



WONCA Europe 2015 Istanbul Statement

Refugees should have access to equitable, affordable and high-quality health care services in all Europe.

WONCA Europe, representing family doctors from 45 Member Organisations across Europe,

- *Acknowledge* the current refugee crisis as the biggest humanitarian emergency of the continent since the Second World War;
- *Recognise* its devastating effects on the health of the refugees;
- *Note with concern* the new priorities in public health and the challenges that primary care services and workforce face.

The president of WONCA Europe, Professor Job Metsemakers, calls upon the Member Organisations to,

1. *Urge* governments to take action so that all people living permanently or temporarily in Europe will have access to equitable, affordable and high-quality health care services;
2. *Reaffirm* the commitment of WONCA Europe to support and advise decision makers should this be needed;
3. *Encourage* close collaboration with their governments, policy-makers and non-governmental organisations for further development and strengthening of the human and institutional resources for family medicine so that sustainable and uninterrupted provision of comprehensive and integrated health care is ensured;
4. *Recommend* the implementation of pre-departure medical examination, proper communication, coordination protocols and reporting for post-arrival follow-up to guarantee the safe travel and resettlement of the refugees;
5. *Acknowledge* the risk of violence, its many presentations and its effects on this vulnerable population;
6. *Invite* family doctors to screen and promptly identify cases of violence and abuse, prevent them and intervene in collaboration with the relevant authorities and community resources;
7. *Emphasise* the importance of medical education recognising the changing epidemiology in Europe and its neighbour countries, and the social determinants of health;

8. *Recommend* appropriate training for family doctors on cultural differences, the evolving infectious disease trends, the mental health problems of refugees, and the special needs of orphaned children and other underage immigrants travelling unaccompanied by family members;
9. *Shape* their training curricula and their continuous professional development accordingly, and address the immediate training needs of the workforce while the crisis escalates;

In 2015 TAHUD, the Turkish association of family doctors, celebrates its 25-year anniversary and WONCA Europe its 20-year anniversary. Through these years we have been fostering family medicine care for every family and community in Turkey, and in Europe as a whole. As the position of the family doctors is increasingly recognised in many countries, we appreciate that more citizens are getting the quality care they need, near their homes. Family doctors provide services to people and societies unconditionally and based on a set of core values, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, sexual preference or religion.

Yet, there is much more to achieve.

WONCA Europe wishes to reaffirm that European family doctors are prepared to play a significant role in the provision of high quality and affordable health services to the entire current and future European population. We firmly believe that every single human being has the right to peace and we plead for action for its achievement in our region and the whole world.