



Dr Christiaan Keijzer presents at WMA General Assembly

## Dear colleagues

This edition follows the Board meeting held on 3 October, when we discussed preparations for the upcoming CPME meetings from 7–9 November. In October, I represented CPME at the WMA's General Assembly and presented how CPME contributes the medical profession's point of view to European health policy-making through pro-active cooperation. The meeting adopted the revised Declaration of Helsinki (see page 9).

Our Secretary General, Sarada Das, addressed the launch of a survey on the mental health and well-being of healthcare professionals, in collaboration with WHO/Europe (see page 7). She also attended the WHO/Europe Regional Committee meeting, where our ongoing engagement as a non-state actor was discussed (see page 7).

We invite you to read about this and much more in this month's edition.

**Dr Christiaan Keijzer**

CPME President



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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 3 OCTOBER 2024

## Finances

### Draft budget 2025

- ▶ The Board agreed to forward the draft 2025 budget to the General Assembly for decision.

### Request from Ukrainian Medical Association

- ▶ The UMA requested a waiver of membership fees for 2023 and 2024. The Board agreed to forward this request to the General Assembly for decision.

## Internal Affairs

### Election manual

- ▶ The Board took that nominations received will be added to the manual and shared with the membership. Nominations can be made until the day of the election.

### Rules of Procedure

- ▶ The Board agreed to forward the revised draft of the Rules of Procedure, including comments received from the legal advisers, to the General Assembly for decision.

### #DoctorsVoice campaign

- ▶ The Board took note of the concept of the #DoctorsVoice campaign and agreed that the Secretariat continues to work on finalising the first materials to launch online on 9 November.

## Policies

### World Mental Health Day Joint Statement

- ▶ The Board decided to endorse the joint statement of the European Mental Health Advocacy Platform, run by Mental Health Europe (MHE), asking the EU institutions and Member States to step up for mental health (see page 8).

Among its many calls, the statement asks the European Commission, as part of its strategy on mental health, to propose a legislative initiative on the management of psychosocial risks and well-being at work, with special attention to the health and care workforces.

### Invitation to join COST Action proposal on doctors' mental health

- ▶ The Board considered the topic of the potential future project important as it would focus on doctors' mental health. It proposed to ask the CPME rapporteur or a member to join the project's stakeholder group.

CPME was contacted by *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* (UAM) which is also a WHO Collaborating Centre for Mental Health Services Research and Training. They are preparing a proposal for a European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action network of researchers, innovators, and stakeholders called "Promote mental health and wellbeing among healthcare workers in Europe (care2care)".

### Council of Europe's guide on children's participation in health decisions

- ▶ The Board decided that CPME will take part in the review of the Council of Europe's child-friendly version of their Guide on children's participation in decisions concerning their health. The review will be carried out by Dr Katrín Fjeldsted, CPME Past President and Rapporteur on Patient Empowerment. The material is intended to be distributed also by healthcare professionals.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 3 OCTOBER 2024

## EMOs' Joint policy on the Health Workforce crisis

- ▶ The Board agreed to adopt the EMO's paper with a view to the discussion in the EMO's presidents meeting.

The Board noted that broad agreement was reached on the draft joint paper during the last working group meeting on 10 September. The draft paper has been disseminated to the respective executive councils of the European Medical Organisations. Pending the approval of the executive councils, the paper would then be foreseen for adoption at the meeting of the EMO presidents.

## Commercial Determinants of Health

- ▶ The Board took note of the drafting process of a new CPME policy on commercial determinants of health.

The WG on Healthy Living held an online meeting to discuss the feedback received from eight NMAs on 24 September. The revised draft will be presented for decision to the General Assembly in November.

## CPME guidelines on the transparency of relations between Doctors and Healthcare Industry

- ▶ The Board took note of the progress in the last WG on Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare Products meeting on 30 August.

The WG commented on "purpose of transfer" as one element to be included the minimum standards of reporting on transfers of value between doctors and the healthcare industry. Also, the WG feedback on the alignment of CPME guidelines with the UEMS/EACCME rules for accreditation of educational events was also addressed after consultation with UEMS/EACCME about their specific rules.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 3 OCTOBER 2024

## Deployment of AI

- ▶ The Board took note of the updates and amendments to the draft policy on the deployment of AI discussed during the WG Digital Health meeting on 2 October.

A political discussion where no consensus was yet reached was on whether doctors should choose (or not) the AI systems without suffering any repercussions in case of not using the system. This could be difficult to implement due to insurances impositions of specific use of an AI system.

