

EuroHealthNet Annual Meeting 2017

31st May – 2nd June - Helsinki, Finland

Wednesday May 31st, 2017

SEMINAR - Tackling health inequalities in a fast changing world

13:30-17:00: Ballroom G18 (Yrjönkatu 18, 00120 Helsinki).

Europe is confronted by demographic, economic, social, environmental, technological, political and cultural changes. The implications for people are enormous, but the challenges can be significantly addressed through cross-cutting and joint efforts, such as those outlined in the Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals, or via a potential new EU Pillar of Social Rights including the social determinants of health.

Social and health policies have common objectives in terms of building a fair and socially sustainable society with health and wellbeing for all. How can we increase the impact of social and health organisations in our changing society and how can they cooperate in order to meet these common goals? Constant, rapid change requires us to be more attentive, responsible, dynamic and innovative than ever before¹.

In Europe, income and wealth inequalities have been rising since the 1970s. Today, the top 10% of households earn 31% of total income and own over 50% of total wealth. Forms of inequality and poverty are changing, whilst the number of people in the EU living at risk of poverty and social exclusion increased by 4.5 million between 2010 and 2014.²

The world of work is also in transition. New forms of work are emerging and technological advances are reshaping the way we work. The norm of having one career with a single employer is ending; whilst 'gig' and 'platform' economies (people working without social security on an ad-hoc basis) are growing. Youth unemployment is still unacceptably high in the EU – averaging 20% with peaks of more than 40% in some countries. Fears about unstable work are palpable across society.

These changes have clear effects on physical and mental health, equity and well-being. The greatest impact falls on the most vulnerable people and those with lower levels of education, amplifying social and related health inequalities. The need to avoid widening health inequalities within and between Member States is clearer today than ever before. It makes good economic sense, as currently public spending on health care and long term care accounts already for 8.5% of GDP in the EU. It is expected that this will increase by 1-2% by 2060.³

We need action (i.e. plans, related budgets and implementation) to make a shift from care/cure to prevention across various sectors and services, in holistic and integrated ways, and empower people across the life course. This seminar will highlight some of the new thinking in health and social policy, provide examples and scope potential for EU action considering the recent EC White Paper on the future scenario of Europe⁴.

¹ EuroHealthNet Statement (2016) Promoting Health & Wellbeing www.eurohealthnet.eu

² Communication from the Commission http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2016/cr2016_comm_en.pdf

³ ECFIN (2016), Joint Report on Health Care and Long-Term Care Systems & Fiscal Sustainability, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/eeip/pdf/ip037_vol1_en.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf

Programme

Chairs/co-chairs: *Kristiina Kumpula Chair SOSTE Council*
 Caroline Costongs, Director EuroHealthNet

13:30 *Welcome and coffee*

14:00 **Session one “Health is a political choice”**

- Päivi Sillanaukee, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- Ana-Carla Pereira, Head of Unit Social Protection, European Commission DG Employment and Social Affairs – EU Pillar of Social Rights
- Juhani Eskola, Director General of the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) – Finnish social and health services reform, barriers and success factors
- Prof Clare Bambra, Institute of Health & Society, Newcastle University – role of social policies to reduce health inequalities

Examples from other countries (Mojca Gabriejelcic, National Institute of Health Slovenia, Elisabeth Bengtsson, Vasta Götaland, Sweden)

15:30 *Coffee Break*

15:50 **Session two “How to follow up with health and social integrated actions”**

- Jussi Ahokas, Chief Economist of SOSTE - The Welfare Economy – a new concept
- Prof Olli Kangas, The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) – The Basic Income Experiment
- Clive Needle, Senior Policy Advisor EuroHealthNet – New thinking in EU Social and Health policy

Examples from other countries (Nicholas Hay, NHS Health Scotland UK and contributions from the floor)

17:10 Closing remarks and conclusions - Nicoline Tamsma, President EuroHealthNet

17:15 End of the seminar – closing by chairs

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