



European Union

Statement

WHO

156th Executive Board

(3-11 February 2025)

Agenda item 12 - Health and care workforce

Geneva, 7 February 2025

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Chair,

Excellencies, Director General,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina* and Georgia as well as Armenia align themselves with this statement.

We express our gratitude to the Director General for this report which summarizes progress towards the four objectives of the Global Strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030.

In considering the Report, we were asked reflect on two questions. On the first, EU and its Member States believe that optimizing the education, employment, and retention of the health and care workforce is a global priority as healthcare systems face growing demands in light of the population growth, ageing of the health workforce and population.

Key approaches including adopting policies on enhancing **access to and investing in healthcare education**, infrastructure for tertiary education, scholarships, enlarging the number of students, **promoting lifelong learning and strengthening partnerships with academic institutions** including the WHO Academy have proved beneficial.

Enhancing employment and better working conditions for our health and care workforce, through policies on competitive salaries and benefits, including initiatives to end the gender pay gap and flexible work schedules is important. Policies should comprehend equity-focused and gender-based approaches to address disparities, ensuring the meaningful participation and representation of women in senior leadership and decision-making roles.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

To optimize staff retention, we suggest the adoption of **workforce planning tools** to predict shortages and plan resource allocation such as the innovative model developed by the EU to estimate the healthcare workforce needed in the region until 2071.

As we know, retention is paramount to safeguard healthcare systems resilience to ensure accessible and affordable quality health services and to meet key objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals.

On the second question, we recognize the pivotal role of WHO in supporting Member States to advance their capabilities and competencies in **data management, policy dialogue and investment decisions**.

Promoting intersectoral engagement and increased collaboration across education, labor, finance, and health ministries would enable holistic workforce planning and **facilitate investment decisions**, assisting Member States in prioritizing their health workforce investments in national budgets. Alignment of workforce strategies with **Universal Health Coverage** and the Sustainable Development Goals to **promote innovative financing mechanisms** should also be supported, with a focus on healthcare.

The WHO should continue to support **building national and regional capacities, through training policymakers** and development of regional training centers, networks and the WHO Academy to facilitate localized solutions and knowledge-sharing.

Healthcare workforce shortages also increase the necessity for innovation in the education curricula of many professions by rethinking skill-mixes and task shifting,

We underline the need for WHO to advocate for **global and regional cooperation and to promote global benchmarks and accountability**, to monitor and report on progress toward workforce-related targets under initiatives such as the **Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030**.

By leveraging such approaches, the WHO Secretariat will empower Member States to make informed, evidence-based decisions that enhance the health and care workforce, thereby ensuring a sustainable and equitable global health system. On this, we would ask WHO to share any data or analysis on the number of staff that will be working on the relevant human resources for health projects and programmes and the available funding required.

Finally, the EU and its Member States expresses their appreciation to the Philippines and Morocco for leading on the resolution calling for “Accelerating action on the global health and care workforce by 2023.

Thank you.