

Report – EU Expert Group on Social Determinants of Health and Health Inequalities

5-6 April 2011.

The meeting of the EU Expert Group had a particular focus on Roma health in the light of the Commission Communication on an EU framework for National Roma integration strategies up to 2020 which was adopted on 5 April 2011.

Updates from Member States

IT is considering how to translate elements of the Commission Communication into local action and could provide further information to a future meeting,

UK has a recent change of government. Work on health inequalities and social determinants is continuing with a strong theme on fairness and social justice, building on the findings of the Marmot review for England. The health service will have a new health inequalities duty and a reform of public health system which will also have a Health inequalities focus. Other measures include a child poverty initiative.

HU As part of the EU presidency an expert conference on prevention took place in May, which will also consider social determinants. A new Semmelweis plan for the health sector is being implemented. It has a main priority on social determinants.

GR informed about an impact of the financial crisis on health inequalities. Traditional indicators of mortality and morbidity do not reflect the crisis well. Work is continuing on quality of life measures with particular impacts being shown on anxiety and depression (focus on children).

DE has a cooperation network on health inequalities, mentioned at a previous meeting and has produced a report on health inequalities in children and young people. Action is being taken forward by the German Association of Cities and by sickness funds. Four regional conferences took place in the last year on older people's health with an emphasis on social determinants. All Regions have regional hubs on health inequalities, funded by sickness funds. The next annual conference on poverty and health will take place in February 2012 and will have a focus on health inequalities and stakeholder engagement.

DK plans to publish a review of social determinants of health in May 2011 and will circulate an English summary. Further information will be provided at a future meeting.

BE had two conferences during the presidency where HI were highlighted. This has stimulated thinking at both regional and national level on further action.

RO Reducing HI between North and South of Romania is a priority. A national strategy is to be launched on Roma inclusion. A Romanian national strategy for Roma is expected to be adopted in April 2011. Further information will be provided at a future meeting.

SE Following publication of the SE Marmot review a number of regional and local authorities are carrying out similar reviews. A new national health promotion plan has recently been published with more focus on local development.

NO the Norwegian government expects to publish a new public health law shortly. Norway will report back on this at future meeting.

BG health inequalities are a priority for Bulgaria, Bulgaria is engaged in several projects on Roma integration. Further information could be provided at a future meeting.

Update from the Commission

Recent data on the health inequalities situation shows a marked decline in the gap in infant mortality between MS over the last 10 years. Gaps in life expectancy for men and women remain approximately the same with a small decline in the male life expectancy gap in 2009. By contrast SILC data on health by educational and income level show persistent and in some cases increasing gaps. The Eurostat report on life expectancy by education level published in December 2010 shows a 4 to 18 year gap in life expectancy by educational level in those MS which have data available.

Key developments at the EU level include:

- start of the Joint Action on health inequalities (Kick-off meeting in April 2011)
- inclusion of health inequalities as part of the European platform against poverty and social exclusion
- adoption of the [European Parliament resolution](#) of 8 March on reducing health inequalities in the EU
- agreement of a roadmap of action between the European Commission and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe.
- preparation of the United Nations Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases, September 2011, New York
- launch of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIPAH)

The EU Progress programme is supporting 6 projects on health inequalities.

EU action on Roma health

Open Society Institute - Marine Buissonniere

The fundamental rights agency report notes that 17% of Roma had experienced discrimination in health care in the last 12 months. Roma experience shorter life expectancy and higher infant mortality. Main actions by OSI include – capacity building of Roma NGOs and individuals, using legal strategies to combat discrimination in health and holding authorities to account. Current programmes include – leadership in health, health mediators,

and community monitoring – which documents the implementation of commitments. OSI also supports the Roma presence in key European health forums such as EUPHA and EPHA. Important areas to explore are increasing use of the European Social Fund and other funds for Roma health, including Roma health mediators; improving data and indicators. There should be opportunities for involving Roma in the stakeholder activities for the joint action.

Discussion points: The role of health mediators has been important in Romania since 2001. Since 2009 they have been paid by the national government but work at the local level. The 2011 census will attempt to count Roma. There is a major gap in data on Roma at EU level. In Portugal the biggest challenge is the provision of health care for those which are not permanently settled, one way to improve health care in this group is through specialised nurses. ES has been taking forward a national strategy for equity in health of Roma since 2003.

WHO – Johanna Hanefeld

Roma health is a priority for WHO which is currently developing a strategy on Roma inclusion. Work is being taken forward within the governance aspects of improving health systems. Country work is taking place in Serbia and FYROM – including support for the development of a Roma health action plan released in 2010.

FRA- Ludovica Banfi

FRA informed about ongoing and future activities which include the Roma issue. In the autumn the study on "Migrants in an irregular situation: access to healthcare in the European Union" will be launched. FRA also informed about ongoing Roma survey which will collect information such as on household profile, economic situation, employment, education and health. The questionnaire will be finalised in 2011-2012.

EUROFOUND- Daniel Molinuevo

European Foundation for Improvement of Living and Working Conditions informed about the research project on substandard housing in Roma population. The project can help identifying which measures should receive more funding and what is the adequate balance between general housing policies and policies targeting Roma population. The content of the project is associated to the work of the EU Taskforce on Roma Inclusion. The report will be finalised in September and could be launched at the next expert group meeting.

Presentations on country reports (Spain, Czech Republic, Turkey and Portugal) and project reports (Crossing Bridges, AIR and INEQCITIES) are available on the SANCO: [Social determinants and health inequalities](#).

The next meeting of the Expert Group on Social Determinants of Health and Health Inequalities is planned in November 2011.