



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

**Regional Committee for Europe**  
65th session

EUR/RC65/TD/3

Vilnius, Lithuania, 14–17 September 2015

9 September 2015

150741

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**Technical briefing, Tuesday, 15 September 2015**  
**13:00–14:15, Conference Hall 5.1**

## **Making progress towards a sustainable health workforce in the WHO European Region**

1. “Enhancing the health workforce” is one of the foundations of health systems strengthening in the WHO European Region. In particular, it has been acknowledged that the contributions of nurses and midwives, who are the largest element in the “front line” of health professionals in most care environments, will have to be supported and enabled.
2. Health 2020 and the Tallinn Charter both have made specific reference to the need to develop suitable policies and strategies to educate, retain and deploy the workforce, to improve performance and skill mix, and to address the challenges raised by mobility and migration of the health workforce, through implementing the provisions of *The WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel*.<sup>1</sup>
3. The purpose of this session is to highlight and promote debate on the critical issue of how to achieve and maintain a sustainable health workforce in Member States and in the European Region as a whole, in support of strengthened and people-centred health systems set out in Health 2020. The briefing will provide an overview and update of progress on the implementation of the *WHO Code* in the European Region since the discussion at the technical briefing on implementing the *WHO Code* during the 62nd session of the Regional Committee for Europe in Malta in 2012. The session will inform participants about the joint work of the WHO Regional Office for Europe with strategic partners, such as the European Commission, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, governments and civil society organizations, on ensuring a sustainable health workforce that is fit for purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> The WHO global code of practice on the international recruitment of health personnel. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2010 (<http://www.who.int/hrh/migration/code/practice/en/>, accessed 8 September 2015).

4. Five documents that contribute to a better understanding of these issues will serve as an evidence-based backdrop to the session:

- Firstly, the launch of “**European strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery towards Health 2020 goals**” and “**European Compendium of good practices in nursing and midwifery towards Health 2020 goals**” highlights the strategic connections between education, planning and management of the professions; and provides a range of case studies from within the European Region where nurses and midwives have made effective and evidence-based contributions to achieving population health goals.
- Secondly, the report “**Making progress on health workforce sustainability in the WHO European Region**” and the policy brief, prepared jointly by the Regional Office and the European Observatory, “**How can countries address the efficiency and equity implications of health professional mobility in Europe? Adopting policies in the context of the *WHO Code* and EU freedom of movement.**” These documents set out the key components required to achieve a sustainable health workforce, and highlight progress in the European Region, within the framework of the *WHO Code*.
- Thirdly, the booklet on “**People-centred health systems in the WHO European Region: voices of patients and carers**” reminds us that achieving health workforce sustainability is a means to an end, which is the enabling effect that health workers, including nurses and midwives, can provide in support of people-centred health systems.

5. The expected outcomes of the session are:

- to raise awareness of the strategies required to achieve health workforce sustainability in the context of Health 2020 and, in particular, the need to enable optimum contributions from the nursing and midwifery workforce;
- to engage all stakeholders in working as equal partners to ensure that the needs of people, not services or professionals, remain at the centre of people-centred health systems.

6. The technical briefing will be in English, with simultaneous translation into Russian.

## Provisional agenda

Time	Topic/speaker
5 min	Welcome and introduction by the Chairperson <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr Hans Kluge Director, Division of Health Systems and Public Health, WHO Regional Office for Europe</li></ul>
15 min	Health workforce sustainability and the <i>WHO Code</i> in the European Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professor James Buchan Speaker; Consultant, Human Resources for Health, WHO Regional Office for Europe</li></ul>
20 min	What health workforce sustainability means to me (opening statements by panellists) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms Nicola Bedlington Secretary General, European Patient Forum</li><li>• Professor Walter Sermeus Professor of Healthcare Management, Catholic University Leuven, Belgium; Project Coordinator of RN4CAST – Nursing workforce project</li><li>• Professor Jean White Chief Nursing Officer for Wales and Nurse Director NHS Wales, United Kingdom</li><li>• Dr Josep Figueras Director, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies</li></ul>
20 min	Open moderated Q&A session with the speaker and the panellists
10 min	The speaker and the panellists share their final thoughts
5 min	Conclusion by the Chairperson

## Further information

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