



CPME/AD/Brd/251008/097/EN

At the CPME Board Meeting, in London, United Kingdom, on 25 October 2008, CPME adopted the following document : “The global and European shortage of physicians: proposals for European strategy” (referring to CPME 2008/097 Final EN)

The global and European shortage of physicians: proposals for European strategy

The right of all people to enjoy the highest attainable standard of prevention and healthcare is central to sustaining good level of people’s life. It needs an adequate healthcare workforce strategy and the means to manage this; the workforce represents the most important investment in healthcare systems. It needs both increased funding and improved infrastructure. Many countries all over the world and also in Europe have actual and projected shortages of physicians. Smaller EU countries are especially vulnerable to sudden changes in migratory patterns. Further loss of physicians mainly through migration is very likely to result in reduced availability of health services and decrease of health safety of the countries’ populations.

Working experience in foreign countries broadens the horizon of doctors and provides them with valuable new perspectives and insight into other health systems. Migrating physicians can also make an important contribution to their destination countries. However, aggressive cross-boarder recruitment strategies can have detrimental effects on the sustainability of the healthcare workforce in the target country. The EU Member States should therefore, by cooperating and communicating, strive to keep a balance between the added value of internationally qualified physicians and the sustainability of the individual national health systems. Treaties of friendship between countries that face intensive migration of doctors can provide an effective tool to support migration in a way that puts no party at a disadvantage.

A way forward is for the CPME to work to develop a common European strategy based on following principles:

- All countries should strive to have the capacity to train a sufficient number of physicians as required by their population and health service demands.
- A European policy should be developed to assist all member states to develop sufficient local training capacity, so that no country has to rely unduly on external recruitment.
- All countries should ensure their physicians professional autonomy, good working conditions and proper remuneration.
- High income countries should assist lower income countries to expand their capacity to train and retain physicians to enable them to become self-sufficient



- All countries must ensure that their physicians are educated, funded and supported to meet the healthcare needs of their populations.
- Recruitment campaigns directed to countries with a vulnerable healthcare system should be avoided.
- Free movement of physicians as one of the fundamental European principles and one of the basic individual human rights must be guaranteed.

CPME calls European Union's institutions and national governments to act along these principles. CPME calls all national medical organizations to support them in their countries.