



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 29 JUN 2009  
C/2009/ 5105

Dear Mr Rudiengaard,

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2009 containing the opinion of the Health Committee and the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament to the Commission's Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health.

The European Commission thanks the Danish Parliament for its thoughtful and constructive opinion. It notes, in particular, the concerns the Danish Parliament has expressed on certain issues raised by the Green Paper. Please be assured that the Commission will take them into account when appraising options following the public consultation on the Green Paper.

The Commission agrees that activities to address the various challenges described in the Green Paper will be mainly undertaken at national level. The public consultation will provide an indication of areas where Member States and other stakeholders consider that the EU can support and add value to these, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

In the opinion given by the Danish Parliament, the need for clarity is indicated in the section of the Green Paper concerning chronic disease management. The Commission acknowledges that this deserves greater clarification to ensure that what is understood is not the extension of informal care but, rather, less emphasis on attending hospital clinics and more community-based care.

The Commission recognises the tension described by the Parliament between the aim, on the one hand, to manage mobility and migration of health professionals and, on the other hand, the fundamental freedom of movement enshrined in the legislation of the free market. This will be addressed in any proposals which are made.

Finally, regarding the role of equal pay in retaining and recruiting nurses in public healthcare, the Commission would like to draw your attention to its activities with regard to the gender pay gap. The Commission is in the process of analysing the effectiveness of Community law in view of the identified causes of the gender pay gap, in line with the 2007 Communication (COM(2007) 424). If needed, the Commission could present proposals to update the legal framework on this issue. It launched on 3rd March an information campaign in all EU countries to raise awareness on the gender pay gap.

Mr. Preben Rudiengaard  
Chairman of the Health Committee  
Folketinget

Several Member States have addressed the gender pay gap through specific initiatives and, in addition, the European Institute for Gender Equality is now being set up. Once up and running, the Institute will provide new technical assistance to the Community institutions and the Member States.

The next step following the closure of the public consultation exercise is to analyse the responses. Any proposals which emerge from the responses will be assessed for potential impact in economic, social, and environmental fields and will be subject to further stakeholder consultation.

Please note that the same letter will be transmitted to Mr Auken, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee.

Yours sincerely

Margot WALLSTRÖM  
Vice-President of the European Commission



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Mr. Svend Auken  
Chairman of the European  
Affairs Committee  
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