

**Joint Statement to the 66th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe
on session 5 (g) ‘Strengthening people-centred health systems in the WHO European Region:
framework for action on integrated health services delivery’**

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the opportunity to address the distinguished members of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe on behalf of **Medicus Mundi International, the International Federation of Medical Students Associations, the European Forum of Medical Associations, the European Forum for Primary Care, the European Public Health Alliance, the European organization for all Occupational Therapists, the European regional network of the World Organization of Family Doctors, the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and the Worldwide Hospice and Palliative Care Alliance.**

We welcome the adoption of a European framework for action on integrated health services delivery that takes forward the priority of transforming health services delivery to meet the health challenges of the 21st century.

Let me focus on a core element of this framework: ensuring a competent health workforce. We appreciate that National authorities are explicitly referred to – as the ultimate guarantor of equitable access to quality health services as a human right. This includes the international moral responsibility and ethical imperative that everybody should have access to skilled health workers providing essential health services from pre-natal to palliative and end of life care.

Ensuring a competent health workforce also calls for a focus on establishing the supportive practice environment necessary to deliver integrated health services while working to gradually change professional cultures for more interdisciplinary modalities of work.

Future (and current) health care demands require a dynamic continuum of skills. And a dynamic continuum of skills requires continual adjustment and harmonisation also taking into account the international mobility of the health workforce – and more flexibility than the current system provides.

People-centred health systems and its competent health workforce also demand from the member states – and their National authorities – the promotion of better policy coherence between health, education, migration, development, employment, and economic policies, and thus the need to plan, educate, recruit and retain adequate numbers of health professionals inside and outside Europe.

The adoption of the WHO Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030 and the UN High Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth set good examples on how we can work together to achieve these goals. While we are looking forward to the results of these processes, we would like to highlight the importance of the Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning and Forecasting, whose recommendations have already been issued and await implementation.

Thank you.

(311 words)

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Supporters of this statement:

- COTEC: European organization for all Occupational Therapists through their National Associations, with the purpose of ensuring an adequate number of high quality occupational therapy practitioners and services in Europe.
- EFMA: The European Forum of Medical Associations is a forum of national associations of physicians across the WHO European Region
- EFPC: European Forum for Primary Care represents around 100 institutional members in the WHO European region active at policy making, academic and practice level in the Primary Care domain.
- EPHA: European Public Health Alliance
- IFMSA: International Federation of Medical Students Associations
- WFOT: World Federation of Occupational Therapists
- Worldwide Hospice and Palliative Care Alliance
- WONCA Europe: European regional network of the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) represents more than 80,000 family doctors through their Member Organisations across Europe.