## Quality of basic medical education

- ▶ The Board took note of the progress following the last meeting of the WG Professional Practice on 5 September.

## Invitation to join TEHDAS2 Advisory Board

- ▶ The Board agreed to participate in the TEHDAS2 Advisory Board and to nominate Sara Roda to represent CPME as the topic of activity related to the terms of reference of the WG Digital Health.

## Invitation to join RESVACC Project Advisory Board

- ▶ The Board decided not to nominate anyone to an advisory committee of a potential future project on developing a framework for resilient immunisation systems against vaccine confidence crises (RESVACC).

CPME was contacted by the Vaccine Confidence Project which is affiliated to the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the University of Antwerp.

## CPME joins WHO/Europe in launching first-of-its kind survey on mental health of health care professionals

CPME is supporting WHO/Europe in a project funded by the European Commission, to launch a first-of-its-kind survey on the mental health and well-being of healthcare professionals across the 27 EU countries, Iceland and Norway.

We would appreciate NMAs' support in making sure it reaches as many doctors as possible. The survey takes about 12 minutes to complete and it will run until 31 December 2024. It is anonymous and available in 25 languages. Please access it here: <https://healthworkers-survey.ccomsuam.org/>

This survey, the largest of its kind ever undertaken in Europe, aims to gather crucial data to better understand the challenges doctors and nurses face in their work environments. Our Secretary General, Sarada Das, addressed the launch event on 22 October, underscoring that the data obtained can lead to concrete action.

## CPME attended WHO/Europe Regional Committee

The annual meeting of WHO-Europe members from 28-31 October saw the re-appointment of Dr Hans Kluge as Regional Director for another 5-year term. The meeting included a dedicated session on the involvement of stakeholders, who as 'non-state actors' have in the past requested a more formal engagement with WHO/Europe. CPME has held non-state actor status since its introduction.

Member States also discussed One Health (page 14), adopted a new vision for resilient and sustainable health systems and action plans on "Preparedness 2.0 strategy" and Emergency Medical Teams.

In addition to attending the formal proceedings, CPME held bilateral meetings WHO officials to discuss topics of mutual interest and continue cooperation, especially with a view to informing CPME members of WHO/Europe's work at national level.

## **Civil society organisations urgently call for EU strategy on mental health**

On World Mental Health Day, European Doctors joined 32 other civil society organisations to call on Ursula von der Leyen to keep her word to step up the EU's work on preventive health, in particular for mental health. Re-elected European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has emphasised the urgent need to 'step up our work on preventive health, in particular for mental health'. She has placed a special focus on the mental health of children and young people, especially online, and promised actions to tackle what she calls 'the greatest challenge in this decade'. These promises build on commitments made over recent years by several EU institutions.

The [joint statement](#) welcomes the renewed ambition and calls on all stakeholders to work together to translate this ambition into concrete actions. Among its many calls, the joint statement asks the Commission, as part of its strategy on mental health, to propose a legislative initiative on the management of psychosocial risks and well-being at work, with special attention to the health and care workforces.

## **European doctors welcome the confirmation of revised EU air quality rules**

On 14 October, the Council of the EU formally [adopted](#) the revised EU Ambient Air Quality Directive, setting new air quality standards for pollutants to be reached by 2030, which are more closely aligned with WHO guidelines. EU member states will have two years to transpose it into national law. The evaluation and revision process of the directive started in 2018, and CPME adopted its position on the following year.

CPME President, Dr Christiaan Keijzer stated that "European doctors welcome the finalisation of the EU Air Quality Directive revision and look forward to working together for its most health protective implementation."



## European doctors' President addresses World Medical Association General Assembly

CPME President, Dr Christiaan Keijzer, addressed delegates on European doctor's activities at the World Medical Association (WMA) General Assembly in Helsinki (pictured on page 1). His presentation focused on how CPME contributes the medical profession's point of view to European health policy-making through pro-active cooperation.

A key outcome of the meeting was the revision of the Declaration of Helsinki, a statement of ethical principles for medical research involving human participants, to address contemporary bioethical challenges while retaining its core principles: informed consent, risk-benefit assessment, and respect for participants.

Incoming WMA President, Dr Ashok Philip of Malaysia, used his inaugural address to call upon physicians worldwide to continue contributing to healthcare policy development and health systems change. He focused on the necessity of the medical profession to stay actively engaged to ensure the best outcomes for patients and to safeguard professional autonomy.

## ECDC online event for European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2024

CPME is once again engaging with ECDC for the European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2024.

