

EPF intervention

Priorities for health systems strengthening in the WHO European Region 2015–2020: walking the talk on people centeredness

On behalf of the European Patients' Forum, a European umbrella representing patients across the EU I would like to congratulate WHO and express our support for this approach and indeed this mind set. This reflects very much our vision as an organisation: patient-centred, equitable access to quality, sustainable health and social care for all patients in EU.

We frame this vision around two core pillars – patient access and patient empowerment.

To deliver high-quality care that is equitable and sustainable, health systems need to shift from a disease-centred to a person-centred approach, where self-management, community and specialist medical care and social care are integrated in personalised solutions centred on the needs of patients. This implies changes at all levels in how care is structured and delivered, and it implies the full participation of patients – not only in their own care, but also in policy-making, in co-designing services, and in research to develop new therapies and technologies that meet patients' needs more effectively.

EPF and our member patient organisations across the EU are committed to playing our part in driving this transformation, based on the premise that patients are not simply a costly problem to fix but part of the solution towards sustainable quality oriented health systems. And we can only do this if we work in collaboration and in concert with all other stakeholders.

How does this translate into practice?

The 'Patients Prescribe' Campaign on Patient Empowerment – in this campaign, EPF is working closely with policy makers, health professionals, academics, and innovators to advance on Patient Empowerment – with its three core tenets – health literacy and information to patients, a new dialogue with health professionals and self-management – embracing both social and technological innovation that puts the human factor to the fore. Ultimately – we want a European strategy on patient empowerment, because only by working together, across countries, across regions, across cultures, can we engineer the change that really matters.

The EU Patient Access Partnership, or PACT, which EPF leads came about as a result of the vast health inequalities that are all -pervasive in Europe. It is a truly multi-stakeholder initiative that has three main pillars

- Ensuring the patient access is high on the EU political agenda, particularly in the context of the EU Semester Process, enjoying significant support from the European Parliament;
- Mapping access across the EU – and what this really means to different stakeholders;
- Developing a credible tool to measure access across the EU – ultimately identifying viable solutions to move forward.