



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 15 May 2007**

**7189/07**

**DEVGEN 67  
RELEX 273  
SAN 77  
ACP 74**

**NOTE**

---

from : General Secretariat  
on : 15 May 2007

---

No. prev. doc. : 7173/07

---

Subject : European Programme for Action to tackle the critical shortage of health workers in developing countries (2007-2013)  
- Conclusions of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States Meeting within the Council

---

At its meeting on 14 May 2007, the General Affairs and External Relations Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, adopted the Conclusions set out in the Annex to this note.

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE  
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING  
WITHIN THE COUNCIL**

**on**

**A European Programme for Action to tackle the critical shortage of health workers in  
developing countries (2007–2013)**

1. The Council recognizes the important role that the European Union has to play in the global response to the crisis in human resources for health and welcomes the European Programme for Action to Tackle the Critical Shortage of Health Workers in Developing Countries (2007–2013) presented by the European Commission as a comprehensive, coherent and large scale response to the crisis in human resources at country, regional and global levels.
2. The Council highlights the importance of policy dialogue with partner countries and strengthening country capacity to integrate human resources for health in poverty reduction and social governance strategies. The Council urges support to be provided to help establish, manage, monitor and evaluate human resource development strategies as part of the national health system, while engaging civil society and private sector in the national response with a view of ensuring national ownership. The Council underlines the need for greater EU support for the capacity development of public administration including human resources management training, the implementation of civil service reform, and the promotion of decent work and salary and non-salary incentives as set out in the European Programme for Action.

3. The Council recognizes that adequate financial resources are needed to ensure sustainable solutions to the human resource crisis in the wider context of health sector financing in developing countries. The Council also recalls the Member States' Commitment of May 2005 (Member States undertake to achieve the 0.7% ODA / GNI target by 2015 whilst those which have achieved that target commit themselves to remain above that target; Member States which joined the EU after 2002 will strive to increase by 2015 their ODA/GNI to 0.33%), as well as the commitment to promote long-term predictable financing mechanisms to increase the fiscal space available for health investment, including more predictable and result focussed budget support, in dialogue with multilateral donors and international financial institutions.
4. The Council recognizes the need for greater global effectiveness of the international response to the human resources for health crisis, and requests the Commission and the Member States to enhance coordination of their agencies and their technical assistance to increase harmonization, to strengthen alignment with the national health sectors and financing systems of the partner countries and to champion dialogue with other key donors.
5. The Council recognizes the need to tackle the human resources for health problems in the context of a pro-poor and equitable national health system strengthening, so as to develop comprehensive and sustainable national human resources for health strategies.
6. The Council calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the full consideration of the critical shortage of health workers in their health programming with developing countries.

7. Recognizing the critical shortage of health workers and the need for action in developing countries in all regions, the Council highlights the priority to be given to action in Africa, including: strengthening the African Union (AU) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to share lessons and hold their member states to account on steps to address the human resources crisis in the context of regional markets and economic migration, supporting the efforts made by the WHO in creating a regional observatory, training resources, networks and research. The Council reaffirms the commitment made in December 2006 to focus on Investing in People when implementing the EU-Africa Strategy in 2007.
8. The Council welcomes the commitment in the European Programme of Action to include a gender perspective in all its actions, including gender equality in health service provision and career advancement, as well as alleviation of the community-based burden of care that is faced predominantly by women and girls.
9. The Council recognizes the critical importance of integrating an HIV/AIDS perspective into the national human resources for health development strategy. The Council calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure adequate links of HIV/AIDS-related strategies and mechanisms on human resources with the overall national response.
10. The Council underlines the need to address human resources needs in post-conflict and fragile states, including in humanitarian programming, the importance of avoiding further weakening of existing government structures.
11. The Council welcomes ongoing work of the Commission and the Member States to review and discuss internal EU health workforce capacity development including the work of the High Level Group on Health Services and Medical Care and its Working Group on Health Professionals. The Council encourages the development of a set of principles to guide recruitment of health workers within the Union and recruitment from third countries to

minimise the negative and maximise the positive impact on developing countries, also taking into account the analysis set out in the World Health Report 2006. The Council also encourages the development of a better information system on human resources for health, including statistics, and further joint work on domestic workforce planning and workforce distribution. The Council also reaffirms that the EU Action Plan will consider how to take forward the development and implementation of an EU Code of Conduct for ethical recruitment of health workers, drawing upon existing Member States' best practices.

12. The Council encourages the Commission and Member States to explore possibilities for the expansion of medical education and health personnel training, within the existing framework of national legislations, to better reflect demand and to facilitate appropriate global supply of human resources for health. The Council further encourages the support of regulatory agencies in order to build their capacity to ensure quality standards and support professional bodies in order to build their capacity for a stronger policy dialogue with government policymakers.
13. In order to alleviate the negative effects of the permanent brain drain in the health sector and its impact on the overall development of the countries affected and to ensure progress towards MDG 1 and the health-related MDGs 4, 5, and 6, the Council calls on the Commission to address health workforce migration within the context of the commitment to explore ways and means to facilitate 'circular and temporary migration' by June 2007 (as set out in the European Council Conclusions of December 2006).
14. The Council calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop a joint implementation plan and a framework to monitor national and collective EU action on human resources, as set out in the European Programme for Action, while taking full account of these Conclusions, and requests the Commission to report by December 2007 on the progress of national and collective EU action towards solving the human resources for health crisis.

## REFERENCES:

1. European Consensus on Development Approved by the Council and the Commission on 22 November 2005 and by the European Parliament on 17 December 2005, and signed by the Presidents of the three Institutions on 20 December 2005 (OJ L 200, 22.7.2006, p.11)
2. EU Strategy for Africa Council Conclusions of 22 November 2005 endorsed by the European Council on 16 December 2005 Brussels European Council of 15-16 December 2005 (doc. 14831/05)
3. Conclusions from the Brussels European Council of 15/16 December 2005 on a "Global Approach to Migration: Priority Actions Focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean" (doc. 15914/1/05 REV 1)
4. Council Conclusions of November 2004 on a coherent European Policy Framework for external action to confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, 23 November 2004 (doc. 15158/04)
5. Council Conclusions of May 2005 on the Millennium Development Goals: EU Contribution to the Review of the MDGs at the UN 2005 High Level Event (doc. 9266/05)
6. Council Conclusions on European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action, 24 May 2005 (doc. 9278/05)
7. Council Conclusions of 21 November 2005 on Migration and External Relations (doc. 14769/05)

8. Council Conclusions on the EU Strategy for Action on the Crisis in Human Resources for Health in Developing Countries, 11 April 2006, which adopted an EU Strategy for Action and an EU Consensus Statement of Commitment on Human Resources for Health  
(doc. 8359/06 + COR 1)
  9. Council Conclusions of 1 December 2006 on Decent Work for All, 1 December 2006  
(doc. 15496/06 + COR 1)
  10. Commission Communication on a European Programme for Action to tackle the critical shortage of health workers in developing countries (2007–2013), 21 December 2006  
(doc. 17118/06 - COM(2006) 870 final)
  11. Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results, and Mutual Accountability, OECD DAC High Level Forum, 2 March 2005
  12. Conclusions of the 3rd High Level Forum on Health MDG Meeting held in Paris on 14 and 15 November 2005
  13. Resolution on enhancing capacity building in global public health adopted at the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly (A60/L.26)
  14. The 57th and 59th World Health Assembly (Resolutions WHA 57.19 and WHA 59.23)
  15. World Health Report, 2006
-