

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) represents national medical associations across Europe. We are committed to contributing the medical profession's point of view to EU and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.

CPME Statement on the EU Return Regulation

In line with the joint open letter on 'Care without Fear: health workers reject the EU Deportation Regulation ("Return Regulation")¹, the Standing Committee of European Doctors re-iterates its serious concern regarding the negotiating positions adopted by the Council of the EU and the European Parliament on the proposed EU Return Regulation.

CPME underlines that investigative measures for preparing or ensuring a deportation must never come into conflict with principle of medical neutrality. We strongly oppose restrictions on access to healthcare, obligations to healthcare professionals to report individuals without legal status, or any measure which permits immigration enforcement in healthcare settings.

CPME underlines that every person is entitled, without discrimination, to appropriate medical care². Doctors are bound by ethical and deontological obligations to provide care to all patients according to medical need and without discrimination. Doctors have a moral and professional duty to provide the same level of care to all patients, regardless of administrative status, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, skin colour, nationality, political affiliation, religion, or social standing.³

CPME condemns any political or judicial action which undermines medical ethics and patients' fundamental right to health.⁴ The duty to treat according to medical need is fundamental to the medical profession and intrinsic to the patient-doctor relationship. Requiring doctors to prioritise immigration enforcement considerations over patient care is incompatible with their professional and ethical obligations. Doctors cannot be compelled to participate in any punitive or judicial action against migrants, including refugees, asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and or displaced persons, or to withhold medically necessary treatment, or to administer any non-medically justified diagnostic measure or treatment, such

¹ [Care without fear: health workers reject the EU Deportation Regulation \("Return Regulation"\)](#) (2026)

² [WMA Declaration of Lisbon on the Rights of the Patient](#) (2005)

³ [CPME Statement on the Medical Treatment of Refugees](#) (2019)

⁴ [CPME Statement on criminalization of acts of solidarity](#) (2020)

as exams to assess age, or sedatives to facilitate easy deportation from the country or relocation.⁵

CPME calls on EU institutions and Member States to ensure that ongoing negotiations on the EU Return Regulation fully safeguard access to healthcare, medical confidentiality, and the professional independence of healthcare professionals. Healthcare settings must not be used for immigration enforcement purposes, nor should healthcare professionals be placed under obligations incompatible with their ethical and deontological duties. Access to adequate healthcare services must be guaranteed in all settings, including reception facilities, hotspot areas, and detention or return centers. Health services for all refugees, asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and or displaced persons, even after having been denied permission to stay in the country, must be free of charge.

⁵ [WMA Statement on Medical Care for Migrants](#) (2026)