PHIRE – Public Health Innovation and Research in Europe

Country Report

POLAND

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EUPHA
European Public Health Association
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1. PHIRE Innovation Projects

The aim of the project was to verify how the project financed by the European Commission’s DG SANCO has influenced the health policy in Poland.

First of all, the list of the projects that were financed by DG SANCO was prepared (see Table 1). From all listed projects only a few were realized by partners from Poland: Venice - Vaccine European New Integrated Collaboration Effort, ENHIS - Implementing Environmental and Health Information Systems in Europe, CSAP Child Safety Action Plan.

**Table 1: List of Innovation Projects in Poland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation</th>
<th>Organization in Poland and contact person</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHOB - Children and Obesity and Associated Avoidable Chronic Diseases</td>
<td>No partners from Poland on the website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ehnheart.org/projects/children-obesity/project.html?mcat=4&amp;type=member&amp;view=project">http://www.ehnheart.org/projects/children-obesity/project.html?mcat=4&amp;type=member&amp;view=project</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA - Healthy Ageing</td>
<td>No partners from Poland</td>
<td><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html">http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/databas e.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAD- European Alliance Against Depression</td>
<td>No partners from Poland</td>
<td><a href="http://www.eaad.net/enu/3706.php">http://www.eaad.net/enu/3706.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUCID - European Core Indicators in Diabetes Mellitus</td>
<td>No partners from Poland</td>
<td><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/health/projects/index_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/health/projects/index_en.htm</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Impact

In order to complete the assignment we have executed number of tasks including meeting with the high officials at the Polish Ministry of Health. The meeting took place in Warsaw, 14 March 2012. The Polish Public Health Association was represented by Professor Beata Karakiewicz, Professor Miroslaw Wysocki and Dipl.-Kff. Eżbieta Buczak-Stec.

At the Ministry we discussed how and whether the DG SANCO projects influence the health policy conducted by the Ministry of Health.

On the sample of the Venice II project we can see, that the results of the research grants are well known but only in researcher sphere who are engaged in the topic. Projects ended successfully and the results were published in the international journals. Moreover, the results of the research were presented at the international conferences e.g. International Public Health Congress, Miedzyzdroje, Poland. (VI Międzynarodowy Kongres Zdrowia Publicznego oraz II Bałtyckie Symposzium Naukowo-Szkoleniowe "Między medycyną Kliniczną a Zdrowiem Publicznym").

Regrettably, to our great surprise, it has proved that none of the outlines of the DG SANCO are reported to the Ministry. Consequently none of the health policy initiative is based on the results of DG SANCO project.

In case of projects financed by the independent party e.g. European Commission, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, National Science Centre or National Centre for Research and Development, there is no requirement that the results are presented to the policymakers from the Ministry of Health. It is also common that the Ministry does not have any information about research and other projects conducted by the research institutes and universities. The reports and implementation suggestions are mostly presented only to the party that was responsible for the financial issues. Moreover, research is not an integral part of the public health policy.

That is why data from the European Commission research grants is not collected by any body that is responsible for the health policy in Poland, in our case the Ministry of Health.

In Poland there are no proper tools that would enable the cooperation and information exchange between the Ministry of Health and institutions responsible for the research in public health field. There is a need for the improvement. In some fields (e.g. implementation and monitoring of the National Health Programme) the cooperation is working properly. However, it is not the case when it comes to the EC research grants.

The main problem with regard to the cooperation and implementation the research result is connected to the fact, that the Ministry of Health is mainly responsible for the current politics. Implementing research results is a secondary goal.

One of the solutions to this problem would be that the Ministry of Health could be actively involved in the establishment of the main / important topic of the research in public health field. The research should be dedicated to particular public health policy objectives. Composing scientific research strategy and objectives should be linked to the current health policy.
During the meeting at the Ministry of Health it was discussed what should be done in order to include research results in the implementation of public health policies. Everyone agreed that the introduction of the Public Health Act could improve situation.
2. Public Health Research System in Poland

In Poland, the research system that is only dedicated to the field of public health does not exist. Public health research system is a part of a general Polish research system.

One of the most important issues about research system is its financing. In Poland the main pillar of research financing is connected to the funds provided by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Some additional funds can be provided by the financing through foundations e.g. The Foundation for Polish Science (FNP), scientific societies, international organisations and other parties.

Financing - Ministry of Science and Higher Education¹

All government support for separately budgeted research is channelled entirely through the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. There are a few ways of financing research including public health research, among others:

1. Core funding for statutory R & D activities,
2. Peer-reviewed research grants based on research proposals, presented by small research teams or individual researchers
3. Subsidies for R & D programmes of national importance commissioned by enterprises, state administrative bodies or local authorities.

Public health research:

1. Core funding for statutory R & D activities

This concerns institutional finance provided selectively to designated research establishments, units and university departments for covering the costs of their own research activities.

In this case the entity (e.g. research institute, university) that applied and received funds from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education could conduct research in field of public health. However the research fields are not entirely coordinated in Poland, each entity is independent. The specific topic and the scope of the research depend on the entity and the researchers that are involved in this research.

2. Peer-reviewed research grants based on research proposals, presented by small research teams or individual researchers²

Two agencies of the Minister of Science and Higher Education - namely National Centre for Research and Development (appointed in 2007) and the National Science Centre (2010) are the

¹ Information from website of Ministry of Science and Higher Education, http://www.nauka.gov.pl
² Information from website of National Centre for Research and Development, http://www.ncbir.pl/
implementing agencies that are responsible for managing financial assets for strategic research programme and are responsible for funding basic research.

