

# EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

## STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EFTA STATES

Ref. 1090810

26 March 2009

### EFTA WORKING GROUP ON PUBLIC HEALTH

#### **EEA EFTA COMMENT ON THE COMMISSION'S GREEN PAPER ON "THE EUROPEAN WORKFORCE FOR HEALTH" (COM(2008) 725 final)**

**The EEA EFTA States welcome the opportunity presented by the European Commission to comment on the Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health. The Green Paper is an important document in illuminating the future health-workforce shortage challenges facing the EU countries in the near future and towards a more coordinated approach at EU level.**

The EEA EFTA States share the Commission's understanding of the future challenges, influencing factors and possible areas for action at EU level. The Green Paper is to a great extent in accordance with EEA EFTA States' national approaches to meet the future health workforce shortage challenges.

Nevertheless, the EEA EFTA States believe that the Green Paper would benefit from a systematic focus on areas such as task-shifting and skill mix, patient treatment and competence, education-theory-practice, length of education versus profit and aspects connected to the female workforce as important elements of a comprehensive strategy to alleviate health force shortage. In certain parts of these areas, particularly regarding skill mix as well as patient treatment and competence, we would like to suggest that the Commission consider setting up working parties or projects to share best practice and evaluations of national efforts.

The EEA EFTA States also believe that the Member States of the EU should abstain from actively and systematically recruiting health workers from countries experiencing health workforce shortages, unless equitable agreements, either bilateral, regional or multilateral, exist between source and receiving countries.

The EEA EFTA States recommend that EU Member States establish or strengthen national data collection on recruitment and migration of health workers in combination with planning means – for instance by projecting different future scenarios. The EU should ensure that data collected nationally is comparable with data collected by other Member States.

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