



On 15 November 2014, the CPME Board adopted the 'CPME Statement on Ebola Virus Disease and Pandemic Preparedness' (CPME 2014/079 FINAL)

CPME Statement on Ebola Virus Disease and Pandemic Preparedness

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.¹

The increasing interconnectedness of the world and the growth of global air traffic present new challenges for public health and physicians in Europe and other parts of the world. This aspect of globalisation becomes particularly apparent during pandemics, with the spread of infectious diseases across countries and continents. In recent years, the potential danger posed by pandemics has been made clear by the spread of the SARS and MERS viruses, as well as various influenza pandemics. The current outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in West Africa, in contrast to previous more localised outbreaks, shows the vulnerability of health systems throughout the world.

Europe must play a central role in the fight against the spread of Ebola. Its geographical position, with numerous flight paths to the affected regions and correspondingly large numbers of travellers, means that Europe is faced with specific challenges with respect to the spread of Ebola. In Europe, a cross-border approach to fighting the pandemic is essential. This is a task which the institutions of the European Union (EU) are particularly well-placed to coordinate. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is an EU agency expressly tasked with the identification, evaluation, and communication of current and future dangers presented by infectious diseases.

The physicians of Europe call upon national governments, European institutions and the international community to immediately strengthen their commitment and support in response to the current outbreak, as well as to develop medium and long term strategies in order to be able to deal effectively with future pandemics:

- CPME commends the dedication of those healthcare professionals who are already working in the affected regions, and encourages physicians who have the necessary experience and training as well as appropriate language skills to support the fight against Ebola on the ground in the affected countries. Interested physicians are encouraged to contact the relevant aid agencies (see attached).

¹CPME is registered in the Transparency Register with the ID number 9276943405-41. More information about CPME's activities can be found under www.cpme.eu



- Physicians and other healthcare professionals who travel to affected countries to support humanitarian efforts against Ebola require special protection before, during and after their deployment.
 - Prior to their departure they must receive assurances that their positions will be safeguarded, and also be guaranteed the best possible liability and life insurance coverage. Aid workers must be provided with appropriate preparatory training.
 - During their deployment, physicians and other health care professionals must be provided with the best possible equipment, particularly protective clothing. This applies to all healthcare personnel working in Ebola affected areas.
 - Physicians and other healthcare professionals must be guaranteed the best quality medical care and repatriation to their home country if they fall ill.
 - After deployment in an area affected by the Ebola outbreak sufficient follow-up care, explicitly including a psychological component, must be provided.

- In the future, it must be ensured that the international community and international aid agencies are in a position to take measures which will enable faster and more effective international intervention in such crises. A coordinated, global strategy should be developed which includes the following points:
 - Institutions which are charged with monitoring infectious diseases and developing responses must be provided with sufficient resources to appropriately fulfil their role.
 - Healthcare professionals must be provided with training on how to protect themselves when dealing with infected patients.
 - Populations must be provided with reliable information to raise awareness about pandemic preparedness.
 - Research into drug development, including vaccinations as well as medicines for the treatment of those infected during a pandemic, must be supported through the provision of the necessary financial resources and innovation-friendly policies in line with the principles of the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki.
 - Effective strategies for carrying out vaccination programmes are required.
 - Healthcare systems must be strengthened in order to prevent the spread of disease during pandemics.

CPME calls on the European Commission, national and local governments to develop a European strategy on establishing and financing centres and networks for the treatment of patients with EVD and to commission the ECDC to work out the strategy and to put it into action.