

## Concept Note for Speakers

### Survey on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Doctors and Nurses in the 27 European Union countries, together with Iceland and Norway

#### Background

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We value our doctors and nurses and want to retain them and protect their mental health and well-being. Yet, current reports<sup>1</sup> are showing that many are suffering from poor mental and physical health, which is contributing to burnout, absences and staff leaving the profession altogether.

In order to improve this situation, it is imperative to better understand the mental health of doctors and nurses and the factors affecting their health so that effective action can be taken.

The European Commission and WHO is therefore embarking on a large-scale survey – covering all 27 EU countries, together with Iceland and Norway - to provide us with the accurate picture on what action needs to be taken.

#### About the survey

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- 1) The survey will be online, anonymous and available in 25 European languages, across 27 EU countries, together with Iceland and Norway
- 2) The survey is being conducted by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, funded by the European Commission under the project “Addressing mental health challenges in the EU countries, Iceland and Norway”
- 3) The survey will be the largest of its kind to date in Europe. The intention is to reach as many doctors and nurses as possible, regardless of specialty and work setting, private or public practice, across the 29 countries. Collaboration with European nurse and doctor associations, and dissemination through their national members, will help achieve this.
- 4) The survey assesses:
  - a) mental health, including anxiety and depression symptoms, alcohol use, overall well-being and resilience
  - b) sociodemographic and workplace-related variables, including workplace stressors and protective factors
- 5) The survey runs from **22 October to 31 December 2024**, with results being made available and a report produced in June 2025.

#### Why is this survey necessary?

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**We value our doctors and nurses – we want to retain them and protect their mental health and well-being**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/wish\\_report](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/wish_report)

Good mental health and well-being in the workplace are core to retention strategies and can promote innovative and productive work environments. We want to make sure that workplaces in the health sector are well-equipped to protect the mental health and well-being of their doctors and nurses – which starts with understanding the overall picture.

### **We cannot fix what we cannot measure**

We need good data to be able to put in place measures and strategies that matter. We know that we need better policies and strategies to ensure lasting protection for doctors' and nurses' mental health and well-being. To put these policies and strategies in place, we need to know exactly how working conditions are affecting mental health and well-being.

The more doctors and nurses who respond to the survey, the better we will be able to clarify the scope of the problem and the factors that have the greatest impact. This data can provide a solid basis for effective action to protect existing doctors and nurses, as well as future staff.

### **We can do better – and want to make sure that the situation continues to improve**

We want a baseline to monitor the mental health and well-being of doctors and nurses, as well as the impact of policies and strategies. It is our hope that this flagship survey can serve as an opportunity for establishing a baseline for regular anonymous monitoring of the mental health and well-being of doctors and nurses.