

HOPE answer to the consultation on the European Care Strategy

All countries face dramatic increases in the incidence of chronic illnesses, many of which occur later in life. Significant advances in science and technology have helped to alleviate the pain and suffering, although cures for cancer, diabetes, heart disease and respiratory conditions remain a distant goal. These innovations translate into higher health expenditures as an ever-increasing number of people require surgery, or access to medical devices, or are required to take medicines for the rest of their lives. The prognosis is difficult to deny. Demographic shifts over the next few decades could lead to unprecedented financial issues in society where populations are ageing and succumb more frequently to chronic diseases.

The healthcare sector, including in particular long-term care, is aware of this shift and has prepared adaptation.

A key issue at European level is however the clear need for coherence and articulation between the hospital and healthcare sector, including in particular long-term care and the social sector. HOPE believes that there is a particular significance to put this debate at EU level since different initiatives of the Commission are leading to fragmented approaches: hospital and healthcare, including long term care on one side and social care on the other.

There are serious contradictions in the design of some policies; particularly visible in the debates around mental health, around cross-border care, as well as around services of general interest and in particular social services of general interest.

HOPE urges the EU decision makers to avoid handling those issues separately when the population is ageing and will need better coordination between all social and health activities would be a mistake. It makes no sense to have complex system if they do not answer to the basic needs.

HOPE, the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation, is a European non-profit organisation, created in 1966. HOPE represents national public and private hospitals associations and hospitals owners either federations of local and regional authorities or national health services. Today, HOPE is made up of 36 organisations coming from the 27 Member States of the European Union, as well as from the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Serbia as observer members. HOPE mission is to promote improvements in the health of citizens throughout Europe, high standard of hospital care and to foster efficiency with humanity in the organisation and operation of hospital and healthcare services.