



Statement by EuroHealthNet at the 65th session of WHO Regional Committee for Europe on promoting intersectoral and interagency action for health and well-being in the WHO European Region (*agenda item 5a*)

Promoting health equity through a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach stands at the heart of what we do at EuroHealthNet. Our extensive partnerships consist of (sub) national public health and health promotion authorities as well as of research institutes and strategic partners from other sectors. Many of our members are involved in developing and implementing HiAP in their own countries or regions. We welcome the initiative to strengthen intersectoral action at a higher policy-level, supported by strong leadership from health ministries. A whole-of-government, - in fact a whole-of-society -, approach is needed to take efficient action on the determinants of health. We would like to make three comments on the proposed approach:

1. We would welcome greater emphasis on such a **whole-of-society perspective**. There are many actors beyond governments and the WHO that influence the determinants of health. Employers, local authorities, NGOs, community organisations, businesses, etc., should be involved as real partners. Public health bodies can also significantly assist in implementing intersectoral action at different levels of society.
2. The proposal could benefit from further guidance on including health in **economic and fiscal policies**. In these challenging times of austerity, political decisions are often made for economic gains and private sector interests, rather than support health and social objectives. We need to demonstrate how health is an asset for economic growth and promote inclusive growth as well, without losing sight of health as a public good in itself.
3. Stronger focus is needed on what health can offer to advance the aims and objectives of other sectors. This builds on earlier work by EuroHealthNet on “**health FOR all policies**”. For example, in terms of environmental policy, we should not only consider the health impacts of climate change, but also show how healthier consumption patterns can reduce the unsustainable use of resources.

We need to **upscale capacity building at all levels**, which can be provided by the WHO Regional Office, but also by other organisations such as training centres, agencies or NGOs working in the field. EuroHealthNet would welcome such a partnership and we would be keen to participate in the proposed Platform for Promoting Intersectoral Working to exchange expertise.

In particular, we encourage **liaison with EU mechanisms across all policies**, such as the EU Semester, the Social Investment Package, and Country Specific Recommendations. We suggest closer cooperation with the European Commission on HiAP, including with DGs Employment & Social Affairs, and Research & Innovation, with whom EuroHealthNet already successfully works since many years on an intersectoral basis.