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THE EESC AND THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

The European Union is at a decisive juncture in the development of its health policy framework. Although health systems remain a national competence, recent crises, technological advances and rising patient expectations point to the need for greater scientific cooperation and a more consistent use of data at EU level. Over the last twenty years, the EU has succeeded in establishing agencies and mechanisms that have strengthened regulatory oversight, disease prevention and health safety; however, significant structural gaps remain, particularly regarding the translation of scientific evi-

dence into everyday clinical practice. It is against this backdrop that Exploratory Opinion INT/1111, adopted by the EESC during its April Plenary Session, is set. The Committee considers that the fragmentation of clinical guidelines and pharmacotherapy protocols across Member States undermines the efficiency and equity of the EU's healthcare systems, and therefore recommends the establishment of a European Centre for Clinical Excellence to act as a non-binding EU reference body for translating scientific evidence into high-quality clinical guidelines, in full compliance with the principles of sub-



sidarity and proportionality. To this end, according to Councillor Ulgiati «the involvement of all stakeholders is essential: structured consultations with the Social Partners, the academic community, healthcare professionals, representatives of the pharmaceutical

and medical technology sectors, as well as patient and consumer organisations, would ensure that the Centre's recommendations better reflect society's needs and real-world experiences, thereby also improving the relevance of the results».

EU: MIGRATION AND ASYLUM PACT NOW IN FORCE

A few days ago, on the 12nd of June to be precise, new rules came into force setting out how the European Union will manage its borders, examine asylum applications and regulate responsibilities among Member States. Adopted in May 2024, the Pact on Migration and Asylum has reshaped the landscape of the Old Continent, now forming the cornerstone of the new European approach to migration. For the first time, the EU has a comprehensive framework on this sensitive issue, featuring robust protection of external borders, balanced and rigorous asylum rules, as well as a fair balance between solidarity and responsibility. «Migration is a European challenge that must be addressed with an effective, fair and firm European solution», explained European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, highlighting the Pact's achievements in terms of more secure external borders, solidarity among Member States, and more efficient asylum and return procedures. Furthermore, a "new chapter" is being opened to tackle the root causes of migration together, through strengthened relations with global partners involving as-

sertive migration diplomacy, technologically advanced border protection (with the introduction and full implementation of the Entry/Exit System) and new provisions to make returns faster and more effective, as set out in the "European Strategy on Asylum and Migration", presented by the European Commission in January. The priorities are to reduce illegal arrivals, combat human trafficking, protect those in need whilst preventing abuse of the system, and promote labour protection. Key elements of the Pact include thorough security checks on all irregular migrants crossing EU borders illegally; shorter deadlines for asylum procedures and stricter rules on abusive applications; dignified reception conditions across the EU facilitating faster access to the labour market (after just 6 months); robust safeguards to ensure respect for fundamental rights, including an independent monitoring mechanism during border checks and the asylum procedure. According to the Commission, the new approach is already yielding positive results, with a 55% decrease in illegal border crossings compared to two years ago.