV General Medical Assembly takes place during which there will be elections at the level of the Supreme Chamber for the next 4-years term of office.

Trends and developments:

2021 was another year very much overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the healthcare system, economy and social life. The epidemiological situation was still one of the main topics locally and nationally.

Nevertheless, dental facilities in Poland were fully operational, providing all range of dental care.

in professional politics

In the last months of 2020 in Poland new regulations regarding the access to the medical and dental professions for non-EU nationals were adopted.

According to new regulations physicians and dentists with non-EU diplomas are to be entitled to work in Poland up to 5 years without the requirement to have their qualifications recognized as equivalent to Polish and EU training standards, in some situations without the need to speak Polish - and even without the need to be registered with the chamber as all other Polish and EU doctors and dentists.

It was argued by the government that this measure is aimed at strengthening the Polish healthcare system with additional staff to help combatting the COVID-19 pandemic which does not seem to correspond to the facts, especially regarding the dental profession.

In 2021 appr. 30 dentists got registered with regionals chambers in Poland in this simplified way. Others are still waiting for the decision.

in educational politics

No major changes in the reporting period.

E-learning became the most common form of postgraduate learning. Many of them were available free of charge.

in health and social politics

The costs of running dental practice have risen, due to inflation, rise of energy costs, additional costs related to PPE, new system of taxation and social security contributions applicable to entrepreneurs since 1 January 2022.

in the insurance system

(incl. the public health insurance and private insurance schemes)

No major changes in the reporting period.

Gradually, dentists are renouncing their contracts (for provision of dental services covered by the statutory health insurance) with the National Health Fund – increase of prices paid by the Fund does not correspond to real increase of costs. Majority of dentists in Poland operate exclusively on the private market, outside the general insurance scheme. Prices at the private dental market are not subject to regulations – they are agreed between the practitioner and the patient, no binding fee schedules are in place.

Corporate Dentistry:

position of NDA towards dental chains

The Chamber has not taken any official position towards dental chains.

The Chamber is of the opinion that an amendment in Polish law should be introduced whereby in every healthcare facility, regardless of who is its legal owner, the chief executive officer should be a medical professional (medical doctor or dentist) who is bound to act in accordance with the principles of medical and dental ethics not only when providing treatment himself but also within the managerial activities.

problems with dental chains and possible solutions

In Poland there are healthcare chains like LUX MED, Enel-Med, Medcover which include growing number of dental offices. Also other chains are entering the market. It is visible that there is a growing interest in investing into setting up dental care facilities by commercial entities - both industry investors and private equity funds. We have signals from individual dentists that they receive offers to join such chains and some of them decide to do so.

Changes in fees:

Due to COVID-19 pandemic and other factors inflation in Poland – similarly to many other European countries – was visibly higher than before. In consequence the costs of dental services in Poland have risen in the last period.

It is estimated that costs of dental treatment have risen - depending on the procedure - by 20 to 50%. The National Health Fund (public payer for those dental services which are covered by the statutory health insurance) increased the scoring of general dental procedures by 10 percent.

Information regarding promotion of the World Oral Health Day:

Despite the pandemic and related limitations of certain activities, WOHD was promoted in Poland in media. There was a campaign stressing the importance of oral health, in particular the periodontal disease in the context of the severity of the course of COVID-19 disease.

Webinars, social media campaigns, materials in the Chamber's monthly "Gazeta Lekarska" were addressed not only to dentists, but to all medical doctors and healthcare managers.