

HEALTH FOR GROWTH PROGRAMME 2011/0339 (COD)

This policy brief provides an overview of the main aspects of the European Commission's proposal for the "Health For Growth Programme 2014 – 2020".

I. INTRODUCTION

In November 2011 the European Commission published a proposal for a follow-up to the current multi-annual programme of European Union (EU) action in the field of health entitled the Health for Growth Programme 2014-2020.

The role of EU health policy is to complement and support national policies and to encourage cooperation between Member States (1). The proposed health programme will provide possibilities to build and further strengthen mechanisms for cooperation and processes between Member States with a view to identifying common tools and best practices that create synergies, bring EU added value and lead to efficient economies of scale (2).

The European Commission has confirmed that the programme will be supported by a total budget of €446¹ million over its seven year lifespan which is an increase on the current programmes total which stands at €321,5 million.

II. BACKGROUND

The impact of the financial crisis coupled with a wave of austerity measures currently being implemented across many Member States and future demographic challenges has stressed the need to improve the cost-effectiveness of health systems across Europe. However, Member States are under increasing pressure to strike the balance between ensuring universal access to high quality, responsive health services whilst respecting budgetary constraints.

The proposed programme looks to build upon both the first public health programme (2003 – 2008) and the second public health programme (2008 – 2013), which have helped to deliver a number of developments and improvements. The proposed third programme will focus on 'Health for Growth', and will seek to strengthen and emphasise the link between a healthy population as a key driver for economic growth. The programme will be geared towards actions with clear EU added value and that are in line with the Europe 2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (2).

It is in this context that the Health for Growth programme will operate and will look to support Member States' efforts to improve the sustainability of their health systems to ensure that high quality healthcare is provided to all citizens now and into the future (2).

¹ At current prices.

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III. MAIN ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAMME

The general objective of the Health for Growth Programme is to work with the Member States to encourage innovation in healthcare, increase the sustainability of health systems, to improve the health of the EU citizens and to protect them from cross-border health threats.

The new programme will focus on fewer but more specific actions of proven EU added value that will deliver concrete results and respond to identified needs or gaps. The programme seeks to improve the way Member States cooperate in the area of health and to provide leverage for the reform of national health policies. It will

introduce a number of new elements such as:

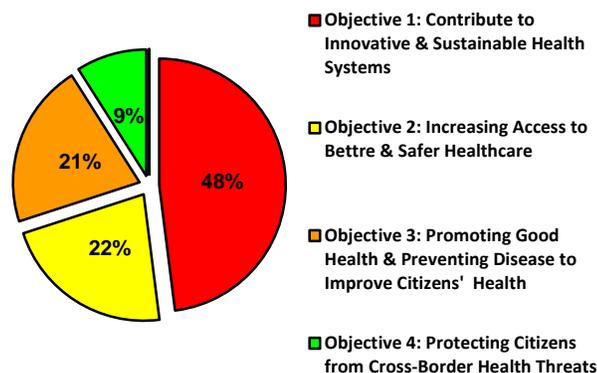
- Progress indicators to measure and monitor the objectives and impact of the programme;
- EU added value as a key determinant in setting the priorities for the annual work plans;
- Improved dissemination and communication of the results of projects;
- Incentives to encourage greater participation of Member States with lower Gross National Income in the programme (2).

To achieve these objectives the programme focuses on four specific objectives:

Objective One: Contribute to Innovative & Sustainable Health Systems

This objective will work to address some of the most complex challenges facing health systems across Europe. The programme will encourage Member States in the adoption of health technology assessments² (HTA). This will be developed through an EU wide voluntary network which will provide a transparent evidence base for decision makers on the taking up and phasing out of health technologies in order to maximise health budgets, and provide the best treatment to patients. Particular assistance will be given to Member States who have limited experience in this area. In addition, the programme will continue to support the development and evaluation of new

Health for Growth Programme Financial Distribution 2014 - 2020



Disclaimer: this graph represents a rough overview of the financial allocations in the Health for Growth Programme 2014-2020

² Health technology is the application of scientific knowledge in health care and disease prevention. Health technology assessment (HTA) is a multidisciplinary process that summarises information about the medical, social, economic, and ethical issues related to the use of health technology in a systematic, transparent, unbiased and robust manner. http://ec.europa.eu/health/technology_assessment/policy/index_en.htm

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health technologies with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and to identify cost effective health intervention methods.

