



The EU and primary care

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Integrated Community Care: a new opportunity for Primary Care

EU health policy: scope

- The primary responsibility for health systems within the EU lies with its **Member States** ([Article 168 TFEU](#)).

“1) A high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Union policies and activities.

2) The Union shall encourage cooperation between the Member States in the areas referred to in this Article and, if necessary, lend support to their action. It shall in particular encourage cooperation between the Member States to improve the complementarity of their health services in cross-border areas.[...]

7) Union action shall respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the definition of their health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. The responsibilities of the Member States shall include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them.”

- However, the EU has many tools that can **support** health systems’ strengthening. The EU **complements national health policies** by supporting local EU governments to **achieve common objectives**: improving public health, preventing and managing diseases, mitigating sources of danger, harmonizing health strategies between Member States.

EU health policy: legislation

The EU can adopt health legislation under **Article 168** (protection of public health) and **Article 114** (single market) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (**TFEU**).

Areas where the EU has adopted **health-related legislation** include:

- [Patients' rights in cross-border healthcare](#)
 - [Pharmaceuticals](#) and [medical devices](#) ([pharmacovigilance](#), [falsified medicines](#), [clinical trials](#), [health technology assessment](#))
 - [Health security and infectious diseases](#)
 - [Digital health and care](#)
 - [Tobacco](#)
 - [Organs, blood, tissues and cells](#)
- The Council of the EU also addresses [recommendations on public health to EU countries](#)
- In addition to **formulating EU-wide laws and standards** for health products and services, the EU provides **considerable funding** for health strengthening projects across the EU (e.g., via the [EU4Health programme](#) and [Horizon Europe – health cluster](#))

Primary Care: the policy narrative

State of Health in the EU: Health at a Glance 2020:

Strengthened primary care systems are key to maintaining continuity of care for non-COVID-19 patients

The emerging evidence described above points to the risks of not giving sufficient weight to non-COVID-19 health care needs, resulting in urgent health problems remaining undiagnosed and exacerbated chronic illnesses. Maintaining primary health care practices, establishing community care facilities, extending home-based programmes, expanding the role of primary health care workers and increasing telemedicine consultations are key to minimise delays and forgone care for all patients.

Primary health care practices, community care facilities and home-based programmes help maintain access to routine care

5. EXPENDITURE ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Effective primary health care is the cornerstone for efficient, people-centred, and equitable health systems. Strengthening primary care has been identified as an effective policy tool to improve care coordination and health outcomes and reduce wasteful spending, by limiting unnecessary hospitalisations and associated costs in hospitals and other parts of the health system. However, in many EU and OECD countries, primary care has not yet fully realised this potential (OECD, 2020).

Expert Panel on effective ways of investing in health - Publications (2)



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KEYWORDS

PUBLICATION TYPE

EXPERT OPINION | 9 FEBRUARY 2018 | EXPERT PANEL ON EFFECTIVE WAYS OF INVESTING IN HEALTH

Tools and methodologies for assessing the performance of primary care

Tools and methodologies for assessing the performance of primary care

EXPERT OPINION | 15 JULY 2014 | EXPERT PANEL ON EFFECTIVE WAYS OF INVESTING IN HEALTH

Definition of a frame of reference in relation to primary care with a special emphasis on financing systems and referral systems

Press release | 28 November 2019 | Brussels

State of Health in the EU: shift to prevention and primary care is the most important trend across countries

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Related documents

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Today the European Commission published the reports that depict the profile of health systems in 30 countries. Country Health Profiles are being issued with the Companion Report that shows some of the biggest trends in the transformation of the healthcare systems and draws key conclusions from the Profiles.

Primary Care: the policy narrative

- Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs): annual policy assessment under the “**European Semester**”

| MS | Healthcare CSRs under European Semester 2022 |
|----|--|
| EE | Improve the affordability and quality of long-term care, in particular by ensuring its sustainable funding and integrating health and social services |
| EL | With a view to ensuring adequate and equal access to health care , complete the rollout of the primary health-care reform in line with the framework amended under enhanced surveillance, including staffing of all primary healthcare units, implementing population registration and introducing effective gatekeeping by general practitioners |
| LV | Broaden taxation, including of property and capital, and strengthen the adequacy of healthcare and social protection to reduce inequality |
| LT | Strengthen primary and preventive care |
| SI | Ensure the long-term fiscal sustainability of the healthcare and long-term care systems . Introduce compensating measures to finalise the shift from labour taxes, including by rebalancing towards more green and growth-friendly taxes |
| HU | Improve access to quality preventive and primary care services |
| NL | Address labour and skills shortages, in particular in healthcare , education, digital and technical jobs and construction, including by tapping underutilised labour potential originating from the high share of part-time employment and the lower employment rate of people with a migrant background |
| PL | Improve the resilience, accessibility and effectiveness of the health system , including by providing sufficient resources to reverse the pyramid of care and accelerating the deployment of e-health services. |

