PHIRE – Public Health Innovation and Research in Europe

Country Report

SLOVAKIA

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European Public Health Association
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Appendix 5.
Methodology

A **Country Health Research Analysis** (CHRA) has been carried out in Slovakia through selected SAVEZ members, PHIRE country informants (CIs) on the tracer projects, and other national experts invited for the meeting with the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (MoH). Since February 2012 the following documents have been distributed: an introductory e-mail on the PHIRE Phase 2 with invitation for collaboration, all working national documents and list of questions from the PHIRE Guidelines for Second Phase. Professionals could provide their feedback until the end of April 2012.

A **National Meeting with the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic** has been held on 25 April 2012 in Bratislava. It was arranged in close collaboration between SAVEZ and the WHO Country Office in Slovakia. All together 23 people were invited, out of them 9 people participated at the meeting. For collecting additional information about national and European research, an extra meeting was initiated by Zuzana Katreniakova (SAVEZ chair) on 13 June 2012 with Edmund Skorvaga (Section of European Programs and Projects, MoH). As a result of the national meeting with the MoH a two-page summary in Slovak with conclusions and recommendations has been prepared, approved by participants of the national meeting, and sent also to professionals involved in the Country Health Research Analysis, and other important stakeholders (e.g. representatives from higher education institutions).
1. PHIRE Innovation Projects

Table 1 provides summary information on the (innovation) tracer projects as they were presented in the ‘Slovakia - Tracer Projects Report’ (PHIRE work package 4) and amended with data gained through the Country Health Research Analysis. PHIRE tracer projects were not separately discussed during the National Meeting with the Ministry of Health because of lack of time.

Out of all eight PHIRE tracer projects:

- three of them have been assessed through the web-based questionnaire by five national country informants (CIs) proposed through SAVEZ: CHOB (1 CI), EURO-URHIS (2 CIs), and EUCID (2 CIs);
- in three of them Slovakia was represented as project partner: VENICE, EURO-URHIS and ENHIS;
- in one of them Slovakia was represented as contributor/expertise: HA;
- and in three of them Slovakia participated in follow-up projects: VENICE, EURO-URHIS and ENHIS.

Table 1: Summary information on the PHIRE tracer projects – Slovakia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation*</th>
<th>SK participation in project I</th>
<th>Final report dissemination</th>
<th>CIs PHIRE phase I</th>
<th>SK participation in project II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VENICE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHOB</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EURO-URHIS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HA</td>
<td>Yes**</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAAD</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENHIS</td>
<td>Yes**</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSAP</td>
<td>No**</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUCID</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* VENICE - Vaccine European New Integrated Collaboration Effort; CHOB - Children, Obesity and associated avoidable chronic diseases; EURO-URHIS I European system of urban health indicators; HA - Healthy Ageing; EAAD-European Alliance Against Depression; ENHIS - Implementing Environmental and Health Information Systems in Europe; CSAP - Child Safety Action Plans Phase I; EUCID - European Core Indicators in Diabetes Mellitus.

** Information differs from the ‘PHIRE WP4 Slovakia Tracer Projects Report’

Information concerning participation of Slovakia in the PHIRE tracer projects gained through the Country Health Research Analysis is slightly different from the PHIRE WP4 national report. It is surprising that feedback of national CIs was obtained on two projects (CHOB, EUCID), in which
Slovakia did not participate directly, whereas feedback was not received on three other projects, where Slovakia has been involved to a different extent (VENICE, HA, ENHIS).

One of the reasons for this might be the process of identifying the CIs by EUPHA section leads as such. There are only 10 SAVEZ members who are currently on EUPHA’s membership list and it is questionable how many others Slovak public health professionals are on EUPHA Sections’ mailing lists. Another limitation for finding appropriate CI could be language barrier which is considered so far (together with lack of human resources and finances) as crucial also for transferring knowledge and experience gained through European projects at national, regional or local level.

**VENICE - Vaccine European New Integrated Collaboration Effort**

Country partner: Public Health Authority of the SR, Department of Epidemiology

Contact persons: Helena Hudecova, (hudecova@uvzs.sk), Jarmila Lancova, Katarina Krajcirova, Alexandra Zampachova


Comments on the national report (impact, policy changes and lessons learned on account of this tracer project)

Even though Slovakia participated in this project, no CI from Slovakia has answered the web-based questionnaire in PHIRE Phase 1. SAVEZ has not been contacted by EUPHA section lead to identify the country informant for this project.

