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Annex(es)

Re Reaction of the Netherlands to the Green Paper on
the European Workforce for Health

C.c.

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Under parliamentary reservation I hereby send you the reaction of the Netherlands government to the Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health.

The Netherlands sees the measures proposed in the Green Paper as a good complement to the Netherlands labour-market policy in the healthcare sector, as set out in the letter of 5 November 2007 from the Minister and State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport concerning labour-market policy and training in the healthcare sector (Lower House, session 2007-2008, 29 282, No 46, see attachment).

The Netherlands welcomes the links established by the Commission between demographic trends, training and public health capacity and the impact of new technology (Chapter 5 and paragraph 4.2).

Changes in the skills required of health professionals as a consequence of new treatment methods and new technologies are priority issues in the Netherlands too. There are implications here for the training capacity and training requirements of carers and clinicians in particular.

An important factor is that the supply of new technologies may cause methods of treatment to change. The Netherlands requests that you also devote attention to the design phase of new medical technology. Better design based on aspects of public health such as ergonomics can help to shorten training pathways. It may also lighten the workload of health workers by improving patient safety.

The more general connection between the (supply of) medical technology and public health is an issue that the Netherlands feels should be considered separately. The

Netherlands also feels that the focus on information technology and telemedicine needs to be broader. The Netherlands would welcome a deeper and wider analysis of the expected role of medical technology as set out in Chapter 5 of the Green Paper.

The Netherlands feels that a clear distinction must be made between the positions of health workers from within and from outside the European Union. The EU is aware of the principle of free movement of workers. This is an important starting point. The Netherlands further considers that non-discriminatory quality requirements should be the only reason for refusing workers from inside the European Union access to the national labour market. Where those requirements are concerned, there must be sufficient room for national legislation and regulations to be applied.

Lastly, the Netherlands wishes to stress that the recruitment of healthcare workers from outside the European Union must be a last resort of labour-market policy. Active recruitment from developing countries with shortages of health workers should be avoided, above all in view of the adverse social effects this could have on the health situation in those countries.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Jos G.H. Draijer
for the Permanent Representative

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