

*TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN
EUROPE*

RECOMMENDATIONS ON EU SUPPORT FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL ACTION ON HEALTH EQUITY

The **Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions**, **EuroHealthNet** and **Euregha** have the following recommendations for the European Institutions when it comes to tackling inequalities in health in Europe and meaningfully involving local and regional authorities:

1. RECOGNIZE THE KEY ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

To recognize the key roles that local and regional authorities play to promote health and reduce inequalities in health by conducting services such as public health, health promotion and disease prevention, social services, employment, education, childcare, housing, transport, planning, environment and public safety.

2. RECOGNIZE THE NEED OF A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO HEALTH EQUITY

To recognize that almost all policies impact on health, and that there is therefore a need for a health in all policies approach at all levels of government, from local and regional to EU level. To support the use of structural and investment funds, health impact assessments and health equity indicators to achieve a whole-of-government approach at the local and regional level, and co-fund capacity building initiatives to facilitate the use of these tools for health equity. To support research on efforts to introduce health in all policies at the local and regional level.

3. HIGHLIGHT THE REDUCTION OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN EU POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

To highlight the issue of health inequalities and the need to reduce them in EU policies, programmes and processes: e.g. in the European semester process, the future European investment plan, the review of the Europe 2020 strategy, the revision of the health strategy, the structural and investment funds, third public health programme, Horizon 2020 (within the various societal challenges strands) and the Employment and Social Innovation programme. To call on the member states to cooperate closely with local and regional authorities to make the Social Investment Package reach out to the subnational level.

4. FACILITATE INCREASED ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

To facilitate the meaningful engagement of and exchange between local and regional authorities in order to identify where and how actions aimed to tackle health inequalities have best effect. It is on the local and regional level where most of the concrete action takes place. The European Commission should therefore support a space for continuous dialogue with regional and local authorities both directly or through European networks that bring these bodies together to ensure that the issue of health inequalities is high on their political agendas and encourage further action to reduce them.

5. FURTHER ENGAGE WITH WHO EUROPE AND ITS NETWORKS

To further engage with the WHO Europe in order to align its policies and share resources with the WHO networks for local and regional authorities such as Healthy Cities, Regions for Health Network, Health Promoting Hospital Network.

These recommendations derived from the seminar "Tackling health inequalities in Europe – What can the EU do to support the work done at local and regional level? 28 October 2014, Brussels. For more information please contact: Jonas Frykman, SALAR, jonas.frykman@skl.se, Caroline Costongs, EuroHealthNet, c.costongs@eurohealthnet.eu, or Ingrid Jansson, Euregha, ingrid.jansson@euregha.net