

Launch of new European project: Health workers for all and all for health workers

One billion people world-wide will never see a health worker

- **Everyone should have access to health workers. However, if the situation remains as it is today, one billion people world-wide will never see a health worker in their life.**
- **The first 'World Health Worker Week' (8-12 April) marks the launch of the 'Health workers for all and all for health workers' project, a European civil society initiative that contributes to a sustainable health workforce worldwide.**

Today over 50 countries, mainly in Africa and South Asia, suffer from a critical shortage of health personnel. On the other hand, in the aging societies of European countries, the number of people who need long-term care is growing, thus fuelling demand for health workers. As the labor market becomes more globalized, rising demand is driving migration and mobility amongst health personnel. The recruitment of health workers abroad may be a way of meeting the domestic demand, but can worsen the shortage of qualified personnel elsewhere, in low- and middle-income countries and also in Europe. The 'care drain' of doctors, nurses and other health workers increases existing inequalities and further weakens weak health systems.

Action towards achieving a sustainable health workforce and strengthening health systems is a joint enterprise of all countries. This analysis is shared by many policymakers of European countries and by the European Commission who is funding the three-year project 'Health workers for all and all for health workers'. The project is aimed at developing and sharing appropriate tools for policy analysis and resulting action. In the eight partner countries Belgium, the UK, Italy, Germany, Poland, Romania, Spain and the Netherlands, and at a European level, civil society organizations want this project to contribute to the creation of a community of practice of national and international stakeholders in order to achieve a sustainable health workforce.

The project is actively supported by WHO Europe, itself a leader in the efforts for action towards achieving a sustainable health workforce, and by the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA) currently celebrating its first 'World Health Worker Week'. A basis for the project is the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Workers adopted in 2010 by all member states of the World Health Organization. The Code aims to establish and promote voluntary principles and practices for the ethical international recruitment of health personnel and to facilitate the strengthening of health systems. It was designed by Member States to serve as a continuous and dynamic framework for global dialogue and cooperation.

432 words

Quote: "I do not believe in local solutions creating problems elsewhere. Because Europe is contributing to the global health workforce crisis, let us also contribute to finding sustainable solutions!" Thomas Schwarz, 'Health workers for all and all for health workers' project

Note for the press

About the project

The project 'Health workers for all and all for health workers' is a European civil society initiative that contributes to a sustainable health workforce worldwide. The project is funded by the European Union.

About the partners

'Health workers for all and all for health workers' partners: African Medical and Research Foundation (Italy), Center for Health Policies and Services (Romania), Humanitarian Aid Foundation Redemptoris Missio (Poland), Health Poverty Action (UK), Medicus Mundi International Network, Memisa Belgium, Federation of Associations of Medicus Mundi Spain, terre des hommes Germany, and project coordinator Wemos (Netherlands).

Further information

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