

79th World Health Assembly
Item 12.5: Primary healthcare

National Statement - Italy

Honourable Chair,

We underscore the pivotal role of primary care as an integrated framework of health and social services, as we are presently undertaking important primary health care reforms, financed by the EU *recovery and resilience funds*.

These reforms are the framework for addressing in particular the health needs of a growing and frequently vulnerable aging population. An extensive institutional reform of care for older persons was launched in 2023, with the aim to integrate social and health services. In particular, Legislative Decree 29 of 2024 introduces a turning point in the management of frail and dependent older persons in Italy at primary level, placing the integration of social and health care at the center of the system. To implement this integration and to simplify evaluation, the reform introduces two useful innovations: the procedures unification, in terms of space, time and assessment instruments; and the assessment standardization. A Unified Multidimensional Assessment tool therefore defines the 'specific care needs' of the older person, based on physical, mental, functional, social, economic, and emotional factors: the aim is to deliver a continuum of health and care services, linking the primary level to long-term care, rehabilitation and palliative care, where needed, and ultimately prevent frailty and dependency.

We are pleased that the GDO Office Italy hosts in Venice will have a specific attention to healthy ageing, therefore look forward to an enhanced collaboration with WHO in this area.

Thank you.

[236/220 words]