



EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS/FAMILY PHYSICIANS
UNION EUROPEENNE DES MEDECINS OMNIPRACTICIENS/MEDECINS DE FAMILLE

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UEMO Appeal to Protect Italian General Practice / Family Medicine and the Doctor-Patient Relationship of Trust

UEMO – European Union of General Practitioners / Family Physicians, an organization representing family doctors from numerous European countries, is closely following the ongoing debate in Italy regarding the possible transformation of General practitioners / Family physicians from independent professionals to employees of the National Health Service.

UEMO wishes to express its concern about any reform that could compromise the fundamental principles of family medicine, recognized and valued throughout Europe: continuity of care, the doctor-patient relationship of trust, the professional autonomy of the physician, and the proximity of community care.

The European experience demonstrates that the most effective and sustainable healthcare systems are those that invest in strong General Practice / Family Medicine, are rooted in communities and founded on a stable and lasting relationship between the citizen and their family doctor. This relationship is essential for the quality of care, prevention, management of chronic diseases, and the appropriateness of healthcare interventions.

The transformation of General Practitioners / Family Physicians into employees of the National Health Service risks profoundly altering this model. Specifically, it could:

- weaken the personal and trusting relationship between doctor and patient;
- reduce continuity of care, a factor recognized in the scientific literature as being crucial to achieve better health outcomes;
- reduce the organizational and professional autonomy needed to effectively respond to the needs of local communities;
- make the profession less attractive for new generations of doctors;
- lead to an increase in healthcare system management costs, without evidence that this will improve patient care.

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UEMO believes that the current challenges facing community healthcare—physician shortages, an aging population, an increase in chronic conditions, and the need for multi-professional integration—must be addressed by strengthening General Practice / Family Medicine, enhancing its central role, and ensuring adequate organizational, technological, and professional tools, rather than radically changing its nature.

For these reasons, UEMO calls on the Italian authorities to promote an open and constructive dialogue with organizations representing General Practitioners / Family Physicians, in order to identify shared solutions that preserve the strengths of the current model and foster its evolution in response to the population's future needs.

UEMO reaffirms its support for Italian General Practitioners / Family Physicians and the value of their role as the citizens' first point of contact with the healthcare system, custodians of continuity of care, and guarantors of personalized, accessible, and sustainable care.

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Tiago Villanueva (UEMO President)