

Statement in response to EUR/RC64/12 Investing in children: the European child and adolescent health strategy 2015–2020 agenda item 5(c)(i)

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) and its regional group the Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC) representing occupational therapists internationally and within Europe welcome the strategy for Investing in Children: the European child and adolescent health strategy 2015-2020.

The values, concepts and language employed throughout the document are congruent with those embraced by the occupational therapy profession. The WFOT agrees that the strategy and actions should be an integrated approach to creating supportive environments across the life course.

The occupational therapy profession commends the WHO's commitment to tackling health inequities and ensuring that all people, with a clear focus on children and adolescents, have equal access for the improvement and maintenance of health. As reflected in the World Federation of Occupational Therapists' Position Statement on Human Rights (WFOT, 2006; available at <http://www.wfot.org/ResourceCentre>) the occupational therapy profession promotes and facilitates every individual's right to participate in a range of occupations enabling them to maximise their potential and experience satisfaction in a way that is consistent with their culture and beliefs.

The occupational therapy profession's practice is framed by the concept of patient centred care crossing institutional and community boundaries with our knowledge base integrating medical, social, psychological and environmental domains. Occupational therapists across Europe work with children, adolescents, individuals, groups and families addressing health promotion, physical disabilities, and mental health issues.

The WFOT urges national policy makers to engage occupational therapists in strategy development and implementation as occupational therapists can share the experience of their practice of empowering and enabling people to participate in decisions about their own lives.

The WFOT asks that policy makers work with occupational therapists to address the research agenda; occupational therapists consistently use evidence informed practice to help meet client focused outcomes and are experts in researching the effects of participation in maintaining health and well-being.

Whilst developing strategies for child and adolescent health across Europe the WFOT requests that Member States also consider the personnel requirements needed to ensure effective service outcomes. The WFOT and COTEC are willing to work with Member States to build a human resource to address the needs of their communities including the development of new and/or the enhancement of existing occupational therapy education

programmes according to the WFOT Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists (WFOT, 2002) and help implement sustainable workforce development strategies.

In closing, occupational therapists' active participation in European strategy development and implementation will contribute expert knowledge of practical solutions to the crucial European agenda of child and adolescent health. The WFOT and its member organisations are deeply committed to working with governments at all levels, non-government organisations and clients to promote societal change and well-being. The European child and adolescent health strategy is a powerful document and directive for achieving equitable access to health and well-being services for these vulnerable age groups across the European community.

This statement is delivered on behalf of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists by Samantha Shann, Vice President Finance WFOT.

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