ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP NETWORK
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From the first civic survey on health personnel in Italy to the "EU call to action" to the European Commission to urgently address the health workforce crisis

Mariano Votta
Cittadinanzattiva / Active Citizenship Network

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Cittadinanzattiva & Active Citizenship Network

Cittadinanzattiva

- Italian NGO founded in 1978
- More than 35.000 volunteers, 270 local assemblies and 84 local centres
- Mission: promote active participation of citizens and protection of their rights

MINISTERO DELLA SALUTE

Alla Cittadinanzattiva
Tribunale per i diritti del Malato

La medaglia d'oro
Al Merito della Sanità Pubblica

In 2007 we have been awarded a **gold medal** for our committment to improving the public health system in Italy

Active Citizenship Network

- The European branch of Cittadinanzattiva, established in 2001
- One of the most widespread network, with more the 100 civic, patients and user organisations
- Promotes the European citizens' point of view in all public policies areas, focusing on healthcare, consumers and corporate social responsibility issues.

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The survey (I)

From 6 to 25 April 2023

Cittadinanzattiva's Civic Evaluation Agency in collaboration with the Federazione Nazionale Ordini Professioni Infermieristiche (FNOPI) and the Federazione Nazionale Ordini dei Tecnici sanitari di radiologia medica e delle Professioni sanitarie tecniche, della riabilitazione e della prevenzione (FNO TSRM e PSTRP).

How **10,000** workers, representing **20 different health professions** live their professional condition

Nurses, Pediatric Nurses, Radiographers, Audiometrists, Neurophysiopathology technician, Biomedical Laborator Technicians, Orthopedic Technician, Hearing Aid Technician, Technician of Cardiocirculatory Pathophysiology and Cardiovascular Perfusion, Dental Hygienists, Dieticians, Speech Therapists, Podologists, Orthoptist - Ophthalmology Assistant, Occupational Therapist, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Technician Neuro and Psychomotor Therapist of Developmental Age, Professional Educators, Health Assistants, Environment and Workplace Protection Technicians

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The survey (II)

Survey Instrument: Online questionnaire with 23 primarily closed-ended questions

Survey objectives:

1. Assess the **perceived climate** among public and private healthcare workers.
2. Identify **critical aspects** within various working areas.
3. Understand **motivations driving or hindering personnel** in the National Health Service (NHS).

Survey focus areas:

1. Workplace well-being
2. Political and social recognition
3. Professional empowerment and growth
4. Working conditions and equipment
5. Gratification and job satisfaction
6. Communication and participation
7. Principles and values of the Italian care system
8. Attractiveness of the NHS

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Well-being at work

Work-Life Balance:

33% **struggle to balance** work and private life.
35.3% lack flexible working hours.
Yet, 48.8% manage to preserve their private life.

Workload and Support:

41.2% find workloads **inadequate**.
36.3% consider work rhythms **unsustainable**.

36.2% feel **supported by colleagues**.
42.2% feel little or **no support from superiors**.

Security Concerns:

25.7% feel unprotected at work & 24.8% find security measures inadequate.

46.5% are unsure/**not knows if a system exists to prevent violence** in their workplace.

Mental Health Support:

65.9% desire a psychological counseling point in the workplace.

Victims of aggression in the last 3 years:

31.6% faced **aggression from users**.
20.7% faced aggression from superiors.
18.4% faced aggression from colleagues.

Presence:

Low percentages report frequent absences due to illness/accident (3.1%), difficulty in staying focused (7%), and burn-out (13.3%).

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Recognition and appreciation

RECOGNISABILITY: being identified as distinct from other professionals working in healthcare

- 75.4% feel **little or no recognition** from politics.
- 63.7% feel unrecognized by institutions.
- 57.6% lack recognition from their own workplaces.

- On average, **more recognition from citizens/carers** (44.7%) and other **professionals** (46.6%).

APPRECIATION: for one's professional profile and role

- Appreciated **by citizens/patients** (57.9%).

- Feel little or no appreciation from politics (73.5%), institutions (64.6%), and their own workplaces(60.8%).

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Professional empowerment and growth

Consistency and Satisfaction:

- 53.7% feel their work **aligns with their professional profile.**
- 46.6% express satisfaction with their career.

Work Environment:

- **Little** stimulation for **personal fulfillment** (42.6%).
- Limited encouragement for **professional growth** (48.5%).

Training and Skills:

- Adequate basic training (42%).
- **Good preparation** in theory (45.5%) and practice (41.9%).
- Training in soft skills (36.9%).

