

UEMO STATEMENT

UEMO STATEMENT ON THE ADOPTION OF THE BUCHAREST DECLARATION

The European Union of General Practitioners and Family Physicians (UEMO) welcomes the newly adopted Bucharest Declaration on the health and care workforce following the High-Level Regional meeting on Health and Care Workforce in Europe: time to act on March 22 and 23.

A concept that is not new, but which should be implemented once and for all, is that the scientific evidence at an international level indicates that healthcare systems based on effective primary healthcare, with highly trained professionals working in the community, deliver better and more cost-effective care, compared to systems with a weak focus on primary care.

General Practitioners and Family Physicians are the backbones of European healthcare systems by diagnosing and providing treatment to the majority of acute and chronic conditions while maintaining continuity of care for prolonged periods of time to individuals and their families across all age groups. It is an extremely difficult and challenging job requiring a vast repertoire of advanced clinical and communication skills but it is also a very rewarding profession where there are countless opportunities for continuous improvement.

General Practice / Family Medicine requires between three and five years of postgraduate training depending on the country, and it is recognized as a speciality in most European countries.

However, it remains challenging to recruit and retain General Practitioners and Family Physicians throughout Europe. It is necessary that decision-makers realize once and for all that it will only be possible to overcome this problem when the important role that GPs and family physicians play in the healthcare system is properly acknowledged, valued and respected. Moreover, GPs and family physicians usually work under great pressure and strain, and it is essential that they are able to work in safe and well-resourced settings, and have enough time to attend to each patient. Otherwise, the risk of burnout and disillusionment with the profession is very real.



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Moreover, the odds of successful recruitment and retention will be higher through a mixture of both financial and non-financial incentives. While proper remuneration and working conditions remain essential, it is increasingly important to offer flexible working arrangements that promote work-life balance and conciliation with family life or other non-clinical roles as well as opportunities for professional development.

According to the Inverse Care Law, the availability of good medical care tends to vary inversely with the need for it in the population served. Therefore, if General Practice/Family Medicine is not attractive to young doctors, the need for medical care will increase considerably and its availability and quality will decrease significantly.

The UEMO will continue to advocate for adequate policies that will effectively help mitigate the current shortage of GPs and Family Physicians in Europe.