Does the NPHA have additional information on national impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project?

The basic information about participation of Slovakia in this project as well as in its continuation - VENICE II ([http://venice.cineca.org/slovakia.html](http://venice.cineca.org/slovakia.html)) is available in national language through the Annual Reports of the Public Health Authority of the SR (2006-2011). In these reports, it is stated that Slovakia filled the project questionnaires, provided information on National Immunisation Programme of the SR and on current mandatory vaccine scheme.

Comments on other actions needed to assess impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project at national level.

Participation in this project brought Slovakia opportunity to build collaboration with European experts working in immunisation programmes, to share knowledge and experience regarding vaccination, to develop tools and to collect a lot of information on immunisation programmes, country surveillance systems, vaccine coverage etc.

Impact of the project is visible also through active participation of Slovakia in the VENICE II, revision of National Vaccination Plan and working out material on influenza vaccination and vaccine. Furthermore, in 2008 Slovakia became a member of European Vaccination Expert Committee (EVEC).
**CHOB - Children, obesity and associated avoidable chronic diseases**

Country partner: -  
Contact person: Country informant within the PHIRE phase 1  
Related document: -  

**Comments on the national report (impact, policy changes and lessons learned on account of this tracer project)**

Even though Slovakia was not represented in this project, CI proposed by SAVEZ has answered the web-based questionnaire in PHIRE Phase 1.

The national CI stressed that the prevalence of overweight and obesity in children has been growing in Slovakia in recent decades. That is why different activities are performed by different institutions in the country, e.g. anthropometric surveys of children and adolescents; surveys monitoring the dietary habits of children and adolescents; or launching the National Healthy Nutrition Programme.

The national CI contacted several institutes and experts dealing with the issues of childhood obesity, but the name of the project "CHOB - Children, obesity and associated avoidable chronic diseases project" is not recognized by the professionals from these institutions. It appears that the only channel providing information about the project is foreign websites and the project has not resulted into significant or widespread activities in the country and thus it has no health benefits so far.

However, the topic of the project is highly relevant and quite discussed in Slovakia, mainly among health professionals and parents. They feel that legal measures should be taken to strictly prohibit advertising of unhealthy foods for children. If there is a common multi-country activity, authorities in Slovakia seem to be prone to join it and to support it.

**Does the NPHA have additional information on national impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project?**

No additional information from SAVEZ.

**Comments on other actions needed to assess impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project at national level.**

No further comments from SAVEZ.

**EURO-URHIS - European system of urban health indicators**

Country partner: Slovak Public Health Association (SAVEZ)  
Contact person: Iveta Rajnicova Nagyova (rajnicova@savez.sk); two country informants within PHIRE phase 1  
Comments on the national report (impact, policy changes and lessons learned on account of this tracer project)

In this project, Slovakia was included among collaborating partners and two CIs proposed by SAVEZ have answered the web-based questionnaire in PHIRE Phase 1.

In Slovakia, this project was relevant because of several reasons: the issue of urban health was appropriate to be addressed in changing economy and rapid urbanization process; it offered an opportunity to select suitable indicators that could describe a health status of urban citizens; and as for a new member of the EU it was important to be in the beginning of the process when urban health indicators are defined, with a potential of a mandatory reporting requirements to respective EU institutions in the future.

Limited impact of the project could be recognized by national, regional and local health authorities from perspective of increased awareness on the importance of urban health indicators.

The project had considerable impact on further public health research in Slovakia in the field of urban health. It gave a great opportunity to assess the feasibility of data collection on urban level; it focused national attention to this emerging issue which have not actually been addressed before; and because SAVEZ has been involved also in the second phase of the project, based on mutual collaboration with the PJ Safarik University in Kosice, Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Public Health one PhD student and one junior researcher were appointed to further investigate on this topic.

Does the NPHA have additional information on national impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project?

