



PRESS RELEASE

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CPME calls for non-discriminatory access to health care

In Europe today, access to health care for all is not a reality. Undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and their children are often left behind. In order to help to make a change, The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) supports the European Declaration of health professionals towards non-discriminatory access to healthcare.

“Doctors have the ethical responsibility to care for patients. It is crucial that they - as well as health institutions- remain free to provide adequate health care to those who need it, irrespective of the legal status of the patient”, CPME President Dr Radziwill said today.

In 2008, CPME already adopted a position paper calling for Access to health care for undocumented migrants ([CPME 2008/109 FINAL](#)). CPME strongly opposed any attempt of authorities to criminalise the provision of health care services to undocumented migrants, as well as any restrictions as to the type and/or extent of healthcare undocumented migrants can receive.

In June 2010, CPME adopted a position paper on Health inequalities ([CPME 2010/014 FINAL](#)) that looks at the wide disparities in access to health care between and within EU Member States, as well as violations of the right to health. Given the complexity of the issue and local specificities, CPME has identified priority areas for action both on EU level and on the level of the National Medical Associations.

To support the European Declaration on non-discriminatory access to health care, please sign the declaration on the [petition website](#).

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For more information about CPME, consult our website: <http://www.cpme.eu>

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) is the representative organisation of European doctors through its full members, the most representative National Medical Associations of 27 countries in Europe. CPME works closely together with its other members, four National Medical Associations from associated and observer countries as well as with specialized European medical associations.

CPME aims to promote the highest standards of medical training and medical practice in order to achieve the highest quality of health care for all patients in Europe. CPME is also concerned with the promotion of public health, the relationship between patients and doctors and the free movement of doctors within the European Union.

EUROPEAN DECLARATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Towards non-discriminatory access to health care

Undocumented migrants face many problems in access to health care in a large majority of European Union member states. These problems are due to laws restricting or eliminating health coverage. They are also due to the complexity of the health system but they also exist because of the fear of being arrested or denounced, because of being refused health care, or because of other discriminations.

This situation goes against our professional ethics which reminds us that every person is entitled without discrimination to appropriate health care. Health professionals' ethics highlight that "*physicians and other persons or bodies involved in the provision of health care have a joint responsibility to recognize and uphold the rights of the patient*".^{*} Whenever legislation, government action or any other administration or institution denies patients these rights, health professionals should pursue appropriate means to assure or to restore them.

In view of this situation,

WE, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS,

Reassert our commitment to our professional ethics that asks us to care for all patients without discrimination. We ask to be able to perform our professional responsibilities with the utmost respect to our professional ethics.

As a consequence, we :

- 1** **Ask that** health professionals should be able to determine in a given situation what health care should be provided to their patient, without any restrictions linked to their residency status (as to the type and/or extent of health care treatment).
- 2** **Ask that** the provision of health care to undocumented migrants be paid for by public funds when these people cannot afford to pay. We also ask that organizational impediments for health professionals and health institutions to provide health care to undocumented migrants be taken away.
- 3** **Remind** that health professionals and health institutions are free to provide services to undocumented migrants. We refuse to denounce any undocumented migrants to (immigration) authorities. We also refuse any criminalisation of providing health care services to undocumented migrants.
- 4** **Highlight** the need that both health professionals and undocumented migrants be fully informed all existing possibilities to provide health care to undocumented migrants.