

**Decision
of the *Bundesrat***

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a Health for Growth Programme, the third multi-annual programme of EU action in the field of health for the period 2014–2020**COM(2011) 709 final; Council document 16796/11**

At its 891st session on 16 December 2011, the German *Bundesrat* adopted the following position in accordance with sections 3 and 5 of the Act on cooperation between the federal and *Länder* authorities in European Union affairs (*EUZBLG*):

1. The *Bundesrat* welcomes the follow-up to the existing health programmes in the form of a third such programme, but notes that the amount of funding allocated to this important policy area is relatively small.
2. The *Bundesrat* supports the Commission's approach, which is to focus on a limited number of individual goals and pursue the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. However, it regrets that Europe 2020's core objective of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million by the year 2020 is not taken into account. Reference is made in this connection to the 'healthy life years' indicator. Early illnesses are to some extent linked to low income levels and lead to reduced participation in working life.
3. The *Bundesrat* regrets that the Commission does not present a health strategy to accompany the health programme and has not undertaken a public consultation. An overall EU strategy should provide a basis for the new health programme from 2014.
4. The *Bundesrat* would have preferred the Commission to carry out and present the mapping exercise and evaluation of the results of the first two health programmes (tasks which are explicitly earmarked for financing) before publishing the proposal for a new health programme.
5. The *Bundesrat* notes that not all vital areas and issues are covered by the new health programme, and that new concepts and tools are introduced, the content and scope of which are not always clear. This applies in particular to the development of common tools and mechanisms at EU level under the health programme's first objective. It is therefore necessary to avoid duplication of work with the existing 'open method of coordination' in the field of health and long-term care (the latter is not mentioned in the health programme). The design of tools and mechanisms must not lead to a further long-term increase in costs and administration for the Member States. In particular, with reference to Article 13(2) of the proposal for a Regulation, there should not be any new and burdensome reporting obligations for the Member States.
6. The *Bundesrat* assumes that the division of responsibilities between the EU and the Member States and also within the Member States will be taken into account and that

the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality will be observed. In this context, the evidence-based innovation targeted by the Commission as a solid steering instrument for structural reform must be examined particularly carefully, primarily by means of testing.

7. The *Bundesrat* regrets that the regions and municipalities do not play a part in the programme. The priority tasks of non-governmental bodies and health stakeholders are considered to be the provision of the necessary information and advice for the Commission. The *Bundesrat* regards it as essential for the design and implementation of the health programme not only to provide the groundwork for the European level; the regions, municipalities and non-governmental organisations should also be given targeted support in the form of preparation, assessment and dissemination of policy approaches, experience, projects and studies. In this connection, the use of the official languages assumes great importance on the spot.
8. The *Bundesrat* notes in the proposal for a Regulation the Commission's intention to develop common measures by providing funding. Against the background of experience with previous joint actions, the *Bundesrat* specifically refers to the willingness of the German *Länder* to participate in such actions. It calls on the Commission to seek and identify joint action participants through a transparent and balanced process and to involve the regional level in the Member States in a suitable manner, already at the preparatory stage.
9. The *Bundesrat* asks the Commission to present criteria for the selection of the various financial instruments (e.g. project promotion, joint actions, service contracts), so as to improve selection transparency. In the case of service contracts, the *Bundesrat* calls for the resources from the overall budget to be clearly specified already in the programme decision. The results of service contracts should in future be made available to the Member States following conclusion.
10. The *Bundesrat* is forwarding this position directly to the Commission.