Continuing Education:

- **Dissatisfaction with opportunities** (48.3%) and CME credits (53.1%).
- Limited access to courses aligned with professional needs (34.4%).
- Satisfaction with **course quality** (50.8%).

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Working conditions and equipment

Work Distribution:

- **Insufficient** equity in workload distribution (42.3%).
- Uneven distribution of responsibilities (44.1%).

Workplace Conditions:

- Poor satisfaction with **workplace characteristics** (36.3%).
- Adequate **resources and tools** (**only** 30%).
- Opportunities for skill recognition and improvement (**only** 21.6%).

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Remuneration and career advancement

Pay dissatisfaction:

- 60% find the salary-to-commitment ratio **inadequate**.
- 65% believe salary does **not match responsibilities**.

Career advancement:

- 67.6% see **no real career advancement** opportunities.
- 69.3% believe advancement **isn't merit-based**.

Diversity and equality:

- Positive promotion of **gender equality and cultural diversity** (54.6%).

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Involvement and participation

Company/Institution Objectives:

- 60.4% feel **uninvolved in defining objectives and strategies**.
- 47.3% cannot express opinions on work organization decisions.
- 68% feel **their opinions aren't considered** in company policies.

Training and Education Plans:

- 65.4% feel little to **no involvement in defining training and education plans**.

Impact on Health Policies:

- 77.5% **feel their opinions aren't reflected in health policies** at their **workplace**.
- 81.5% feel unheard **at regional level and national level**.

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Staying vs leaving: the voice of those concerned

Reasons for leaving NHS:

- Compensation and contractual concerns.
- Lack of recognition and growth opportunities.
- Work-related stress and workload.
- Negative work environment and relationships.
- Management issues and resistance to change.
- Concerns about system trends and depersonalization.
- Lack of involvement in decision-making.
- Deviation from NHS values and patient focus.
- Negative feelings towards the profession.
- Desire for change and new motivations.

Reasons for staying in NHS:

- Stability and security.
- Commitment to public health.
- Contribution to system improvement.
- Passion and belief in the profession.
- Sense of responsibility and duty.
- Positive work relationships with colleagues.
- Opportunities for professional growth.
- Personal realization and satisfaction.
- Work-life balance and convenience.
- Commitment to quality service.

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Conclusions

- **Recognition of crisis:** the uneven workload, complex skill requirements, emotional involvement, and high responsibilities are significant sources of stress. This stress can negatively affect the quality of life, personal well-being, and professional performance.
- **Focus on priorities:** fair compensation for their skills and responsibilities, greater social and institutional recognition; investing in continuous education & training, support, proximity, and innovative technologies & communication tools are highlighted as crucial priorities. These actions can enhance the resilience and effectiveness of healthcare services, ensuring better patient care and trust in the system.
- **Professional Commitment**: despite challenges, healthcare professionals remain committed to the values of the National Health Service (SSN) and the concept of health as a public good. Their dedication to addressing social and healthcare needs demonstrates their intrinsic motivation to contribute to the well-being of society.
- **Call for political action**: there's a clear call for a multi-faceted approach that prioritizes investment, political commitment, and a patient-centered perspective within a framework of social responsibility and equity. Only through concerted efforts at both national and European levels can these challenges be effectively tackled and the integrity of healthcare systems upheld.

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“The key role of HCPs for a healthier Europe. Combining the protection of patients' rights with skills shortage, medical desertification and job strain”

(Read more - video interviews – photo gallery – dedicated Newsletter)

“European civil society unites to strengthen health workforce and citizens’ right to health” (I)

Eu Call to Action” to the European Commission to Urgently Address the Health Workforce Crisis

Dec 2024: 42 civic, patient and health professional organisations, supported by 5 MEPs from the two largest political groups in the European Parliament (EPP and S&D), have addressed an open letter to the newly elected European Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare, Olivér Várhelyi. This joint effort, led by Cittadinanzattiva - Active Citizenship Network and RPP Group, aims to underline the urgency of tackling Europe’s health workforce crisis to protect citizens’ right to health.

“Supporting health workforce to strengthen patients’ rights in the EU”. With this message, the #CareforAll2024 campaign was launched in the second half of 2024, featuring representatives of 13 associations from 10 countries as testimonials.

