

EuroHealthNet Technical Working Group (TWIG)

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

I. NCD-TWIG Purpose and objectives

The Technical Working Group on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs-TWIG) has been established by EuroHealthNet to support its members' and partners' work in the area of non-communicable diseases/chronic diseases through active communication and exchange on national, regional, local and EU policies and projects. The NCDs-TWIG will provide an opportunity for experts working in EuroHealthNet member and partner organisations to discuss their work and specific initiatives in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, alcohol and other themes related to chronic diseases, including the link with health and social inequalities. The discussions will focus on EU-level policy developments in these areas and how partners can benefit from, and contribute to, a wide range of European initiatives.

By joining this TWIG, experts will have access to:

1. Specific updates from EuroHealthNet's news and information gathering service on developments in EU or WHO Europe policies, programmes and events
2. Opportunities to inform and advise EuroHealthNet inputs into relevant EU policy, legislation and programmes;
3. Networking and sharing opportunities on what works towards combating NCDs;
4. Opportunities to publicise and promote work being done in their countries, communities and regions or to request help to meet needs or build capacities;
5. Opportunities to attend EU Platforms, including to the EU Platform for action on diet, physical activity and health

At the 2015 EuroHealthNet General Council and Annual Meeting, the following topics were suggested for TWIG discussions and exchanges:

1. Reviews on the benefits of investing in prevention
2. New plans developed in member or partner countries to address chronic diseases
3. Scientific evidence, methodologies and approaches on what works and what doesn't
4. Varied themes such as urban spatial planning, international trade agreements, duties on sugars or e-cigarettes that can promote healthier societies
6. Specific issues such kidney diseases or chronic pain, which affect millions of Europeans
7. Links between NCDs and health and social inequalities

The NCDs-TWIG can be a forum to exchange information, to use the expertise of EuroHealthNet members and partners on tackling NCDs and, in particular, to capture learning from innovative policy approaches.

The NCD-TWIG will take into account the following key European policies:

1. *The European Commission WHITE PAPER: A Strategy on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related health issues (2007);*
2. *The Council conclusions on nutrition and physical activity (2014/C 213/01);*
3. *The EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020;*
4. *Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors*
5. *WHO Regional Office for Europe nutrient profile model (2015);*
6. *Vienna Declaration on Nutrition and Non-communicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020 (July 2013) - WHO Europe.*
7. *Action Plan on Youth Drinking and Heavy Episodic Drinking (Binge Drinking) 2014-2016*
8. *Calls by the European Parliament and the EU Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action (CNAPA) for a new EU strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol and alcohol related harm.*
9. *The upcoming EU Joint Action on Childhood Obesity*

TWIG members will also learn about the following activities, of which EuroHealthNet is a member:

1. The [EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health](#);
2. The [EU Joint Action on Alcohol Related Harm \(JA-RARHA\)](#)
3. The [EU Joint Action on Chronic Diseases \(JA-CHRODIS\)](#)

II. NCD-TWIG Next Steps in 2015

TWIG participants will soon be contacted by EuroHealthNet with opportunities to work together and provide expert input on some of the themes mentioned above. They will also be informed of the outcomes of the Diet Platform and of their upcoming meetings. Furthermore, the organisation of an NCD-TWIG webinar is envisaged in autumn.

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III. Terms of Reference

1. Establishment

A Technical Working Group (TWIG) on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) has been established by the EuroHealthNet Executive Board (EB) with the following objectives:

- (a) To encourage and support thematic collaborations by participants of EuroHealthNet;
- (b) To exchange evidence-based content which may be used for policy, advocacy, project and events purposes;
- (c) To exchange experiences and collect good practices by members and partners and highlight these at EU level;
- (d) To increase awareness and analyse specific European developments in more detail, identify opportunities for collective action and work together on common positions and activities.

2. Accountability

Performance of all TWIGs shall be reviewed annually by the EB. Activities of every TWIG shall be reported to the annual meeting of the General Council, which is responsible for all final decisions on the Annual Work Programme and may vote to continue, redefine the mandate or terminate any TWIG.

3. Participation

Any member or partner body of EuroHealthNet may apply to be part of any TWIG if it wishes. This is voluntary, not compulsory. All members and partners shall be informed of the establishment of all TWIGs upon joining the partnership and annually. The lead contact person for each EuroHealthNet member or partner will be asked to suggest qualified experts in his/her institution who wish to participate. This shall be done separately for each TWIG. More than one expert from each institution in the EuroHealthNet partnership may participate in a group, but it is suggested that a maximum of five people from any one institution should be in any one TWIG. This may include the institution's lead contact person.

Contact details (name, position, organisation, telephone number and email address) shall be provided to the EuroHealthNet office. Any participant may leave the TWIG(s) at any time by providing a written (email) resignation.

4. Rights and benefits

All participants will receive occasional updates from the secretariat on matters relevant to the specific theme of the TWIG. All participants will be included in an online NCD-TWIG

mailing list and may share and discuss issues with other participants or request information from them.

Requests will be circulated for comments and inputs on matters for which EuroHealthNet may wish to provide evidence or to generate inputs, for example for EU or WHO consultations, in publications and documents, or for project preparations.

Comments may be provided directly to the secretariat, without public attribution if necessary, and may be shared with other participants or used publicly. Please note that EuroHealthNet habitually uses a standard disclaimer on collective submissions, which clarifies that any member body may choose to vary its own submission.

Online discussions, telephone and video conferences or webinars may be organised by the office or in collaboration with TWIG participants. The Executive Board shall consider requests for convening an annual TWIG meeting with a specific agenda as part of the EuroHealthNet annual meeting or in other events, subject to available resources.

Participants may submit suggestions for topics for joint consideration, or to inform the group of sectoral or geographical initiatives, changes, needs or opportunities.

Participants may initiate the consideration of subjects or items, but may not mandate work by the office or commit resources beyond what has been agreed by the Managing Director and Executive Board as part of the work programme.

5. Commitment and roles

Initially, each TWIG will gather and share information on its subject as set out above. However the aim is to develop towards groups of collective expertise which will proactively develop position statements, anticipate needs and opportunities, be a reliable source of content input and contribute towards achievement of the EuroHealthNet Business Plan and its Strategic Development plan to 2020.

Once critical mass is achieved in an individual TWIG, with at least ten participants from at least five different states, the EB may call for a Convenor to be nominated and elected by TWIG participants to lead the setting of agendas and chairing discussions. The Convenor will also be able to make public statements on behalf of the collectively-agreed positions of the TWIG, but only when a majority of all participants is achieved. The Convenor would be invited to meetings of the EB where the specific TWIG remit and activities are considered and to the Annual Meeting of EuroHealthNet. The secretariat and convenors will remain accountable to the EB and GC as above.