



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

SANTE B4: Disease prevention and health promotion

Flash Report **Third meeting of the Public Health Expert Group (PHEG)** **06 December 2023**

The third meeting of the Public Health Expert Group (PHEG) took place on 6 December 2023. It was chaired by DG SANTE and attended by the representatives of **21 Member States, Norway and Iceland**, together with Commission services (AGRI, EAC, ECHO, ENV, HOME, JUST, REFORM, RTD), HaDEA and the European Investment Bank. The main objective of the meeting was to inform Member States on the work of the subgroups under PHEG, on the results of the priority setting exercise and on proposed priorities for the years 2024 – 2026. A video message from Sandra Gallina, **Director General SANTE**, was shared, in which she expressed her support for the work of expert group and its subgroups.

Subgroups' and network's work

DG SANTE presented the work of the subgroups (cancer, mental health, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and vaccination) under the PHEG and of the Network of Expertise on long COVID. PHEG agreed with the **revised mandate** for the subgroup on NCDs, which will be titled “Comprehensive approach on Prevention of NCDs across the Lifespan” and run until the end of 2025.

Priority setting exercise

DG SANTE presented the results of the priority-setting exercise carried out in 22 Member States, Norway and Iceland, and proposed the health priority areas for 2024 to 2026. Member States welcomed and expressed their support for health **promotion and prevention** of NCDs (encompassing mental health) and health, socio-economic, commercial, urban, environmental **determinants** to be priorities for 2024, and to prioritise healthy longevity/lifelong prevention, vaccine-preventable diseases and vaccination, infectious diseases (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis) and long COVID in 2025-2026. DG SANTE and the co-chair of the Health Systems Performance Assessment Expert Group informed of the latest developments. DG SANTE then informed on the funding opportunities under the EU4Health 2024 work programme for actions on NCDs and communicable diseases.

Update from Commission services and European Investment Bank

DG REFORM informed the expert group on the high interest from Member States for technical support in the area of health (in 2023, particularly for mental health reforms). The Member States were given an update on the current funding opportunities for research projects under Horizon Europe and of the calendar for defining the priorities of the next programming period. The European Investment Bank presented its contribution to supporting EU health policy priorities, in particular through investments in the area of cancer.

Discussion - tour de table

Member States expressed their broad support for the work of the PHEG and its subgroups, and agreed with the proposed health priorities for 2024-2026. Among others, they highlighted the importance of addressing the **commercial determinants** of health and **alcohol** harm, and of a **comprehensive approach** to prevention across sectors. The health priorities of the upcoming Belgian Presidency were presented to the expert group.

Conclusion and next steps

The Chair thanked all participants for their input, that is an essential and valuable basis for the work of the PHEG and its subgroups. The next meeting of the PHEG will take place on 12 June 2024 (in-person).