



Growing together in diversity for the benefit of all Europeans

Statement of WONCA Europe Conference 2017, Prague

Diversity has always been one of the most defining and intrinsic characteristics of the people of Europe. The tension between diversity and a desire for uniformity has been the source of many of Europe's great achievements, but, when mishandled, has also played a part in some of its greatest failures.

Countries and regions can thrive when diversity is acknowledged and accepted, but as populations become increasingly varied, it is necessary for the political leadership to ensure that essential services, such as health care and education, are adapted, to meet the changing needs, and are delivered in a fair and accessible way.

Our statement: Growing together in diversity for the benefit of all Europeans

We believe that the WONCA Europe Conferences are unique platforms for expressing, sharing, and promoting these values. During this year's conference in Prague, we explored many aspects of heterogeneity in our professional lives, and exchanged experience and knowledge; we reiterated the need for continuous exchange of expertise both within and among countries as a key to enabling them to grow together in diversity; and we addressed contemporary challenges, such as increasing health inequalities, demographic changes, ageing and multi-morbidity.

Concluding the work of our conference, we wish to strongly reemphasise that the citizens and political leadership of Europe must embrace diversity wholeheartedly, accept the multiple identities of all human beings, and promote the traditional and time-proven European values of freedom, democracy, respect for truth and the law, free access to education, gender equity, respect for individuality, freedom of religion, cooperation and open communication.

WONCA Europe member organisations have committed to raise awareness and support educational efforts on diversity by including it in their agenda, and engaging with universities and other institutions for the development of appropriate programmes.

We urge:

- Family doctors around Europe to be aware of the heterogeneity of their communities and provide sustainable, safe, affordable and patient-orientated care for all;
- Primary health care organisations, and the WONCA Europe Member Organisations to take advantage of the experience and expertise in diversity, which are provided by the networks, the institutions and the communities throughout the European region, so that they may improve quality of care;
- The WONCA Europe Member Organisations to step up the development of appropriate and contextualised undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education for family doctors on diversity, taking into consideration the related patient needs, required health care governance, and role that family doctors should undertake in the rapidly evolving European settings.
- Policy makers, health care organisations and other stakeholders to create such conditions for primary health care to be able to fulfil the above mentioned points.