

Brussels, 2nd February 2011
PR/2011/03

EuroHealthNet faces the European Union's cohesion policy

Responding to the European Commission consultation on the Conclusions of the Fifth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, EuroHealthNet underlines that health must remain a priority investment area for structural funds in the future Cohesion policy. Disease prevention approaches, especially to tackle health inequalities, should be prioritized and mainstreamed throughout the Post 2013 Cohesion policy. This must be reflected in the aims, objectives and targets set out in the policy's functioning and operation including the proposed Common Strategic Framework and Member States Operational Programmes.

EuroHealthNet's contribution to the Conclusions of the Fifth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion is available [here](#).

For EuroHealthNet, cohesion policy should be based on three overarching recommendations: Improve daily living and working conditions; tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources; measure and understand the problems and impacts of action. EuroHealthNet reminds that targeted investment to address health inequalities by action on the social determinants of health is more cost-effective than paying later for the consequences of these inequalities. Therefore, the European Commission, together with Member States, national, regional and local Public Health Institutes and authorities should develop and implement complementary public health prevention actions.

In order to get a cohesion policy more effective, Member States should have a level of adaptability to design programmes that suit to their social, economic and environmental situations. EuroHealthNet is therefore in favor of the development and incorporation of additional indicators that could be used in future Cohesion policy, especially indicators related to the beyond GDP debate, health and well-being. In addition, a results-oriented cohesion policy is important. To this end, programmes must be clearly set out, with clear targets and deliverables. Outcomes must be evaluated on the basis of a defined list of indicators. In addition to this, improving health and actions to reduce health inequalities must be a key priority and should be clearly highlighted in the added value for proposed actions.

Finally, with view of improving the partnership principle and involvement of local and regional stakeholders, social partners and civil society, EuroHealthNet supports the idea of placing personal/community wellbeing at the heart of policy formation. Stakeholders would therefore be encouraged to be more innovative and effective. From a health perspective, the health sector usually lacks experience when it comes to pursuing operational funding that does not have a health label. Opportunities to systematically analyze weaknesses and further develop capacity in the health sector towards this end must be supported, particularly among local and regional health authorities and institutes.

Clive Needle, EuroHealthNet director, said *“Evidence shows that improving health and wellbeing can make a major contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of communities from Dublin to the Danube. This is not about building hospitals with EU funds: we can show examples of how health systems can help local bodies, business and people to meet what they identify as crucial problems. To secure gains for all we need the right measures of progress and to be involved in planning from the start.”*

For more information, contact Ms. Ariane Moret
EuroHealthNet
Communications Coordinator
E-mail: a.moret@eurohealthnet.eu
Tel.: + 32-2-235-03-28
Fax: + 32-2-235-03-39

EuroHealthNet is a not-for-profit network of regional and national agencies responsible and accountable for health promotion, public health and disease prevention in Europe. Its aim is to improve the health of European citizens by striving for a healthier Europe with greater health equity between and within countries. EuroHealthNet does that by supporting projects and policy development together with its members and the EU institutions; by exchanging information and by communication in and beyond its network.

More information available at:

www.eurohealthnet.eu

www.health-inequalities.eu

www.health-gradient.eu

www.equitychannel.net