

Press release

Boost skills, embrace transformation: regions for green and digital skilling in healthcare

Brussels, 11th October 2023

Today, the European Week of Regions and Cities hosted an insightful discussion on the importance of digital and green skills within the health sector, with a spotlight on the role of regions in spearheading up- and re-skilling of the healthcare workforce. The session took place at the European Committee of the Regions and was organised by the CoR's NAT Commission and Interregional Group on Health and Well-being, and EUREGHA, the reference network for European Regional and Local Health Authorities, in light of the EU Year of Skills 2023. The wide participation confirmed how critical skills are in supporting healthcare systems' digital and green transition, empowering the healthcare workforce and creating more sustainable ecosystems.

The up-skilling and re-skilling of the healthcare workforce in the European Union has gained significant importance in recent years as a pivotal factor to fully realise the potential of the digital and green transition.

"If we do not address the issues that the health workforce is facing, we will not have healthcare systems in the future (...) we need to do our best for the EU to remain competitive, build, keep and attract talents, and create a stronger leadership globally. This is the aim of the BeWell project" said George Valiotis, Executive Director at the European Health Management Association, Coordinator of the BeWell project, stressing the importance of the regional dimension when it comes to up- and re-skilling of the health workforce and the related opportunities for engagement with the project: *"regions are one of the most important stakeholders, being the closest dimension to communities, and BeWell can provide a roadmap for them"*.



Henriette Hansen, EU Consultant & Project Manager, South Denmark EU Office, complemented the previous intervention by bringing the EUVECA project vision: *"There are so many challenges in creating a sustainable future-oriented healthcare sector. EUVECA identified six megatrends (n.d. ageing population, chronic diseases, digitalisation, personalised care and prevention, modern health consumer, active climate role) that need to be addressed with the 21st-century skills in the healthcare sector"*. And, on the role of regions in addressing future-oriented skills within the healthcare sector: *"regions are now working to establish labs where healthcare providers are trying to create local-based activities assuring better healthcare, trying to break down the silos, especially within the educational sector"*.



The European Skills Agenda provides a strategic framework for addressing skills gaps and promoting lifelong learning, setting the stage for collaboration among various stakeholders and knowledge sharing. Birgitta Sacrédeus, CoR Member and Chair of the CoR's Interregional Group on Health and Wellbeing, gave the example of Swedish regions, that are putting into force initiatives that help citizens use digital tools and make healthcare and social sector jobs more appealing. *"In this complex environment, we need to think about how regions can be instrumental in tailoring education and training initiatives to local and national needs, fostering innovation, engaging communities, and ensuring that EU-wide healthcare policies are effectively implemented at the local level. Regional collaboration and engagement are essential components of a comprehensive approach to healthcare workforce development in the EU"*.

Giovanni Gorgoni, Chair of EUREGHA and moderator of the session, concluded the event by recalling the statement from Stella Kyriakides during the CoR plenary on 10th October: *"Local and regional authorities play a most important role in delivering healthcare services: the European Health Union has the potential to make a real difference in the lives of people across the EU, but it can only succeed if local and regional authorities are at the centre of it"*.

For more information about the session, click [here](#) and stay tuned for more updates and session materials.