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International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

Statement on Agenda point 5c) Priorities for health systems strengthening in the WHO European Region 2015–2020: walking the talk on people centredness

Honourable Chair,
Distinguished Member State Delegates

This statement is delivered on behalf of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, European Public Health Alliance, Medicus Mundi International, European civil society coalition 'Health workers for all and all for health workers', World Federation of Occupational Therapists, World Organisation of Family Doctors region Europe, International Alliance of Patients Organisations, International Confederation of Midwives, European Midwives Association, International Council of Nurses.

We'd like to start by acknowledging and applauding the key and extremely relevant messages mentioned on the presented report, and calling the the WHO to keep on pushing European Member states to implement these core pillars of health systems, which are crucial to promote a better and more inclusive healthcare framework for Europe:

- to ensure Universal Health Coverage and abolish out-of-pocket expenses;
- to enhance health workforce availability worldwide, while also reinforcing the need for ensuring their adequate education;
- improving health information and its systems;
- to ensure access to medicines and technology;

and, enclosing everything, the great need for adapting Health Systems to the 21st century challenges.

Nonetheless, we'd like to address member states about two important matters that NGOs recognise as crucial to be tackled by Europe.

Firstly, the current Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations can bring several potential negative effects to health systems, such as impairment of access to medicines/assistive technologies, adequate distribution and education of health workforce, lesser tobacco control and food and alcohol labelling, extensions of intellectual properties and consequently increase in technology/ medicine prices and potential overruling of governments' decisions due to an Investor State Dispute Settlement. Based on this, we call member states to open communication channels with their Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Members of the European Parliament about this agreement, so that trade agreements will not put European health at risk.



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Also, we recognise the utmost importance of ensuring that everybody has access to skilled health workers providing essential health services, which demands from the member states the promotion of better policy coherence between health and migration/mobility, development, employment, economic policies, and thus the need to plan, educate, recruit and retain adequate numbers of health professionals inside and outside Europe. Also, the implementation of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel is key to ensure that international moral responsibility and ethical applies to the administration of health workforce.

We finish by mentioning that none of this can be achieved without an effective and orchestrated collaboration between actors at different levels and representing diverse political, civil society and business interests, and we hereby demonstrate our willingness to collaborate in the intersectoral strengthening of European health systems.

Supporters:

