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Protecting and Improving Health of Migrants

Written by TWB Healthcare Mar 9, 2012

Public Talk by Asia-Europe Foundation and Casa Asia

“We have a moral and professional obligation to protect and improve the health of migrants. It is our hope that the new European Policy for Health will provide inspiration and guidance for Member States and other partners” – said Dr Pirooska Östlin, Programme Manager for Vulnerability and Health Programme, World Health Organization – Regional Office for Europe (WHO-EURO).

Dr Östlin’s statement once again emphasised The Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health, adopted during the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health on 21 October 2011.

The Heads of Government, Ministers and Government representatives noted in that Declaration, “Health equity is a shared responsibility and requires the engagement of all sectors of government, of all segments of society, and of all members of the international community, in an ‘all for equity’ and ‘health for all’ global action”.

Dr Östlin was one of the speakers at the Public Talk “Health and Migration: perspectives from Asia and Europe” in Barcelona on Wednesday 7 March 2012. The other speaker for the evening was Dr Jaime F.

Calderon Jr., Regional Migration Health Adviser at the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Dr Calderon stressed that: “We need to work towards the development of national policies that enable equal access to health and social services for migrants regardless of their status. This is in the spirit of the rights based approach to public health to achieve health equity”.

This Public Talk was organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and Casa Asia to address one of the most pressing issues in both Asian and European contexts. The Consul-General of Japan in Barcelona, Mr Hidehiro Tsubaki, who was present during the event, noted in his opening remarks: “In today’s globalised world, no country can achieve its goals alone, concerning national public health issues. The topic of “health and migration” is one such concern. It is absolutely necessary that all players in the field of global health combine their efforts to maximise the outcome”.

Ms Sol Iglesias, ASEF Director for Intellectual Exchange, highlighted: “Migration and health are common challenges that both Asia and Europe face. Asia-Europe Foundation, through its multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach, aims to promote the inclusion of migrants’ health in global and regional health strategies.”

The audience was able to share their experiences from the field and directly interact with the speakers during the question-and-answer session. People from various sectors participated in this event. They included the diplomatic corps, individuals and representatives from organisations dealing with the issues of migration, public health practitioners and the media.

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