

Regional European Organisation of the FDI

National Report 2020 Germany

German Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer e.V.) Berlin / Brussels

Changes in the association and its organization

No changes in the association or its organization occurred in 2020.

Trends and developments

- **Professional Politics:** There was one change in the area of professional law in 2020. The German Dental Association was able to prevent the general obligation to involve a data protection officer in dental practices with less than ten employees which would have been very costly for practice owners. Moreover, the German Dental Association was able to secure the short time work scheme for dental practices. Before the Coronavirus crisis, they were not eligible to this system of securing jobs throughout an economic crisis.
- There was one development relevant to the dental profession in **national health policy** in 2020. In December 2020, the Federal Joint Committee (*Gemeinsamer Bundesausschuss*) adopted a new [directive](#) on the systematic treatment of periodontitis and other periodontal diseases. After years of deadlock, this new directive now allows dentists to treat patients according to the most current scientific standards within the statutory health insurance schemes. This new regulation enters into force on July 1st, 2021.
- In **education policy** there were no changes or developments in 2020.
- In 2020, there were no changes in the **health insurance system** relevant to the dental profession.

Corporate dentistry

Investor-driven chains of dental practices are seen very critically by the German Dental Association and other dental organisations. The BZÄK observes current developments with concern; as companies and investors are currently not subject to the regulations of professional law that protects patients.

The BZÄK considers it particularly problematic that capital investors hope for a high return from dental medical care centres, and the following worrying developments, already observable in other European countries, may therefore occur:

- An influence on the dentist's freedom of therapy
- Losses in the quality of the treatment
- Higher billing volume for patient treatments; more services are billed as in comparison groups.
- While at the same time dentists are paid a lower wage.

A possible solution to the problems described above could be a change in the Dentistry Act, which the BZÄK intends to introduce. The amendment is intended to ensure that all forms of professional practice must be based on the dentist's own responsibility, independence and non-commercial activity. In addition, conditions must be created for legal persons under private law whose business purpose is the practice of dentistry, which guarantee the independence of the members of the profession also for this form of professional practice. This could be ensured, for example, by means of regulations on profit sharing, majorities of company shares and voting rights or chamber supervision.

Remuneration of dental services / Changes in fees

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the private health insurances agreed to contribute to the increased **costs for hygiene** in dental practices (they pay now in addition about 6 Euro per patient contact). The statutory health insurances did not increase their lump sum payment for hygiene costs.

Information regarding promotion of the World Oral Health Day

The World Oral Health Day, as promoted by the FDI and its regional organizations, is not celebrated by the German Dental Association. The German national day on oral health has been established for nearly over 30 years and is celebrated on the 25th September each year. It is not possible to adapt the German Day of Dental Health to the 20th March, since the national day is planned and prepared well in advance with many actors (health insurance companies, municipalities, schools, regional dental associations...). Since the events in Germany are planned with a lead time of up to 24 months, the planning is already complete for 2022 and 2023.

Further information on activities

In 2020, **no international activities** took place due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the **Coronavirus pandemic** reaching Europe, the German Dental Association put a comprehensive [homepage online](#) which gives **information** concerning all aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It informs dentists about risk and hygiene management in dental practices, offers the latest information on testing, vaccination and quarantine measures. Moreover, the homepage provides information on short work schemes, applicable labor law and possible compensation payments. Special information on working in care facilities and kindergartens are also linked to the homepage. Information for patients is also given. The homepage is regularly up-dated.

Major concerns for the German Dental Association

- The adjustment of the **remuneration scheme** for dentists to Germany's current economic development continues to be of great importance for the German dentists.
- **Investor-driven dentistry** and the resulting dangers for the liberal profession as well as the hitherto inadequate supervision of investor-driven dental practices by the regional chambers is a major challenge for the German Dental Association.



- The **digitalization** of patient files and dental practices as well as the exchange of medical information continues to pose challenges for the dental profession, as many questions of data protection and liability have not yet been conclusively clarified on political level.

Discussion points for the ERO general assembly

- Investor-driven dentistry and the associated chain formation of dental practices; experiences in ERO member countries
- Digitalization of dentistry, protection of sensitive (medical) data
- Lessons learnt from the Coronavirus pandemic