



**ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS DES HÔPITAUX
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SENIOR HOSPITAL PHYSICIANS
EUROPÄISCHE VEREINIGUNG DER LEITENDEN KRANKENHAUSÄRZTE
EUROPESE VERENIGING VAN STAFARTSEN
DEN EUROPÆISKE OVERLÆGEFORENING
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ ΝΟΣΟΚΟΜΕΙΑΚΩΝ ΙΑΤΡΩΝ ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΤΩΝ
ASSOCIAZIONE EUROPEA DEI MEDICI OSPEDALIERI
DEN EUROPEISKE OVERLEGEFORENING
ASSOCIAÇÃO EUROPEIA DOS MÉDICOS HOSPITALARES
ASOCIACIÓN EUROPEA DE MÉDICOS DE HOSPITALES
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ΕΒΡΟΠΕΪΣΚΑ ΑΣΟΪΙΑΪΙΑ ΗΑ ΣΤΑΡΣΗΤΕ ΒΟΛΗΝΗΧΝΗ ΛΕΚΑΡΗ
ASOCIATIA EUROPEANA A MEDICILOR DIN SPITALE**

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In periods of economic and social difficulties, there is a particular need to reinforce the availability of good quality medical care for all patients in Europe in order to safeguard adequate medical treatment also for those who can no longer afford it due to economic hardship. This is especially relevant in light of an increasing burden of "out of pocket" payments. Certain groups such as workers, who see their retirement age delayed, are in need of special attention. Safeguarding access to medical care is also important for the maintenance of economic productivity of society in general. Shortages of staff and reduced funding already negatively affect quality of care and safety and will become even more significant in near future if proper remedies are not applied.

On April 18 2012, the Commission adopted a Communication "Towards a job rich recovery" which sets out a range of measures to encourage employment and strengthen economic growth in Europe. It also identifies healthcare as one of three key sectors with a high employment potential.

However, the economic crisis induced some member states to reduce resources available to their National Health Services by reductions of the public health expenditure, the number of hospital beds and employees, the salaries, access to technologies. These measures are aimed at saving public money, but at the same time costs for sick citizens increase and level of care is reduced.

This harsh reality does also affect practicing health professionals, who are blamed for failures of the healthcare system and are not able to meet expectations of their patients. Instead of contributing to job rich recovery also healthcare contributes to unemployment. Shortages of medical professional staff will be very difficult to correct, particularly in view of European demography.

Maintaining an adequate supply and quality of healthcare services under severe budget constraints is thus a key issue to be addressed by policy makers.

The best way for rationalising expenditures in health care is to assure high quality of services. This requires appropriate structures and organization, as well as good working conditions for the health care workers. Quality assurance is based on three points of evaluation: structure, process and result. It is based not only on the professional qualifications, but equally depends on the structure and the process. If these are not adequate, even the highest level of professional competence cannot assure the quality of the system.

These medical organisations believe that each European citizen deserves and has the right to receive adequate care, particularly in times of hardship and distress, and that inequality in access to healthcare have to be reduced. Tendency to reduce health expenditures seen in some countries in order to save money is unacceptable.

These medical organisations call upon European and National institutions to assure that all the European citizens receive the best possible healthcare and that availability of healthcare professionals, hospital beds and healthcare structures, access to adequate technology and to medical services without undue delays are not allowed to deteriorate below a standard acceptable in European Union.

Patients' safety and quality of care must not be compromised even in times of economic crisis. The European Medical Organisations emphasise the importance of quality healthcare and declare preparedness of the medical profession to define standards for structures and processes that are required to assure delivery of such care.