



NOTE OF THE MEETING

STEERING GROUP ON HEALTH PROMOTION, DISEASE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

26 OCTOBER 2017, BRUSSELS

This was the third meeting of the Steering Group on Promotion and Prevention. The agenda was structured around discussing the second round of best practice selection, reflecting on health priorities, and the role of the Steering Group in ensuring multi-sectoral collaboration in the field of public health.

Welcome and Introduction

The meeting was chaired by Mr Martin Seychell, Deputy Director-General of DG Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE).

The participants were nominated representatives of the Member States and Norway. In addition, colleagues from DG EMPL, DG RTD, JRC and SRSS attended the meeting. Representatives from the OECD attended the meeting as well.

Discussion of the First Round of Selection of Best Practices

Following presentations by Romania and Slovakia, Member States presented their national experiences related to the first round of selection of best practices. The discussion was focused on Member States' experience with the ranking process for best practices according to national priorities in the first round, as well as how the best practice selection process could be improved. Member States expressed their support of the Steering Group's approach to selecting best practices and offered suggestions and input for the next steps of this process.

Funding Possibilities

Mr Christoph Schwierz, Deputy Head of Unit, presented the work of the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS), focusing on how SRSS can assist Member States with regard to implementation of funding for best practices in the area of non-communicable diseases. As an example, Mr Schwierz presented the implementation of colorectal cancer screening, which was one of the best practices selected by the Steering Group in the first round.

Second Round of Best Practice Selection

Mr Seychell invited Member States to express their preliminary views on health priorities, which will be followed by a final ranking to be completed via an electronic questionnaire in which Member States will rank their top three priority health topics. Based on this prioritization of topics, DG SANTE will share selected best practices for Member States to rank according to their priorities. The main goal is to implement the selected interventions with the support of EU co-funding.

Mr Seychell then gave a presentation on the background for why the six health topics to be ranked were selected: nutrition, physical activity, patient safety, mental health, eHealth, and alcohol.

Following Mr Seychell's presentation, Member States presented their views on national priorities related to non-communicable diseases, including the health topics they were most interested in. Topics that were mentioned as priorities by multiple Member States included nutrition, physical activity, and mental health. In addition, several Member States suggested linking certain topics, particularly in the case of nutrition and physical activity, as lifestyle determinants. Alcohol was also indicated by multiple Member States as a priority health topic; as part of the Steering Group process, best practices in the field of alcohol will be eligible for funding from both the Health Programme and other funding mechanisms at the European Union level. Additionally, several Member States expressed a strong interest in the area of health inequalities. It was noted that, given that health inequalities represent a horizontal topic that cuts across all policies, they will be addressed in a transversal manner, as part of the transfer and scale-up of each best practice.

Several Member States noted, however, that they needed to have further discussions around the selection of priorities, given that they considered many or all of the six topics to be very important. Mr John F. Ryan suggested that, if Member States encounter difficulties in discussing their health priorities at the national level, the Commission can organize bilateral or multilateral meetings to help with these discussions. Mr Seychell subsequently reiterated that the Commission is available for such meetings if Member States request them.

Best Practice Portal

Mr John F. Ryan, Director for Public Health, Country Knowledge and Crisis Management in DG SANTE, presented the process of setting up the future Best Practice Portal, which will be a one-stop shop for the consultation and assessment of interventions aimed at chronic disease prevention. Member States expressed their support for this approach and offered suggestions for the implementation of the Best Practice Portal.

Knowledge Development in the Joint Research Centre

Mr Krzysztof Maruszewski, Director for Knowledge Management in the Joint Research Centre (JRC), presented the activities of the JRC in the area of knowledge management and how they can support the work of the Steering Group. Mr Maruszewski emphasized that the JRC is focused on giving policy makers the right information at the right time, by creating virtual networks of experts to help cover the large amount of information that is available.

Implementation Research in Horizon 2020 and Onwards

Ms Line Matthiessen, Acting Director for the Health Directorate in DG RTD, presented DG RTD's implementation research on best practices. Ms Matthiessen emphasized that there is currently a science-practice gap and a need to move from "knowing" to "doing", which DG RTD's implementation research is focused on addressing. Member States expressed their support for this approach and for aligning research with public health needs.

The Economics of Prevention

Mr Michele Cecchini, Principal Administrator for the OECD, gave a presentation on the economics of prevention, highlighting how effective chronic disease prevention policies can produce beneficial effects for national economies. Mr. Cecchini also presented a new project on physical activity the OECD will start soon and invited interested Member States to contact the Secretariat.

Conclusions

The Chair thanked the members of Steering Group on Promotion and Prevention for their active participation and invited them to the next meeting of the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases, which is planned for 19 April, 2018.

Mr Xavier Prats Monné, Director-General of DG SANTE, concluded the meeting by highlighting the importance of cooperation and complementarity of work within the Steering Group, the European Union's goal of adding value to the areas where it has the ability to contribute, the need for a focus on implementation and monitoring of best practices, and the fact that implementing effective health policies can produce a significant impact for both the health status and the economy of Member States. He finished by saying that the Steering Group on Promotion and Prevention has a possibility to make a change and move away from a single discipline approach towards interdisciplinary work to ensure transparency and the highest possible impact of European Union actions in the field of public health.