Although the project enabled gathering information on the availability of selected urban health indicators in Slovakia and their use in research field by analyzing health outcomes of population with indicators on urban level, it was not possible to spread out this knowledge at national level. Main reasons of this were lack of time and insufficient human and financial resources of SAVEZ.

Comments on other actions needed to assess impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project at national level.

Participation of Slovakia in this project brings opportunities on the use of the information approach in the future. The project was introduced to the local policy makers in Kosice municipality and discussions were initiated on future possibilities to start health data collection at municipality level and to use these data for future local health policy planning.

The visibility of urban health indicators theme has been strengthened also through including it in the topics presented at the public health conferences organised by SAVEZ in 2009 and 2011.

HA - Healthy Ageing

Country partner: Public Health Authority of the SR (contributor)

Contact person: -
Comments on the national report (impact, policy changes and lessons learned on account of this tracer project)

The PHIRE national report states that Slovakia was not represented in this project, however in the final project report “Healthy Ageing – a Challenge for Europe” the Public Health Authority of the SR is listed among contributors to this project (see web-site link 1. above). Furthermore, no CI from Slovakia has answered the web-based questionnaire in PHIRE Phase 1, but SAVEZ has not been contacted by EUPHA section lead to identify the country informant for this project.

Does the NPHA have additional information on national impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project?

Within the Healthy Ageing project questionnaire has been sent out to elicit what policies and strategies in European countries meet the challenge of ageing populations. National plans listed in this questionnaire were focused on improving quality of life for older people in Slovakia and included for example: arranging health prevention and health education for older people to support their social environment; developing materials (leaflets, brochures on health ageing) and implementing educational activities – pilot seminars in Bratislava; developing guidelines to spread educational activities throughout the country; and monitoring target group health status and health awareness and behaviour after two years (see web-site link 1 above).

Comments on other actions needed to assess impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project at national level.

Slovakia was also represented through the Regional Public Health Authority in Banska Bystrica in a Special Interest Group on Healthy Ageing (SIG-HA) which was set up in the framework of EuroHealthNet to follow up on the EU co-funded Healthy Ageing project (2005-2007). The main objective of the group is to keep ‘Healthy Ageing’ on the agenda of government, public health institutions and others accountable for public health and health promotion by promoting existing Healthy Ageing project outputs and advancing knowledge about the topic (see website link 2 above).

EAAD - European Alliance against Depression

Country partner: -

Contact person: -

Related document: -

Comments on the national report (impact, policy changes and lessons learned on account of this tracer project)
The PHIRE national report states that Slovakia was not represented in this project, and no CI from Slovakia has answered the web-based questionnaire in PHIRE Phase 1. SAVEZ has not been contacted by EUPHA section lead to identify the country informant for this project.

**Does the NPHA have additional information on national impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project?**

No additional information from SAVEZ.

**Comments on other actions needed to assess impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project at national level.**

No further comments from SAVEZ.

**ENHIS - Implementing Environmental and Health Information Systems in Europe**

**Country partner:** Public Health Authority of the SR, Department of Environmental Hygiene

**Contact persons:** Katarina Halzlova (katarina.halzlova@uvzsr.sk); Lenka Dancova (lenka.dancova@uvzsr.sk)

**Related website:**

**Comments on the national report (impact, policy changes and lessons learned on account of this tracer project)**

The PHIRE national report states that Slovakia was not represented in this project, however this information is not valid. No CI from Slovakia has answered the web-based questionnaire in PHIRE Phase 1, but SAVEZ has not been contacted by EUPHA section lead to identify the country informant for this project.

**Does the NPHA have additional information on national impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project?**

The information about participation of Slovakia in this project is available in national language through the Annual Reports of the Public Health Authority of the SR (2005-2011).

In these reports it is stated that Slovakia has been active in the process of developing ENHIS at European level and since 2010 the implementation at national and regional level has been carried out. Factsheets about several indicators have been produced based on the ENHIS methodology and are available at the national project’s website (see link on related web-site above).
Comments on other actions needed to assess impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project at national level.

No further comments from SAVEZ.

