

Health workforce shortages and international mobility in the EU Report calls for action to address impending health workforce crisis in Europe

A report launched today by the European civil society project «Health workers for all and all for health workers» (HW4All) warns of an impending crisis in Europe which will have a global impact.

The report «Health Workforce shortages and international mobility in the EU» analyses trends in the international recruitment of health workers in the European region and highlights three cross-cutting issues:

- Human Resources for Health planning capacity across the European Union: The World Health Organization (WHO) Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Workers recommends that all States forecast and plan their own health personnel needs and strive to meet them without resorting to international recruitment. The report provides an overview of how the European Union is doing it and of the tools currently available for this purpose.
- Fiscal space for health workforces in the context of the economic crisis: The report questions the possibility for European States to «take effective measures to educate, retain and sustain a health workforce that is appropriate for the specific conditions of each country» (as requested by the WHO Code) in the context of austerity measures currently imposed on many of them. Fiscal tightening risks in fact restricting the capacity to train and retain for future human resources needs, leading to a potential large scale future problem and an increase in the global shortfall.
- Health workforce mobility and trade in services: By adopting the perspective of «health in all policies», the report links between WHO Code provisions and the approach of the EU to trade in services.

The analysis presented in the HW4All report recognises the fact that the European Union's mandate on health is limited to supporting, coordinating or supplementing national health policies, while Member States remain responsible for the definition of their health policy and the organisation and delivery of health services. Equally, however, the EU and its Member States have a legal obligation to make their policies coherent with development objectives.

HW4All online collaboration platform launched

Together with the synthesis report, the project «Health workers for all and all for health workers» also launched its online collaboration platform where all the relevant actors and stakeholders are invited to share experiences, opinions, suggestions, best practices and proposals on health workforce issues. Platform users will also find occasions to activate themselves as advocates of increased coherence between development cooperation policies and domestic health policies and practices of European Member States.

400 words

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About the HW4All project

The project «Health workers for all and all for health workers» is a European civil society initiative that contributes to a sustainable health workforce worldwide. The project is funded by the European Union. «Health workers for all and all for health workers» partners: African Medical and Research Foundation (Italy), Center for Health Policies and Services (Romania), Humanitarian Aid Foundation Redemptoris Missio (Poland), Health Poverty Action (UK), Medicus Mundi International Network, Memisa Belgium, Federation of Associations of Medicus Mundi Spain, terre des hommes Germany, and project coordinator Wemos (Netherlands).

HW4All online collaboration platform and synthesis report:

<http://bit.ly/hw4all-news>

Further information

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