



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL CARE

Document: Minutes of the meeting of the High Level Group on 14 September 2006	
Date: 3 November 2006	Reference: HLG/2006/10
To: Members	From: Secretariat
Action: For information.	



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Brussels, 3 November 2006

HLG/2006/10

**MEETING OF THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL CARE
14 SEPTEMBER 2006, BRUSSELS**

Subject: Minutes of the meeting

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Participants were welcomed to the meeting of the High Level Group (HLG) by the chairman, Mr Madelin. A list of participants is attached. The draft agenda (HLG/2006/7) was adopted.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 7 June 2006 were adopted (HLG/2006/6).

3. HEALTH SERVICES INITIATIVE

The Commission informed the HLG about recent developments regarding the health services initiative. The Commission is planning to launch a public consultation on this subject before the end of September, on the basis of a Commission communication. The public consultation should be open at least until the end of the year.

4. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM WORKING GROUPS TO REPORT TO COUNCIL

Health professionals

In 2006 the working group conducted a study in monitoring impact of professional mobility in six Member States. Only limited data are available, however, the study suggests that cross-border mobility of health professionals within EU remains limited overall, though it may increase in the future. The group agreed that a set of key indicators on professional mobility should be created and asks the Commission to advise how this might best be done.

Another study was carried out amongst the group members on current practice with regard to ethics and recruitment practices. Following the EU consensus statement on the

international crisis in human resources for health, made by the GAERC of 10 April 2006, the possibility of developing guidelines for international recruitment should be considered.

The working group also continued to exchange information on arrangements/requirements for continuing professional development.

Cross-border healthcare purchasing and provision (including patient rights)

As from beginning of 2007, new co-chairs of the working group from Slovakia and Spain were appointed.

The Guidelines on cross-border healthcare purchasing and provision developed by this working group in 2005 are now translated in all EU languages and available on the Commission website.

The working group conducted a mapping exercise on common principles of care, based on the replies from the members to a questionnaire. This mapping exercise is now almost ready. After final revision and approval of the group, it will be published on the Commission's website.

As regards gathering of data about trends and impacts of cross-border care, the group indicated that there is a serious lack of hard data available. The same applies to analysing of financial impacts of cross-border care. The working group therefore recommends to work closely with the Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers on the issue of data collection.

European reference networks

The main tasks for this working group for 2006 were to start testing this agreed concept of European reference networks on the pilot projects and to continue working on the issues that needed further investigation or which have not yet met a consensus, in particular organisational and governance issues related to the establishment of ENCR.

At this meeting it was agreed that the working group should be re-named to "Working group on European reference networks". This reflects better the field of activity of the working group and approach taken by the working group.

The working group also developed a paper "Options for procedure of identification and development of European reference networks". This paper is attached as an Annex to the 2006 HLG Report. It outlines some options identified by the working group so far, but could be still modified in the future, for example on the basis of experience gained from the pilot projects. The working group recommends that Ministers consider whether these principles and options represent a good basis for future work.

The working group further recommends that the definition of common principles and criteria for identification and development of European Reference Networks should be adopted at the European Level. Finally, development of methodology to assess benefits of establishing and supporting the European reference networks from the perspective of different stakeholders should be supported by the Commission.

Health impact assessment and health systems

The results of the work of this working group in 2006 are the following: The Group is able to present a webTool incorporating a manual, the health systems impact cube, and a policy assessment. They have also set up a Network of Member States experts for Health Systems which is nearly complete and which has been consulted on the policy assessment during August. Due to a delay in delivery of the policy assessment by the WHO Observatory, there has not been time to pilot the Tool as planned ahead of the report to the Council. Nevertheless, the Group has succeeded in delivering its products. This is outlined in the 2006 HLG Report and in its Annexes 2 and 3.

Patient Safety

The working group agreed its draft contribution to the 2006 HLG Report and adopted it without modifications.

In 2006 concrete project proposals developed by the group members applied for support from the Public Health Programme. However, none of these projects were recommended for funding in the evaluation of proposals. The working group therefore decided to change its approach and to take this work forward within a single integrated framework involving all Member States.

A drafting group was set up to develop a first draft of a Recommendation on patient safety. The Recommendation should be ready by November 2006.

Another objective of the Working Group has been to have initial discussions about developing a comprehensive European framework for patient safety. The next step in this regard has to be a political commitment by the Member States to be actively engaged in promoting patient safety both nationally and across Europe as a whole.

Information and eHealth

This working group did not meet. It was agreed that the issues covered by this working group have been effectively taken over by the working group lead by DG INFSO. The Commission (DG INFSO) therefore provided an update on the work of the i2010 subgroup on eHealth.

5. FINALISATION OF REPORT TO COUNCIL

The revised version of the draft Report was agreed, subject to some drafting modifications as indicated during the discussion. The Secretariat will re-circulate the revised version of the Report for a written approval by the group. The Report should be ideally finalised before the end of September so that it could be formally submitted to the Council.

The Finish Presidency informed the group that the Report will be on the agenda of the November Health Council as a point for discussion and the Council conclusions on the Report should be adopted. For that purpose summary of the Report will be translated in all 20 EU languages.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 9 November 2006. However, chairs of the working groups should indicate to the Secretariat whether their working groups need to meet in November.

- - -