CSAP - Child Safety Action Plans

Country partner:  - 
Contact person:   - 
Related document:  - 

Comments on the national report attached (impact, policy changes and lessons learned on account of this tracer project)

The PHIRE national report states that Slovakia was involved in this project, but CHRA showed that Slovakia is not listed among project partners neither in the CSAP brochure C phase I (http://www.childsafetyeurope.org/actionplans/info/csap-brochure-phase1.pdf) or in the phase II (http://www.childsafetyeurope.org/actionplans/info/csap-brochure-phase2.pdf). Furthermore, no CI from Slovakia has answered the web-based questionnaire in PHIRE Phase 1. SAVEZ has not been contacted by EUPHA section lead to identify the country informant for this project.

Does the NPHA have additional information on national impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project?

Despite the fact, that Slovakia has not participated in the CSAP I and II, a potential impact of this project could be expected in the future. Slovakia has become collaborating partner of the TACTICS, multi-year initiative working to provide better information, practical tools and resources to support adoption and implementation of evidence-based good practices for the prevention of injury to children and youth in Europe (http://www.childsafetyeurope.org/tactics/index.html). The initiative, which runs from April 2011 through to March 2014, builds on the successful work of past EC funded projects such as the Child Safety Action Plan (CSAP) project (2004-2010) and is lead by the European Child Safety Alliance.

Comments on other actions needed to assess impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project at national level.

No further comments from SAVEZ.

EUCID - European Core Indicators in Diabetes Mellitus

Country partner:  - 
Contact person:   two country informants within the PHIRE phase 1 
Related document:  - 

PHIRE – Public Health Innovation and Research in Europe
**Comments on the national report attached (impact, policy changes and lessons learned on account of this tracer project)**

Even though Slovakia was not represented in this project, two CIs proposed by SAVEZ have responded the web-based questionnaire in PHIRE Phase 1.

Considering the fact that Slovakia was not involved in this project, but seeing that diabetes mellitus (DM) is ongoing burden in Slovakia (at least 300 000 people officially suffer from DM) the national CIs indicated several assumed health benefits of this project like knowledge of epidemiological situation in the country, regional or local level; organization of DM primary prevention and medical treatment; and further education of GPs.

**Does the NPHA have additional information on national impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project?**

No additional information from SAVEZ.

**Comments on other actions needed to assess impact, policy changes and lessons learned with this project at national level.**

No further comments from SAVEZ.
2. Public Health Research System in Slovakia

Are there clear roles, responsibilities and collaboration between Ministry of Science, Ministry of Health and other funders - regions, universities, independent foundation?

There are several commissioners participating on financing public health research in Slovakia:

Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic is responsible for managing science and development (http://www.minedu.sk/science-and-research/) and for state funding of all research through institutional and designated support. Designated support is provided via competitive calls which are open once a year for all scientific areas together, thus no specific calls are available for (public) health research. There are four institutions under the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport directly responsible: Slovak Research and Development Agency (APVV), Scientific Grant Agency (VEGA), Cultural and Educational Grant Agency (KEGA), and Agency for the Structural Funds of the EU (ASFEU). All are more characterised in the updated public health research country profile.

Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic provides a state donation to (public) health research (see below), however, there are not adequate conditions neither specific organisational unit nor human resources at the MoH for coordinating public health research at national level.

Other funders providing financial support to public health research are also operating, but there are “more hardly" recognifiable in Slovakia. Some of them provide funding only for themselves (e.g. universities through internal grant calls for young researchers, Slovak Academy of Sciences) or irregularly via specific calls (e.g. some non-governmental foundations, pharmaceutical companies).

Concerning public health research funding we can conclude, there are different funders exist, however their roles, responsibilities and collaboration is marginal in this field in Slovakia.

Is commissioning included within a national strategy for health / public health research?

In September 2007, the main strategic document on research and development in Slovakia titled “Long-term Plan of the State Science and Technology Policy by the Year 2015” was approved by the Government of the SR. In this document, “Health – quality of life” is stated as the first of 12 substantive thematic priority research areas at national level. On one side, the state research programmes and calls should be based on these priority areas, on the other side, in reality it is not possible to allocate funding for all of these areas in such a small country as Slovakia is (SOVVA, 2008. Z čoho žije slovenská veda? Analýza financovania výskumu a vývoja z verejných zdrojov v akademickom sektore SR). Updated version of this strategic document on research and development in Slovakia titled “Strategy Phoenix” approved by the Government of the SR on July 2011 declares new approaches in financing research and development.

