



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Health systems, medical products and innovation
Performance of national health systems

Expert Panel on effective ways of investing in health (2019-2022)

9th plenary meeting

22 September 2021

10:00-12:30h CET

MS Teams

Minutes

The ninth plenary meeting of the Expert Panel on effective ways of investing in health (term of office 2019-2022) took place virtually on 22 September 2021. The meeting, which was a non-public meeting, was chaired by the Panel's Chair, Professor Jan De Maeseneer.

1. Welcome and introduction

The agenda was approved without changes, the minutes of the previous plenary meeting of 23 June were approved earlier in writing and had been published on the Expert Panel website.

Professor McKee informed the Panel and the Secretariat that he became President Elect of the British Medical Association.

Dr Murauskiene became a professor.

No conflicts of interest were raised on matters of the agenda.

2. EU health developments update

COM (M. Matthews) highlighted that health policies continue to be at the forefront of the EU policy priorities. She summarised the key health messages in the State of the Union address (15 September) covering global vaccination solidarity, pandemic preparedness in the EU, including the launch of the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) and the announcement of a European Care Strategy. She also updated the Panel on the work regarding the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The health components of the Recovery and Resilience Plans received so far by Member States cover mainly capital investments and digitalisation of healthcare. To a lesser extent, measures addressing primary care and prevention, and training of health workforce are also covered. So far, 19 national plans have been endorsed by the Commission.

Members welcomed the update. They then discussed the best way to promote the Panel's opinions in order to influence the current debate. It was suggested to continue publishing articles based on the opinions findings and to disseminate opinions regionally and locally by Panel members.

Resilience testing methodology project

COM (B. Dajka) informed the Panel members about the resilience testing methodology project (funded under EU4Health) that the Commission, OECD and the European Observatory will be jointly working on. COM has launched a call to the two organisations to develop and pilot a resilience testing methodology for health systems. The methodological work will form the basis of a potential EU Health System Resilience Testing and Support Programme for Member States that is envisaged to run for several years.

COM underlined that developing a resilience testing methodology will facilitate better data, information and enable cross-country learning. This action will assist in contributing to the European Semester, which addresses the effectiveness, accessibility and resilience of health systems. The encompassing resilience assessment framework will serve to detect critical health system weaknesses against specific shocks as well as long-term structural challenges. This will help to develop recommendations for remedial actions.

COM highlighted that the resilience testing framework will build on the Panel's Opinion *on the organisation of resilient health and social care following the COVID-19 pandemic*, adopted on 25 November 2020 as well as the December 2020 report by the EU Expert Group on Health Systems Performance Assessment (HSPA) titled '*Assessing the resilience of health systems in Europe: an overview of the theory, current practice and strategies for improvement*'.

Pilot testing may be run at national, regional or local level, as appropriate for the purposes of establishing a solid methodology.

It was proposed by members that they could help arrange pilots with regional health authorities. Some members suggested to speed up the process by sharing already existing methodology used by MS and by exchanging preliminary findings.

COM proposed that the OECD and European Observatory could present their preliminary work to the Panel in one of the plenary meetings in 2022.

COM highlighted 14th European Public Health Conference 2021 scheduled for 10-12 November with a workshop on resilience testing entitled: '*Getting real with future shocks: How to test health system resilience?*' in which the Panel members are involved.

3. Opinion on European solidarity in public health emergencies

The virtual public hearing to present the draft opinion to stakeholders took place on 16 September. There was a good interaction with participants and the feedback was very positive. Additional comments can be sent in writing by 1 October. Several comments highlighted the need to include more emphasis on social care in the opinion.

The Chair of the drafting group and rapporteurs confirmed that the opinion will be updated to take into account stakeholder comments and EU developments such as HERA and update on

vaccine donations. It will aim to be finalised by 18 November in order to be approved in the next plenary meeting of 24 November together with an accompanying factsheet.

4. Opinion on mental health of health workforce and other essential workers

The chair of the drafting group and rapporteurs updated the members on final steps before publishing the opinion. The opinion itself was already approved in the previous plenary meeting. The fact sheet has been finalised and circulated to the Panel for possible comments prior to the meeting. The fact sheet has been approved.

Members discussed the process of writing the opinion, the challenges, usefulness of discussions in small focus groups and the relevance of external researchers. The chair of the drafting group stressed that the final results reflect the views of the independent Expert Panel.

5. Any other business and next steps

COM informed the members that the physical meetings with external participants are possible to be organised in Brussels if the epidemiological situation does not worsen. All external visitors have to provide either an EU Digital Covid Certificate or equivalent, as proof of being tested, vaccinated, or as having recovered from the virus.

Members discussed whether to have the next plenary meeting of 24 November 2021 in person or virtually. They will inform Secretariat about their preference. It was agreed to convene the meeting in person if all members are willing to travel to Brussels pending the availability of a meeting room which is big enough to ensure compliance with physical distancing rules. A hybrid meeting was not considered useful.

Regarding the next mandate, the Panel members mentioned possible topics, such as strengthening primary care, integrated care, greening health systems, training of health professionals, gender issues. The members will communicate their ideas to the Secretariat by 31 October via a shared document in MS Teams. COM will also check internally within SANTE and with other DGs on suggestions and share with the Expert Panel at the next meeting.

Chair thanked all participants and closed the meeting.

6. List of participants

MEMBERS

BARROS PITA Pedro
DE MAESENEER Jan
GARCIA-ALTES Anna
GRUSON Damien
KRINGOS Dionne
LEHTONEN Lasse
LIONIS Christos
MCKEE Martin
MURAUŠKIENE Liubove
NUTI Sabina
ROGERS Heather

SICILIANI Luigi
WIECZOROWSKA-TOBIS Katarzyna
(apologies)
ZACHAROV Sergej
ZALETEL Jelka

COM

MATTHEWS Maya (SANTE)
DAJKA Bela (SANTE)
SPEGELE Christoph (SANTE)
VOLOSINOVA Viera (SANTE)