



## CITIZENS' SUMMARY

# On the European Workforce for Health

### What is the problem the proposal is seeking to address?

There are a number of challenges facing health systems in Europe. People are living longer, new technology is increasing the range and quality of, often expensive, treatments. Third, there are new and re-emerging threats to health eg from communicable diseases. Finally, citizens have ever-rising expectations about having access to the best possible healthcare.

Health services are extremely labour intensive and health workers in the widest sense constitute one of the most significant sectors of the EU economy, providing employment for 1:10 of the EU workforce.

However, there are serious issues facing the health workforce in the EU and many of the problems are common to all Member States. The ageing population means that the health workforce is itself an ageing one and there are insufficient recruits coming through to replace people leaving. This and the growing pressures on health systems mean that there are already shortages in many health professions. Migration of health professionals into and out of the EU and mobility within and outside the EU - is also having the effect of increasing shortages in some regions.

Moreover, the EU must ensure coherence between health, development and migration policies and make sure that principles for ethical recruitment are implemented due to the lack of health professionals in many development countries.



### How would the proposal tackle the problem?

The aim of the Green Paper is to increase the political visibility of these issues and to engage stakeholders in the debate so as to stimulate coordinated approaches. In light of the fact that Member States are facing a number of common problems with their health workforces, there is much to be gained by promoting cooperation and common approaches between the Member States. The European Community can add value by supporting this.

### Why is it right for the EU to act?

Community action is intended to complement national policies. The principal responsibility for organising and delivering services lies with the Member States, but the EU has an important role in helping to support Member States and adding value by bringing together partnerships between stakeholders and offering support in networking and the sharing of good practice.



## How would proposal work?

Its publication is intended to launch a public consultation process to obtain everyone's views on a wide range of issues connected with the healthcare workforce and preparing for the care of an ageing population. The results of the consultation will feed in to our consideration of what the EU can do to support Member States in tackling these challenges.

## When would change be felt and what are the next steps?

When the replies to the consultation have been received there will be a period during which the Commission will consider the comments and ideas received. Based on the views given, the Commission will consider if further action at EU level would be useful.



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