

Konstanty Radziwiłł
President
of the Central Medical Council

NRL/ZRP/EJ/140-4/213 /2009

Warsaw, 18 February 2009

European Commission
Attn. Mr Andrzej Ryś
Director
DG Health and Consumers

Dear Director,

Please find enclosed the opinion of the Central Medical Council (NRL), no 1/09/V of 13 February 2009, on the European Commission's Green Paper on the EU Workforce for Health.

Yours faithfully,
(signed)

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OPINION No 1/09/V OF THE CENTRAL MEDICAL COUNCIL

of 13 February 2009

on the European Commission's Green Paper on the EU Workforce for Health

The Central Medical Council (NRL) has studied the European Commission's Green Paper on the EU Workforce for Health, which has been published on the Commission's web site, and wishes to make the following comments.

Some of the more pressing challenges facing health care systems in Europe are:

- the need to eliminate inequalities in EU citizens' access to high-quality health care;
- the fact that constantly increasing health expenditure is not keeping up with the growing supply of and demand for services. This is creating structural problems with the equality of health care systems and is having a negative impact on employment conditions and remuneration, which in turn is making the medical professions less attractive, causing a shortage of trained health personnel. The demand for skilled health personnel in richer countries is met by migration from poorer countries, which exacerbates the problems of access to specialist care in the latter countries.

Relevant factors and possible fields of activity deserving particular attention include:

1. Re: demography and the promotion of a sustainable health workforce:
 - analysing the remuneration of health sector personnel;
 - creating the conditions which will encourage persons over the age of 55 and those who no longer have family commitments to stay at/return to work;
 - facilitating and encouraging the study of medicine and related subjects.
2. Re: training:
 - ensuring that training takes account of the special needs of persons with disabilities (who should have guaranteed access to the same quality of medical care as healthy people and to the specialist medical services which they need);

- facilitating a steady increase in professional medical personnel; raising the level of professional qualifications, thereby improving treatment outcomes and guaranteeing patient safety;
 - designing training courses which enable workers to return to work.
3. Re: managing the mobility of health workers within the EU:
 - giving consideration to a pan-European system of offsetting economic losses relating to the cost of training migrant medical personnel in their country of origin.
 4. Re: global migration of health workers:
 - ending active recruitment from developing countries.
 5. Re: data in support of decision making:
 - the creation of a European system of monitoring the flow of health workers.
 6. Re: the impact of new technology: improving the efficiency of health workers:
 - educating patients about the possibilities and limitations of new technology.
 7. Re: the role of health entrepreneurs in the health workforce:
 - encouraging medical workers to undertake a business activity in the health sector.
 8. Re: cohesion policy:
 - facilitating the use of structural funds to improve working conditions.

(signed)
Mariusz Janikowski
Secretary

(signed)
Konstanty Radziwiłł
President

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