



The Intensive Connection

European decision-makers call for ICM to be a central pillar of the European Health Union

22 July 2021 - While Europe is getting ready to spend a second summer under the shadow of COVID-19, European decision-makers are pushing forward an ambitious agenda and preparing to deliver a more resilient and sustainable European Health Union.

To make the best use of the hard-learned lessons from the pandemic, policy makers are now joining the call of the heroes of this unprecedented health crisis: the healthcare workers in Intensive Care Units who came under enormous pressure and outdid themselves constantly to save lives.

Pandemics don't stop at our borders and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) acknowledge the need for European solutions to a European problem. [In a letter addressed to the President of the European Commission](#), Ursula von der Leyen, MEPs urge for intensive care medicine to be recognised as a main pillar of the new European Health Union.

The letter, sent from MEP István Ujhelyi's office to the European Commission on Wednesday 21 July 2021, brings attention to the fact that nowadays, in Europe, it is easier to move critically ill patients from one Member State to another than to bring qualified doctors at their bedside.

According to the MEPs, there is a lack of mutual recognition for intensive care medicine training among many EU countries, which prevents a fast and efficient European response in times of pandemics and other cross-border health threats.

The European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) strongly supports this initiative, bringing into the spotlight the necessity to tear down any bureaucratic barriers to create a framework for free movement of intensivists.

“Investing more in human resources and training and creating a network of excellence to exchange best practices between Member States is the best way to raise the standards of care in Europe” says Prof Maurizio Cecconi, Chair of the Department of Anesthesia and Intensive Care Units at Humanitas Research Hospital in Milan, Italy and President of ESICM.

ESICM has been working towards creating a framework for free movement of intensivists for many years and is advocating for the [addition of Intensive Care Medicine to the Annex V of the Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications](#).