ECDC will host a digital event entitled "AMR is invisible, but its victims are not", aimed at raising awareness on the impact of antimicrobial resistance on people lives, keeping the patients at the centre of the discussion. It takes place on 18 November, 1:00PM – 3:30PM CET, and the registration link is here: <https://events.ringcentral.com/events/european-antibiotic-awareness-day-2024>

## FEATURE

## Member News

In this month's feature, we have screened members' website to provide links to latest news from NMAs.

### Austrian Medical Chamber

The [Austrian Medical Chamber](#) conducts a yearly medical training evaluation. In 2024, medical training got a higher rating compared to 2023, and has improved according to the data. Poor reports for evidence-based medicine and basic training were analysed. The Austrian Medical Chamber indicated an intention to intensify efforts to ensure availability of more training time for evidence-based medicine. In addition, a joint strategy with the universities and hospital operators is needed on how to continue with basic training.

### French Medical Council

The [French Medical Council](#) published the results of their [large-scale questionnaire](#) aimed at collecting precise data on doctor's security in the professional context. The report shows a 27% increase of violent acts towards doctors in 2023. General practitioners are the most vulnerable, representing 64% of declarations. However, a low rate of official reporting is observed: only 31% of doctors who reported violence to the Council have filed a formal complaint. The Council calls on public authorities to strengthen the protection of healthcare providers and strongly encourages doctors to report any incident to their department council.

### Irish Medical Organisation

The [Irish Medical Organisation](#) has on their website a "[Doctor health and Well-being Hub](#)". This Hub, shares mental health resources for Doctors, such as links to programs which offer confidential services to help with any mental health difficulties the individual might be encountering.

## FEATURE

## Norwegian Medical Association

The [Norwegian Medical Association](#) participated in a 2-week campaign in October, "[Make wise choices – together for a healthier healthcare service](#)". With twelve different health personnel associations taking part, the association shared various posts on social media, newsletters and on websites calling health professionals to reduce examinations and treatments which do not benefit the patient, and which in the worst case can cause harm.

## Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists

The [Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists](#) engaged in a broad media campaign "[I am a doctor, I am a human being](#)". The initiative consists of videos which show issues invisible at first glance in the medical profession. The campaign aims to show that doctors and patients are not on opposite sides. The videos highlight the fact that doctors also have difficulties relating to the existing system, and that they are human.

## MONITORING

## Political Outlook

### Detailed schedule of hearings of EU Commissioners–designate

The hearings are taking place in the European Parliament from 4 to 12 November, and Commissioner–designate for Health and Animal Welfare is scheduled for 6 November from 18:30.

### Commissioner–designate for Health and Animal Welfare, Olivér Várhelyi, answers Parliament’s written questions

The Commissioner–designate answered written questions prior to his oral hearing. He plans to complete the European Health Union, enhance health system resilience, and make the EU an “innovation powerhouse”, particularly in biotechnology and health data. He aims to address cybersecurity in hospitals and complete the Pharmaceutical Reform to balance innovation with accessibility and affordability of medicines. Várhelyi also mentions wanting to explore “further non-legislative actions” on access.

On his plans for the shortage of health professionals, he replied: "There is a particular challenge with shortages in the health workforce, seen across Member States and affecting many parts of the profession. An uneven distribution of health professionals is a challenge in at least half of Member States, resulting in the so-called ‘medical deserts’. This problem will only exacerbate with the expected rise in demand for healthcare. If confirmed, I will also support the work of the future Executive Vice–President for People, Skills and Preparedness and help to build a coherent framework for addressing long–term care workforce challenges." CPME has asked MEPs to follow up on this in the hearing with oral questions on the topic.

Várhelyi says he commits to integrating gender and youth perspectives into all policy areas. He plans to support various programmes, emphasising mental health and digital health services. He also pledges to maintain high ethical standards and transparency, ensuring regular and transparent engagement with the European Parliament.

## MONITORING

To strengthen healthcare systems, Várhelyi will focus on reducing health inequalities, and preventing medicine shortages through a Critical Medicines Act. He proposes considering “procurement measures to help to make demand more predictable, measures to maintain and strengthen Europe’s manufacturing capacity, developing strategic partnerships to diversify supply chains.”

He emphasises a comprehensive approach to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and supports incentives for developing new antimicrobials. Additionally, he plans to improve food labelling for healthier choices and sustainability, and reduce chemical pesticide use by promoting alternatives.

