



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on investing in Europe's health workforce of tomorrow: Scope for innovation and collaboration

***3053rd EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY HEALTH and CONSUMER
AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 7 December 2010***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union:

1. RECALLS that under Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Union action is to complement national policies and be directed towards improving public health; it is also to encourage cooperation between the Member States in the field of public health and, if necessary, lend support to their action, and fully respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care;
2. RECALLS that under Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Member States are to, in liaison with the Commission, coordinate among themselves their policies and programmes;
3. RECALLS the Council conclusions of 2 June 2006 on common values and principles in European Union Health Systems, which notably point to the need to ensure the accessibility and delivery of high-quality, safe and evidence-based care;
4. RECALLS the Commission's Green Paper on "the European workforce for health" of 10 December 2008 and the Report on the open consultation on the Green paper on the European workforce for health of 15 December 2009, which identified the pressing issue of the current and future shortage of health workers, in particular specialist doctors and nurses;

P R E S S

5. RECALLS the Commission Communication "Europe 2020, a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" of 3 March 2010, wherein seven flagship initiatives are put forward, including "An agenda for new skills and jobs", aiming to create conditions for modernising labour markets with a view to raising employment levels and ensuring the sustainability of our social models, and "Youth on the move";
6. RECALLS the WHO Global Code of Practice adopted at the World Health Assembly of 21 May 2010 which serves as an ethical framework to guide Member States in the recruitment of health workers;
7. WELCOMES the Ministerial Conference "investing in Europe's health workforce of tomorrow: scope for innovation and collaboration", held in La Hulpe on 9-10 September 2010, which underlined the need to develop appropriate initiatives to invest in sufficient, motivated and well-skilled health professionals in order to protect the viability and accessibility of the health systems;
8. UNDERLINES that the growing number of major and chronic diseases, the ageing of the population and of the health workforce, the changing needs of patients and of the health systems, the increasing mobility of patients and health care professionals, scientific progress and the emergence of new technologies pose key challenges for all Member States, and require innovative approaches for the health workforce of the future;
9. RECOGNISES the interdependency between Member States in the field of human resource policies of the health care sector, especially as regards the mobility of health care professionals;
10. INVITES Member States to:
 - strengthen collaboration and exchange of good practice, including on the collection of high-quality and comparable data, to better support the development of Member States' health workforce policies for the future, contributing to equal access to care for all, with particular attention to forecasting future health workforce needs and effective health workforce planning throughout the European Union;
 - raise awareness of the importance of attractive working environments, working conditions and professional development opportunities in motivating the health workforce and guaranteeing the quality and safety of the care provided;
 - stimulate training and education of the health workforce with the aim of further promoting the quality and safety of care and consider how to make best use of EU tools for financing this, without prejudice to the future Financial framework;
 - adhere to the WHO Global Code of Practice on international recruitment;

11. INVITES Member States and the Commission to:

- develop an action plan providing options to support the development of Member States' health workforce policies, recognising the competencies of Member States, in particular in the areas of the assessment of competence profiles, the improvement of planning methodologies taking into account identified health needs, Continuous Professional Development and recruitment and retention strategies, and to tackle the key challenges for the health workforce throughout the EU in the medium and long-term perspectives;
- involve in the development of this action plan patients' representatives and health professionals, as well as other relevant stakeholders from the health sector;
- take into account in the development of this action plan the potential contribution of other policy areas, in particular education, labour, social affairs and the internal market;

12. INVITES the Commission to:

- encourage cooperation between Member States and lend support to the development of the action plan by 2012;
- include training and education of the health workforce as a priority area and consider how to make the best use of EU tools for financing this, without prejudice to the future Financial framework, in line with the flagship initiatives "An agenda for new skills and jobs" and "Youth on the move" of the Europe 2020 strategy;
- ensure that the 2011 workplan of the Health Programme can include a joint action providing a platform for cooperation between Member States on forecasting health workforce needs and health workforce planning in close cooperation with Eurostat, OECD and WHO.
