



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL CARE

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Brussels, 16 June 2006

HLG/2006/6

**MEETING OF THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON HEALTH SERVICES AND MEDICAL CARE
7 JUNE 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/2006/3) was adopted.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 22 March 2006 were adopted with the modification suggested by France (HLG/2006/4 REV1).

3. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

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

As agreed at the meeting in March, the working group has conducted a mapping exercise on information to patients in the Member States. 15 Member States contributed to this exercise so far. Six members of the working group volunteered to assist with analysing of the contributions and preparing a summary. The final document would have two parts – an analytical part and a technical annex with an overview of available data.

As regards liability issues, a short document will be prepared by the UK and disseminated to the members of the working group. In the next stage, legal experts from the Member States will be involved in analysing of that document.

Health professionals

The working group at this meeting discussed how to identify key indicators relevant for measuring and analysing health professionals' mobility and whether these indicators are available at EU level. This work will be followed-up at the meeting in September.

Another priority of the working group for this year is issue of ethical aspects of recruitment. On that subject DG Development presented outcomes of the Development Council in April. The Development Council agreed to develop a EU Ethical code for recruitment. The working group will need to monitor closely this initiative and be actively involved.

As regards the working group's third priority, the continuing professional development, the working group was informed that the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) is organising a conference on this topic in December 2006.

It was also agreed that the working group should focus its work rather on concrete political deliverables. It should, for example, recommend to health ministers to be closely involved in activities which are lead primarily by non-health ministries, but which may have impact on health professionals. Further, it should focus in more detail on framework for ethical principles of recruitment. In the future also the issue how structural funds could be used in the Member States for health professionals could be addressed.

Centres of reference

During the meeting of this working group two presentations took place. First, a presentation of the European Association of Rare Diseases (EURORDIS) on the project RAPSODY, which is i.a. addressing an issue of European networks of centres of reference for rare diseases. Second, Prof. Diane Donnai (University of Manchester and North West Regional Genetic Service) presented a health professionals point of view with regard to centres of reference. She also presented an example of already existing network of centres of reference for rare diseases supported from the 5th Framework Research Programme.

The working group also discussed a first draft of the proposal for the procedure for identification and development of European networks of centres of reference. A revised version of this document, taking into account comments from the members of the working group, should be prepared before the meeting in September. The working group agreed that for establishing of a specific mechanism at EU level a special allocation of resources from the EU budget would be needed. The group also agreed to examine how this work could be linked with the planned EU initiative on health services.

Patient Safety

The working group was informed that the project on setting up a European information system on patient safety "EuInfoPas" lead by Denmark was submitted under the 2006 Call for proposals within the Public Health Programme. The group was also informed that a workshop lead by France will be organised in December 2006 and will focus on issues related to setting up of a European network for patient safety.

The working group also agreed that its meeting in November should focus on discussion on EU strategy for patient safety.

Health impact assessment and health systems

The work of this working group is progressing well, although the workplan has been slightly revised:

- a web-based assessment tool (incorporating the Health Systems Impact Cube) is currently being adapted;
- a draft policy assessment will hopefully be ready at the end of June;
- a network of experts on health systems in the Member States is being established. It was recommended that this network is not only a virtual network, but that the experts also actually meet.

Due to a delay with the adoption of the 'Health and safety at work' strategy the pilot study can be only carried out after the September meeting. It will thus not be ready for the December Council, however, the working group may be able to provide some provisional paper.

These issues also fit very well in the programme of the Finnish Presidency with its focus on health in all policies.

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.

4. PREPARATION OF REPORT TO COUNCIL

The Report of the High Level Group for 2006 will be prepared on the basis of the template circulated by the Secretariat (HLG/2006/5). Working groups should prepare their contributions in advance of the September meeting so that only few outstanding issues would be discussed in the meeting itself.

The future Finnish Presidency confirmed that it will try to ensure that the Report would be put on the agenda of the December Council for discussion between ministers.

5. UPDATE ON THE EU HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT NETWORK

Prof. Kristensen, leader of the European network for Health Technology Assessment (EUnetHTA) project, presented the state of play and achieved progress of this project, which has been set up on the basis of recommendations of the High Level Group from 2004. Member States were encouraged to actively take part in this project through an Advisory Group structure.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1. Update on recent development regarding the open method of coordination in healthcare and long-term care

Mr Roland Bladh (Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) presented a short update on the recent development regarding the open method of coordination in healthcare and long-term care. He informed the High Level Group about a special meeting of the Social Protection Committee to discuss healthcare

issues which will take place on 15-16 November 2006. Mr Bladh also informed about a conference on long-term care that will take place on 13 September in Brussels.

6.2. Belgian Non-paper on health services

A Non-paper on health services prepared by Belgium was distributed to the members of the High Level Group and presented by Belgium.

6.3. European Social Fund and Health

Ms Marie Donnelly (Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities) gave a short presentation on areas where support from the European Social Fund could be used for health-related investments. Members of the High Level Group were encouraged to liaise with their colleagues at national level leading the work on structural funds and make their suggestions for health-related investments. The framework which is currently being negotiated between Member States and the Commission will be valid from 2007 until 2013.

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High Level Group on Health Services and Medical Care Meeting of 7 June 2006

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