However, a national strategy for (public) health research does not exist in Slovakia so far. On the other hand there are some other governmental documents or national programmes related to (public) health issues in which research is recognized as one of important measures for achievement of aims planned in these strategies e.g. State Health Policy Concept, National Programme on Mental Health, and National Programme on Obesity Prevention and National Antidrug Strategy for 2009-2012.
In March 2012, the Scientific Board of Ministry of Health of the SR has prepared “Proposal on preferred health research fields for 2012-2015 - List of priorities for health research in 2012” which has been approved at the Panel Meeting of Ministry (http://www.health.gov.sk/Clanok?oznam-podporovanych-oblasti-na-pripravovaniu-vyzvu-v-roku-2012-schvaleny-gremialnou-poradou). Together with other stakeholders, SAVEZ has commented this document mainly from perspective of number of priority areas (too many) as well as of research themes (too much oriented to biomedical then to public health research). Furthermore, neither in this document nor in the Call on Government Grant for 2012 in terms of the Act No. 525/2010 on Provision of State Donation from the Ministry of Health of the SR (launched in March 23, 2012, http://www.health.gov.sk/Clanok?vyzva-veda-2012), allocation of funding has not been declared. This issue was raised also during discussion at the PHIRE national meeting with the MoH in April 2012.

To our knowledge, there is only one other ministry – the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the SR which has defined its main research priorities in the field of work safety and health protection at workplace for 2012 – 2015 with financial sources declared.

Despite the fact, that there is a potential within higher education institutions and other stakeholders to carry out (public) health research, there is no national strategy for this research elaborated with commissioning clearly included in it and funding this research is inadequate in Slovakia.

**Was a full range of public health research fields (including health promotion, health services epidemiology, surveillance, management, wider determinants) commissioned in 2010?**

As it is stated in the “PHIRE work package 5 - first phase: Calls or programmes on Public Health Research opened in 2010 in Slovakia” (PHIRE WP5 national report), no specific public health research fields were commissioned in 2010. There is no specific funding exists neither for public health research fields or public health research in general in Slovakia. At national level, the projects’ applications on public health research are submitted via competitive grants (general calls) and from perspective of research field are included into medical sciences category. This state financing of research is organized by two government grant agencies - the Slovak Research and Development Agency and the Scientific Grant Agency.

The Slovak Research and Development Agency (APVV) published its General Call 2010 from May 24 to July 26. From all 717 proposals submitted, 587 proposals were evaluated (12.8% or 75 of them from medical sciences) and 174 proposals were accepted (9.8% or 17 of them from medical sciences). Overall budget approved was €38.2m with €3.6m or 9.4% of them for medical sciences projects. Based on the information available from the APVV online database of funded research projects (http://www.apvv.sk/databaza-financovanych-projektov), out of 17 research projects on medical sciences only 2 might be considered public health research projects with less than €0.5m approved which represents only 1.1% of all research projects accepted and 1.3% of all finances allocated in 2010.

Similarly, the Scientific Grant Agency (VEGA) published its Call 2010 from March 15 to May 5. From all 1,367 proposals submitted, 990 were evaluated (10.7% or 106 of them from medical sciences) and 541 were selected for financial support. Out of them, 11.3% or 61 proposals were from medical sciences, but only two to three might be considered public health research.
projects. Overall budget allocated was €7.3m with less than €0.3m - 4.1% for all medical sciences research projects and 0.2% - €11,000 for these two to three public health research projects in 2010.

The public health research projects which have been selected for national support through APVV and VEGA cover field of quality of life in patients with non-communicable chronic diseases, stress research as important risk factor in Alzheimer disease, epidemiology of selected infectious diseases and aspects of spreading out infectious diseases in Roma settlements.

The last available Report on state of research and development in the Slovak Republic for 2005-2009 (http://www.minedu.sk/materialy-zasadneho-charakteru-vat/) declares that in 2010 the MoH has provided financial support to 40 research projects selected in terms of the Act No. 525/2010 on Provision of State Donation from the Ministry of Health of the SR in 2007. Overall budget allocated for this support was €853,164, but it is not clear how many of these health research projects belonged to public health research.