EU funding instruments supporting health systems resilience-building

Focus on collaborative trans-national projects

EU4Health

Horizon Europe

Digital Europe

Interreg projects

Focus on national/regional projects

Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

EU Cohesion Policy funds

Technical Support instrument

InvestEU

Other EIB funding

The *EU4Health* programme (2021-2027)

- EU's response to the health and health systems' crises triggered by COVID-19
- Largest health programme ever - **EUR 5.3 billion** (current prices), 2021- 2027
- **Four main objectives (groups):**



Improve and foster health in the Union



Tackle cross-border health threats



Strengthen health systems, resilience and resource efficiency



Improve medicinal products, medical devices and crisis-relevant products

Best practice exchange and uptake

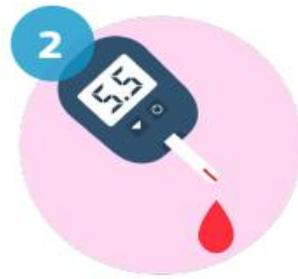
- Some examples of projects funded under the 2014-2020 Health Programme:
 - The projects [VIGOUR](#) (**Evidence-based guidance to scale-up integrated care in Europe**) and [SCIROCCO-Exchange](#) (**Capacity-building for integrated care**) leveraged the experience of the integrated care ‘pioneers’ and **transferred knowledge** to the ‘next adopters’ of integrated care in Europe. Several regional and national authorities benefitted from the knowledge transfer. VIGOUR and SCIROCCO-Exchange finished in June 2022 and May 2022 respectively.
 - The Joint Action [JADECARE](#) (**Joint Action on implementation of digitally enabled integrated person-centred care**) works on the actual **transfer of 4 good practices** from 4 ‘pioneers’ to more than 20 ‘next adopters’, with actual pilots of integrated care carried out by the ‘new adopters’ (care authorities). JADECARE will end in September 2023.
- Project funded by the [Annual Work Programme 2021 EU4Health](#) – **to be launched in 2023:**
 - Joint Action CIRCE on “transfer of best practices in primary care”:
 - 6 practices selected: 1 from BE (region of Wallonia), 3 from ES (regions of Andalusia, Catalonia, Galicia), 1 from PT and 1 from SI
 - Most of them do concern prevention and management of NCDs and multi-morbidities

Healthier together – EU non-communicable diseases initiative

- Initiative (2022-2027) to support EU countries in **identifying and implementing effective policies** and actions to **reduce the burden of major NCDs** and **improve citizens' health and well-being**.
- **Five strands**, all encapsulating a **health equity** dimension (reduction of health inequalities)



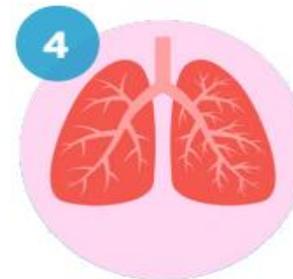
Behavioural health
determinants



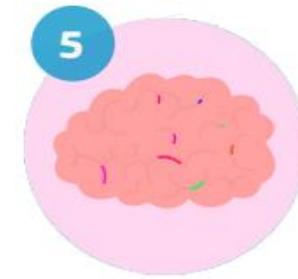
Diabetes



Cardiovascular
diseases



Chronic
respiratory diseases



Mental health and
neurological disorders

- [Guidance document](#) created with relevant stakeholders: a toolkit to identify windows of **opportunity for high-impact actions**:
 - **Uptake of nationwide or EU-level policies**
 - **Transfer of good practices,**
 - **Development and implementation of guidelines and recommendations,**
 - **Piloting and rolling out of innovative approaches**
- Implementation supported by the [EU4Health](#) programme and **other EU programmes (2022 WP: Direct grants to Member States' and calls for proposals on prevention of NCDs - cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and other NCDs)**

Thank you

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