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European healthcare systems are in need of availability and quality of resources, as their deficiencies already negatively affect quality of care and safety and will become even more significant in near future.

On April 18 2012, the Commission adopted a Communication "*Towards a job rich recovery*" which sets out a range of measures to encourage employment and strengthen economic growth in Europe. It also identifies healthcare as one of three key sectors with a high employment potential.

The economic crisis induced many member States to cut resources to their National Health Services.

While in a period of crisis the EU Commission considers that there is more need of medical care to maintain and to improve productivity, to take care of workers who see their retirement age delayed, to care for people who become poorer and cannot afford the best medical care or must contribute "out of pocket", the policy of many Countries is to cut the public health expenditure, to reduce hospital beds, salaries, employment, access to technologies, which means saving public money, but increased costs for citizens and worsening of the level of care.

This harsh reality will also affect practicing health professionals, who will be blamed for failures of the healthcare system and will not be able to meet expectations of their patients. Such development can rapidly produce severe problems in healthcare and difficult to.

Maintaining an adequate supply and quality of healthcare services under severe budget constraints is thus a key issue to be addressed by policy makers.

FEMS reaffirms that the best way for saving money in health care is to assure high quality of care, which requires appropriate structures and organization, as well as good working conditions for the health workers.

Quality of care is not only based on the professional qualifications, but it depends also on other important factors inside the Health systems. Quality assurance is based on three points of evaluation: structure, process and result. If the structure and the process are not adequate, even the highest level of professional competence cannot assure the quality of the system.

A minimum European standard for structures, technologies and process would therefore, be instrumental in blocking the tendency, in many countries, of reducing the expenditure in their National Health Systems, just to immediately save money at the expense of citizens and healthcare professionals.

FEMS calls upon European and National institutions to assure that all the European citizens receive the best healthcare, and to make it possible there is a need for standard for availability of healthcare professionals, number of beds and territorial structures, access to adequate technology, access to services without undue delays.

Patients safety and quality of care must not be compromised even in times of economical crisis.

We declare the importance and preparedness of the medical profession in defining standards for structures and processes that are required to assure delivery of quality healthcare .

Enrico Reginato

FEMS President

