

# Call for Action on Patient Safety



**Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), Association of Italian Chiropractors (AIC), Council of European Dentists (CED), Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC), European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC), European Federation for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (EFCAM), European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN), Hellenic Cancer Federation (ELLOK), European Medical Students' Association (EMSA), European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF), European Patients' Forum (EPF), European Pharmaceutical Students' Association (EPSA), European Society for Quality in Healthcare (ESQH), European Society of Radiology (ESR), European Association Working for Carers (Eurocarers), Health First Europe (HFE), European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE), Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU), European Union of Private Hospitals (UEHP), and Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe are joining forces to call for continuation of EU Patient Safety Policy and to highlight the importance of the EU Expert Group on Patient Safety and Quality of Care.**

This initiative of the EU Patient Safety Thematic Network within the EU Health Policy Forum is based on the [2005 Declaration of Luxembourg](#), followed by the [2009 Council Recommendation on Patient Safety](#), and the [2014 Council conclusions](#) which recognise a need for continued and sustainable collaboration at EU level on patient safety and quality of care. Moreover, the implementation of the 2009 Council Recommendation requires continued attention. The initiative wishes to build on the sustainability plan of the EU Patient Safety and Quality of Care Joint Action (PaSQ). Our firm belief, supported by evidence, is that Member States' work in this area is crucial and their engagement is best implemented via the EU Expert Group on Patient Safety and Quality of Care.

### **Core principles**

Every European citizen deserves the best possible healthcare. Therefore, patient safety and quality of care must remain high on the EU political agenda.

All health professionals have a vital role in protecting the patient and providing high quality health and social care, which results in effective health and social care ecosystems, organised in an integrated context of care. Therefore, patient safety and quality of care are a core part of all education programmes and require concrete support for research and innovation to upscale existing good practices between the EU Member States. When upscaling, ensuring people-centredness must remain as a key principle and practice in any new design and innovation, with the appropriate involvement of all healthcare professionals and frontline professionals in particular in EU policy developments. There is no safety and quality without engaging the frontline.

Within this context, the emphasis on patient empowerment is crucial and an essential pre-condition for better quality of care. The Council conclusions recognise this and call for efforts by Member States to exchange cross-country knowledge and tools to foster patient empowerment and involvement. A modern health and social care ecosystem supporting patient empowerment also requires continuity of care for all European patients in need of it. To that end, an excellent dialogue and collaboration between the patients and the health and social care professionals is crucial. Thus bringing back care to the community with a highly qualified healthcare and social care workforce is a *conditio sine qua non*. Professionals need to be in regular and sustainable direct contact with patients. They also need to be appropriately trained in person-centred skills, knowledge and attitudes. Only in that way can they provide the appropriate support and health coaching which can make a significant contribution to supporting citizens' empowerment and better health outcomes.

## **Call for action**

We welcome the EU Patient Safety Thematic Network within the EU Health Policy Forum and urge for further action in this policy area as patients deserve the highest quality of care possible and attainable. In view of the high priority patient safety enjoys with the European Commission, EU Member States and European citizens, we suggest that the EU Expert Group on Patient Safety and Quality of Care continues its work supporting the delivery of a sustainable way forward in this area by December 2016, as asked for in the Council conclusions on Patient Safety in 2014.

Furthermore, we propose options building on the sustainability plan of the PaSQ Joint Action:

- Sharing and exchange of information on a voluntary basis and participating to knowledge transfer
- Supporting the continuation of the PaSQ exchange mechanism
- Voluntary participation in implementation exercise(s)
- Voluntary participation in developing tools for implementation
- Exchange of cross-country knowledge and tools towards fostering patient empowerment and involvement in the healthcare system, with the involvement of patient organisations

These options of collaboration and involvement in the key functions for the PaSQ Permanent Network are voluntary and can vary according to the interest of participating Member States from simple sharing and exchanging of information to the participation to implementation tools development.