



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Public Health  
**Health information and Scientific committees**

Luxembourg, 11 July 2016  
SANTE.C.2

## **EXPERT GROUP ON HEALTH INFORMATION (EGHI) MEETING**

**LUXEMBOURG 11 MAY 2016**

### ***SUMMARY REPORT***

#### 1. WELCOME

The Chair, Philippe Roux, Head of the Country Knowledge and Scientific Committees unit of the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) of the European Commission, welcomed the participants to the meeting of the EGHI. The recently nominated delegate was particularly welcomed, namely Pavol Rieger from the Slovak Republic, as well as the observer Michel Vernay representing the National Institute for Health Surveillance, France.

The Chair informed that the second meeting of the 'Task Force on the future of the BRIDGE-Health project and preparing a proposal for setting-up a European Research Infrastructure Consortium on Health Information', was to take place on 12 May 2016, and that countries, international organisations and EU projects that earlier expressed interest to participate had been invited; but that membership is kept open.

The Chair informed that the presentations and documents would be made available in CIRCABC. The summary report, the list of participants and the presentations, with the agreement of authors, will also be made publicly available on the SANTE website. A document regarding data and privacy protection had been distributed before the meeting and the participants were requested to contact the Commission in case of any objections to publish their names in the list of participants on the SANTE website.

The draft agenda was adopted after that the participants were informed that the update from WHO had to be moved up on the agenda following point 4: Updates of the Commission Services.

The summary report of the meeting held on 12 November 2015 was adopted. The final version will be made publicly available on SANTE web site together with the list of participants and available presentations from the meeting.

The Acting Director of DG SANTE C, John Ryan, gave the welcome speech underlining the need to deepen country and cross-country knowledge to improve access, effectiveness and resilience of health systems in Member States.

## 2. INFORMATION FROM THE EGHI MEMBERS

Under this agenda point, the representative of the Netherlands, Marieke Verschuuren and the representative of Malta informed on activities related to health information under the current or future presidency. Marieke Verschuuren underlined as main focus of the Dutch Presidency the affordability of extremely expensive innovative medicines, food product improvement (reduction of salt, saturated fat and calories) and the fight against antimicrobial resistance. Additionally, the EGHI members were informed about the eHealth Week 2016 on 8-10 June, which the Dutch Presidency is organising.

Neville Calleja informed that childhood obesity and cross-country cooperation will be one of the main priorities under the Maltese Presidency. Additionally, pending further discussion, the ERIC on Health Information could be part of the Maltese agenda.

Further, EGHI members reported orally on relevant work in their countries. Some contributions had been received before the meeting and all countries were invited to send written input to the EGHI secretariat after the meeting. The Country reports document is regularly updated and made available in CIRCABC, only accessible to EGHI members.

Herman van Oyen, Belgium, mentioned that they are starting calculating Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) and asked other countries to share similar experience. Ondřej Májek, Czech Republic announced the reform of the Act on Health Services in order to improve the functioning of the national health information system. Arnaud de Guerra, France, informed that the National Institute of Public Health was reorganised and is now also in charge of producing reports on health status of the population. Aušra Želvienė, Lithuania, informed that they are launching eHealth information system, which is for the time being mainly focussing on e-prescriptions. Neville Calleja, Malta, announced that the country is cooperating with the WHO on the Small Countries Health Information Network. Polonca Truden-Dobrin, Slovenia, informed about cooperation with Norway on piloting data sets on municipality level.

## 3. STATE OF HEALTH IN THE EU CYCLE

Sylvain Giraud, DG SANTE B1, and Philippe Roux, DG SANTE C2, introduced the new *State of Health in the EU package* which responds to Commissioner Andriukaitis' mandate to strengthen country-specific and EU-wide knowledge of health systems and public health. The 2016-2017 exercise will be implemented by the Commission services in close collaboration with the OECD and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.

Alan Cahill, Ireland, raised concerns about a possible ranking of Member States and enquired about the use of the November 2017 country health profiles for the European Semester process. Neville Calleja, Malta, highlighted the importance of Member States' ownership and the need to avoid duplication of processes like JAF Health. The representative also indicated the possibility to have further discussions during the Maltese Presidency and suggested that the establishment of a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) on Health Information, which is currently explored by some Member States, could support the exercise and create synergies. Giovanni Nicoletti, Italy, stressed the need to present the State of Health in the EU also at senior level, and to further clarify the role of and expectations from Member States, i.e. in relation to data provision. The representative further raised the concern of the potential media impact when the State of Health in the EU products are published. Herman van Oyen, Belgium, called for

transparency and openness of the process, and for the involvement of Member States - allowing interpretation of data within the national context. Mika Gissler, Finland, echoed the need to ensure ownership of Member States, and stressed their prerogative of drawing conclusions from the assessment for the national level.

The Commission (SANTE B1 and C2) stressed that the main purpose of the *State of Health in the EU* lies in supporting the EU and Member States in relation to evidence-based policy making. The exercise is not intended to rank Member States; but will only compile and present in a structured and consistent manner factual information and systematic analysis on the basis of already existing data, which Member States have in any case already committed to provide (i.e. via ESTAT). Further it was stressed that the cycle will build on existing elements and frameworks such as the work of the Health Information group, the ECHI, JAF Health, the HSPA Expert Group and Health at a Glance: Europe and mainly draws on the existing indicators. The Commission intends to present the project to Member States at high level during the forthcoming EPSCO Council and will also use each opportunity to keep Member States informed throughout the process. Cooperation at different levels, also involving this group will help to further develop the project.

