

The European Commission has published a study on the feasibility of EU level action to help Member States assess, forecast and plan their health workforce needs.

The project, undertaken by Matrix Insight Ltd, in collaboration with the Centre for Workforce Intelligence (CfWI), draws upon 34 country profiles, 12 case studies and a focus discussion with an expert panel. It was published on the Commission website on 10 July 2012.

The Commission are aware of a European-wide gap in the supply of health workers and hope Joint Action by Member States can contribute to a solution and the future sustainability of health systems.

The early study finds great variability in workforce supply challenges in Europe, stating “Countries such as Bulgaria, the Netherlands and the UK already witness shortages whilst countries such as Denmark, France or Germany currently have no shortage of health workforce overall, but have a problem with geographic misdistribution as they lack appropriate supply particularly in rural areas. Other countries such as Spain have to cope with professional misdistribution and are in need of additional staff in certain specialisms whilst reporting surpluses in others.”

The study also finds “substantial” variation in the health workforce data collection methods across European countries. For example data on active workforce and full time equivalents are collected in only a few countries, and the data only tends to cover those professionals working in the public sector. The researchers note to a lack of data on the flows of human resources for health in Europe. “Data regarding the transfer to and from the health care sector from other sectors (professional flow data) are difficult to obtain.”

The study concludes with a range of recommendations for countries in improving health workforce data collection methodologies including: the stated purpose behind data collection, the definition of professional roles and the reliable comparability of data collected.

More information [here](#) ^[1]

20 July 2012

Links

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/health/workforce/key_documents/study_2012/index_en.htm