



FLASH REPORT: SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP WITH NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS TO IMPROVE INFORMATION TO PATIENTS.

DATE: 08 AND 09 FEBRUARY 2023– LUXEMBOURG IN HYBRID FORM

Participants: 26 representatives from the National Contact Points (NCPs) from 19 countries (18 Member States and Norway) were present in Luxembourg, in addition to 4 Member States connected online. Three countries were excused (Czechia, Portugal, Iceland) and 3 did not respond (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovenia).

Representatives from the European Commission, from DG SANTE and DG EMPL attended the event, and DG REGIO attended online.

Acting Deputy Director-General for Health John F. Ryan opened the meeting and welcomed participants. A representative of Unit SANTE B.3, Health monitoring and cooperation, and health networks, chaired the event.

The agenda of the workshop followed the recommendations listed in the Cross-border health care evaluation. The first point focused on the interplay between the Directive and the Social Security Coordination Regulations and ways to raise awareness and better communicate with patients. DG EMPL gave a short introduction, and was followed by the MoveS network, who presented the latest available report analysing the relationship between Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and Directive 2011/24/EU. The Latvian representative presented their experience on the topic.

The second point on the agenda focused on making information on the European Reference Networks available on NCPs' websites and improving website accessibility for people with disabilities. DG SANTE B3 representative gave an overview on the major developments in the area of European Reference Networks (e.g., grants, the evaluation and Joint Action), and was followed by the co-chair of the ERN Board of Member States, who presented the Joint Action currently being set up on integrating ERNs into the national health systems. NCPs from Austria and Finland presented their websites.

The Chair then opened the floor for a *tour de table* inviting the NCPs to report on (1) availability of information on ERN on their website, including future planning and (2) accessibility for people with disabilities. Most NCPs are revamping their websites or plan to do so. Overall, many countries already present information on ERNs on their NCP websites, or link to national or Commission websites on ERNs. The few countries that do not yet do so said that they plan to rectify this in the near future. Concerning the issue of making websites more accessible to

disabled people, the situation was the same, with most countries already meeting this goal and others planning to improve their sites in this regard soon.

The third point on the agenda was the prior notification system. DG SANTE B3 representative explained the aim of this system, e.g., to reduce financing risks for the patients, and reported that a voluntary system of prior notification was only being implemented in 8 countries. This was followed by presentations of 3 NCPs (Ireland, Italy and Poland) on their prior notification systems. All presentations highlighted advantages but also reported a certain burden in terms of delay of treatment and additional administrative procedures.

The fourth point of the agenda was the presentation of the Health Policy Platform. SANTE B3 presented this online platform as a tool that could further increase network activities among NCPs. This was followed by a live demonstration of the platform's functions by SANTE B3 colleague. After discussion, NCPs agreed to create a dedicated network in the Health Policy Platform.

The workshop concluded with a brainstorming session to discuss NCPs needs and how funds from the EU4Health programme might be used to enhance the implementation of the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive 2011/24/EU and improving information to a broader range of patients. NCPs were divided into two groups to discuss actions for possible funding (1) information campaigns on patient rights on cross border healthcare including ERNs; (2) capacity building and training of NCPs to improve getting information to patients; (3) exchange and replication of good practices between Member States on cross border healthcare in particular in border regions and (4) a major awareness raising event at EU level on cross border healthcare to be organised early 2024.

Feedback received from NCPs on the workshop was very positive, in terms of both content and format (on site). They appreciated personal interaction after the Covid period.

As next steps DG SANTE and DG EMPL will update the 2012 guidance note on the interplay between these two instruments.

DG SANTE will further support capacity building of National Contact Points and provision of information to patients through actions funded under the 2023 AWP of the EU4Health programme. A call for tender is planned to be published in Q3 2023.