



# Directorate-General for Health & Consumers

**The EU health professional  
workforce**

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## The importance of the EU Health Workforce

- Developing effective and efficient health systems, with the capacity to improve health and prevent disease, depends on having a high-quality, efficient health workforce with the right skills – throughout the EU Member States



## The importance of the EU Health Workforce (2)

- Health workers in the widest sense constitute 1:10 of the EU workforce
- Approximately 70% of healthcare budgets are allocated to salaries and other employment-related charges



# Challenges facing sustainability of workforce

- A number of challenges facing our health systems: ageing population/ageing workforce/threats to health
- Ever-rising expectations; new treatments and new technology
- Need to improve equity of access



## Regional disparities in the EU

- Free movement within the EU poses challenge for some specialties and some regions within MS
- Shortages in one part of EU impacts elsewhere creating regional disparities
- Our workforce planning mechanisms are hampered by not knowing full picture



# Lack of comparable data

- Europe-wide information and robust data on the composition of the workforce is lacking – why they move - where they move to – whether/ when they return
- Projects to overcome this in train, including OECD research but will take time. Some data may be too resource intensive for MS to collect
- EC has been supporting OECD work on Health workforce and international migration, aiming at providing an overview of the healthcare workforce (including long-term care), by place of birth and training and to analyze migration flows (and related training and recruiting policies)



## Common Problems: Shared Solutions?

- Mobility within regions and between MS is a reality: robust HR strategies are needed to address the effects
- There is much to be gained by promoting cooperation and common approaches
- Time to start aiming for EU self-sufficiency?



## Effects of global health worker migration: what is EU doing?

- As we know, the health workforce crisis in developing countries is one of major barriers to MDG progress – ethical issues
- EU Programme for Action 2007 – 2013 – call for, amongst others, ethical recruitment guidelines for EU
- Addressing EU workforce problems must not have negative impact outside EU
- Commitment that Blue card highly qualified immigration proposal will respect ethical recruitment principles



## What can we do at the EU level to improve our own workforce capacity?

- Shared evidence base for collective response to common challenges – improving monitoring and statistical system through available funding (EU, OECD, WHO);
- Sharing good practice - learning from each others' experience
- Guidance/guidelines
- Recommendation
- Supporting networks of stakeholders – promoting cooperation
- Support from the structural funds - training and re-skilling of health professionals, in particular for under-developed regions.



## What next?

- The Commission's Annual Policy Strategy for 2008 provides for a Green Paper on health professionals which is planned to be published in November 2008
- There will be a consultation period until the end of March 2009

## What next? (2)

- Results of consultation exercise will be analysed.
- Responses will feed into consideration of what EU can do to support Member States in tackling these challenges