

European Health Parliament Closing Session

29 June 2016, Brussels, Belgium

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On Wednesday 29 June, EHMA attended the 2016 Closing Session of the European Health Parliament, held at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The [European Health Parliament](#) (EHP) is a platform of 55 young professionals from across Europe, who are working together over 6 months, with the objective of delivering high-level policy-oriented recommendations to positively influence and change the future of healthcare in Europe.

The Closing Session was mainly dedicated to the presentation of the abovementioned recommendations, produced by the five committees in which the EHP is structured. The Committees focus on topical healthcare issues, namely: digital skills for health professionals, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), climate change & healthcare, prevention and self-care, migration and health challenges.

EU Commissioner for Health Vytenis Andriukaitis, together with EU Parliament ENVI Chair MEP Giovanni La Via, Belgian Health Minister Maggie de Block and EU Parliament Vice-President Mairead McGuinness, introduced the Closing Plenary Session, highlighting how the young generation of healthcare professional is needed to move the EU health policy forward.

Commissioner Andriukaitis, moreover, identified the three current and future key European Healthcare issues, eHealth and new skills, antimicrobial resistance and migration, and stressed how they are all connected to the '3Ps' that underpin public health at EU Level: Promotion, Prevention and Protection.

Hereafter a brief summary of the single sessions and of the EHP Committees Recommendations, with a particular focus on the report "Digital skills for health professional". The Storify of EHMA's live-tweeting at the EHP Plenary is also available [here](#).

Digital skills for health professionals

Fadi Dalati, Chair of the European Health Parliament Committee on Digital Skills for Health Professionals, presented its Committee's 2016 recommendations, mainly based on an extensive survey covering over 200 health professional and their experience with digital health solutions.

The Recommendations highlight how, even though eHealth and mHealth (Digital Healthcare) are a core component of the healthcare future, a large majority of the health professional have no sufficient training and competences in digital health technology.

F. Dalati - *"Digital healthcare is the future but it is fundamental to develop the right skills within the health workforce"*

To tackle this issue, the Committee proposed the following actions:

- Encouraging the diffusion of digital healthcare solutions (e.g. through funding/reimbursement schemes)

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- Enhanced digital education for the health workforce through:
 - Tailored training programs
 - Joint Action on digital skills for Health Professionals
 - Updated clinical guidelines regarding mHealth and eHealth
 - Healthcare professionals more involved in developing mHealth and eHealth solutions

[MEP B. Benifei](#) (S&D), who endorsed the Committee's proposal, said that:

- Policy makers must take into account the professional views for a fully implementable digital healthcare at European level;
- Particular attention to Digital training in the healthcare sector within the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#), launched on 20 June 2016;
- Fully consciousness about digital healthcare for both professionals and patients (empowerment) is necessary to create trust and to improve the quality of Healthcare

Prof. Hendrick Van Der Poel, European School of Urology, highlighted the importance of tailored training programs for health professionals and the fact that simple digital 'education' is not enough: more hands-on training is needed to fully develop valid competences.

The report was also endorsed by [MEP Michal Boni](#) (EPP).

Antimicrobial resistance

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is the resistance of bacteria and other microbes to previously effective drugs, resulting mainly from the misuse and overuse of antimicrobial drugs and antibiotic pollution in the environment.

The report on Antimicrobial Resistance, introduced by EHP Committee Chair Tímea Rezi-Kató, focuses on four key areas:

- Making cross-border healthcare more visible, e.g. through setting up a "European Health Semester", a platform for sharing best practice and country-specific recommendations on cross-border health threats;
- AMR prevention through GP practice intervention and education;
- Implementation of manufacturing standards to prevent pharmaceutical pollution that leads to AMR;
- Enlarged access, especially for developing countries, to innovative tools and treatments against AMR.

The report was endorsed by [MEP Miroslav Mikolasik](#) (EPP), [MEP Annie Schreijer-Pierik](#) (EPP), [MEP Karin Kadenback](#) (S&D)

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Climate change and healthcare

The work of the EHP Climate Change & Healthcare Committee, chaired by Delphine Roulland, concentrates on the excessive human consumption of meat, which is associated with the high levels of greenhouse gas emission produced by the livestock industries in Europe.

To tackle this issue, the Committee elaborated four recommendations:

- Developing awareness campaigns across Europe;
- Rethinking National legislations on food advertising and setting up an initiative to assess meat advertising in Europe;
- Improving the existing labelling scheme for meat products, including water & carbon footprint, together with the use of antibiotics and hormones in the animal;
- Setting up financial support towards better legislation on meat production & consumption, especially leveraging the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).

The report was endorsed by [MEP Lucy Anderson](#) (S&D) and [MEP Tibor Szanyi](#) (S&D).

Prevention and self-care

Eleni Antoniadou, EHP President and Chair of the EHP Committee on Prevention and Self-Care, presented the EHP report on this topic, which outlines the benefits of prevention and self-care measures on the EU Healthcare systems affordability and sustainability, but also highlight the existence of a number of barriers that still prevent the full exploitation of this potential.

For instance, as [MEP Nicola Caputo](#) (S&D) highlighted, only the 3 % of Health expenditure are dedicated to prevention and self-care, while 97% is spent on treatments.

To address this issue, the report recommends three cluster of actions to be taken at EU, Member State and community level.

At European Level, the EHP calls upon:

- The European Commission to enhance the assessment of the performance of healthcare system and to create a European Joint Action focused on self-care and prevention;
- The European Parliament to create an Interest Group on prevention and self-care and to promote a unified EU strategy on this topic;
- The upcoming EU Precedencies to include recommendations around self-care and prevention and to encourage education initiatives.

At Member States level, the EHP asks Member States to increase collaborative efforts across ministers in supporting a “prevention in all policies” approach, also developing policies and incentives for prevention, increasing at the same time their budget allocation for related public health activities.

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Finally, at community level, the EHP calls upon:

- investors to take part in funds for the implementation of self-care and preventive policies;
- public-private partnership, patients and healthcare professional association to prioritise education on this topic and advocate self-care to prevent avoidable chronic diseases.

The report was endorsed by [MEP Nicola Caputo](#) (S&D), [MEP José Inácio Faria](#) (ALDE) and [MEP Alojz Peterle](#) (EPP).

Migration and health challenges

In the context of the current migration crisis, the actual needs of migrants arriving in Europe must be thoroughly discussed. Among these needs, access to healthcare is crucial and, currently, providing access is often left to volunteer-based organizations that normally operate in humanitarian crises.

The report, presented by EHP Committee Chair Viviana Mucci, argues that providing primary healthcare to migrants with a focus on mental health, independently of migrants' legal status, is legally grounded and economically efficient.

Two are the recommendations made by the Committee:

- An innovative cost-sharing scheme to ease access for undocumented migrants to national health systems.
- Enhance Member States' and EU commitment to increase their support to combat mental health issues among migrants, e.g. through community-level programmes and EU Commission's increased coordination and support for best practices of migrants' mental health.

The report was endorsed by [MEP Mihai Turcanu](#) (EPP), [MEP Anna Záborská](#) (EPP), [MEP Jean Lambert](#) (Greens) and [MEP Elena Gentile](#) (S&D).

Please click on the links below to access the full versions of the reports:

- [Digital skills for health professionals](#)
- [Antimicrobial Resistance](#)
- [Climate change and healthcare](#)
- [Prevention and self-care](#)
- [Migration and health challenges](#)

European Health Parliament website: www.healthparliament.eu. For more information on this topic, please contact [Michele Calabrò](#) at EHMA.