#### 4. UPDATES FROM THE COMMISSION SERVICES AND AGENCIES

##### 4.1 ESTAT

Jakub Hrkal and Ilze Burkevica, DG Eurostat, gave an update on the current activities and health statistics covering survey data and administration data. One key development is the Eurostat received new data from the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS). Data is under validation and first results will be disseminated by September 2016. The presentation also covered ongoing work on disability statistics, health and safety at work, health care expenditure, causes of death, health care non-expenditure and morbidity statistics.

##### 4.2 EMPL

Boriana Goranova, DG EMPL, European Commission, presented an update on Health and long term care in the European Semester followed by developments and use of the Joint Assessment Framework on Health and the Social Protection Committee in-depth thematic reviews. She also mentioned the public consultation recently launched on the European Pillar of Social Rights. Antonio Cammarota, DG EMPL, mentioned the collaboration with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work with regards to relevant information in the field health and safety at the workplace.

##### 4.3 RTD

From DG Research and Innovation (RTD) a presentation was given by Julia Schmitz on the European Human Biomonitoring Initiative (EHBMI). The work of the EHBMI is progressing well, 22 EU Member States plus Norway, Iceland, Israel and Switzerland are involved. A decision on a first set of chemicals (prioritisation process) has been taken including daily exposure chemicals (7 substance families), emerging substances and chemical mixtures.

#### 4.4 JRC

Nicholas Nicholson from the Public Health Policy Support Unit of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) gave an update on the 2015 European call for cancer registry data. Data submission is still ongoing for some countries. He underlined the difficulties linked to national data-protection rules of some Member States to ensure consistent data gathering at a European scale.

#### 4.5 UPDATES FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS - WHO

Khassoum Diallo from the WHO Regional office for Europe gave updates on recent and planned health information activities under the umbrella of the European Health Information Initiative (EHII). The presentation contained also an overview of recent developments related to the European Health 2020 policy framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. He introduced the country Profile of health and well-being and accompanying Highlight on health and well-being for Greece, underlining that WHO plans to produce annually publications for up to five countries. Additionally, updates were given on WHO supported health information networks, health system performance assessment, the upcoming Public Health Panorama issue on health information and releases of new versions of the health information gateway and mobile app. WHO is also intensifying its capacity building activities with the upcoming Advanced Health Information Workshop. Dr Diallo presented briefly the European action plan on evidence informed policy making that will be discussed at the Regional Committee for Europe in September and called for the support of Member States and other stakeholders, as it will increase commitments and coordinate activities from Member States, WHO and other international organizations in the area of health information under the EHII umbrella. He concluded his presentation with the proposal to explore possibilities to intensify collaboration between Commission and WHO Regional Office for Europe, especially related to country profiles and highlights.

#### 5. ERIC ON HEALTH INFORMATION

The chair reminded that Member States called for sustainability and good coordination in activities related to health information in the EU. An ERIC is a potential tool to achieve this goal as well as for facilitating the involvement of International Organisations such as the OECD and WHO.

Herman van Oyen and Petronille Bogaert, Scientific Institute of Public Health Belgium, coordinators of the BRIDGE-Health Project, presented the preliminary draft concept paper for an EU health information system, emphasizing that an ERIC would be a step forward. EGHM Members are requested to comment on the draft concept paper by 18 May 2016.

Neville Calleja, Malta, reported on the first results of the ERIC' drafting group meeting of 18 April 2016 underlining that ownership by the Member States is imperative. He invited more countries to join the initiative.

#### 6. BRIDGE-Health Work Package (WP) 4

Angela Fehr, Sabrina Hense, Robert Koch Institute Germany and Marieke Verschuuren, National Institute of Public Health, Netherlands, presented the progress on European

Core Health Indicators Monitoring (Work Package 4), within the BRIDGE-Health Project. This work package focusses on the mapping of data availability for and the technical and content evaluation of the ECHI short list. Prior to this meeting, the EGHI members had been approached by Work Package 4 and asked whether they would be willing to become members of an Expert Group on National Health Indicators Implementation (EG-NHII). This group will support the activities of Work Package 4. Against this background, the EGHI/EG-NHII members were asked for an agreement on the terms of reference for the Expert Group on National Health Indicators Implementation by 18 May 2016.

#### 7. UPDATES FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS - OECD

Gaëtan Lafortune, gave an overview of activities and strategic directions for OECD work on health statistics. The EGHI members were informed about activities related to health data governance, health care quality indicators, economics of public health/ prevention, efficiency of health systems and Health at a Glance: Europe 2016 which will be produced in cooperation with DG SANTE. EGHI Members will be consulted on the draft over summer.

#### 8. Any other business

Was communicated in writing after the meeting:

As part of the mid-term evaluation of the Health Programme 2014-2020, the Commission will launch a public consultation in September 2016. The results will inform an assessment of the implementation and continued policy relevance of the 23 thematic priorities of the programme, of which four relate to 'fostering health information and knowledge systems'. On the basis of this assessment potential amendments to the thematic priorities will be considered.

In due course SANTE will invite members to participate in the consultation.

#### 9. Conclusions by the chair

In agreement with the members, the secretariat will make a proposal for a consolidated mandate with a focus on improved working methods at the next meeting. Members agreed that in the future presentations will be no longer than 10 minutes (maximum 10 slides) leaving 20 minutes for discussion after each presentation. Additionally, power point presentations should be sent to the secretariat two weeks before the meeting to be made available to all members 10 days prior to the meeting. It was agreed that future EGHI meetings will finish by 16h30. Further, future EGHI meetings will focus on a particular issue which will be decided during the preceding meeting. The next EGHI meeting discussions will focus on the publication of Health at a Glance: Europe 2016. The Commission will continue to inform the EGHI members about further developments of the State of Health in the EU.

The Chair thanked all participants and the speakers in particular. He concluded by saying that the date of the next regular EGHI meeting still needs to be confirmed and that the EGHI members will be informed as soon as possible.