



Scientific cooperation for a healthier Europe

National scientific advisory bodies in the field of medicine and public health have agreed upon intensive European collaboration. This will lead to more effective and efficient use of scientific knowledge in health policies on the national and European level and to population health improvement. This is the result of the kick-off meeting of the European Science Advisory Network for Health (EuSANH) in Brussels.

Europe is facing huge challenges in the field of public health. Many of these are border-crossing, such as infectious diseases and environmental threats, or similar in most countries, such as obesity and an ageing population. At the same time, there are many chances and opportunities as scientific knowledge is increasing exponentially. To tackle the challenges and use the opportunities, health policy needs a stronger and more comprehensive scientific base of available evidence and new research. This was concluded at Friday April 24th after a two days conference in Brussels of national scientific advisory bodies from 13 European countries. A joint working programme on Improving Science Advice for Health (EuSANH-ISA) was established and will be financed by the European Commission for the three coming years.

Key objectives are to improve the quality and efficiency of scientific advice on health at the national and European level, and to convene the best experts from Europe to make science-based policy recommendations on major health issues. In connection to this, important knowledge gaps can be identified as a priority for new health research programmes. In addition, working together, the participants can combine their limited resources to cover many more important health issues.

Topics that are high on the agenda are healthy living, screening for disease, vaccination strategies, health care quality, mental health, and socio-economic determinants of health. In relation to health, other domains are also addressed such as education, nutrition, the environment, and occupation. In addition, not only cost, but also the positive economic impact of population health needs more scientific attention.

The participating advisory bodies will expand their scientific cooperation also to other European countries, to increase the transnational impact and benefits of science-based health policy making. There is close collaboration with European agencies on food, infectious diseases and medical technology, the European academies of sciences, WHO Europe, and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the United States. In Brussels, IOM-President Dr. Harvey V. Fineberg applauded the EuSANH programme, and emphasised that for more effective international health policies independent scientific advice of the highest quality is a basic requirement.



European Science Advisory Network for Health

EuSANH is a network of science advisory bodies in Europe which are active in the field of health. Currently, national science advisory bodies from twelve countries are participating.

Mission and goal

The objective of EuSANH is to promote independent scientific advice on health issues to national and European health authorities and to support evidence-based health policy. National advisory bodies participating in EuSANH share information and expertise. They aim at coordinating work programmes and seek cooperation in devising reports on health issues across national borders.

Members

The current member organisations are: Belgium, Superior Health Council; Czech Republic, National Institute of Public Health; Finland, National Institute for Health and Welfare; France, Haute Autorité de Santé; Germany, Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care/German Institute of Medical Documentation and Information; The Netherlands, Health Council of the Netherlands; Poland, National Institute of Public Health-National Institute of Hygiene; Portugal, National Health Institute; Romania, National School of Public Health and Health Services Management; Spain, Instituto de Salud Carlos III; Sweden, Swedish Council of Technology Assessment in Health Care; Switzerland, Swiss Federal Office of Public Health; The United Kingdom, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Advisors

Several European organisations have an advisory role in EuSANH: the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the Health Evidence Network (WHO Europe, HEN), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the Federation of European Academies of Medicine (FEAM), and the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC).

Contact and more information

The EuSANH secretariat is located at the Health Council of the Netherlands: eusanh@gr.nl. Contact person is Ms Dorine Coenen, MSc (tel.: +31 70 340 74 73). More information can be found at <http://www.eusanh.eu/index.html>.