



Special Report of the Court of Auditors No 2/2009

The European Union's Public Health Programme (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health?

Jean-Luc SION
Head of Finance Section SANCO C1 "Health Programme and Knowledge Management" , DG SANCO

EU Health Policy Forum

16 October 2009



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health?

- Limited scope of the ECA audit: Health determinants strand only.
- Limited sample of projects: 36 projects out of 149 in strand.
- Only the first three years (2003-2005) of implementation examined.



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

■ Recommendation 1

In order to address the current imbalance between objectives and means, any successor programme should be assigned better targeted programme objectives which are more in line with its budgetary means.



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

- Commission has taken steps, in the last few years, to streamline programme management and implementation with the establishment of an Executive Agency for the programme.
- The area of health determinants is a broad area which generates much political interest. Given the limited number of funds available, concentrating these on specific areas and actions is a challenge.
- Through the PHP the Commission has been able to initiate actions in several key areas of public health which supported and underpinned policy development.



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

■ Recommendation 2

Where the current PHP (2008-2013) is concerned, the Commission should undertake a mapping exercise in order to gain an overview of projects undertaken and their results to identify the existing overlaps and any remaining gaps in its project portfolio.

The number of annual 'action areas' should be significantly reduced, and they should be focused on strategic priorities.



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

- The mapping exercise recommended by the CoA was done as part of the Interim evaluation of 2003 - 2007 PHP in 2007.
- It identified areas for improvement and measures have been implemented or are being implemented in the management of Health Programme 2008-2013.
- This is particularly the case for avoiding duplication of action between the programmes from different DG's.
- The Commission intends to carry out such a mapping exercise annually for the current PHP (2008-2013).



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

- With the creation of EAHC the design and monitoring of projects undertaken has improved.
- The 'guide for applicants' used since 2006 instructs applicants to use the latest generally accepted principles for project management.
- The negotiation process ensures that objectives are actually fixed in the grant agreement, and the project officers of EAHC, ensure their application throughout the project duration.



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

■ Recommendation 3

For the period after 2013, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission should reconsider the scope for EU public health activities and the approach to EU funding in this area. This should be done bearing in mind the budgetary means available and the existence of other cooperation mechanisms (such as the "open method of coordination") as a means of facilitating collaboration and the exchange of information among stakeholders throughout Europe.

The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

- Public Health activities are defined within limits of Article 152 and the intervention logic of the Public Health Programme has been confirmed in both 2000 and 2007 EU Health Strategies approved by Council and Parliament.
- Both Public Health Programmes have been approved by EP and Council
- Member States, given their role in the Programme Committee, have an opportunity to influence the number of objectives of the Annual Work Programmes.



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

In a resolution approved on 30-09-2009,
the Council recognises :

- the improved management since creation of EAHC
- the European Added Value of PHP



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

The Council further invites Commission and Member States to :

- assign clear targeted objectives
- ensure greater clarity of intervention logic
- ensure a limited number of annual priorities

The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

European Parliament (CONT-Com)
examined a resolution on 1-10-2009.

It considers that :

- PHP objectives were neither clear nor adjusted to available budgets
- dilution has decreased the quality of PHP



The EU PHP (2003-2007): An Effective Way to Improve Health ?

It further invites Commission to :

- report on outcome of mapping exercises
- focus on networks and exchange of best practice
- use more open methods of coordination
- set out an explicit intervention logic



How to find the report?

ECA web-site

<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/2780293.PDF>

This paper was produced for a meeting organized by Health & Consumers DG and represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumers DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.