

Speech PGM / M. Van Hoegaerden
JOINT ACTION ON HEALTH WORKFORCE PLANNING & FORECASTING
PLENARY ASSEMBLY – MADRID MARCH 23rd, 2015

Honorable Minister, Dear President and General Managers, Dear Assembly,

It is an honor to see so many of you here in Madrid for this Second Plenary Assembly of the Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning & Forecasting.

We are here to report to you, the partners of our joint action. One of the main goals of our joint action is to create a platform for collaboration and exchange. And we can already conclude that this goal has been achieved. Look at us today! Look at the way we have produced our deliverables, with many workshops, many review rounds, and numerous contributors, ...

The JA succeeds in being a good place for experts to meet and strengthen their network. Your feedback of the Rome conference in Rome also confirmed your appreciation for this objective. Additionally, I may say that most of you, present here today, have contributed to the products which will be officially presented today. This makes this plenary assembly no longer a reporting session but rather a sharing session.

This participative way of approaching our project is really key to me and a good sign for our future.

Through our programme we show that countries and experts can share their knowledge and create added value for all.

During the past two years, countries with experience in planning and forecasting of Health Workforce have been dedicated to share their experience, to teach, repeat, debate, allow time of their experts ... But they have also shared the challenges and difficulties they have faced. Countries that have different experiences, and many experts have brought their knowledge to our pool of expertise that we have in Europe. They have shown important interest and lighten up alternative perspectives.

Also the very mature and respectful dialogue within the joint action between Members States' experts, Regions and Stakeholders adds quality to our products and show good perspectives for local future dialogue and implementation.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the new collaborating partners who recently have enlarged the network and are participating for the first time in our plenary assembly. As the group of partners is growing, so is the importance of our Joint Action and our objectives!

Our Plenary Session Agenda is organized with the same spirit. You have surely noticed that we consistently included time for discussion after all core deliverables presentations. We insist on the interactivity and depend on your expertise to improve our work. Each presentation followed by each dialogue, should help you to have an excellent knowledge of our work. We need you to point to its strengths and limitations, and to foster ideas on how it can be useful to all and to you.

Within the Plenary Assembly, we will organise two forum sessions, which offer room for further dialogue, allowing all to speak with fewer time constraints. We, Joint Action Management & European Commission, assure you that the results of those forums will feed into and help develop further our deliverables. I would like to have your feedback especially on the sustainability and dissemination packages.

Still, I'm not blind, and I perfectly know that our enthusiasm could blow off if not further supported in the future. Our deliverables can be stored on shelves if not brought into practice. Moreover, I know that most of what our Joint Action is producing, is material for the EU-HRH strategy, no longer theoretic but still not operational, and that we must further build on it.

My biggest concern is that there is only one year of Joint Action left and so many challenging milestones and deliverables are still to be produced. In our last year we will produce and organise 3 pilot projects, 2 feasibility studies, and 6 major deliverables.

So my ambitions for this Assembly are, not only to have a good productive meeting as we always do, but also that you would:

#1. Confirm your very strong participation for the last year of the Joint Action;
#2. Be an ambassador for health workforce planning and bring your enthusiasm and knowledge back home to initiate or further develop initiatives on managing HRH issues;
#3. By knowing each other and sharing common concerns, become advocate of the dialogues:

- inter-professional;
- between Member States;
- across the political levels;
- between the primary and secondary care;
- between the department of Health, Education, Finance, and many others
- ...

#4. Be convinced that even difficult matters remain feasible when EU-wide expertise is brought together.

With these ambitions in mind, I'll be your "ringmaster" along the two coming days and I'm very pleased to move further on the Second Plenary Assembly of the Joint Action on Health Workforce Planning & Forecasting, taking just one more moment to thank our host, el Ministerio de la Salud, and the Government of Spain for this wonderful invitation here in Madrid.