



*Nouvelles de Bruxelles - Notizie de Bruxelles – Novidades de Bruselas – News from
Brussels
Issue # 36 – 22/12/09*

DG SANCO report on the public consultation on the Green Paper on European Workforce for Health

This 15/12/09, the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection (SANCO) has published its report resulting from the responses to the public consultation on the European Commission's Green Paper on European Workforce for Health.

The report in question summarizes the issues raised by the 197 responses received by the DG SANCO, following the public consultation which ended the 10/04/09. The list of all the responses (including of course the one of FEPI) is available at the website of the DG SANCO, http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_systems/results_oc_workforce_en.htm.

As you remember, Mrs. **Elizabeth Kidd**, Policy Officer of the DG SANCO, in charge of the drafting of the Green Paper in question, addressed the latest meeting of General Assembly of FEPI, in Rome, where she discussed with us the first results of the consultation, and in particular the issues highlighted by the response of FEPI.

The report completed by the DG SANCO underlined an overall positive reaction from the stakeholders. *'Respondents saw an EU dimension to the challenges facing them. Furthermore, the majority believed that at least some EU action would be useful. Indeed, only 2.5% of respondents were against any action, mostly because they considered health workforce issues to be within the exclusive remit of individual Member States. A further 8% of respondents made their support subject to clear EU added value.'*

It is very interesting to note that many of the points raised by the response of FEPI to the public consultation are included into the document, highlighting the

efficiency of our lobbying and the need to multiply such debates with representatives from the European Institutions.

The following points of the European Commission's document are directly related to the ones raised by FEPI:

- a) Continuous Professional Development (CPD): In its position paper, FEPI was encouraging all EU Member-States to set up a CPD system and to exchange best practice as to the implementation of such national systems, in order to assure patients that healthcare professionals are up-to-date with current practices and regularly receive further training. The report of the DG SANCO calls for the *'Importance of access to high quality Continuing Professional Development: suggestion of a European quality standard for CPD and the creation of an EU personal record of CPD'*. The report also points out that *'the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) was underlined by over 70% of respondents. Academia, regulators, nurses' organisations and patients were some of the groups most in favor of this action. Some respondents even implied that "Continuing Professional Development' should be obligatory in all Member-States'*. In a more general view, the report underlines that the big majority of respondents considered training as one of their top priorities, *'the question of training and continuing professional training was high on the list of issues about which stakeholder groups hold strong views. The most supported actions referred to continuing professional development, language training and return to work training. There are calls for social 21 funds/structural funds to be better targeted, in order to provide support for training of health workers. This would be in line with the guidelines for the Commission in 2009-2014, which suggest that mapping the skills and competences needed for the health systems of the future will be important'*.

- b) Sharing of Best Practice and Information Exchange: FEPI has called for extending exchanges to contain inter-professional dialogue at the European level, including resolutions to exchange information about the fitness to practice status of healthcare professionals, especially in light of increasing professional and patient mobility. In its report, the European Commission points out that *'EU action on training in general was welcomed by 80% of responses, questioned by 10% and the remainder indicated that action on this topic should be limited to encouraging the sharing of good practices'*.

- c) Ageing population and care of the elderly: In its response to the public consultation, FEPI was calling for the development of high level principles on the care for older people in the EU. This issue is not directly tackled by the European Commission's report, but, and it is maybe even more interesting for us, it is included within the political guidelines proposed by Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, highlighting that '*services to children and the elderly, to be a driver for the creation of many thousands of jobs and one of the routes to economic recovery*'.
- d) Other points raised by FEPI, such as managing migration and the mobility within the EU are tackled more generally, probably because they were not considered of high priority by the majority of stakeholders .
- e) The report also shows in its annexes, the main points raised by the 14 regulators that have responded to the consultation, (amongst others: An Board Altranais, the NMC, the CHRE, FEPI, HPCB, French Regulatory Body of Midwives, the HPC). These points are:
- i. usefulness of extended roles for health workers
 - ii. freedom of movement of professionals might endanger patient safety.
 - iii. Importance of regulation in healthcare and of legal-clarity on responsibilities within the EU, when cross-border services.
 - iv. need for exchange of information in the EU about specific professionals
 - v. there were doubts on whether circular migration was feasible
 - vi. importance of independent practitioners in the health sector

Our feeling is that the European Commission's DG SANCO has made a comprehensive document, embracing many of the points of FEPI and of the majority of the respondents.

This can only encourage us to pursue with our good contacts at the European Commission, in order to be up-to-date with the possible coming legislative developments of this issue.

President Carrigy, the Executive Board and all of us in the Brussels office would like to wish you and your beloved-ones the Merriest of Holidays and a 2010 full of energy, health, happiness and love