**Is public health research open to wide range of researchers, and including civil society as stakeholders?**

In principle public health research support provided through the Slovak Research and Development Agency (APVV) is open to wide range of researchers, including governmental organisations, higher education institutions, non-governmental and private organisations. However, each applicant and its project partners have to be certificated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the SR as research and development organization. This condition issues from the Act No. 172/2005 Coll. on the Organisation of State Support for Research and Development and on amending of the Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the Organisation of the Activities of the Government and on the Organisation of the Central State Administration, as amended by later regulations.

Financial support from the Scientific Grant Agency (VEGA) is restricted to higher education facilities and the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

Financial support provided by the MoH is available to those organisations which are certificated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the SR as research and development organization or eligible for health research by the Act No. 172/2005 Coll. on the Organisation of State Support for Research and Development and on amending of the Act No. 575/2001 Coll. on the Organisation of the Activities of the Government and on the Organisation of the Central State Administration, as amended by later regulations.

**Was the information provided (both the information on programmes and calls in Public health research and the STEPS country profile) agreed or revised?**

The information on programmes and calls in public health research was agreed with some adding and specification. **The STEPS country profile has been revised and updated version is included as the Appendix 5 of this report.**
3. National and European Research

Do national research programmes cover the areas of the PHIRE Tracer Projects?

Seeing that there is no national strategy for health / public health research elaborated in Slovakia, it is not possible to give an answer on this question.

Are there connections between national research and the European projects, in general?

From the perspective of financial support, there is some connection between national and European research projects in general. Since 2007 to 2010 Slovak researchers could apply through the Slovak Research and Development Agency (APVV) for reimbursement of costs related to the preparation of FP7 research projects (http://www.apvv.sk/grantove-schema/program-pp7rp). Furthermore, in 2008, 2011 and 2012 partners from Slovakia participated in FP7 research projects, especially coordinators of research, technology and development activities could apply for state co-funding through the APVV (http://www.apvv.sk/grantove-schema/multilateralne-vyzvy/vyzvy-do7rp/do7rp-2012?tab=call).

Concerning the European Union’s Structural Funds programme, national research and development is supported mainly through the Operational Programme Research and Development (OP R&D) which is implemented in accordance with the “Long-term Plan of the State Science and Technology Policy 2015” (http://www.minedu.sk/data/att/2732.pdf, see also chapter 2 question b). The global goal of the OP R&D is to modernize and make more effective the system of research and development, support and to improve the infrastructure of higher schools which will enable them to contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the economy, decreasing regional disparities, establishing new innovative (high-tech) small and medium-sized enterprises, creating new employment opportunities and improving the conditions of the educational process at higher schools. For the 2007 – 2013 programme period a total of €1.2bn has been allocated for the OP R&D (a total of €883m have been allocated for the Goal Convergence and €326m for the Goal Regional Competitiveness and Employment). In 2009, 22 projects focused on public health have been financed (€16.1m), which represents 1.1% from overall finances allocated for projects oriented on population health status.

Furthermore, the OP R&D supports in the scope of Priority Axis 3 the infrastructure of high schools and universities, including the schools with medical direction.

Global goal of the Operational Programme Health - the improvement of conditions influencing health condition of the productive-age and unproductive-age population through increasing the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of healthcare and health support under healthcare infrastructure – has been achieving by means of realization of three priority axes: Hospital Healthcare System Modernization; Health Promotion and Health Risks Prevention; and Technical assistance. Though the OP Health does not support health research directly, it creates conditions for further practical and theoretical education of graduates from schools with medical directions in a modernized network of healthcare providers.

Does the Ministry of Health have a position on the content of the European Union’s Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) Research Programme?

On May 2012, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR sent its “Response to the Green Paper on the Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding”. Another position paper on the same issue has been elaborated by the civic association - Slovak Association for Science and Applied Research (SASAR, www.sasar.eu) and represents the view of its members and community that have been involved in the public debate on the future of Framework Programmes organized by SASAR during spring 2011. Both documents are listed among all other contributors at http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=responses&show=all, but there is not direct reference to health / public health research in these national documents.

How does the Ministry of Health discuss this with the Ministry of Science?

