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## Malta Launched a National Health Workforce Strategy for the First Time



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Malta has recently launched an ambitious strategy to tackle the shortage of health workers, while addressing the much-needed opportunities to train and retain staff, and fill the gap in their professional development.

Immigrants comprise an important share of the country's health care workforce. As nearly 7% of all health workers and 11% of nurses in Malta come from overseas, there is a critical need to focus on training and language skills. As a result, Malta will recruit cultural mediators to coach foreign workers, supporting them with their language skills.

WHO/Europe's newly launched flagship report, "Health and care workforce in Europe:time to act",highlights several actions for countries to commit to in order to better support their workforce. The national strategy launched by Malta reflects the actions emphasised in this report.

Some of the actions include the development of proper capacity for planning and managing the health workforce, and establishing robust health information systems.

Health workers are suffering from increased mental and emotional stress. They suffer long working hours AND few break opportunities, leaving many on the brink of burnout. Malta aims to address this challenge by providing counselling services to raise more awareness around self-care, resilience and coping mechanisms.

Whilst the rapid ageing of health workers is a significant workforce issue for many countries , it is less severe in Malta. In most countries, 40% of doctors will retire within 10 years, whereas in Malta, only approx.17% of their doctors are above the age of 55.

Malta's ambitious new strategy will be its first ever national strategy to tackle the challenges encountered by health workers. They will also consider not only how to keep numbers, but also of the skills required, the opportunities for professional development and how to encourage the right changes.

Source:[WHO](#)

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