



**EFN Report on  
 EPHA Representation in the WHO High Level meeting  
 "Health in times of global economic crisis: implications for  
 the WHO European Region"**

<b>A</b>	<p><b>HISTORY</b></p> <p>EPHA General Secretary asked EFN to represent EPHA in the WHO High Level meeting "<i>Health in times of global economic crisis: implications for the WHO European Region</i>", taking place in Oslo, Norway (1-2/04/2009) in which national governments discussed how the health sector can help mitigate negative health and social impacts and counter the economic downturn.</p>
<b>B</b>	<p><b>REPORT BASED ON DRAFTED RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Health authorities across Europe are concerned that the present economic system does not distribute wealth with solidarity and equity, and hinders improvement of health.</li> <li>2. The poorer countries are the most vulnerable when it comes to health loss. Solidarity is essential.</li> <li>3. Investment in health improves wealth. Health investments create jobs. Protecting health budgets throughout the economic downturn is therefore essential.</li> <li>4. Every Minister is a health Minister. Promote health in all policies. The initiative of the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs is within this context very important: bringing together Foreign Ministers interested in Health.</li> <li>5. If spending is to be reduced, it is important to:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Protect spending on public health measures;</li> <li>b. Invest in primary health care as it contributes to economic development;</li> <li>c. Reduce spending on the least cost effective services - These will be normally found among the most high tech and high cost services in hospitals;</li> <li>d. Delay investment plans for high cost facilities and promote the use of generic drugs.</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. We need basic health service coverage, but what are these basic health services? A global convention is therefore needed. Important to learn from experience (e.g. Finland, Iceland, Estonia).</li> <li>7. More money for Health and more health for the money invested. It is important to improve quality of services by reforming the health system urgently. As such, the crisis is a policy window opportunity.</li> <li>8. Use the opportunity of the crisis to strengthen universal access to social protection programmes and to health services.</li> <li>9. Structural measures are needed by raising tax on tobacco, alcohol, sugar, salt and airline tickets (used for solidarity fund).</li> <li>10. Focus on the shortage of the health care workforce and increase quality of education of health professionals and local health providers. It is important to continue the development of a WHO code for ethical recruitment.</li> </ol> <p><b>REMARKS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Very interesting key note speakers, such as Alan Maynard, Martin McKee and Mary Robinson. Their message was very clear: think out of the health box.</li> <li>2. Member States expressed a strong need for support from WHO to take further issues at home. WHO has the tools and now it is time to use, implement them. The tools referred to relate to monitoring and evaluation of the health and health services. It is important to measure patient outcomes, measuring the impact of our actions.</li> </ol>

3. We cannot allow ourselves of not acting: strong leadership is needed. Nevertheless, during the discussion it never came into the mind of the governments to involve NGOs as part of the solution. Governments said “we are thinking about”, but never “we are thinking with”.
4. Although the Tallinn Charter was central in the discussion, it was not clear how governments are going to implement the Charter. EPHA representative made in his address reference to the Tallinn charter sentence on developing “a stakeholder approach”
5. Finally EPHA representative highlighted the importance of a gender approach to health policies. Most panel discussion consisted purely out of men, which was inappropriate.
6. From a nursing perspective, it became clear that nurses and nursing is named as the professional group where investments are urgently needed - meaning investment in primary health care, focus on skill mix and skill needs and recruitment & retention of nurses.
7. The candidates for the September election of WHO Europe Director General used this opportunity to recruit votes.

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**C RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Available on: [http://www.euro.who.int/healthsystems/econcrisis/20090316\\_1](http://www.euro.who.int/healthsystems/econcrisis/20090316_1)