



Statement by EuroHealthNet at sixty second session of WHO Regional Committee for Europe, Thursday 13 September 2012, concerning the Resolution on the European Action Plan for Strengthening Public Health Capacities and Services.

EuroHealthNet, the international network for bodies responsible for development of health promotion and associated approaches in Europe, welcomes the resolution of this Regional Committee to take forward and implement an action plan to strengthen public health capacities and services. It does so as one of the stakeholders referred to in the draft text, who should indeed be part of a new generation of partnerships for investment in prevention and health promotion activities.

To that end EuroHealthNet has been pleased to contribute to the draft initiative through its consultative phases, not least in co-organising the second consultative meeting in Brussels in March 2012. We are already linking in new ways with increasing numbers of WHO departments and offices, its collaborating centres, and bodies such as the South East Europe Health Network, with who we are developing agreements. It is part of our work programme to continue that in 2013, and to strategically and practically develop those links beyond 2014 as part of both the WHO and EU 2020 strategic plans for health, economic, environmental and social recovery and sustainability.

We deliberately express our view of this action plan as integral to whole of government and societal planning, because we believe that without such an approach public health will remain in respected but only partially effective silos with insufficient resources. Thus we strongly welcome the overall vision of *promoting* greater health, not only protecting minimum standards of protection from threats, and the priority of tackling inequities and the wider determinants of health as socially just and economically wise.

The clustering of core essential public health operations in an integrated approach is important. We will consider incorporating it in our own organisational objectives to help build clarity across sectors and countries. We continue to participate in reviews of capacities and in building strengths to address needs, and urge sustainable health promotion institutions to be maintained in all states and regions. That will help underpin the vision of integration from intelligence to services delivery including promotion and prevention, through to the enabler operations, where far more attention is needed at professional levels. We are part of initiatives to help develop better common professional standards across the continent so ideas and policies are turned into actions to meet real needs.

That leads to our final point about the range of stakeholders that will be needed if the action plan is to succeed. We urge all states to meet the 2014 targets for real self-assessment, but to go further as the Resolution suggests and actively engage the full range of stakeholders available and willing to help, as we are. From health professionals and researchers to experts in civil society at national and sub national levels, and most of all the citizens being directly affected by worsening obesonegenic or physico-social or physical or other harmful environments, support

and partnership is available as never before, often thanks to funding from public programmes such as EU funds, and is vital. All our citizens need this action plan to succeed. Evidence shows that those most affected must be involved in design and delivery. That does take hard work and commitment by us all, but while some traditional mechanisms and methods remain relevant and should be maintained, the world is turning and Europe must progress or decay. We all need to evolve and integrate the best of the newest evidence based innovations together with the most successful of the established models – new and old in harness.

EuroHealthNet commits its network, knowledge and services to help take this important initiative forward and strengthen true partnerships with WHO and others. We look forward to the passage of the Resolution and implementation of its provisions as concrete steps along the route to a world-class public health system for all the peoples of Europe.

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