

MINUTES

Online Meeting Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases

19 October 2021

On 19 October 2021, the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases (SGPP) held a virtual meeting, chaired by DG SANTE. The representatives of 23 Member States, plus Norway, attended the meeting together with a number of Commission departments, agencies¹ and the European Investment Bank.

The SGPP was informed about the **European Health Emergency preparedness and Response Authority (HERA)**, launched only a year after President von der Leyen proposed the idea in her State of the Union speech. It will strengthen preparedness by first identifying and making sound investments in the development, manufacturing and stockpiling of medicines, in order to face new public health emergencies with confidence. HERA will also work closely with international partners to strengthen preparedness and response at global level, ensuring that countries around the world are capable of producing vaccines, medicines and medical supplies in times of need.

i. Best practices: current exercise and assessment for improvement

2021 Joint Actions on best practices and planning for 2022

The SGPP was informed that the Commission continues to support Member States in their recovery by strengthening their health systems; an estimated amount of EUR 50 billion is planned for health reforms and investments under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, complemented by actions in the EU4Health Programme including the upcoming Joint Action on the transfer of best practices in primary care. DG SANTE then presented the **Joint Actions** (between the European Commission and the Member States) that will be co-funded under the EU4Health work plan 2021; one such action will implement the transfer of six best practices in primary care with a total budget of EUR 10 million, two other actions will implement a total of three best practices on prevention of non-communicable diseases (one on diabetes type 2 and two on healthy lifestyles targeting families and children in deprived districts) with a total budget of EUR 7 million. The information session for Member States was held at the end of September 2021 and now Member States are invited to nominate their competent authorities by 29 October 2021.

In response to a question from **The Netherlands** whether any individual or organisation within a Member State could react to the open call to submit practices to the Best Practice Portal, DG SANTE replied in the affirmative; any organisation which does not have a conflict of interest and conforms to the criteria set in the given call may apply. **Belgium** asked whether, in a Joint Action focusing on best practice implementation, it is necessary for the practice owner to participate as the competent authority or whether they could also

¹ Directorates-General represented included Energy (ENER), Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL), Environment (ENV), Research and Innovation (RTD), Reform (REFORM), as well as the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and representatives from a number of EU decentralised and executive agencies such as European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and Consumer, Health and Food Executive Agency.

be included as an affiliated entity. **Belgium** also suggested that the practice owner be supported by the Commission to facilitate their participation or to share their experience. HaDEA replied that the best practice owners can either be the coordinator of the Joint action or lead the key work package on how to transfer the best practice in another country. DG SANTE and HaDEA are scheduling meetings with the Member States to prepare the new Joint Actions where these aspects can be discussed; for further information, the functional email² was provided. In response to a question from **Finland**, whether a liaison with the national health ministry is required in those cases where the owner of a best practice is a non-governmental agency, and therefore not a competent authority, the reply was in the affirmative.

Follow-up action: *MSs to nominate competent authorities for the joint actions transferring best practices by 29/10 and participate in relevant info and workshop meeting.*

Proposal for the review of SGPP's best practice process

Since its adoption in 2017, when criteria were agreed for the **assessment of best practices**, 239 practices have been submitted to the Best Practice Portal. The current assessment process was outlined with a proposal to adapt it to better fit the three types of policy support tools: best practices, implementable research results and promising approaches for those practices that have not yet been fully implemented. The aim is to improve the review process in order to allow Member States to be better informed about potential best practices, especially in quickly emerging and high priority areas and to improve the usability of the Best Practice Portal.

Finland supported the proposal to review the assessment process and stressed the importance to identify what is strategically important, not just focussing what is currently available. **France** welcomed steps to improve the quality of selecting and implementing best practice interventions in public health and noted that external assistance during the transfer would be beneficial in order to collect the evidence. **Spain** remarked on the differentiation of best practice from innovative practice. **Italy** provided input to the proposed methodology, specifically, the targeting of the recommendation and of the best practice, and the involvement of local stakeholders for eventual adjustment to the local context. DG SANTE will organise a meeting in week 42 with the countries where the best practices on NCDs originate; a preparatory webinar can also be organised with the interested Member States if requested.

Follow-up action: *the external contractor will assess the best practice process and present preliminary findings to the SGPP in February.*

OECD project on the impact of best practice implementation

The OECD presented their project funded under the third Health Programme on **the impact of best practice implementation**, including the development of a guidebook to help countries select, implement and evaluate best practice interventions in public health, an in-depth analysis of candidate best practices in public health, and provision of advice. The SGPP were invited specifically to consider closer involvement, for example by proposing best practice case studies, by requesting support from OECD for relevant Joint Actions – from their design to implementation, and requesting and supporting the development of country-specific modelling modules to increase precision and tailor outputs to national needs. The OECD project results will be circulated by the SGPP secretariat, once they will have been finalised and made available.

² HaDEA-HP-CALLS@ec.europa.eu

Following a question from **Belgium**, the OECD clarified that they select best practices from the Best Practice Portal and discuss them with the Commission, supporting the process. DG SANTE added that they work closely with the OECD which supports the SGPP's work on best practices, hence the best practices were selected via this channel. The OECD concluded that they are happy to support Member States in this action, and discussion can continue also bilaterally with the interested Member States.

Follow-up action: *OECD will finalise their project with DG SANTE, and provide output, namely the guidebook to evaluate best practices, to SGPP members.*

Joint Research Centre: Policy briefs to improve knowledge on non-communicable diseases

The Joint Research Centre presented their policy briefs within **the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Knowledge Gateway**³. It reviews and streamlines data and knowledge needed to support, justify and strengthen the development of policies that underlie health promotion. After an overview of topics covered, the content development process was outlined, with an indication of the methodology and structure.

