



# EU health policy in support of Member States and regions tackling health inequalities



**Wolfgang Bücherl**  
**DG Health and Food Safety**  
**European Commission**

# EU action on health inequalities

## ➤ **“Solidarity in Health: Reducing Health Inequalities in the EU” (2009)**

Aim: to support Member States and set out the contribution of EU policies in such areas as: public health, employment, research about regional policy towards addressing health inequalities.

## ➤ **Progress report (September 2013)**

# EU action on health inequalities

## 2013 EU report on health inequalities

- Life expectancy across the EU continues to increase (in particular: CZ, SK, SI, HU and PL);
- Average infant mortality in the EU fell between 2001 and 2011 (from 5.7 to 3.9 deaths per 1000 live births).

### **But:**

- More than 8 years of difference of life expectancy between “new” Eastern and “old” Western parts of the EU in 2012 (Italy: 82.4 years, Spain: 82.5 and Lithuania and Latvia: 74. 1 years).

# EU action on health inequalities

## Health Programme 2014-2020

### General objective:

"to complement, support and add value to the policies of the Member States to improve the health of Union citizens and reduce health inequalities by promoting health, encouraging innovation in health, increasing the sustainability of health systems and protecting Union citizens from serious cross-border health threats."

# EU action on health inequalities

## Joint Action on health inequalities

- Regional network;
- Expertise in Health Impact Assessment and Health Equity Audit;
- Sharing good practice on stakeholder engagement.



**EQUITY***ACTION*

The Joint Action on Health Inequalities

Equity Action has received funding from the European Union  
in the framework of the Health Programme





European  
Commission

# EU action on health inequalities

## Investing in Health (2013)

### **Health Systems**

*Reforms aiming at sustainable investments and cost-effective spending can bring savings and secure better health outcomes.*

### **Human Capital**

*Health can boost economic growth by enabling people to remain healthier and active for longer.*

### **Health Inequalities**

*Reducing inequalities in health contributes to social cohesion and helps reducing poverty and social exclusion.*



*High spending not always leads to better health: how money is spent is essential.*

*Cost-effective technologies can bring efficiency gains*

*Knowledge and evidence on Health Systems Performance Assessment needed.*



European  
Commission

# Europe 2020 and health policy

**Promoting good health *for all* is an integral part of Europe 2020:**

- positive impact on **productivity and competitiveness**
- **innovation** for more sustainable healthcare sector
- improving **skills** and creating **jobs**
- using the potential of an **ageing population**

## European Semester:

Areas include sustainability and accessibility of health systems

Health and  
Consumers



# Europe 2020 and health policy

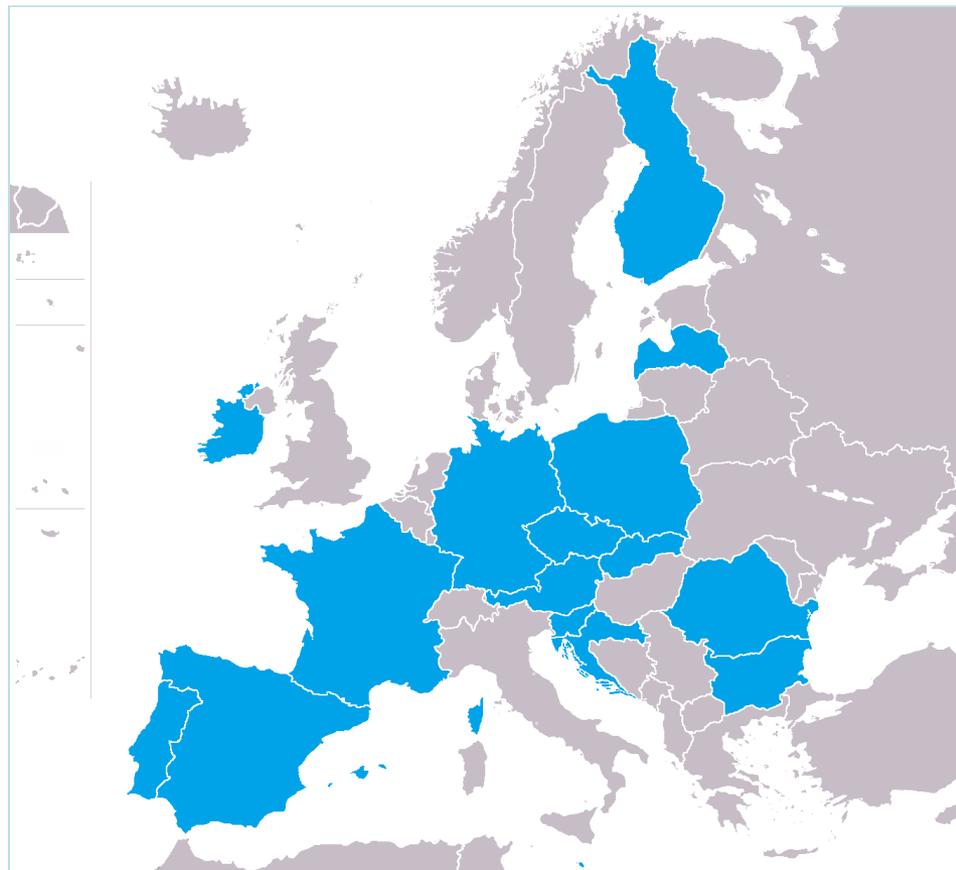
## Annual Growth Surveys 2013 and 2014:

- **Reforms of healthcare systems** should be undertaken to ensure cost-effectiveness and sustainability, assessing the performance of these systems against the **twin aim of a more efficient use of public resources and access to high quality healthcare,**
- Active inclusion strategies should be developed, encompassing [...] broad **access to affordable and high-quality services, such as social and health services,** childcare, housing and energy supply,
- Importance of the **contribution of the health sector in tackling unemployment and social consequences of the crisis,**
- Healthcare services are an area that will generate significant **job opportunities** in the years to come.