To our information, there was no discussion between the Ministry of Health of the SR and the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the SR on the Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) Research Programme till May 2012.

Does the Ministry of Health have a position on the use of the European Union’s Structural (Regional and Social) Funds programme for public health research in 2014-2020?

At the MoH, there is a Section of European Programs and Projects responsible for using Structural Funds and acting as governing body for Operational Programme Health, and as mediating body for Operational Programme Education - Priority 2.2 - Support to Life-long Learning in the Health Sector.

In September 2012 current general director of the Section of European Programs and Projects at the MoH stated that building healthcare infrastructure will remain global goal within the OP Health in 2014-2020.

How does the Ministry of Health discuss this with the Ministry of Finance and/or other Ministries?

To our information, there was no discussion between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Science on the Structural (Regional and Social) Funds programme for public health research in 2014-2020 till May 2012.

Please provide details on Ministry of Health engagement in priorities and funding both at national and European level.

At national level Ministry of Health of the SR approved “Preferred health research fields for 2012-2015” with “List of priorities for health research in 2012” in March 2012. Call for proposal was launched in March 2012. Financial contribution of 1 million EUR for supporting national health research projects from this call is planned within the budget of the MoH of the SR for 2013.
To our information the MoH doesn’t have a position on the use of SF programme for public health research in 2014-2020, but there is a plan to establish new administrative capacity under the MoH which should provide technical support to other thematic organisational units realise 2nd and 3rd Community Public Health Programmes (health care quality and patient safety, mental health, human resources planning in health care).
4. Recommendations and Conclusions

As a result of the PHIRE national meeting with the MoH a two-page summary in Slovak has been prepared with the following conclusions and recommendations:

**Strengthening public health research at national level:**

Public health research should be included among other health research areas.

National priorities of public health research have to be clearly defined.

A certain amount of the public health budget should be spent on public health research.

Administrative capacities within the Ministry of Health of the SR or its directly governed institutions should be established to coordinate health / public health research at national level.

Health / public health research should be supported by health governing bodies by providing leadership in identifying areas of research and resources needed to conduct it.

Partnerships should be supported among different public health research stakeholders (universities, Slovak Academy of Sciences, NGOs etc.).

**Strengthening national public health research within European research:**

To improve translation of experience, knowledge and main findings gained through participation at European research to national level.

To provide additional financing for follow-up dissemination of research projects deliverables (e.g. national reports, country profiles) from European to national, regional or local level.

To improve utilization of European resources through increasing participation of Slovakia in European research projects (DG SANCO, FP7, Structural Funds).

To support interest and motivation of researchers to participate at European research projects through creating effective projects’ management conditions at their institutions.

To allocate national or institutional financial resources for fulfilling conditions of co-financing.

**Follow-up activities:**

Findings collected through participation of Slovakia in the SPHERE, STEPS, and PHIRE projects will be further disseminated and used at national and international level through the following activities:

SAVEZ has received invitation from the Faculty of Health Care and Social Work, Trnava University to held **workshop on public health innovation & research in Europe** during the
Within the Biennial Collaborative Agreement (BCA) between the Ministry of Health of the SR and the Regional Office for Europe of the WHO 2012/2013 evaluation of public health services in Slovakia will be conducted. From the MoH the project is supervised by Dr. Viliam Cislak, Deputy Minister of Health of the SR. SAVEZ chair Dr. Z. Katreniakova has been nominated to coordinate the work of the National Working Group comprising public health stakeholders and experts appointed to conduct the evaluation on the basis the WHO tool. One of its modules deals with health related research. The 5th International SAVEZ Conference will provide a platform for the national consensus meeting of the evaluation (9-10 May 2013 in Kosice).
Appendix 1. Agenda of the meeting

Date and Place: 25 April 2012
Ministry of Health of the SR, Limbova 2, Bratislava, SR

Meeting organisers: Slovak Public Health Association
WHO Country Office in Slovakia

Agenda of the meeting:

13.00-13.20 Welcome and Introduction of Participants
D. Sedlakova (WHO Country Office in Slovakia, Bratislava)

13.20-13.30 Introduction of the PHIRE project, aims of the meeting
Z. Katreniakova (SAVEZ and PJ Safarik University, Kosice)

