



EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

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The first large-scale event for family doctors in Switzerland was held on 1 April 2006. 12000 front-line doctors took to the streets to demonstrate at the doors of the Federal Palace, the seat of national government. Their claims were threefold:

1. The continuation of quality training, the creation of family medical institutes in the Swiss Faculties of Medicine, financial support for post-graduate in-surgery training, in order to ensure a sufficient number of motivated up-and-coming doctors.
2. Better working conditions, by maintaining and promoting the number of basic medical services on offer (radiology, laboratory, A&E, etc...), by reducing administrative charges and offering equal opportunities and rights in terms of pay. This last point caters to the project of the Minister of Health to create competition, by giving health-insurance companies the possibility of choosing the doctors whom they refund, on the basis of purely economic criteria.
3. The possibility of being heard by the decision-making bodies and taking part in the discussions.

On the evening of the demonstration, the Minister of health announced his proposal to reduce the duration of training for general practitioners, along the lines of a training in keeping with the Bologna agreements. This proposal was contained in a request to the UEMO to support the Swiss general practitioners and the standpoint adopted by the UEMO was widely disseminated.

By the end of the year, the favourable fallout of the demonstration was apparent: front-line medicine had become visible and there are now numerous contacts with the political world and the Press. The integration of family practitioners in decision-making bodies is gradually becoming accepted. The project for the new "Master" type course has been temporarily shelved. The university family medicine departments have the wind behind them. But there still remain many obstacles in particular the discussion of the selection of practitioners according to quality criteria defined by the corporation rather than economic criteria.

Swiss family practitioners thank the UEMO for its commitment to their cause in the fight for a specialised, though nonetheless quality, training.