



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

**HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL CARE**

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| <b>Document:</b> Information on Health in Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion |                              |
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| <b>To:</b> Members   | <b>From:</b> Secretariat     |
| <b>Action:</b> For information.  |                              |

## **Information on Health in Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion**

On 5 July 2005, the Commission adopted a proposal for Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion, setting priorities on the use of the Structural and Cohesion Funds, which includes investment in health.

The draft guidelines present a "healthy workforce" as one of the objectives of cohesion policy and stress the role of health in boosting productivity and competitiveness. The guidelines also emphasise the link between health, ageing and workforce participation and underline the impact of prevention and health promotion on competitiveness.

These draft guidelines are intended to steer Member States' National Strategic reference frameworks for cohesion 2007-2013, i.e. the national plans detailing how each Member State envisages to spend Structural and Cohesion Funds during this period. Therefore, the guidelines will contribute to raising awareness on the health gap and on the need to invest in health prevention and promotion and encourage the use of the Structural Funds for this purpose. Such guidelines will be adopted by the Council by unanimity, 3 months after its adoption of the regulation on the general provisions on the ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund (adoption due in 2006, linked to the debate on the financial perspectives).

In this context, the Commission has just launched an open consultation - up to 30 September - regarding those aspects of cohesion policy that should be emphasised in the final version of the guidelines. The Commission's Directorate General for Regional Policy will prepare a report on the results of consultation and forward it to the Council.

Following a Ministerial meeting in May 2005 at which Member States were consulted, it is important that national governments make their views known on the draft guidelines as submitted by the Commission in July. In particular those Member States with particular needs for further investment in their health systems may wish to ensure that health is kept as a key objective of cohesion policy and the Structural Funds in the final version of the guidelines.

Members of the High Level Group may therefore wish to play an active part in formulating their authorities' response to this consultation, which will be particularly important in setting out the future framework for health investment in the EU.

The consultation is available at:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/consultation/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/consultation/index_en.htm)