

EN
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Answer given by Ms Kyriakides
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.10.2024)

Health and social care workforce shortages are an important challenge. According to Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union¹, Member States are responsible for the management of health services, which includes ensuring sufficient availability of health workforce. As per Article 153 (4), the design and management of social protection systems, including long-term care (LTC), remain fundamentally a responsibility of Member States.

The action plan to tackle labour and skills shortages² calls for actions at all levels. The Commission supports Member States through a Joint Action on health workforce planning³, actions on skills development: BeWell⁴ and training projects⁵; and an action addressing shortages of nurses⁶. The Cohesion Policy Funds and the Recovery and Resilience Facility can support complementary, country-specific actions. The Commission's Healthcare Systems Performance Assessment Expert Group will work with Member States on staffing level solutions in healthcare⁷.

To help Member States address labour shortages in LTC, the Commission, under the European Care Strategy, proposed a Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality LTC⁸, set up a European social dialogue committee for social services, and supported a skills partnership in LTC.

The Commission supports Member States in attracting talent from outside the EU⁹. Talent Partnerships with five countries provide mutually beneficial frameworks to facilitate labour mobility, combined with investment in the educational and training systems to transform the risk of brain drain into brain gain. Sectors are selected jointly by participating Member States and non-EU countries and can include health and LTC.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=en>

² Commission sets out actions to tackle labour and skills shortages
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10790>

³ EU4Health Programme: <https://www.agenas.gov.it/ricerca-e-sviluppo/ricerca-internazionale/personale-sanitario-ri/heroes-health-workforce-to-meet-health-challenges>

⁴ Erasmus+ programme: <https://bewell-project.eu/>

⁵ EU4Health programme: https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/2022-eu4health-work-programme_en; AMR EDUCare <https://www.amreducecare.eu/>; e-Hospital4Future <https://eh4future.eu/>; GESEA Educational Programme <https://gesea.eu/>; DigiCanTrain <https://digicantrain.turkuamk.fi/contact-us/>; DDS-MAP <https://ddsmap.easpd.eu/>; TRANSITION <https://ehma.org/projects/transition/>; EHMA <https://hpass.healthworkforce.eu/>

⁶ EU4Health programme: https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/2024-eu4health-work-programme_en

⁷ https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-systems-performance-assessment_en#:~:text=The%20Expert%20Group%20supports%20tailored%20activities%20in%20countries

⁸ COM(2022)441 final.

⁹ European Commission adopts Skills and Talent Mobility Package: https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-adopts-skills-and-talent-mobility-package_en