

Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases

Mandate for a temporary sub-group on “Healthier together: EU Non-communicable Diseases Initiative”

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this mandate is to set out the rationale, objectives, tasks and planned outputs for the temporary sub-group on “Healthier together: EU Non-communicable Diseases Initiative” under the rules described in the Commission Decision setting up the "Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases (SGPP)"¹.

The SGPP sub-group “Healthier together: EU Non-communicable Diseases Initiative” (the sub-group) is set up to advise the Commission about the implementation of the “Healthier together: EU Non-communicable Diseases Initiative” (Initiative), thus contributing to increase the impact of EU action to reduce the burden of the non-communicable diseases while reducing related health inequalities. Among others, it will provide feedback and input to the Initiative, and help identify best and innovative practices, guidelines and research results to be transferred to the ground and highlight complementarities and synergies with other related policies and sectors, namely with the Europe’s beating Cancer Plan and the related structures implementing it. The sub-group will also promote the actions at national level and areas for targeted collaboration with stakeholders such as professional associations.

2. BACKGROUND

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) account for 86% of deaths and 77% of the disease burden in the EU². The costs of treating NCDs are high and expected to grow further, considering also the EU’s ageing population.

Improved health promotion and disease prevention can reduce the prevalence of NCDs by as much as 70%, whereas preventive healthcare spending in the EU on average is only 2.8% of total health expenditure.³ The European Commission aims to support EU Member States in implementing effective policies to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases (in order to reach Target 3.4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), i.e. to reduce premature mortality from NCDs by one third in 2030 through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being.

Doing so would improve overall health, reduce the human and financial burden of disease, contribute to a healthy workforce, and increase the resilience of our societies.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/major_chronic_diseases/docs/c2018_4492_en.pdf

² WHO/Europe | Non-communicable diseases

³ [3% of healthcare expenditure spent on preventive care - Products Eurostat News - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#)

Reflecting this, the EU4Health programme was approved with at least 20% of its budget reserved for health promotion and disease prevention, including cancer.

3. TASKS

Firstly, the sub-group will advise the Commission on implementing the Initiative, providing feedback and input, namely by identifying potential actions in the following five strands:

1. cardiovascular diseases;
2. diabetes;
3. respiratory diseases;
4. mental health and neurological disorders;
5. and a horizontal strand for health determinants (including tobacco, nutrition, physical activity and alcohol, in coordination with the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan).

Although cancer prevention and treatment should definitely be addressed to reach Target 3.4, policy implementation support in this area falls outside the scope of this Initiative, considering that this will be addressed through the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. However, synergy and complementarity with the cancer plan will be sought, especially for the common health determinants. Therefore, the European Commission will ensure that the EU NCDs Initiative sub-group and the sub-group on cancer are mutually informed.

Secondly, it will advise on the identification of potential actions such as transfer of validated best or promising practices, revision of guidance, protocols, screening guidelines or accreditation schemes, preparation of NCDs national action plans, re-organization of prevention and care models, technical and legal preparation for innovative policy initiatives, pilot testing of approaches, preparation of training materials, twinning and sharing actions.

Thirdly, the sub-group will inform on the national and EU-level implementation of NCDs-related actions, report on problems related to the voluntary uptake and/or implementation of action, and provide recommendations to the Commission on ways to support Member States and overcome such difficulties.

The sub-group may provide input and advice on topics related to the reduction of the NCDs' burden in the Member States, with a special focus on prevention, to support and complement the Initiative.

It may also highlight complementarities and synergies with other related policies and sectors, e.g. research, environment, employment and agriculture.

The sub-group will regularly inform the SGPP on the progress made on the Initiative, namely at the SGPP meetings. It may also contribute to the information of the Council and the European Parliament in this regard.

4. ORGANIZATION

The Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety of the Commission will set up the sub-group based on tasks described in this mandate. The sub-group shall operate in compliance with the horizontal rules applicable to expert groups.

The members of the sub-group shall include the nominated expert representatives from Member States. Observers⁴ may be invited to attend.

Member States may nominate as their representatives civil servants or public employees other than their permanent representatives in the SGPP. The Directorate-Generals for Health and Food Safety of the Commission may invite representatives of other Commission services and EU agencies and institutions, as well as experts with specific expertise to the subject matter to take part in the work of the sub-group.

The sub-group will be chaired by the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety of the Commission and a secretariat support will be provided to the sub-group.

Indicatively, the sub-group shall meet physically or virtually at least three times between January and June 2022, and in the second part of 2022 at least twice, after which the SGPP will discuss and agree whether it has reached its objectives and could be dissolved.

5. DURATION

The sub-group shall reach its objectives by the end of 2022, when preparations for the Healthier together: EU Non-communicable Diseases Initiative will be in operation, after which it will be either dissolved or prolonged at the request of the Commission.

⁴ EEA countries