



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Document: Minutes of meeting of Working Group on the European Workforce for Health held on 2 June 2014

Date:
June 2014

Reference:
HLG/WORKFORCE/2014/01

To: Members

From: Secretariat

Adopted

**MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
THE EUROPEAN HEALTH WORKFORCE (OF THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP
ON HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL CARE)**

2 June 2014

DRAFT MINUTES

Chair: Katja Neubauer, DG SANCO, European Commission

1. Welcome, minutes of the last meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Chair welcomed all participants. The draft agenda was adopted and the minutes of the previous meeting held in 12 April 2013 were approved. The Chair reminded participants of the meeting objectives:

- To discuss the preliminary results of the European Commission study on continuous professional development of health professionals
- To discuss policy responses to the OECD paper on skills use, skills mismatch in the health sector
- To present the Commission Communication on health systems adopted in April.
- To inform the working group on the activities of the Joint Action on health workforce planning.
- To update the working group on the European Commission recruitment and retention study and to present the findings of the EU research project "Prometheus II" – health professional mobility and health systems.

All presentations from the meeting will be made available on the Europa website:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/events/ev_20140602_en.htm.

2. Update on the Action Plan for the EU health workforce

Caroline Hager, DG SANCO European Commission, gave an update of the various activities in the four core areas of the Action Plan for the EU health workforce, two years since its adoption in April 2012:

- Improve workforce planning
 - Joint Action on health workforce planning and forecasting: many activities launched in the first year and cooperation grows.
- Better anticipation of skill needs
 - EU mapping study on the continuous professional development of health professionals underway with preliminary results today and final report due in October 2014.
 - OECD-study on skills mismatches: preliminary results today and final report in June.
 - Pilot Network of Nurse Educators: the Commission co-funded project on mapping the education and regulation of healthcare assistants will be published soon.
 - Sector Skills Alliances: pilot skills alliance in the health sector is developing an EU training module in elderly care led by a Finnish training institute in cooperation with partners in five countries.¹

¹ <http://www.ecvetforec.eu/presentation.htm>

- Sector Skills Council “nursing and care”: although the 2012 feasibility study for a sector skills council for nursing and care concluded there was some potential, overall there was not sufficient scope across the EU and there was a risk of overlap with the Joint Action “horizon scanning” work package. No application was received in response to a DG Employment call in February 2014.
- European Skills Competences and Occupations (ESCO): the work of the Reference Group in healthcare and social services is still ongoing and the Working Group will be updated in the future.
- Improve recruitment and retention strategies
 - Study on effective recruitment and retention: final report due March 2015.
- Support the WHO Global Code on the international recruitment of health workers: work underway within the framework of the Joint Action to exchange practices on the implementation of the Code.

Michel van Hoegaerden, programme manager of the Joint Action on workforce planning and forecasting, pointed out that the Joint Action also had links with other areas of the Action Plan: work package 4 (data and mobility) will deliver recommendations on how to implement the WHO Code and work package 6 (horizon scanning) will also look at future skills needs.

3. Presentation of preliminary findings of EU mapping study on continuous professional development

The Chair introduced this topic by underlining the importance of regularly updating and improving skills of health professionals through lifelong learning (LLL) and continuous professional development (CPD) in order to improve quality of care and patient safety. Furthermore, she mentioned the EU legal instruments that address CPD:

- The 2009 Council Recommendation of Patient Safety which encourages Member States to include patient safety also in the CPD of health professionals
- The recently amended Professional Qualifications Directive 2013/55/EC: under Article 22 of the Directive, Member States shall encourage CPD to ensure professionals maintain "safe and effective" practice and Member States will report by January 2016 how this has been transposed.

Nina Bernot, Council of European Dentists, presented the preliminary findings of the EU mapping study on CPD on behalf on the consortium (European professional organizations of doctors, nurses, dentists, midwives and pharmacists). A summary of these findings can be found in the background paper circulated to the working group.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Some working group members questioned the results of the survey and that they would like to be able to verify the results. The consortium agreed to send out the list of respondents to the survey and invited the working group to take up any questions with the survey respondents (e-mail sent on 6th June 2014).

- Corinna Kleinschmidt, the representative from the German federal health ministry, asked for clarification about a paragraph on the payment of CPD courses. The consortium will clarify this point in the final report.
- Michel Van Hoegaerden, programme leader of the Joint Action, wanted to know whether there is a link between CPD and health workforce planning. At this stage, there seems to be no clear link.
- Felix Rohn, DG Education and Culture, European Commission, elaborated on the various education and training programmes that have been launched or modified like Erasmus +.
- In reply to a question concerning the evaluation of CPD, Ms Bernot answered that the survey showed that there are relatively few national studies on the evaluation of CPD and that the consortium is collecting information.
- In reply to a question concerning innovative inter-professional CPD, Ms Bernot pointed out that the study did not come across many examples, but there are a few studies on inter-professional CPD for mid-wives who want to become a nurse.
- In reply to a question of UEMS about initiatives of recognising CPD-activities from other countries, Ms Bernot noted that the study does look into these initiatives and that they will elaborate on this during the technical workshop to take place on the 20th of June.
- Gerlinde Holweg, representative from the Dutch health ministry, expressed interest in the experiences of CPD in other Member States. Furthermore, they hope that Member States can help each other improving their CPD-systems by exchanging best practices. In the Netherlands, CPD is mainly linked with staying fit to practice and patient safety.
- Rui Santos Ivo, the Portuguese health ministry representative, also looked forward to the final report and was surprised by the many Member States who have mandatory CPD. He called upon the Commission to develop future initiatives on CPD.
- Carlos Moreno Sánchez, the Spanish health ministry representative, mentioned that they will present their national system of CPD and revalidation of licences to practice at a conference on 11th June.
- Ms Kleinschmidt, the German representative, is also in favour to exchange best practices and more EU cooperation. She queries what kind of bilateral agreements exist on the recognition of cross border CPD activities. Ms Bernot clarified that this will be clarified in the final report.
- Ms. Kovács, the Hungarian health ministry representative, stated that there are no future plans to improve CPD as HU has just had a major reform, which included more automatic recognition for cross-border CPD activities.
- The European Observatory saw scope for EU cooperation. Member States could help each other by exchanging best practices e.g. on the mix of the content in a CPD programme and on the format of CPD activities.
- Italy has recently started a review process and called for closer EU cooperation on CPD. They are less interested in inter-professional CPD and more in CPD activities for specialities within the health professions.
- Czech Republic has just started a new CPD structure for nurses with the support of professional organisations.