Moreover, the programme will look to further stimulate the use of e-health solutions. Action proposed include the establishment of a non-exhaustive list of data that is to be included in patient records and developing effective methods for allowing use of medical information for public health purposes and research, including patient registers (3).

Under this objective, the EC will attempt to build an evidence base of information in order to provide advice to Member States on how to organise and manage their health systems better (3). Potential advice can take the form of technical evaluation of the consequences of policy action, or of analysis of the expected outcomes of different and possibly conflicting policies. A mechanism for pooling existing expertise at EU level will be initiated in 2012 in order to develop this capacity.

The programme will address health workforce issues through the identification and promotion of successful strategies for recruitment in the health sector as well as encouraging cross-border education and training³. The existing tools and instruments that exist within the framework of the European Innovation Partnership on Action and Healthy Ageing will be examined with a view to assisting the rolling out of the strategic development implementation plan and its proposed areas for action.

- ***The total sum committed to this objective over the lifespan of the programme is €194,331 million which represents approximately 48% of the total budget (4). The main legislative dossier covered in this objective is on medical devices.***

Objective Two: Increasing Access to Better & Safer Healthcare for EU Citizens

This objective is generally responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of many of the aspects in the Patient's Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare Directive. The main aim of the actions proposed under this objective is to pool medical expertise and knowledge in order to improve access to diagnosis and provision for all patients requiring highly specialised care for a specific disease or group of diseases. The programme will support the implementation and accreditation of the European Reference Networks system⁴, which will develop and exchange shared solutions, guidelines, and best practices for healthcare quality and patient safety across the EU. Additionally, the programme will look to increase collaboration on patient safety and quality of care to expand patients' options in terms of the cross-border possibilities available to them by increasing the availability of information and the transparency on care delivery which would help to achieve improved healthcare outcomes (3).

- ***The total sum committed to this objective over the lifespan of the programme is €89.069 million which represents approximately 22% of the total budget (4). The main legislative dossiers covered in this objective is on Substances of Human Origin (blood, tissues, cells and organs) and Patients' Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare.***

³ Supporting implementation by Member States of the WHO Code of Practice on the international recruitment of health personnel in the EU-specific context of free mobility of persons and services.

⁴ European Reference Networks: bring together, on a voluntary basis, specialised healthcare centres across the EU to make it easier for patients to access highly specialised care.

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Objective Three: Promoting Good Health & Preventing Diseases to Improve Citizens' Health

This objective will identify, disseminate and promote the up-take of validated best practices for cost-effective prevention measures, by addressing key risk factors, with a focus on the cross border dimension, in order to prevent diseases and promote good health (3). Under this objective, the programme will promote actions that address major health determinants such as nutrition, obesity, poor diet and alcohol-related harm; increasing rates of participation in physical activity for children and adults; reducing exposure to tobacco smoke and developing platforms on prevention against smoking (to replace the current on-going anti-tobacco campaign); and provide on-going support on effective prevention of HIV/AIDS (3). It will do this through a series of measures including:

- Supporting and accelerating the take-up of best practices by Member States;
- Supporting existing EU strategies;
- Fostering effective cooperation between Member States;
- Establishing an EU-level validation mechanism that will demonstrate how practices and community-based intervention can be assessed with a view to sustainable implementation at the level of whole populations;
- Supporting adequate dissemination and evaluation methods (3).

