

Oral Statement by EuroHealthNet

Requested for Regional Committee 69th
Session Provisional Agenda item 5 (a) on
Promoting Health Equity in the WHO
European Region



EuroHealthNet, the European Partnership for Health, Equity and Wellbeing, welcomes the Draft Resolution ***“Accelerating progress towards healthy prosperous lives for all, increasing equity in health and leaving no one behind in the European Region.”*** We congratulate the WHO Regional Office and Member States responsible for organising the conference held in Ljubljana in June, in which EuroHealthNet and many of its members were pleased to participate and contribute.

EuroHealthNet’s mission has prioritised health and social equity within and between European states for over two decades. We shall seek to continue to contribute to the work and objectives of WHO globally and regionally, plus its Member States, as appropriate.

We also continue to advise the Institutions and Programmes of the European Union, as it reaches the landmark of a decade since publication of its Communication ***“Solidarity in Health”*** on tackling health inequalities. We already support the EU **Joint Action Health Equity Europe, JAHEE**. We are reinvigorating **our own health equity online Portal**. This will update on new initiatives plus new ways to stimulate innovative and equitable investments, as a part of the WHO Europe **Coalition of Partners**.

The Resolution’s request to place health equity at the centre of sustainable development and inclusive economies offers potentially important progress. We welcome its call for organisations and partnerships such as ours to ***“engage in and support”*** its implementation. We will do whatever we can. But in order to do so effectively, we make a respectful request in turn: that true partnership working should be better understood and practiced by all International and national bodies.

Evidence shows that effective involvement of all affected stakeholders at all stages and all levels – **including design, initiation and evaluation of actions, as well as implementation** – needs to be intrinsic, not just tokenistic. That means better involving dynamic sub national and civil society bodies, who have so much potential to help - if they are valued and their capacities are enhanced.

We and others can be a crucial part of the solutions. **No International Organisation, State or stakeholder can achieve these complex, challenging but vital objectives alone**. That is partly why progress has been variable and slow. Of course, that is in addition to common wider problems of tackling symptoms rather than underlying causes of inequities, as Professor Sir Michael Marmot has so vividly demonstrated. That too should change.

Our website www.eurohealthnet.eu includes links to our work and yours, from research outcomes to practice models and examples, to policy recommendations. They will support this Resolution’s call and its aim - to accelerate slow progress to overcome the persistent inequities in health and its determinants which blight and damage all our systems, countries and communities.

We know enough to act. We are ready, willing and able to help play our active part.

EuroHealthNet, September 2019