

Report back to High Level  
Committee on Health on Parallel  
Session on Social Determinants  
and Health Inequalities

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# The situation across the EU

- Health gaps are unacceptable and are widening
- There is an economic burden to health inequalities
- Social solidarity is threatened as a result of health inequalities
- There is a need to link in with the Lisbon Agenda and sustainable development in a clear manner
- It is a shared priority for MS to reduce health inequalities

# Follow up from UK Summit

- Very successful summit on tackling health inequalities highlighted the need:
  - To collect and share evidence of effective strategies, policies and actions
  - For MS to develop cross-government policies
  - For the Commission to support MS to achieve change in this sector
  - For research on the impact of interventions designed to tackle health inequalities

# Current actions at Commission level

- Public health programme already funded a number of projects
  - e.g Closing the Gap
- Results from these projects should feed into the work of the new expert group
- The Commission is currently supporting communication and action between MS

# National examples

- France - bringing a focus on vulnerable groups in all thematic priorities
- Wales - Health services with a strong preventive focus – Designed for Life
- Lithuania - Quantitative health target on reducing health inequalities through close partnership for health between ministries
- Finland – Development of cross sectoral dialogue

# Actions at MS – EU interface

- Documentation of specific examples of impact of health inequalities possibly by concrete examples e.g. effect on GDP
- Providing convincing economic evidence of the link with health inequalities is very difficult
- Evaluation of impact assessment reports for the health and health inequality dimension is important
- Evaluation of national health policies for their impact on health inequalities

# Intersectoral work

- There is a need for Health Ministries to communicate openly with other sectors to engage with work on health inequalities
- The link between health inequalities and economic growth needs to be highlighted in order to assist health inequalities to be firmly and centrally on the policy agenda

# Areas for EU action

Expert group on health inequalities could focus on:

- Tobacco
  - Tackle illicit trade possibly as a topic for the first FCTC
- Food
  - Tackle promotion and marketing of foodstuffs to children
- Alcohol
  - Address marketing of alcohol to young people



# Role of the future expert group process

- This group should be established as a sub-committee of the HLCH and report regularly to the HLCH
- A proposed work plan with feasible tangible outputs should be approved at the next HLCH meeting and a time frame for reporting should be set
- The primary purpose of the group is to advise MS and the Commission, but participation of outside experts and International bodies is important

# Role of the future expert group content

- The economic consequences of health inequalities for the EU
- Survey of EU policies to see how they can work to reduce health inequalities
  - e.g. ways in which structural funds could be used to address health inequalities
- Provision of evidence that MS and Commission could utilise to influence European initiatives coming up in the next two years
- Mapping of different ways of tackling the issue at EU level
  - e.g. FP7, new public health programme

# Summary of proposed changes to mandate

- HLCH subcommittee
- EEA membership
- Interface between **policies**, projects and activities
- Importance of linking in with International organisations
- To consider the impact of EU policies on health inequalities