



**Statement of the
International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA)
70th Session of WHO Europe Regional Committee**

Agenda Item 2

"The state of health in the WHO European Region, including lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic"

Honourable Chair, Distinguished delegates,

Early this year, humankind was once again put to test when on March, 11th 2020, the World Health Organization and its General Director, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, declared SARS-Cov2 (COVID19) as a pandemic, a global health threat to our communities and to the fabric of our societies. Almost half a year after, the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be beaten and countries all over Europe have started to see a rise in the number of new case infections.

Therefore, the IFMSA considers there is an urgent need to invest in the preparedness, empowerment and support of the Health Workforce, providing adequate training, equipment and protection to ensure their safety at all time, while maximizing the mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of workers. Furthermore, it is important for Member States to commit to achieving UHC by providing dignified and non-discriminatory healthcare services, with a focus on removing barriers of access for vulnerable and marginalised populations.

While we praise the efforts done by the Member States and the WHO on the short term management of this pandemic, we consider that it is also important to develop social and economic recovery plans to support the most vulnerable populations, including but not limited to migrants, people with low socioeconomic status, unemployed and homeless people. During this pandemic, we cannot also forget that it is of utmost importance to maintain healthcare facilities and ensure the provision of comprehensive healthcare services and essential medicines especially to patients that need continuous monitoring, such as those with chronic diseases.

IFMSA also calls on the WHO Europe and the Member States to develop strategies to disseminate culturally and linguistically appropriate health emergency protocols and evidence-based information to appropriate audiences and engage them to play a role in emergency management and combating misinformation. For this to happen there is a need to openly share data about health emergencies with aid agencies, non-state actors, researchers and health care professionals, while maintaining a continuous intersectoral communication to facilitate public health emergency preparedness and responses.

As part of the future generation of health professionals, we consider it is highly important to include healthcare students in the decision-making process, such as, but not limited to the development and implementation of health emergency protocols and preventive strategies.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be handled by any single group, profession or organization, but instead requires local, national and international collaborations between non-state actors, member-states, non-governmental and youth-led organizations, universities and communities to work together to efficiently and swiftly save as many lives as possible, while minimizing the immediate and post-crisis impact of this pandemic on our societies.



IFMSA

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Thank you.



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