



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Health systems, medical products and innovation

Performance of national health systems

EXPERT GROUP ON HEALTH SYSTEMS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

27TH MEETING

28 JUNE 2022, 10:00 – 16:00

VIRTUAL MEETING

MEETING MINUTES

Participants:

Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, OECD, WHO and the European Commission (DG SANTE and DG REFORM)

External guests:

Colleagues from EuroHealthNet and from Veneto Region's Prevention Department (for agenda item 3), colleagues from Technical University of Berlin (for agenda item 5)

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1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

In the absence of co-chair Andrzej Rys (DG SANTE), **Maya Matthews (European Commission)** fulfilled the role of co-chair and opened the meeting. She introduced the agenda of the day and this was followed by a round of introductions of all the participants.

2. 2021 PRIORITY TOPIC – PREVENTION

Maya Matthews informed that since the last plenary meeting on 23 February 2022, there had been progress on the report, which is being drafted by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies on behalf of the HSPA Expert Group. The co-chairs thanked the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies for their work so far. They also thanked the countries that are members of the sub-group on prevention, as well as OECD and WHO and the countries that participated in the small group discussions on the topics of health literacy and mental health.

Rachel Greenley (European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies) presented the first three chapters of the draft report. Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the topic, discussing the main concepts of disease prevention and health promotion. Chapter 2 analyses the survey which was carried out in the HSPA group on prevention indicators. Chapter 3 develops three

case studies on the topics health literacy and mental health. The third case study presented in this chapter is about Austria's Health in all Policies Strategy.

Several countries as well as DG SANTE thanked the Observatory for the draft. The discussion focused on what the final chapter of the report would present. The following questions were raised:

- What can be derived from the case studies?
- Which challenges does Austria face to implement its Health in all Policies Strategy?
- How can mental health be measured? Should there be a distinction between mental health status and mental health services? Which indicators does the OECD collect?

It was concluded, that the final Chapter 4 (not drafted yet) should bring together key findings from Chapters 1-3 and will develop a "menu" of prevention indicators, in order to support countries with their national HSPA frameworks.

Laura Peter (European Commission) also informed the members about the recent Commission "Healthier Together Initiative" to tackle non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and suggested that this should be mentioned in the report.

Members of the group were asked to provide written feedback on draft Chapters 1-3 by the 11 July to the HSPA Secretariat. A draft of the full report will be available mid-September.

3. BEST PRACTICES ON HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Co-chair Kenneth Grech introduced the agenda item, explaining that the HSPA Secretariat invited several guests to showcase different examples of best practices on health promotion and disease prevention.

- **Caroline Costongs, Director EuroHealthNet**, gave a general overview on health promotion and disease prevention and presented best practices in the field of health promotion and diseases prevention in which EuroHealthNet/ their members have been involved. She gave concrete country examples (Portugal, Slovenia, Hungary, Austria, Finland and the Netherlands) of 'social prescribing' where activities, such as social activities, physical activities and nature-based experiences are prescribed by a general practitioner via a link worker.
- **Laura Merlo, Veneto region's Prevention Department**, gave an overview of the regional prevention plan and presented in more depth the best practice 'Gyms to Health' from Veneto Region, Italy. In this project, general practitioners prescribe physical exercise as a therapy. The Veneto Region created a network of gyms that need to fulfil certain requirements. The objective is to promote physical activity for every age group suffering from certain risk factors or conditions.
- **Michele Cecchini, OECD Public Health Department**, gave a short overview of the Commission funded project on best practices in public health. He explained the framework and gave some concrete examples focussing on lifestyle counselling, food labelling and school/ community programmes. He also showcased the potential effects of transferring these best practices and avoiding NCDs at large scale.

Kenneth Grech thanked the three guest speakers for their participation and willingness to give short presentations. **Maya Matthews** mentioned the Joint Action on transferring best practices in Primary Care, supported by the EU4Health Programme.

4. REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

Maya Matthews explained the rationale for updating the Terms of Reference based on the Council Conclusions on “strengthening the European Health Union”, adopted on 7 December 2021, which invited Member States and the Commission to explore the potential of this Expert Group to address strategic approaches to health system innovation and transformation. At the Working Party on Public Health (High Level) on 9 December 2021, the Commission was invited to prepare a proposal to update the Terms of Reference of the Expert Group on HSPA to this effect. The revised Terms of Reference were shared informally with the SI, FR and CZ Presidencies. They were sent to the members of the HSPA Expert Group on 5 May, to provide written feedback by 31 May.

Loukianos Gatzoulis (European Commission) presented the revised version which reflects the need to expand the scope to discussions and activities related to the health systems transformation and innovation. The members of the HSPA Expert Group had provided only minor comments prior to the meeting, which were already taken into account in the presented version.

France, Czechia and the Netherlands expressed their support towards the new objective of the HSPA Expert Group and France informed that they would like to discuss the European Hospital Label initiative in this group.

The HSPA Expert Group agreed by consensus to endorse the revised terms of reference and submit them to the Czech Presidency for share them with the Working party on Public Health (High level); meeting planned for 26 July 2022.

5. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE HSPA EXPERT GROUP

Kenneth Grech introduced the agenda item, giving the floor to:

- **Florin Popa (European Commission, DG REFORM)** gave an update on technical support to implement HSPA and also explained the forthcoming Technical Support Instrument (TSI) flagship on person-centred integrated care.
- **Philip Wahlster (German Federal Ministry of Health) and Philipp Hengel (Technical University of Berlin)** informed on the pilot project for a national HSPA framework.
- **Marina Karanikolos (European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies)** presented the Observatory’s new publication "Health system performance assessment: a framework for policy analysis".

6. AOB

Kenneth Grech mentioned the next priority topic from the work plan was “value-based healthcare” and asked members if they are still interested to work on this topic. France and Belgium took the floor and expressed their strong interest to keep the topic. The HSPA Expert

Group decided to form an “exploratory group” to discuss the scope and framing of this topic for the next plenary meeting. Members should inform the HSPA Secretariat by 11 July if they want to be part of this group.

The next HSPA Expert Group meeting will be organized as a physical meeting in Brussels in autumn.

The selection of further priority topics is linked to the new mandate of the group and will be discussed during the next meeting.