Following a brief poll on awareness and use of the gateway, DG SANTE proposed conducting a future survey on the needs of a broader spectrum of users. **France** considered that the poll may not reflect the accurate use of the knowledge gateway. In response to a question from **Belgium** on the role of the gateway, DG SANTE clarified that it is a collection of knowledge on different topics, legislative, statistical and scientific. It includes clear, evidence-based data and information from authoritative sources such as international and national public health related organisations. The content is intended to be used by policymakers in order to learn what is currently being undertaken and inform their policies in the area of public health, and prevention of non/communicable diseases. Member States have been involved in establishing priorities for the content already included in the gateway, and are welcome to provide input⁴ on what they require further.

Follow-up action: *SGPP secretariat will contact SGPP members to increase awareness about the knowledge gateway website and get feed-back.*

EU4Health Programme

The SGPP was updated on the implementation of the 2021 work programme⁵ of the **EU4Health Programme**⁶ and the programming steps for the EU4Health 2022 work programme⁷. The widespread stakeholder consultations were outlined, which identified strengthening efforts on health promotion and disease prevention as priorities. Consultation in the EU4Health Steering Group is ongoing and will conclude in November; the Commission expects to adopt the work programme 2022 by the end of 2021. Implementation of the Programme will be undertaken by HaDEA⁸.

ii. Health in all policies

DG Environment: Zero Pollution Plan

³ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/health-promotion-knowledge-gateway_en

⁴ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/give-us-feedback_en?reported_page=/health-promotion-knowledge-gateway_en&destination=/health-promotion-knowledge-gateway_en&related_knowledge_service=16_and_ioanna.bakogianni@ec.europa.eu

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/default/files/funding/docs/wp2021_annex_en.pdf

⁶ [EU4Health 2021-2027 – a vision for a healthier European Union | Public Health \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/default/files/funding/docs/wp2021_annex_en.pdf)

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/health/funding/events/ev_20210910_en

⁸ [European Health and Digital Executive Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/health/funding/events/ev_20210910_en)

SGPP members were informed about the activities of DG Environment under the framework of the **Zero Pollution Action Plan**⁹ and specifically showcasing selected Commission actions to reduce pollution and build the case for reinforced collaboration between the environment and public health communities. The Flagship 1 of the Zero Pollution Action Plan, Reducing health inequalities through zero pollution, will see the Commission ensure that the newly announced Cancer Inequalities Registry and the Atlas of Demography are regularly fed with pollution monitoring and outlook data. Monitoring wastewater for COVID-19 was also showcased as a successful example of environmental monitoring working for health. The SGPP was invited to reflect on areas of common interest to the SGPP and the dedicated network on the Zero Pollution Action Plan that DG ENV is proposing to create with participants from Member States.

European Climate and Health Observatory

The SGPP was informed about the newly launched **European Climate and Health Observatory**¹⁰, which allows policy- and decision-makers to visualise climate change related health risks to mitigate them. The SGPP was asked for suggestions on the themes for the European Climate and Health Observatory initiative for 2021-2022 and to consider potential collection of best practices in response to heat stress and climate sensitive diseases in order to create synergies and support this work.

Upcoming entry into application of Regulation (EU) 2017/746 on in vitro

The SGPP was informed about **Regulation (EU) 2017/746 on in vitro diagnostic medical devices**, which was adopted on 5 April 2017, entered into force on 26 May 2017, and with a date of application of 26 May 2022. Given the dual issue of delays caused by COVID-19 and capacity shortage of conformity assessment bodies, the Commission has proposed an extension of transitional provisions, see COM (2021)627. The SGPP was invited to take note of the planned amendment of Regulation (EU) 2017/746.

DG Research and Innovation

DG RTD informed the SGPP of the latest developments within **Horizon Europe**, and specifically the more ambitious approach to **objective-driven Partnerships**. Within Cluster 1 – Health¹¹, three Partnerships are foreseen: the European partnership for the assessment of risks from chemicals, the European partnership fostering a European Research Area for health research, and the European partnership on transforming health and care systems. Under Horizon Europe, it is also proposed to set up a number of **Institutionalised European Partnerships**¹² between the Union, EU Member States and/or industry, including specifically the Global Health EDCTP3 and the Innovative Health Initiative. An Information Day on European Partnerships¹³ is foreseen for 28 October 2021. Moreover, the five **Horizon Europe Missions** were launched on 29 September 2021; the first Horizon Europe Work Programme for 2021-22 included a set of actions that lay the ground for their implementation. The new topics for 2021 were identified: three research and innovation actions and procurement actions, with deadlines in the first months of 2022.

The Chair closed the meeting thanking participants and informing them of the next meeting of the SGPP which will take place on 9 February 2022, when the next priority areas for best practices will be discussed and agreed.

⁹ [Zero pollution action plan \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euro-observatory/zero-pollution-action-plan)

¹⁰ [European Climate and Health Observatory \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euro-observatory/european-climate-and-health-observatory)

¹¹ [Cluster 1: Health | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euro-observatory/cluster-1-health)

¹² [European Partnerships in Horizon Europe | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euro-observatory/european-partnerships-in-horizon-europe)

¹³ [Cluster 1 - Health | Horizon Europe Info Day 2021 \(sli.do\)](https://ec.europa.eu/euro-observatory/cluster-1-health-horizon-europe-info-day-2021)