The Chair concluded that there was a lot of interest from Member States and that there were still some places left for the technical workshop on CPD taking place on the 20th of June. However, it would not be possible to cover travel costs. She added that the study will be finalized in October 2014 and will be discussed at the next Working Group in November. Furthermore, the Commission has noted and will reflect on the call for more

EU collaboration on CPD. This is in line with the modernised Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, which requires the establishment of an information exchange on best practices on CPD.

4. Presentation of OECD analysis on skills use and skills mismatches in the health sector.

Michael Schoenstein, OECD health division, presented a preview of the OECD study on skills use and skills mismatches in the health sector, co-funded by the European Commission. For the study, the OECD used data from the PIACC² and EWCS³ surveys. Both surveys are self-reported. The main hypothesis is that there seems to be less skills mismatches in the health sector than in other comparable sectors, because the access to professions in the health sector is strictly regulated. While the data showed that for over-skilling there is not a real difference in the perception of the skill levels between physicians, nurses and professions from other sectors, surprisingly however, physicians were more likely to report that they were under-skilled. The results were corrected for age, sex, country and education. Increasingly integrated labour markets make these mismatches an international challenge. Therefore, there is a need for more research on where these skills mismatches occur as the surveys did not cover different types of skills, whether communication or in performing surgery. The paper will be presented at the next OECD Health Committee on 24th of June. The OECD will do some further analysis of country groups, also making a link with CPD structures, and a follow up report will be published by the end of the year.

In reply to several questions, Mr Schoenstein stressed again that there are some major data limitations and explained how he dealt with them. He corrected the results for country, age and sex. Furthermore they will do country checks over the summer as far as possible.

The Chair concluded that the study is of considerable interest and that the Working Group will be kept informed of follow-up analysis.

5. Presentation of study “Mobility of Health Professionals – Prometheus II”

On behalf of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Professor James Buchan presented the study “Mobility of Health Professionals – Prometheus II”. Prof Buchan highlighted the main trends of health professional mobility, noting that they change rapidly. This increases the need for more recent data. Furthermore, the crisis widened the gap between rich and poor countries and stimulated more mobility. His key messages were:

- You cannot be 'isolationist'.
- You (almost certainly) do not have all the data and analysis you need to be effective in monitoring and managing mobility.
- You are increasingly connected with other labour markets.
- Migration problems cannot be solved as a stand-alone policy challenge.

² Programme on the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

³ European Working Conditions Survey

- Countries must develop and share strategic intelligence beyond own system and country.

In reply to a question, Prof Buchan noted that, although the recognition of the qualifications of the five health professions are harmonised in the EU, there are still many challenges for EU migrants in working in different health systems.

6. Presentation of Commission Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems

Federico Paoli, DG SANCO European Commission, presented the Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems which was launched on 4 April. This Communication is a political text which sets out the EU agenda to address the challenges facing Europe's health systems.

In a reply to a question, Mr Paoli explained there is no direct link with the country specific recommendations published within the context of the European Semester. However, this Communication does highlight the three main dimensions according to which the performance of health systems can be assessed.

7. Update on Joint Action on health workforce planning and forecasting

Micheal van Hoegaerden, JA programme manager, gave an overview of the main objectives of the Joint Action. The first year focused on collecting information. The second year will focus on writing the tools and guidelines on workforce planning and forecasting in order to test these in the third year. Mr Van Hoegaerden also stressed the importance of the sustainability of the Joint Action and mentioned the role that the Member States in this Working Group could have in validating the policy recommendations. Furthermore, Mr. van Hoegaerden explained the society survey for future generations, which will gather the views of students about the labour market of the healthcare sector on several themes like migration, motivation, education and how these will affect their personal choices. The results will be fed into the sustainability strategy of the Joint Action.

In reply to a question, Mr Van Hoegaerden noted that they will involve sister organisations of professional organisations in their society survey for future generations.

The Chair concluded that the role of the Working Group on the sustainability of the Joint Action will be discussed at the next meeting.

8. Information on the EC mapping study on effective recruitment and retention strategies

The European Commission is funding a study to map all effective recruitment and retention strategies in the EU. On behalf of the project consortium, Mr Giepmans, European Health Management Association (EHMA), presented the study methodology and work in progress. The study will be finished in March 2015.

France informed that they have just launched new retention policies for medical doctors and they are willing to present their plan at the next Working Group.

9. Any other business

The Chair announced that the Commission adopted the 2014 work plan of the Health Programme on 26 May 2014. This foresees funding for setting up a network to work together to define the core competences of healthcare assistants for the possible development of a common training framework under the Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36.

10. Next meeting

The Chair announced that the next meeting would be held in November 2014 (possible date is 17 November) and thanked members for their attendance and input and closed the meeting.