



MINISTRY OF HEALTH



World Health
Organization

European Region

High-level Regional Meeting on Health and Care Workforce in Europe: time to act

22–23 MARCH 2023, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

SCOPE AND PURPOSE



Background

The need to build a robust, fit-for-purpose, well supported and sustainable health and care workforce has been elevated as a top priority in many countries in the WHO European Region in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several critical elements of workforce development and sustainability have been repeatedly highlighted, including their mental health and well-being, the vital role of safe and enabling working environments and health and care workforce shortages, especially in rural areas.

The recently released WHO Regional Office for Europe regional report *Health and care workforce in Europe: time to act*¹ shed further light on the imminent challenges facing the European health and care workforce. Among these is the rapidly ageing medical workforce in Europe, warranting the need for immediate action to ensure the future health-care needs of European populations are met. The problem of the ageing workforce is further compounded by the low production of graduates in many countries in the Region, which, in some case, is insufficient to replace imminent losses due to retirement. At the same time, excessive working hours, high workloads and the rise of mental health conditions among young professionals have led to large numbers leaving the profession, putting quality of care and future health workforce supply at further risk.

To effectively address these challenges, the regional report put forward 10 priority action points to ensure a whole-system approach to health and care workforce development and planning, from better aligned education to more targeted financial investment. Although many of the problems countries face are similar, the severity differs greatly. Context-specific solutions are necessary with the involvement of all key stakeholders, including ministries of health, education and labour, professional associations, and academic and technical experts.

Regional meeting

To advance health and care workforce priorities as laid out in the newly launched regional report, the WHO Regional Office for Europe is convening a regional meeting in Bucharest, Romania on 22–23 March 2023.

The meeting will bring together a diverse group of key stakeholders working in the area of health and care workforce, including representatives of ministries of health, technical and academic experts, and multilateral partners. The focus of the meeting will be to discuss core high-level regional health and care workforce priorities² and identify concrete actions for countries to advance their health and care workforce goals, including:

1. health and care workforce retention, with an emphasis on working conditions
2. retention in rural, remote and underserved areas
3. protecting the mental health and well-being of health and care workers
4. investing in health and care workforce development
5. health and care workforce planning.



1 Health and care workforce in Europe: time to act. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2022 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/362379>, accessed 10 March 2023).

2 See full programme enclosed.

In addition, a series of technical sessions will be organized to allow for more in-depth discussions and exchanges on specific topics such as migration and education and training.

Specific meeting objectives include:

- adopting the Bucharest Declaration on Health and Care Workforce, urging political action to strengthen the health and care workforce in the Region;
- discussing the main priority areas put forward in the regional report and identifying regional, subregional and country-specific areas for action;
- discussing and identifying intersectoral mechanisms of collaboration between education, labour finance and health to ensure system-wide sustainable approaches to health and care workforce planning;
- proposing key messages to take forward for presentation at relevant high-level fora on the health and care workforce; and
- conducting a regional consultation on the first draft of the working documents to be presented at the health and care workforce session during the 73rd session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe.

Target audience

The regional meeting is aimed at senior-level officials in ministries of health with strategic and technical responsibility for health and care workforce policies, including health and care workforce planning, design and implementation. In addition, chief medical officers and government chief nursing and midwifery officers will be invited to participate, as will academic and technical experts from associations, nongovernmental organizations and academic and multilateral agencies involved in health and care workforce planning.

Format

The meeting will take place in a face-to-face format with a possibility of online participation.

Languages of the meeting

The meeting will be held in English with simultaneous interpretation in English and Russian in the main panel and selected parallel technical sessions. Preparatory documents will be available in English and Russian.



КАБИНЕТ

Лечебной
физкультуры



**World Health Organization
Regional Office for Europe**

UN City, Marmorvej 51

DK-2100, Copenhagen Ø, Denmark

Tel: +45 45 33 70 00

Fax: +45 45 33 70 01

Email: eurocontact@who.int

Website: www.who.int/europe

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