



European Union

Statement

WHO

78th World Health Assembly

(19 May – 27 May 2025)

Item 13.7 – Health and Care Workforce

Geneva, 24 May 2025

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EU Statement

Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.

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

We support the strategic priorities set by the Director-General focusing on: protection and rights, education, and job creation, multisectoral collaboration, and gender equity. As the largest donor to the WHO, the EU reaffirms its strong commitment to the organization's mission and leadership in global health.

We emphasize that protection from any form of violence, discrimination, unsafe working conditions and respect for human rights, as well as due appreciation in all its form, are preconditions for attracting and retaining the health workforce and, a cornerstone of resilient health systems.

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

Given the rising healthcare demands, ageing populations and workforce shortages, we stress the importance of education, training, optimizing skills mix, career development and health workforce planning. Digital upskilling is important to address the digital health transition, with a focus on strengthening recruitment and retention strategies, all of which are vital for achieving universal health coverage and global health security.

Effective strategies include increasing the supply of health workforce, continuous professional development, and strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders, including the WHO Academy, which offers a unique opportunity to strengthen the skills and capacities of human resources in health. We acknowledge the Nursing Action launched by the EU4Health Programme 2025, and carried out by WHO EURO, to tackle critical shortages in the nursing workforce across the EU.

Improving working and retention conditions are essential. Health policies must promote equity and gender-responsive approaches support women's meaningful participation and leadership. Currently, women form 70% of the health workforce but hold less than 25% of senior roles, with a 24% pay gap.

Long-term planning tools to predict shortages and facilitate resource allocation and sustained investment in health and care workforce are essential to building equitable and resilient health systems and central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, we congratulate the Philippines and Morocco on the draft resolution “Accelerating action on the global health and care workforce by 2030”.

We underline the need for the WHO to advocate for global and regional cooperation and to promote global benchmarks and accountability.

In conclusion, WHA78 marks the 15th anniversary of the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel’s adoption. The EU and its Member States underline the Code’s relevance, effectiveness, and the need

to strengthen its implementation. It is therefore important that it is updated to reflect the current challenges, trends, and context.

Thank you.