



Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

**Green Paper on the EU
Workforce for Health**

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SANCO 5



The importance of the EU Health Workforce

- Developing effective and efficient health systems, with the capacity to improve health and prevent disease, depends on having a high-quality, efficient health workforce with the right skills – throughout the EU Member States



The importance of the EU Health Workforce (2)

- Health workers in the widest sense constitute 1:10 of the EU workforce
- Approximately 70% of healthcare budgets are allocated to salaries and other employment-related charges



Challenges facing sustainability of workforce

- A number of challenges facing our health systems: ageing population/ageing workforce/threats to health
- Ever-rising expectations; new treatments and new technology
- Need to improve equity of access



Challenges – increased mobility

- Directive 2005/36 – mutual recognition of professional qualifications – tool of mobility within EU
- Often blamed but health professionals leave for USA etc as well



Regional disparities in the EU

- Mobility poses challenge for some specialties and some regions within MS
- Shortages in one part of EU impacts elsewhere creating regional disparities
- We are hampered by not knowing full picture



Lack of comparable data

- Europe-wide information and robust data on the composition of the workforce is lacking – why they move - where they move to – whether/ when they return
- Projects to overcome this in train but will take time and some data may be too resource intensive for MS to collect



Common Problems: Shared Solutions?

- Mobility within regions and between MS is a reality: robust HR strategies are needed to address the effects
- There is much to be gained by promoting cooperation and common approaches
- Time to start aiming for EU self-sufficiency?



Effects of global health worker migration: what is EU doing?

- Workforce crisis one of major barriers to MDG progress – ethical issues
- Programme for Action 2007 – 2013
- Addressing EU workforce problems must not have negative impact outside EU
- Commitment that Blue card highly qualified immigration proposal will respect ethical recruitment principles



Current Legal Framework

- EU Treaty Article 152
- Delivery of health services responsibility of MS
- « Community shall encourage cooperationand ... lend support »
- Take any initiative to promote coordination



What can we do at the EU level?

- Shared evidence base for collective response to common challenges – improving monitoring and statistical system through available funding (EU, OECD, WHO);
- Sharing good practice - learning from each others' experience
- Guidance/guidelines
- Recommendation
- Supporting networks of stakeholders – promoting cooperation
- Support from the structural funds - training and re-skilling of health professionals, in particular for under-developed regions.



What next?

- The official launch of the Green Paper consultation will take place at a conference on 10 December 2008 in the Borschette centre, Brussels. Register on line
- http://s-sanco-europa/health/ph_overview/workforce/index_en.htm
- The consultation period will last until the end of March 2009



What next? (2)

- Results of consultation exercise will be analysed.
- Responses will feed into consideration of what EU can do to support Member States in tackling these challenges
- We encourage an enthusiastic response to consultation