To boost the competitiveness of the health sector, he aims to support innovation in the pharmaceutical and medical device sectors and will propose a “ambitious” Biotech Act to enhance research and innovation in biotechnology. In his answers, he says “biotechnology, artificial intelligence and data from the European Health Data Space (EHDS) are of strategic importance for the EU’s long-term competitiveness.”. Várhelyi also advocates for a cross-cutting approach to health promotion and disease prevention, with a strong focus on mental health and implementing Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan.

## Commissioner-designate for Preparedness, Crisis Management, and Equality, Hadja Lahbib

The Commissioner-Designate emphasised the importance of enhancing the EU’s health preparedness and response capabilities through the Health Emergency Response Authority (HERA). She highlighted the need for a comprehensive strategy to support the availability of medical countermeasures, from early threat detection to production and rapid deployment. This strategy would include joint procurement and stockpiling to ensure readiness for public health emergencies.

Lahbib also stressed the importance of reducing the EU’s dependency on non-EU countries for critical medicines and ingredients, proposing a Critical Medicines Act to strengthen supply chain resilience. Lahbib committed to working closely with other Commissioners to develop a wide-ranging EU stockpiling strategy and ensure effective crisis management and response mechanisms. However, Lahbib stated that securing funding for health crisis planning may be challenging. She provided no clear stance on expanding HERA’s capacity or ensuring its long-term funding.

## MONITORING

## Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare

### Ever-increasing pharmaceutical expenditure trends

The European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP) and the Medicine Evaluation Committee (MEDEV) jointly developed a [report](#) on trends in ever-increasing pharmaceutical expenditure. The report mentions prioritising national and European health policies that promote evidence-based and affordable access to treatment; ceasing the implementation of policies that over-incentivise pharmaceutical developers resulting in ever-increasing and unaffordable prices; defining areas of unmet needs based on monitoring data to improve our response to the actual therapeutic needs of the population; and prioritising securing incentives targeting real and ultra-orphan diseases and to stimulate competition for orphan drugs. The report also presents country-specific factsheets with their related pharmaceutical expenditure trends (pages 8 to 45).

### Advancing the implementation of the One Health Approach in the WHO European Region

WHO/Europe held a high-level briefing as part of the 74th Session of the WHO Europe Regional Committee (RC74) to engage Member States to adopt, adapt and implement the One Health approach based on their context and in line with global and regional priorities. WHO/Europe has developed an [adaptation guide](#) to enable Member States to tailor strategies to implement a One Health approach on a national and international level, using collaborative efforts and innovative, people-centred and evidence-informed approaches to address complex health changes.

The One Health Joint Plan of Action presented in the adaptation guide includes six action tracks: to enhance One Health capacity to strengthen health systems; to reduce the risks from emerging and re-emerging zoonotic epidemics and pandemics; to control and eliminate endemic zoonotic, neglected tropical and vector-borne diseases; to strengthen the assessment, management and communication of food safety risks; to curb the silent pandemic of AMR; and to integrate the environment into One Health.

## MONITORING

## Digital Health

### EU aligns product liability rules with digital age and circular economy

On 10 October, the Council adopted a [directive](#) to update the EU's civil liability law. The new liability rules were developed with the aim of better addressing that nowadays, many products have digital features and that the economy is becoming increasingly circular. According to Bence Tuzson, the Hungarian Minister of Justice, "it will become easier for an injured person to claim damages in court. Manufacturers on the other hand will benefit from clear rules related to digital product and circular economy business models". Please find an explanation of the main elements of the law [here](#).

### Data Protection Authorities collaborate on future of AI and privacy

The European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) participated in the G7 Roundtable held from 9–11 October in Rome. The event concluded with the adoption of the "[Statement on the Role of Data Protection Authorities in Fostering Trustworthy AI](#)" and the "[Statement on AI and Children](#)". The latter calls for urgent action to safeguard children's privacy and emphasises the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure that emerging technologies such as AI promote trust while protecting the most vulnerable. The Data Protection Authorities also released a [communiqué](#) stressing the importance of robust cross-border data transfer mechanisms that protect personal data.

### Factsheet on AI and Cybersecurity

The EDPS created a [factsheet on AI and Cybersecurity](#), reflecting the opportunity AI presents as to protect institutions and organisations against cybersecurity threats, but also how AI can also facilitate cyber-criminals' work in gaining access to one's personal data. Some benefits entail the ability of AI to predict attacks and malware before they occur and to predict and automate responses to certain threats. Some downsides entail the possibility of AI to create highly personalised and convincing phishing messages.

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