



Report Health and Migration Advisory Group Meeting 25-26 February 2008

This was the third meeting of the Health and Migration Advisory Group. The group was originally convened to provide advice and support on the issues of health and migration which were prioritised by the Portuguese Presidency (July-December 2007). There were 45 participants at the meeting including representatives from Member States, World Health Organization, Council of Europe as well as project leaders and participants from migration and health related projects from the Public Health Programme, invited experts and staff from the Commission services and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. The meeting was chaired by Michael Hübel (DG SANCO). The agenda for the meeting is attached to this note and the presentations from the meeting are available on request and through the web site of the EU Public Health Executive Agency.

The main objectives were to:

- provide an update on recent activities in health and at EU and international levels
- review and create linkages with current projects on health and migration funded under the public health programme.
- consider related EU policy developments in the areas of public health; migration; employment. equal opportunities and research.
- exchange information and contribute to the planning and organization of future work on the topic of health and migration.

Recent EU and international activities on health and migration.

The conference "Health and Migration: Better Health for All in an Inclusive Society" took place in Lisbon in September. It was a highly successful meeting with participation of several ministers, the WHO Director General and the Commissioner for Health Markos Kyprianou. Many of the members of the Advisory Group were also present. The conference conclusions informed the development of Council Conclusions and are annexed to them.

The Council agreed Conclusions on Health and Migration in December 2007. The Conclusions recognise the right of migrants for health protection and for access to preventive health care and medical treatment. They also note the special health needs of many migrants and the importance of health for migrant's integration. They stress that addressing the health needs of migrants is fundamental to achieving the best level of health for everyone living in the EU as well as recognising the importance of cross sectoral and international action to achieve this.

Two technical reports, one on good practice and the other providing an overview of health and migration issues, were produced for the conference. These are now published and available for download from the former Portugal Presidency website. The Advisory Group made an important contribution to the production of the reports shaping the structure and helping in identifying examples of good practice.

The Council of Europe eighth ministerial conference 'People on the Move: Human Rights and Challenges for Healthcare Systems' took place in Bratislava in November 2007. The conference adopted the Bratislava Declaration on Health, Human Rights and Migration. The Council of Europe are currently establishing a committee of experts on health and migration. Following the recommendations of the Bratislava Declaration it will develop an ethical and human rights based framework for managing the patients' and health professionals' mobility between the CoE member states. It will concentrate on particularly vulnerable categories of migrants (undocumented migrants, internally displaced persons) but may also include the ethical aspects of migration of health service professionals. The expert committee will be composed of eight people nominated by Member States at the coming meeting of the European Health Committee (CDSP) in June. There is the possibility for a small number of additional participants from academic and civic society to be invited as observers or as "virtual experts" (participating through electronic means). Members of the group who were interested in participating were invited to contact Mr Piotr Mierzewski from the Council of Europe. The proposals should be formally presented by the member states at the CDSP meeting.

The Executive Board of the World Health Organization took a decision at its last meeting in January 2008 to recommend a resolution on the health of migrants to the next World Health Assembly (WHA). The resolution calls among other things, for Member States to promote equitable access to health promotion and care for migrants, subject to national laws and practices and devise mechanisms to enhance migrant's health. It calls upon the Director General of WHO to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the WHA in 2010. WHO also intends to establish a global consultation on the issue. Member States who are interested in getting further information are invited to contact Dr Lopez Acuna.

Presentations from projects

Please see EU Public Health Executive Agency web site for copies of the presentations.

Presentations from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and Commission Services.

Please see EU Public Health Executive Agency web site for copies of the presentations.

Discussion on next steps.

This was discussed firstly in two groups, one of which focussed on cooperation between projects and the other on Member States.

Project coordinators expressed their willingness to work together and build complementarities and share the knowledge base by developing a common taxonomy, organising meetings and exchange of methods and tools.

Following the typology of the projects they will be pooled in four main areas: undocumented, information gathering, HIV prevention and ethnic minorities. The Public Health Executive Agency (PHEA) Project Officer and the AMAC project will produce a matrix to perform an analysis of the projects in order to identify overlaps potential synergies and knowledge gaps.

A similar initiative will be developed at national level, based on the list of partners of the projects per country in order to facilitate common activities and sharing of information.

Communication channels should be created through the link to PHEA, through participation in relevant meetings at European Events, like EUPHA conferences and possibly by organising a major International event to highlight the political momentum and the common values and experiences shared by the European experts involved in the Public Health projects.

The MIGHEALNET project can be used as a knowledge base repository, where experiences identified at the project and national authority levels can be brought together.

There was a consensus that the work of the health and migration advisory group was useful to Member States. Input from other EU policy areas was particularly appreciated. There were a number of strands for further work. These included:

- through the French, and other presidencies of the Council. France is expecting to host a number of high level meetings on migration during its presidency.
- follow up of the Council of Europe resolution on health and migration and the CoE expert group.
- the WHO global consultation on migrants health.

Mechanisms will be developed to improve the coordinate and synergy of the various projects relating to migrant health funded through the EU Public Health Programme. One of these, the AMAC project, plans to hold a meeting in 2009 to which it will invite Member State representatives. The Italian National Institute on Health and Migration is also considering hosting a meeting to which it will invite scientific institutes.

The European Commission will continue to facilitate exchange of information and coordination of policies between Member States in this area and will discuss with Member States the most appropriate mechanisms for doing so within the context of the development of structures for implementation of the EU Health Strategy (2008-2013).