



TOWARDS A BETTER HEALTHCARE SYSTEM: THE EUROPEAN HEALTH PARLIAMENT WORKFORCE PLANNING COMMITTEE KICKS OFF

"You treat a disease, you win, you lose. You treat a person, I guarantee you, you'll win, no matter what the outcome."

Patch Adams

On 27th October, the Google premises and the European Parliament received 56 young professionals with different backgrounds, from different parts of the world, who gathered all together to work on a subject that requires more attention than it currently has - healthcare. Our first impression of the European Health Parliament was the most positive. We could sense immediately that we are working with a multidisciplinary team of people who are passionate about healthcare matters and who are eager to learn and to share their knowledge, opinions and values. Working with these people who do not only care about health but are willing to have an actual impact and to make significant changes towards a better constructed European healthcare system is a truly enriching experience.

People usually tend to focus on superficial elements of daily life, such as financial prosperity and social status, while neglecting one of the most important values in life, their health! It's important to emphasize that not only the patients but also healthcare employees need individual attention and adapted working conditions. To receive a better treatment, patients need a healthy and qualified workforce. Physical and mental health for every person is a right of European citizens. As members of the European Health Parliament Workforce Planning Committee, acknowledging and defending this right requires responsibility and commitment of us all to drive positive change in the European healthcare system through our recommendations for health policy!

Developing a quality policy recommendation requires certain steps and a particular approach. To have a more efficient result, we decided to organise our work in several stages.

Firstly, we will research the existing policies governing health workforce planning in Europe and the latest initiatives on EU level, in order to have an in-depth understanding of successful actions and failures in the area. Then we will focus on a case study to support our recommendation and to gain insights in the sector based on previous research and experience. Reading articles and reports published by the EU institutions, international organisations as

well as NGOs and intergovernmental institutions will help us to deepen our knowledge and decide on our priorities. By determining specific actions taken from previous projects and analysing proposed recommendations we will figure out the gaps and issues that require further action. This will help us to define our policy priorities within this edition of the European Health Parliament. The second step will be to target the responsible policy makers and experts to discuss our views on the subject and to have recommendations on this matter. In order to elaborate a policy that the European Commission could actually adopt, we are doing constant research and are focusing on the quality of the final result.

We believe that an essential element of the proper healthcare system in the EU is a qualified health workforce and its reasonable planning. EU citizens should receive consistent high-quality care by healthcare workers across borders in Europe. A successful health workforce planning system in the EU does not only have the promise of reducing costs and increasing outcomes, it also has the potential to give that extra dimension to the added value of the EU project.

As the workload of healthcare employees is becoming higher each year, the need for multidisciplinary collaboration is becoming essential to ensure a quality care of patients. New jobs and new skills need to be defined to make this possible. In addition, one of the important issues for the health workforce EU policy is soft skills training. To guarantee an efficient multidisciplinary collaboration, the subject of empathy, mental health of workforce and patients, communication, flexibility and team-work deserve deeper attention and should be tackled as a whole.

To conclude, the current problems related to Health Workforce Planning need a more detailed approach and the European Health Parliament is the best platform for this. The possibility to interact in person with the policy makers, not being limited by any political strains, and make an impact in the European health care is an incredible opportunity to make a real change and make the current healthcare system better. We, as the Health Workforce Planning Committee, are proud of being part of the 3rd edition of the European Health Parliament and looking forward to #MakeHealthGreatAgain!

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