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**Expert Panel on Effective Ways of Investing in Health (EXPH)  
Hearing on ‘Options to foster health promoting health systems’**

Brussels, 23 October 2019

**Background**

The Expert Panel on Health is currently working towards an Opinion on ‘Options to foster health promoting health systems’ to support the Commission by providing the views of the Panel, informed by evidence, on issues that can make a real change to health systems reforms and investments within the EU. The aim of the hearing was to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to share their views on the draft Opinion of the Expert Panel on the above-mentioned subject.

**Expert Panel members present:** Professor Margaret Barry (rapporteur), Professor Jan De Maeseneer (chairing the hearing), Assoc. Professor Liubove Murauskiene.

**Presentation of the Opinion**

Professor Barry introduced the terms of reference and explained the structure of the report, that includes definitions and background on health promotion, the Health Promotion Socio-Ecological Model outlined by the Ottawa Charter (WHO, 1986), the rationale for health promotion, including changing patterns of health problems, economic arguments, and the need for sustainable health systems. She highlighted the policy frameworks for health promotion, citing the WHO Helsinki Statement on Health in All Policies, and the UN's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. She further stated that the report provides information on progress made toward health promotion in Europe, barriers and enablers, as well as mechanisms for strengthening health promotion. The report concludes with the Panel's recommendations, including among others advocating the importance of health promotion, garnering political commitment, protecting and promoting sustainable financing mechanisms for health promotion, and developing the capacity to implement health promotion at EU and at the Member-State level.

**Main issues raised by stakeholders**

Participants in the discussion:

- Noted that there are prevention activities ongoing already in hospitals, communities, and primary care settings. They said authorities should work to identify change makers in health promotion and to use them to inspire others.
- Drew attention to the fact that the policy framework of the report is arguably too reliant on UN and WHO approaches and said that links to EU policies should be made stronger. There should also be more references to activities at the EU level, including to the European Pillar of Social Rights. There was a reference to EuroHealthNet publication of funding opportunities that could also be included in the final report. Said that the Panel should stress more specifically what EU instruments can be used to advance health promotion goals.
- Advocated further discussion of digital health literacy, healthy lifestyle and impact on diseases, with particular attention to antibiotic intake and AMR challenge, nutrition, and stress reduction/mental wellbeing research for more evidence. The suggestion was made to link to European research initiatives, such as Horizon Europe, to support future health promotion partnerships.
- Argued that the role of nurses in regards to health promotion should be more explicitly mentioned in the document.
- Asked the Panel to elaborate more on interference by industry in policymaking, including using fake science, spreading lies, lobbying, buying scientists, and working to influence the sector. How can authorities deal with the power imbalance while setting health policies?
- Mentioned budgeting and financing (but not in the “classic understanding”) of spending - maybe also to have a look at good practices on continuous budgeting.
- Drew attention to budgets and financing, noting that a holistic approach to health promotion could identify other funding opportunities in adjacent sectors, such as transport, clean cities, environment, housing. There could be more opportunities in financial instruments dedicated to these sectors that could be steered toward health promotion.
- Referenced wellness and personal health apps as a way to empower individuals for health promotion.

### **Conclusions and next steps**

The Panel concluded the hearing by requesting a speedy delivery of comments via email to [SANTE-EXPERT-PANEL@ec.europa.eu](mailto:SANTE-EXPERT-PANEL@ec.europa.eu). The Panel will finalize its work on this opinion in November 2019.