



EPSU-HOSPEEM Statement on the Proposal for a Directive on the Application of Patients' Rights in Cross-border Healthcare

(Brussels, 8 December 2009) Under the Swedish EU presidency, it was not possible to reach political agreement on the *Proposal for a Directive on the Application of Patients' Rights in Cross-border Healthcare* (1 December).

As previously stated in the joint declaration on health services (December 2007), EPSU and HOSPEEM, the recognised European social partners in the health care sector, have continuously urged governments not to introduce any measures that could threaten the principles of universality, accessibility, affordability and quality in the provision of healthcare.

EPSU and HOSPEEM have great confidence that the upcoming Spanish EU Presidency will recognise that the central principles in this debate are the legal basis being based on the values of universal healthcare provision and not just the internal market, and the right of national healthcare providers to organise their healthcare provision through prior authorisation.

EPSU and HOSPEEM urge the Spanish Presidency to re-assess this draft directive in light of the new public service provisions of the Lisbon Treaty (Article 14 and the Public Service Protocol). These provisions underline the fact that healthcare should be organised on the basis of common European social values including solidarity, social justice and social cohesion. They should also follow the principles of general interest, like universality, accessibility, proximity and quality.

To maintain and improve the level of services, Member states should maintain their autonomy to plan services and organize resources at local, regional and national levels. This includes the possibility to manage the concrete delivery of services to patients by effective planning and organizing. Without proper coordination, a high rate of cross-border patient mobility can seriously harm the possibilities for governments and authorities to organize the care in a financially sustainable way. It could also endanger equal access to health care. Authorities therefore should be encouraged to coordinate both the incoming and outgoing patient movements by setting up transparent and fair procedures for cross-border care including referral systems, authorization procedures and financial compensation schemes.

EPSU and HOSPEEM call on governments, and in particular the incoming Spanish EU presidency, to take these concerns into account in their further deliberations of this issue.

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HOSPEEM is the European Hospital and Healthcare Employers Association. It regroups at European level national, regional and local employers' associations operating in the hospital and health care sector and delivering services of general interest, in order to coordinate their views and actions with regard to a sector and a market in constant evolution. HOSPEEM is an individual member of CEEP.

EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC. 8 million public service workers from over 200 trade unions are members. They organise workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration.