

Eurofedop Seminar

Migration and its impact on the health care sector

Podgorica (Montenegro), 16-17.05.2019

Short Report



The present seminar was organised by Eurofedop to discuss the phenomenon of the brain drain in the health care sector, the process by which health care personnel leave their home country to work abroad, in countries where they are offered more favourable salary and working conditions. This process is for example a serious problem in the Western Balkans, where countries are confronted with an important amount of health care professionals moving to countries from the European Union. Eurofedop had invited its members from the Western Balkans to learn more about the situation and hear what their suggestions are to deal with these problems.

The migration of health workforce is a global challenge and mainly concerns nurses and doctors. It originates from serious lacks of health care staff existing in receiving countries, but, in turn, creates lacks of health care staff and puts at risk the quality of health services in source countries. In order to be able to deal with the situation, it is essential to develop objective indicators to quantify the shortage of medical staff in each country and develop possible scenarios to find solutions to the existing shortages.

Strategies for the retention of medical staff should not only aim at raising wages, but also at improving the working conditions and the quality of working life as a whole. The argument of staff shortage was for example used in negotiations in Romania to obtain an increase of wages through the last adopted wage law.



In addition, medical services are continuously evolving and make it necessary for healthcare workers to continuously train themselves. But important differences as regards the level of education in different countries remain and make it necessary to underline the need for aiming towards the equivalence of health care education in European countries.

Digitisation of health services leads to better health services, but precaution is required. The success of digital transformation depends on our ability to understand both the services and the digital component.

In order to deal with the growing brain drain phenomenon, more coordination is required and trade unions can deliver an important contribution in this respect by sharing experiences and good practice.



In the course of the seminar, Eszter Kovács of Semmelweis University (Hungary) gave more information on SEPEN, a project that is supported by the EU and aims at setting up an expert network on health workforce planning in Europe.



Dr. Aleš Bourek of Masaryk University (Czechia), member of the EU expert panel on effective ways of investing in health, held a presentation on task-shifting and the digital transformation of health care and services.

Delegates of Western Balkan countries were given the opportunity to report on the situation in their national countries. It was agreed to report regularly on the situation of the brain drain as it exists and evolves in the national countries.

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