



EU HEALTH POLICY PLATFORM – Thematic Networks 2018 Kick-off meeting, 10 April 2018, 10.30 – 13.30

Location: R/Froissart 101, 1040 Brussels, room 00/42, (videoconference Luxembourg, HTC 03/093)

The objective of the meeting was to kick-off the Thematic Network 2018 cycle by introducing the draft Joint Statements of the three selected Thematic Networks.

On 10 April 2018 a kick-off meeting organised by the European Commission took place with the members of the Thematic Networks 2018. The main aim of the meeting was to give the Thematic Networks the opportunity to present their ideas for Joint Statements and receive preliminary feedback from the Commission. The Commission took the opportunity to explain to the Thematic Networks what they should pay attention to when drafting the Joint Statements. Finally, the EC gave a tutorial on the functionalities of the EU Health Policy Platform that could be useful for the Thematic Networks.

To begin with, the Commission presented the timeline for the upcoming months: two optional webinars for the Thematic Networks to present their drafts and call for endorsements in June and September, the deadline for the final Joint Statement on 25th October, the annual meeting in November and the option to collect endorsements until January 2019.

The draft Joint Statement on "Smart healthy age-friendly environment" aims to align the work of different networks in the area of age-friendly environments. They will focus on aligning technological developments with building industry to have smart environments suitable to aged population (eHealth) and bridging the gap between technology and users' needs (mHealth). Planned actions include a literature review, interviews with leading opinion leaders and a survey on eHealth and mHealth practices. The Commission advised on a number of useful contact points within the Commission and outside. It was also suggested to highlight the importance of the ageing of the EU population.

The draft Joint Statement on "Stimulating consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables" aims to improve eating patterns. An analysis of eating patterns will provide valuable input. Conferences – including the EGEA conference in November 2018 – are being organised to provide guidelines and ideas to be included in this statement and will provide a solid scientific background. The Commission highlighted the need to take the inequalities in eating patterns related to socioeconomic background into account. It was also advised to consider sustainability aspects and to include a wide range of sectors and NGOs in the process.

The draft Joint Statement on "Societal Impact of Pain" focuses on the social and economic impact of pain, in addition to health aspects. The Thematic Network is conducting surveys to analyse the impact of pain on the work/life of patients. The goals of the Joint Statement are (1) to improve the health systems by creating more understanding of pain among health professionals, (2) the inclusion of pain as a disease in health policies, (3) to address pain as a factor in employment (4) standardise pain education for professionals. The Commission advised to review current Commission initiatives and priorities and align the Joint Statement accordingly. In addition, more background information (surveys, recognition of pain as a disease) that was provided during the discussion should be included in the Joint Statement.

Concerning the drafting of the Joint Statements in general, the Commission highlighted that the Joint Statements should not be a wish list of what the Commission and Member States should do. The Joint Statements should rather detail how the Thematic Networks can facilitate the implementation of actions or the achievement of certain goals. The Joint Statements should remain realistic and point out possible synergies with EU priorities and with completed or ongoing projects at EU or national level.