

Joint non-State actor statement on the WHO European Framework for Action on the health and care workforce 2023–2030

This statement was drafted on the occasion of the 73rd session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe - 24–26 October 2023, Astana, Kazakhstan.

Honourable Chair, esteemed Regional Director, distinguished delegates and dear participants, my name is Corinne Hinlopen from Wemos, and I read this statement on behalf of non-state actors in official relations with WHO European Regional Committee.

We congratulate the WHO Regional Office for Europe for their landmark report 'Time to act', as well as for their efforts to mobilize 37 Member States to co-sponsor the resolution. The health workforce well deserves this prominent place on the agenda, and this Framework for Action shows a clear way forward.

As civil society organizations, we would first like to highlight the following:

During and after Covid-19, **international health and care worker mobility** became more dynamic and complex. Some returned home, while many others left the sector or their countries for reasons like burnout, stress and under-appreciation. Migration typically favours health systems with better working and living conditions, whether real or perceived. However, these systems often have high attrition rates themselves and resort to international recruitment as an easy fix, harming the countries of origin, who for their part also fail to adequately retain their health and care workers.

Since all Member States face similar health workforce shortages and challenges, now and in many years to come, **we call on Member States to cease the international competition for skilled health and care workers in crisis-ridden systems, and to work together to provide them with the working conditions they need to thrive and to deliver the best possible health care, for all in the European Region.**

In addition, we have four more specific asks:

- 1** The healthcare workforce includes many different professions and roles. We urge Member States to tailor their health workforce strategies to their specific population needs, and to organize education, training, recruitment, and retention of the different cadres accordingly.
- 2** We strongly urge Member States to prioritize people-centred primary healthcare, delivering a full range of services in integrated systems and to undertake specific and concrete efforts to reach those in

greatest need and reduce health inequities.

- 3 We also ask that Member States strive to upgrade the status and societal appreciation of all categories of health and care workers and to make sure they are remunerated, supported and protected accordingly.
- 4 Finally, we ask Member States to guarantee optimal working conditions for health and care professionals by investing in safe and secure working environments, in high quality facilities, with appropriate support staff and streamlined administrative processes, and in continued professional development, all to the benefit of patient safety and population health outcomes.

Thank you for your attention.

Concrete steps to put Europe's health workforce at the heart of the Framework for Action

In summary, we ask member states to:

1. cease the international competition for skilled health and care workers, and to work together to provide them with optimal working conditions,
2. tailor their health workforce strategies to their specific population needs,
3. prioritize people-centred primary healthcare and reduce health inequities,
4. upgrade the status and societal appreciation of all categories of health and care workers, and
5. invest in safe and secure working environments, appropriate support staff, streamlined administrative processes and continued professional development.

Signatories



EuroHealthNet



European Cancer Organisation



European Forum for Primary Care



European Medical Students' Association



European Public Health Alliance



International Diabetes Federation Europe



Wemos



WONCA Europe



World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists