



## Flash Report

### Second meeting of the Public Health Expert Group (PHEG)

29 June 2023

DG SANTE hosted the second online meeting of the Public Health Expert Group (PHEG) to outline planned actions following the recent adoption of the Commission Communication on mental health. The meeting also provided an update on current activities in relation to the prevention package, other policies and sub-groups and preparations for the rolling work plan of the PHEG. The representatives of 20 Member States, as well as Norway, attended the meeting, together with Commission services and agencies.

#### Update on the Commission Communication on mental health

The Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health was adopted on 7 June. Backed by €1.23 billion in EU funding to support implementation of 20 flagship initiatives, the Communication marks a new departure for mental health, taking a holistic approach that incorporates policies and socioeconomic and environmental determinants that affect mental health. Follow-up actions already underway or planned in the coming months include the launch of a €9 million call for tenders on capacity building, a call for best practices on mental health to be launched this summer, and a meeting with the subgroup on mental health in September and a webinar with stakeholders on 21 September.

#### Update on the prevention package

DG SANTE provided an update on preparatory work on the prevention package, which includes two Council recommendations, a revision of the 2009 Council recommendation on smoke-free environments, and a new Council recommendation on vaccine-preventable cancers. The proposal on smoke-free environments is being prepared based on consultations of Member States, stakeholders and the Expert Group on Tobacco Policy and the Joint Action on Tobacco Control (JACT-2). Likewise, the Council recommendation on vaccine-preventable cancers is also being drafted taking due account of the call for evidence and consultations of key stakeholder groups and Commission scientific partners.

#### Update on other policies and sub-groups

Member States were also brought up to date on the work achieved to date in the various PHEG sub-groups: Cancer, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Mental Health, and Vaccination, as well as the network of expertise on long-COVID. In addition, the Commission informed the group about the recent work by the Health Systems Performance Assessment expert group.

#### Rolling agenda

DG SANTE presented the key elements received from the survey of Member States in terms of setting priorities for the rolling work plan of the PHEG. The outcome of the survey was briefly discussed and it was agreed that those countries who had not yet replied will do so by 7 July. These countries also contributed to the discussion with support for the setting of priorities. The draft work plan will be presented in the autumn after further consultation with Member States.

#### Any other business

The forthcoming Spanish Presidency presented its priorities in the area of public health.

### Conclusion and next steps

The Chair thanked all participants for attending the meeting and for their valuable input to the work of the group. The next meeting of the PHEG is planned on 6 December 2023, and further subgroup and stakeholder meetings would also take place in autumn.