

Flash report

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

10 September 2020

The Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases (SGPP) held a virtual meeting to discuss further with Member States the concrete suggestions for the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the recommended actions outlined in the Mission on Cancer. Representatives of 25 EU Member States and Norway attended the meeting together with a number of Commission services and agencies.

The meeting facilitated an animated and rich discussion between the Member States and the Commission, based on the results of the broad stakeholder consultation process, to help inform the finalisation of the EU Cancer Plan by the end of 2020 and indicate the further steps for the future implementation of the Plan. The initial main results of the Member States Survey were also presented.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and Mission on Cancer

Participants were informed about the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and its planned adoption for Q4 2020, as well as updates on the Mission on Cancer, including the suite of stakeholder engagement events which took place across Europe. Members were then updated on results of the Member States survey which was undertaken during July and August 2020. The purpose of the survey was to understand Member States' priorities in cancer and to gain insight into the types of actions/support/contribution the Member States consider part of an EU level response. There then followed a rich tour de table and discussion on particular national priorities and how the European approach complemented national activities, for example when it comes to national initiatives to develop a survivorship passport for children in the digital health record. Issues related to health literacy, personalised care, necessary improvements in palliative care, and the potential use of artificial intelligence in better sharing and use of health data and creating new care models, and better links between cancer screening data and cancer registries were raised and discussed. DG Environment raised the nexus between environmental and health policies, citing an estimated 254000 annual cancer cases in the EU due to all forms of pollution [estimate of the European Environment Agency] and the relation between AMR and the need to reduce the use and secure the safe disposal of antibiotics in agriculture, animal farming and aquaculture. Equity of access was particularly important for Member States. The vast majority of Member States have now submitted their feedback and identified their priorities. An emerging shift of priorities towards disease prevention was acknowledged by the Commission services and Member States present.

Implementation of best practice and research results

The SGPP was presented the initial results from the survey of national priorities for public health in Member States, undertaken in order to identify the top four priorities for population-level health interventions and best practices for 2021-22. The top three priorities were identified as anti-microbial resistance, cancer, and access and availability of medical products, followed by prevention of non-

communicable diseases (NCDs). It was noted that actions at the European level already exist for the top three identified priorities. After the priority assigned to prevention of NCDs, the next three priorities relate to risk factors on tobacco, environmental determinants of health (notably pollution) and obesity. It was suggested that for NCD prevention, Member States may wish to focus on risk factors, which would also include tobacco, environmental determinants of health and obesity (the following three on the priority list). There was broad agreement, but requests for the NCD to be regarded as an 'umbrella' not just for the three identified risk factors. The priorities will be honed further and agreed later with the SGPP.

When Member States were asked if subtopics on prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases should be preselected or whether an open call for best practice in all possible topics would be a better approach, the latter was overwhelmingly preferred, but with a possible emphasis on the effectiveness of best practice. DG SANTE emphasised that there would not be duplication of existing action plans, rather complementing the strategies by using the SGPP for identification and transfer of specific best practice, then evaluation and eventual selection by Member States of which practices to implement in the period 2021-27.

Finally, the SGPP was updated on the programming for the Horizon Europe Programme.

It was noted by the European Commission that the discussions in the SGPP are without prejudice to the ongoing inter-institutional governance discussions on the new programme taking place in the Council and European Parliament.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The meeting was concluded by thanking participants for their valuable and enriching input and reminding them of the next meeting, to be held virtually on 02 October 2020. This will be between the SGPP and the Horizon Europe Shadow Programme Committee, and will include first discussions on the mandate for a possible joint SGPP/HE Programme Committee subgroup on cancer.