



18<sup>th</sup> European Patients' Rights Day

European Patients' Rights & Cross-Border Healthcare  
Member of the European Parliament Interest Group

**The key role of HCPs for a healthier Europe**

Combining the protection of patients' rights with skills shortage, medical desertification and job strain

**20 March 2024 | 16:30 – 18:30 CET**  
Room ASP 3H1 | European Parliament, Brussels  
Hosted by MEP **Brando Benifei** (S&D)

With the support of: Johnson & Johnson, Boehringer Ingelheim, VIATRIS, HEALTH EUROPA, TrendSanita, Institute of Medical Research and Health Sciences

Media partners: ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP NETWORK, CITTADINANZA ATTIVA

## NEXT STEPS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By Mariano Votta

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### Final remarks

When it comes to public health, in the run-up to the elections, the European institutions are called upon to make a great effort of coherence and credibility towards the European citizens to keep moving closer to a European Health Union despite having recently cut 1 billion euros for the EU4Health programme<sup>1</sup> earmarked for it, as set out in the budget review recently approved by the Union.

How can European institutions contribute to making the health services of member states more resilient if funds for crisis preparedness programmes for national health systems are cut?

Where the Member States can find the resources to approach the shortage of health personnel in terms of workforce shortages and skills gaps? In Italy, for example,

<sup>1</sup> 1 billion euros from the EU4Health programme (20% of the programme) to other EU policies in the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the current EU long-term budget of the European Union. <https://eurohealthnet.eu/publication/joint-statement-concerns-over-eu4health-cuts/>

according to data recently published by the Gimbe Foundation<sup>2</sup>, there is a shortage of more than 3,100 general practitioners, with the most critical situations in the large northern regions.

## Next steps

- 1) In the coming weeks and months we'll be committed to follow the pre-electoral debate trying to include the issue of the health of the European citizens.
- 2) The main suggestions coming from the today's initiative, including our proposal<sup>3</sup>, will be published and send – among the others – to:
  - the European Commission DG EMPL<sup>4</sup> before the closing event of the European Year of Skills, planned on the 30 of April<sup>5</sup>.
  - the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union, committed to develop a strategy to strengthen the EU health and care workforce<sup>6</sup>.
  - the newly elected MEPs, in the form of an open letter, together with the invitation to support the MEPs Interest Group “European Patients' Rights and Cross-border Healthcare” for its third mandate.
- 3) Meantime, we'll continue to celebrate the European Patients' Rights Day which its official date is and remains the 18 April. Due to the upcoming European elections in 2024, the European celebration at the EU Parliament has been anticipated today, while across Europe we are supporting several PAGs engaged to celebrate it on 18 of April (every year we collect hundreds of local initiatives), as well as in Italy my organization

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rainews.it/articoli/2024/03/allarme-per-i-medici-di-famiglia-gimbe-ne-mancano-oltre-3100-sanita-5194461e-3212-47ef-b8d2-d553651afa40.html>

<sup>3</sup> The establishment of a Public Health Committee, within the new European Parliament; alternatively, the reinstatement of the public health subcommittee, established in Feb.2023 within the ENVI Committee. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/sant/about>

<sup>4</sup> Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

<sup>5</sup> [https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/european-year-skills-what-comes-next\\_en#agenda-of-the-european-year-of-skills---what-comes-next](https://year-of-skills.europa.eu/european-year-skills-what-comes-next_en#agenda-of-the-european-year-of-skills---what-comes-next)

<sup>6</sup> <https://documenti.camera.it/Leg19/Dossier/Pdf/AT027.Pdf>

will lead the National celebration with an event in Rome on the 18 of April at the European Commission's Representation in Italy and the participation of the MEP Beatrice Covassi.

- 4) And as always we are collecting messages, so, feel free to send us a short video message or a statement that highlights what European Patients' Rights Day means for you. With your authorization we will publish them on our social channels.

### **Acknowledgements**

And now, as usual, I have my long list of acknowledgements.

Thanks again to all of you for the participation, thanks to the hosting MEP Brando Benifei, thanks Mariam and thanks to all the speakers.

I would like to mention that this European policy dialogue event was made possible by the unconditional support of Johnson & Johnson, Boehringer Ingelheim, Viatrix that I want to thank.

Thank you also to our three media partners: Health Europa, TrendSanità-Policy and Procurement in HealthCare, and the peer-reviewed journal “Archives of Medical Research and Health Sciences” (ISSN: 2994-6379).

Many thanks as always to all colleagues who worked on this initiative, in particular Daniela, who is present here, and Bianca, the project manager of the EPRD2024.

As usual, all the presentations delivered today will soon be published on our website and widespread through our monthly newsletter.

Well, before to say hello, I take the opportunity to invite all you tomorrow again here at the EU Parliament (Room SPINELLI 1G369) when, from 9.00 to 11.00, the Mission Board on Vaccination in Europe<sup>7</sup> (of which my organization is part) will be launching its

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<sup>7</sup> MBVE is a multi-stakeholder thought-leadership group composed of multi-disciplinary academic experts, HCPs and public health professionals, civil society organisations, patient groups, and Vaccines Europe. <https://missionvaccination.eu/>

Consensus Report outlining ambitious targets for strengthening immunisation systems in Europe, including the key role of HCPs in a healthier Europe<sup>8</sup>, perfectly in line with the theme of this year's European Patients' Rights Day.

With the hope to see you tomorrow, I wish you a good continuation of the day. Arrivederci.

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<sup>8</sup> For example:

- recommendation 2.3 focuses on strengthening HCP education and training on vaccination and communication skills (both as part of their educational curriculum and post-qualification);
- recommendation 3.2 focuses on expanding vaccination services beyond traditional health care settings (e.g. in workplaces, schools, and community pharmacists). That entails an important role for both occupational health physicians AND pharmacists.

To know more: <https://missionvaccination.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/240318-MBVE-Consensus-Report-DIGITAL.pdf>