



FLASH REPORT

FOURTH FORMAL MEETING - STEERING GROUP ON HEALTH PROMOTION, DISEASE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES 23 JANUARY 2020, BRUSSELS

On 23 January 2020, the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases held its third formal meeting.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of 27 Member States and Norway. Colleagues from other Commission departments including the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, DG Eurostat, DG Research and Innovation, DG Structural Reform Support and the Joint Research Centre also attended, as did the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and the European Investment Bank.

With reference to the ambitious agenda of the Von der Leyen Commission, DG Health and Food Safety underlined the important role of the Steering Group in providing input into the Commission's new key initiatives, helping it to understand Member States' health priorities, and maximizing opportunities to work across European policy agendas and financial instruments. With regard to the latter, the Steering Group will be the central EU platform for discussing and steering the health impact of a wide range of financial instruments within the scope of the future Multi-Financial Framework.

The Steering Group was informed of progress made by its focus group on the sustainability of Orphanet, which is preparing a proposal to safeguard the financial future of this project through national contributions. It was also briefed on work within the scope of the Joint Action CHRODIS Plus to develop a policy-oriented document addressing cross-national collaboration in the field of non-communicable diseases.

The Steering Group then received a more extensive update on the ongoing negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament with regard to the proposed European Social Fund Plus. The Group was consulted on the future the multiannual planning, also with regard to the Health Strand where input was provided on programme prioritisation and synergies with national priorities.

Following this exchange, the Steering Group was updated on the strategic planning of the Horizon Europe research programme, including the potential Research and Innovation partnerships foreseen under this programme. Again, there was an opportunity for

discussion and delegates said they appreciated being informed of the opportunities to support health research via this major European funding instrument.

The Steering Group was briefed on the preparations for the Europe's Beating Cancer action plan and the consultation process is to be launched at an event co-hosted by the European Parliament in February. This was followed by a presentation on progress with regard to the cancer research mission. DG Research and Innovation and DG Health and Food Safety stressed it aims for the research mission and the action plan to be mutually reinforcing, making the most of existing knowledge and resources to tackle one of Europe's key health challenges.

The Steering Group then addressed the implementation of best practices, notably on mental health and second-dose measles vaccination, following earlier Steering Group decisions to support best practice learning and implementation on these two topics via the Health Programme. Member States are strongly encouraged to participate in the new Joint Action and project on mental health foreseen in the 2020 Work Plan of the Health Programme.

The focus then moved to the adaptation of existing best practice criteria to accommodate for future cross-national learning on (second-dose) measles vaccination. The Steering Group commented on proposed changes and will have an opportunity to provide further comments and amendments in the coming weeks. Following this, the Steering Group was informed of a recent initiative to exchange knowledge between actors working on national and European best practice portals, and explored options how to better connect and channel the expertise available via those portals.

The outcome of a survey on the Steering Group workings and objectives was presented and discussed. Steering Group members expressed appreciation for this opportunity to share experiences and suggestions for further improvement on the role and benefits of the Steering Group, also in light of the new Commission policy agenda and financial instruments. The Commission considers the input received as very informative and helpful.

The Steering Group was also informed of the key outcomes of the 2019 State of Health in the EU country health profiles and Companion Report published in November. These are key elements of the two-year knowledge brokering cycle the Commission is delivering in collaboration with the WHO Observatory on Health Systems and Policies and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. While the companion and country reports are presented every odd-numbered year, the Commission presents cross-country data in its 'Health at a Glance – Europe' report every even-numbered year. Given the focus of the Steering Group, specific attention was drawn to the Companion Report chapter on digital transformation of health promotion and prevention and the opportunity for Member States to become involved in voluntary exchanges between experts and national authorities. The Steering Group was also alerted to a recent report on 'Options to foster health promotion health systems' by the Expert Panel on Effective Ways of Investing in Health.

One of the issues emerging from the Steering Group survey was the possibility to develop a rolling agenda. The Steering Group was informed that the Joint Research Centre will further explore what topics could be included in such an agenda. Acknowledging that this is very much a work in progress, the Commission aims to present a first draft for discussion at the next Steering Group meeting in June.

Croatia then informed of the health priorities of their first EU Presidency and planning of key events. This presidency comes at a time of change in Europe, which is reflected in its motto 'A strong Europe in a world of changes'. Health priorities focus on a small number of priorities: promoting lifelong care for one's health via lifelong healthcare, and transplantation and organ donation. These issues will then be tackled from different angles.

Germany also presented key aspects of their forthcoming Presidency in the second half of 2020. They anticipate the legislative agenda will include closure of work on health technology assessment. Priority themes that Germany will present in addition will centre on digitalisation and big data, cancer, strengthening global health, and securing the supply of medical products and their ingredients.