For the video message, click here

“European civil society unites to strengthen health workforce and citizens’ right to health” (II)

Watch the collective video message and the ones by MEP Ondřej Dostál (NI, Czech Republic), MEP Loucas Fourlas (EPP, Cyprus), MEP András Kulja (EPP, Hungary), MEP Tomislav Sokol (EPP, Croatia)

MEP András Kulja (EPP, Hungary) - #CareforAll 2024

MEP Ondřej Dostál (NA, Czech Republic) - #CareforAll 2024

MEP Tomislav Sokol (EPP, Croatia) - #CareforAll 2024

MEP Loucas Fourlas (EPP, Cyprus) - #CareforAll 2024

MEP Ondřej Dostál (NI, Czechia) and MEP Brando Benifei (S&D, Italy) signing the open letter

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International peer-reviewed publications

Applied Sciences Research Periodicals
July 2023, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 13-19

Medical desertification and National Recovery and Resilience Plan in Italy: Focus on Inner Areas

Mariano Votta, Maria Vitale, Bianca Ferraiolo, and Maria Eugenia Morreale

ADITUM
Enrich your Research
International Journal of Medical Case Reports and Medical Research
Short Communication

New EU Institutions are called to tackle the health workforce crisis, the main pre-condition for a greater protection of patients' rights across Europe.

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Applied Sciences Research Periodicals
June 2023, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 01-17

Health Needs in Italy, Between Medical Desertification and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. Province Where You Go, Shortage of Health Personnel That You Find

Mariano Votta, Maria Vitale, Bianca Ferraiolo, and Maria Eugenia Morreale

ClinicSearch
Clinics in Nursing
Mariano Votta *
Open Access
Research Article

The Key Role of HCPs for a Healthier Europe at the Core of the XVIII Edition of the European Patients' Rights Day

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Archives of
Medical Research and Health Sciences

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ISSN: 2994-6379

Research Article

First Civic Survey on Health Personnel in Italy. On the Front Line but in the Shadows: Behind the Scenes of the National Health Service

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MEDVIX PUBLICATIONS

Journal of Medical and Clinical Case Reports
Research Article | Open Access | ISSN 2997-6022 | Volume 01 | Issue 12

Call to Action to the European Commission to Urgently Address the Health Workforce Crisis and the Upskilling of Healthcare Professionals

Mariano Votta[1*], Bianca Ferraiolo[2], Kinga Wójtowicz[3], Luca Mario Comincioli[4]

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Achievement (I)

Press release

18-12-2024 - 12:41
20241218IPR26022

European Parliament

SANT: Parliament confirms standing committee for public health

After the adoption of Parliament's decision to create a standing committee on public health, Chair Adam Jarubas (EPP, Poland) made the following statement:

…. "taking into account citizen concerns and the results of the European elections"

"we must now live up to the high expectations of our citizens"

17 January 2025: Launch of the first EU action to address nurse shortages shows positive impact of European Health Union. The first EU action to support Member States in retaining and attracting nurses, with a budget of €1.3 million under the EU4Health programme. The action is established by the European Commission in partnership with WHO Europe. The action will involve activities across all EU Member States over a 36-month period, with particular focus given to those countries with significant health workforce challenges.

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Achievement (II)

Towards a standardized framework for patients' rights at the European level

We would like to congratulate the Polish institutions on the political value of their decision to include the topic of patients' rights in the programme of the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (Jan/June 2025), thus placing it at the centre of the European political agenda. As underlined in the recently published White Paper "Healthcare Policy Recommendations", the willingness to take concrete steps towards the official adoption of the European Charter of Patients' Rights represents a fundamental step. Read more

Open Access
Volume 8 Issue 2
Short Communication

Journal of Medical and Clinical Studies
ISSN: 2582-0869

PUBTEXTO

Towards a Standardised Framework of Patients' Rights across Europe

Votta M[a], Mc Mahon SA[b], Ilieva R[c], Zanetti JK[d], Hejzak R[e], Nieminen S[f], Jutila L[g], Samouilidis A[h], Vella C[i], Maes J[j], Grzesiak I[k], Kolodziej M[l], De Lima MTF[m], Fraga C[n], Valcea L[o] and Gunther P[p]

May 2025: third mandate of the MEPs Interest Group "European Patients' Rights & Cross-border Healthcare", a unicum of its kind

European Patients' Rights & Cross-Border Healthcare
Member of the European Parliament Interest Group

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Annals of Public Health & Epidemiology
Iris Publishers

Research Article
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The Successful Story of the MEPs Interest Group "European Patients' Rights & Cross-Border Healthcare"

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