European  
Commission

# European Semester – Country-specific recommendations on health systems' reforms, from 2011 to 2014



**2011:**  
**4 countries**

**2012:**  
**6 countries**

**2013:**  
**11 countries**

**2014**  
**16 countries**



European  
Commission

# Health in the European Semester

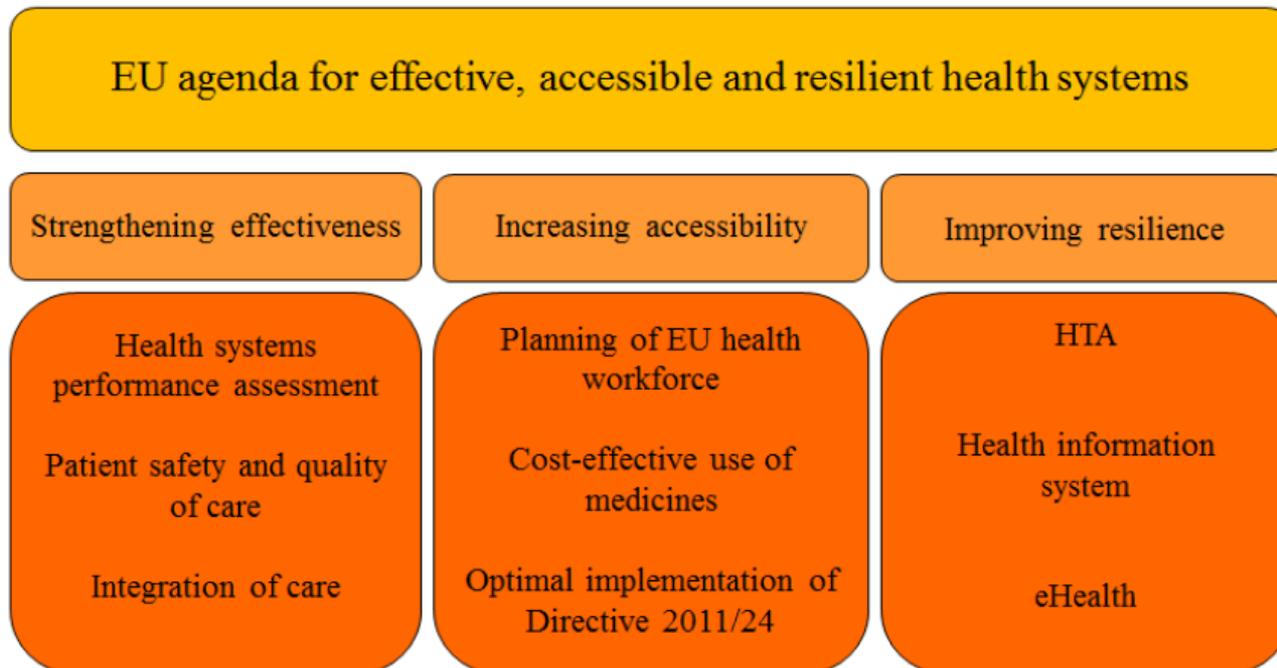
## Targeted thematic areas:

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Better integrated models of care</b>	<p>Addressed to 12 Member States: ➤ <b>AT, BG, CZ, ES, FI, HR, IE, LV, MT, PL, RO, SK</b></p> <p>Advocated as a tool to ensure an overriding – primary – goal of long-term fiscal sustainability: ➤ <b>BG, FI, LV, RO</b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Accessibility to high-quality healthcare</b>	<p>Addressed to 3 Member States: ➤ <b>ES, LV, RO</b></p> <p>References in the SWDs: ➤ <b>BG, PL</b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Health systems effectiveness (“quality”)</b>	<p>Addressed to 2 Member States: ➤ <b>LV, RO</b></p> <p>References in the SWDs: ➤ <b>BG, LT, HU, SK</b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Controlling public budgets for medicinal products</b>	<p>Addressed to 3 Member States: ➤ <b>IE, ES, FR</b></p> <p>References in the SWDs: ➤ <b>DE</b></p>



European  
Commission

# Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems, April 2014



## European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2014 – 2020

- ESF: Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest.
- ERDF: Health and social infrastructure which contribute to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, and transition from institutional to community-based services.



European  
Commission

# ESIF 2014-2020 and health investments

- ESIF legal framework is structured around **11 Thematic Objectives**.
- Possible investments in health: health R & I, ICT for e-health, health infrastructure (focus on community-based and primary care), active and healthy ageing, health promotion and prevention, healthy workplaces, training and LLL, enhancing access to high-quality healthcare, administrative and institutional capacity building...

**GUIDE** developed by SANCO, REGIO and EMPL:

- Intended for use by the Commission services and **now public for Member States and stakeholders**
- Contains information on **possible areas eligible for health investments**
- Sets policy line: providing priority areas and lines of intervention (according to EU legal and policy texts)



## Conclusions (*Equity Action Regional Network*)

- Raise awareness – also at regional level – of the ESIF as potential co-funding mechanism for initiatives that can improve health equity;
- Raise its profile vis-a-vis ESIF managers;
- Advocate for systemic approaches to take health equity into account in initiatives that receive ESIF;
- Invest in capacity building;
- Work throughout existing and new partnerships.



European  
Commission

**Thank you for your attention**

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm)