

Tuesday 11th September 2012

**Oral statement in response to Agenda item RC62 5(c) Policy & technical topics:
strategy & action plan for Healthy Ageing in Europe, 2012-2020**

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) and the Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC) representing occupational therapists internationally and within Europe welcome the strategy and action plan for healthy ageing in Europe, 2012-2020.

Occupational therapists are experts in relation to Activities of Daily Living [WFOT Position Statement: Activities of Daily Living available at <http://www.wfot.org/ResourceCentre>] and as such occupational therapists can be key contributors to Strategic Area 1: healthy ageing over the life course, as they empower and facilitate individuals and groups to participate in daily activities which promote health and well-being.

Occupational therapy is an autonomous health and social care profession and occupational therapists are equal members of interdisciplinary health, social and rehabilitation teams [WFOT Position Statement: Occupational Therapy – Profession Autonomy available at <http://www.wfot.org/ResourceCentre>]. Through these interactions occupational therapists contribute their unique perspective on occupational performance to client-led intervention programmes.

Occupational therapists practice in a variety of settings including hospitals, health centres, (retirement) homes, community and specialist housing, depending on needs of the ageing population. WFOT and COTEC urge national policy makers to engage occupational therapists in implementing priority intervention 1: promoting physical activity. Occupational therapists can contribute to healthy ageing by enabling people to participate in the everyday activities they choose to do in self care, productivity and leisure.

We also urge involvement with regards to priority intervention 4: public support to informal care giving with a focus on home care, including self-care. As previously mentioned occupational therapists are experts in Activities of Daily Living and can thus assist with the WHO action to design strategies for training older adults in self-care and for training informal caregivers, and adapt self-care training programmes.

WFOT and COTEC fully support priority intervention 5: capacity building among the health and social care workforce. Occupational therapy education and practice is holistic covering medical, social, psychological and environmental domains. Whilst in some member states occupational therapy practice is well established WFOT and COTEC encourages relevant national agencies to reflect on whether the education and employment of occupational therapists is being fully utilised. WFOT and COTEC are willing to work with member states to develop new and/or existing occupational therapy education programmes according to the WFOT Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists (WFOT, 2002) and implement sustainable workforce development strategies.

We wish to conclude by stating that by active participation in European dialogue and work, occupational therapists can offer expert knowledge and practical solutions to the crucial European agenda of healthy ageing.

This statement is delivered on behalf of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and the Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries by Samantha Shann, Vice President Finance WFOT and Maria Daniela Farrugia, COTEC Treasurer.