**National Centre for Research (NCR)**

The main duties of the NCR are: funding of the basic research in form of the research projects, funding doctoral fellowships and post-doctoral internships and funding research projects carried out by experienced researchers aimed at implementing pioneering research important for the development of science.

Public health research can be funded by the NCR when the research is in the scope of the NCR responsibilities and the research proposal was accepted throughout the peer-review.

**National Centre for Research and Development**

The National Centre for Research and Development is the implementing agency of the Minister of Science and Higher Education. It is in charge of the performance of the tasks within the area of national science, science and technology and innovation policies.

The main task of the National Centre for Research and Development is management and execution of strategic research and development programs, which lead directly to the development of innovativeness.

Among the tasks of the National Centre for Research and Development, are the support of commercialization and other forms of transfer of scientific research results, the management of applied research programs and the performance of national security and defence projects.

**Other Financing**

Public health research can be also financed by other entities like foundations. The largest source of science funding in Poland outside the state budget is offered by the Foundation for Polish Science (FNP). The Foundation for Polish Science (FNP), formed in 1991, is an independent, self-financing, non-profit, non-governmental organization, with a mission of supporting science in Poland.

**Conclusion**

In 2010, Professor Jan E. Zejda and Professor Mirosław J. Wysocki published a research article concerning topic of public health research in Poland in one of the leading public health journal in Poland (*Public health in research projects financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education - implementation and needs, Przegl Epidemiol. 2010;64(3):405-11*).

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3 Information from website of National Centre for Research, http://www.ncn.gov.pl
The main results of the review are:

"The Polish system of a competition-based application for research grants from the budget of Ministry of Science and Higher Education is a potentially important instrument of promotion of scientific activity and stimulation of research development in specific fields. Review of the grants evaluated by the subject-specific Section of Public Health and Sport Sciences in 2001-2010 showed that among 570 accepted grants 26.2% covered basic sciences, including toxicology and experimental studies, 20.3% belonged to sport sciences whereas public health, epidemiology and prevention accounted for 28.1% of the grants. Other studies included clinical, molecular and genetic topics. Furthermore, public health, epidemiology and prevention oriented grants used 27.2% of the total budget managed by the Section. Review of the topics revealed that some public health key issues are not addressed by the grants. The results of analysis suggest a need for actions leading to proper promotion of public health sciences. Within the field preference should be given to studies involving population-based approach and to studies on structures and functioning of health care institutions. Recommendations include an inventory of national research priorities in public health, prepared by the multidisciplinary team and distributed among potential grant applicants as well as among formal reviewers of grant applications. “
3. National and European Research

In Poland the main pillar of research financing is connected to the funds provided by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. However additional funds e.g European research funds, funds provided by national and international foundations are becoming a valuable source of the research funding in Poland.

Minister of Science and Higher Education

Two agencies of the Minister of Science and Higher Education - namely National Centre for Research and Development (appointed in 2007) and the National Science Centre (2010) are the implementing agencies that are responsible for managing financial assets for strategic research programme and are responsible for funding basic research.5

Ministry of Science and Higher Education is an Intermediate Body for three operational programmes: Innovative Economy, Human Capital and Infrastructure and Environment.

Additional funds

A number of additional funds for conducting research can be provided by the financing through foundations (e.g. The Foundation for Polish Science (FNP)), scientific societies, international organisations and other parties.

European scholarships and research grants offered within e.g. seventh framework programme have become valuable source of research funding in Poland.

Scholarships and research grants for Polish scientists are also offered by the many international institutions e.g. FWF Austrian Science Fund (FWF Der Wissenschaftsfonds), Robert Bosch Foundation (Robert Bosch Stiftung), German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG), The Max Planck Society (Max Planck Gesellschaft), Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung), Polish-US Fulbright Commission, The Kosciuszko Foundation, Mellon Foundation

5 More information in Chapter 2
4. Recommendations and Conclusions

The research results, especially from the complex international projects financed by the European Commission should be presented to the policymakers from the Ministry of Health. In that way the implementation of the health policy could be based on the evidence based methods.

The Ministry of Health could be also involved in the establishment of the main/important topic of the research in public health/health policy field.

Everyone agreed that the introduction of the Public Health Act could improve the situation.
Appendix 1. Agenda of the meeting

Public Health Association Poland

Meeting at the Ministry of Health Poland

14 III 2012 Warsaw, Poland

AGENDA

1. Invitation to Public Health Congress co-organized by the Public Health Association (Kołobrzeg, 2012 - VI Międzynarodowy Kongres Zdrowia Publicznego oraz II Bałtyckie Sympozjum Naukowo-Szkoleniowe "Między medycyną Kliniczną a Zdrowiem Publicznym")

2. Overview of cooperation between the Ministry of Health and other parties in research activities and implementing the research results

   (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, National Science Centre, The National Centre for Research and Development)

3. Any other business
Appendix 2. List of participants

Public Health Association – Poland

– Prof. dr hab. Beata Karakiewicz – Public Health Association – Poland; Pomeranian Medical University
– Prof. dr hab. Mirosław Wysocki – National Institute of Public Health- National Institute of Hygiene; Public Health Association - Poland
– Elzbieta Buczak-Stec – National Institute of Public Health- National Institute of Hygiene; Public Health Association – Poland

Representatives of Ministry of Health (inter alia):

– Dorota Wójcik – Public Health Department
– Marzena Drwaniacka – Head of the Department of Health Care and Prevention; Public Health Department
Appendix 3. List of distributed documentation

1. Information about the project that are/were realized in Poland

2. Detail Information and presentation about the Venice Project (Vaccine European New Integrated Collaboration Effort) realized in National Institute of Public Health - National Institute of Hygiene