In relation to chronic diseases, the programme will provide support for innovative approaches⁵ to tackle chronic diseases through health promotion and prevention, healthcare, information and research activities. Finally, actions to support the development of high-quality population-based organised screening programmes for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer will be supported while the programme will also support the update/revision of the EU cancer-screening guidelines and the development of further, science-based European guidelines for scaled-up cancer prevention (3).

- ***The total sum committed to this objective over the lifespan of the programme is €85,02 million which represents approximately 21% of the total budget (4). The main legislative dossier covered in this objective is on the Tobacco Product directive and Tobacco Advertising Directive.***

Objective Four: Protecting Citizens from Cross-Border Health Threats

The programme will support the implementation of the EU legislation on health threats and EU action in the field of public health crisis management. The following components of crisis management will be examined and addressed in order to improve Member States' capacity to deal with such threats: preparedness and response planning; risk and crisis communication; capacity building for risk assessment and training; and exchanges of best practice and

⁵ Based on the identified in the Council Conclusions on innovative approaches for chronic diseases in public health and health care systems, December 2010:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/118282.pdf

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experience. Actions will also support measures designed to monitor and provide early warnings of health threats with a view to combating them more effectively.

- ***The total sum committed to this objective over the lifespan of the programme is €36.437 million which represents approximately 9% of the total budget (4). The main legislative dossier covered in this objective is Health Security.***

IV. HOW WILL THE NEW PROGRAMME OPERATE?

The Programme is open to all EU Member States, EFTA/EEA countries, countries acceding to the EU, candidate countries and potential candidates, as well as countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy, as long as membership of the programme remains in accordance with the conditions of their bilateral or multilateral agreements (4).

The Programme will fund grants and public procurement contracts for public or private bodies, national authorities, European NGOs and international organisations which seek to develop innovative solutions which improve the quality, efficiency and sustainability of health systems (4). The level of EC co-financing for grants for projects and joint actions will be harmonised at 60% of eligible costs and up to 80% in cases of exceptional utility⁶. For operating grants, the funding process will be simplified in particular through the use of framework contracts.

In addition, the new programme will be implemented through annual work programmes that will set out the priorities and actions to be undertaken. This approach of identifying strategic actions will result in a reduction in the overall number of actions per year according to the EC, as this will allow for greater focus on the priority areas and better use of human and financial resources.

The implementation and management of the new programme will be simplified for example through electronic applications and smaller number of projects and actions. Dissemination of results will be improved so that Member States and the health community can make better use of them.

V. NEXT STEPS

This proposal for will now be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, with a view to adoption by the end of 2013 to allow for the start of the new Programmes in 2014.

EuroHealthNet will play an active role in the co-decision making process, particularly in the European Parliament, during the coming two year period before implementation.

⁶ This figure rises to 80% in exceptional cases, such as for Member States with a low Gross National Income participating in joint actions.

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VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a Health for Growth Programme, the third multi-annual programme of EU action in the field of health for the period 2014 – 2020": http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/prop_prog2014_en.pdf
- European Commission Citizen's Summary on the Proposed EU Health for Growth Programme (2014 – 2020): http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/summary_prog_en.pdf
- European Commission, "Impact Assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Health for Growth Programme, the third programme of the EU action in the field of health for the period 2014 – 2020": http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/ia_progr2014_en.pdf
- EuroHealthNet 2011, Policy Briefing on the European Commission proposal for a Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020: <http://eurohealthnet.eu/sites/eurohealthnet.eu/files/publications/20110725%20-%20EU%20Budget%20Final-JC.pdf>

VII. NOTES

- 1) The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:SOM:EN:HTML>
- 2) European Commission, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a Health for Growth Programme, the third multi-annual programme of EU action in the field of health for the period 2014 – 2020": http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/prop_prog2014_en.pdf
- 3) European Commission, "Impact Assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Health for Growth Programme, the third programme of the EU action in the field of health for the period 2014 – 2020": http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/ia_progr2014_en.pdf
- 4) European Commission, MEMO: Q&A Health and Consumers Programme 2014-2020: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/764&format=PDF&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



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