13.30-13.50 Public Health Research System in the SR
Z. Katreniakova (SAVEZ and PJ Safarik University, Kosice)

13.50-14.20 Questions and Answers – moderated discussion
Z. Katreniakova (SAVEZ and PJ Safarik University, Kosice)

14.20-14.30 Coffee break

14.30-14.50 PHIRE Tracer Projects Impact Assessment
I. Rajnicova-Nagyova (PJ Safarik University and SAVEZ, Kosice)

14.50-15.20 Questions and Answers – moderated discussion
I. Rajnicova-Nagyova (PJ Safarik University and SAVEZ, Kosice)

15.20-15.30 Conclusion, next steps
Z. Katreniakova (SAVEZ and PJ Safarik University, Kosice)
## Appendix 2. List of participants

**Invited and present participants:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burajova</td>
<td>Barbora</td>
<td>Open Society Foundation, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cislak</td>
<td>Viliam</td>
<td>Ministry of Health of the SR, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Danko</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Comenius University, Jessenius Fac. of Medicine, Martin and APVV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Katreniakova</td>
<td>Zuzana</td>
<td>SAVEZ &amp; PJ Safarik University, Fac. of Medicine, Kosice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Novakova</td>
<td>Zuzana</td>
<td>National Public Health Authority of the SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Palkovicova</td>
<td>Lubica</td>
<td>Slovak Medical University, Fac. of Public Health, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Potuckova</td>
<td>Jana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rajnicova</td>
<td>Iveta</td>
<td>PJ Safarik University, Fac. of Medicine, Kosice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sedlakova</td>
<td>Darina</td>
<td>WHO Country Office in Slovakia, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Invited and in advance excused participants:**

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Breznican</td>
<td>Marek</td>
<td>MoH of the SR, Section on Eur. Programs and Projects, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dobrota</td>
<td>Dusan</td>
<td>Comenius University, Jessenius Fac. of Medicine, Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Imrich</td>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>SAV and NCP 7RP – Health, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kristufkova</td>
<td>Zuzana</td>
<td>Slovak Medical University, Fac. of Public Health, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lukacova</td>
<td>Nadezda</td>
<td>SAV and VEGA komisia pre lekárske a farmaceutické vedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Skorvaga</td>
<td>Edmund</td>
<td>MoH of the SR and NFP DG SANCO, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stvrtninová</td>
<td>Viera</td>
<td>Comenius University, Fac. of Medicine, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Invited and not excused participants:**

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hotovcin</td>
<td>Matej</td>
<td>Slovenská asociácia pre vedu a aplikovaný výskum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ferjencikova</td>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Slovenská asociácia pre vedu a aplikovaný výskum</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hromekova</td>
<td>Barbora</td>
<td>International Visegrad Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hubova</td>
<td>Katarina</td>
<td>International Visegrad Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Miklosi</td>
<td>Mario</td>
<td>MoH of the SR, Section on Health, Bratislava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tomkova</td>
<td>Jana</td>
<td>Slovenská organizácia pre výskumné a vývojové aktivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ASFEU, Implementation Section on OP Research &amp; Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3. List of distributed documentation

Before the Meeting with the Ministry of Health (25 April 2012) the following documentation has been distributed (13 April 2012) to all invited participants:

- E-mail with invitation to participate at the meeting
- Official letter with invitation to participate at the meeting
- Agenda of the meeting
- Leaflet on the PHIRE

All working national documents have been sent (21 April 2012) consequently to those who confirmed interest to take part at the meeting or excused in advance:

- PHIRE work package 4: Report on tracer projects for Slovakia
- PHIRE work package 5 - first phase: Calls or programmes on PH Research opened in 2010 in Slovakia
- STEPS country profile

After the Meeting with the Ministry of Health (25 April 2012) the following documentation has been distributed (4 May 2012) to all invited participants:

- PowerPoint presentations from the meeting
- Summary report in Slovak with conclusions and recommendations
Appendix 4. Copies of press release and photos from the meeting

Information about the PHIRE national meeting with the Ministry of Health of the SR has been published at: http://www.prohuman.sk/zdravotnictvo/stretnutie-odbornkiov-v-ramci-projektu-phire-inovacia-a-vyskum-vo-verejnom-zdravotnctve-v-europe