



Statement of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) & the European Medical Students' Association and European Forum of Primary Care & Centre for Regional Policy Research and Cooperation 'Studiorum'

Can people afford to pay for health care? New evidence on financial protection in Europe

Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates,

The IFMSA, EMSA, European Forum of Primary Care and Studiorum congratulates the Regional Office and the Member States on their work ensuring financial protection. We acknowledge that health system monitoring is essential to support evidence-based decisions and effective policy responses.

Despite improvement in healthcare services, inequities in health still remain. As pointed out by the regional study, in Europe a significant percentage of the population is pushed beyond the poverty line by out-of-pocket payments. Additionally, the increasing price of essential medicines is one of the major challenges faced by health systems worldwide. We strongly encourage open discussions between nations, medical companies and patient groups, as we believe they are required to bridge the financial gap.

We would like to emphasize that reforms in the financing policies such as increased, but also more efficient and equitable governmental funding are required to achieve financial protection. Also, we would like to emphasize that changes in the health system, taking all the six building blocks of a health system as described by the WHO in regard, will bring us closer to achieving Universal Health Coverage.

We would like to point out that health systems do not only serve to treat and prevent illnesses but are also functioning as effective means to a country's economy. Moreover, healthy adults are more productive and healthy children perform better in school. This improves economic performance and enables economic growth to be sustainable and inclusive.

Therefore, we urge upon governments to ensure financial protection for all its citizens, by increasing government spending as a fraction of total health expenditure, keeping out-of-pocket payments for healthcare at a minimum and facilitate transparent, equitable and efficient financial management systems.

Thank you.