

**Health monitoring is an essential element of an evidence informed public health policy cycle.**

**Health information is a prerequisite for good and transparent governance.**

### **WHY DO WE NEED HEALTH INFORMATION?**

Health Information is needed to inform policy making. Surveillance of population health and wellbeing is the first of 10 Essential Public Health Operations defined by WHO Europe. Indeed, health information should be at the basis of each public health policy making cycle, as well as at the end, providing feedback on the impact of the policy choices made earlier in the cycle. Thus, health information is a prerequisite for good and transparent governance, enabling evidence-informed provision of public health and health care.

### **HEALTH INFORMATION IS NEEDED AT ALL POLICY MAKING LEVELS**

Public health authority lies at different policy making levels: from local, regional to national and international. There are differences between the purposes and information needs at the different policy levels, and the health information needs to be adapted to all policy making levels. While a local system will require information on e.g. the performance of local health care providers, a national system will need public health information at a more aggregated level, supporting national budget decisions.

### **INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH INFORMATION**

The European Commission has been actively stimulating the development of an EU public health monitoring and reporting system since the 1990s, with a multitude of EU-funded projects, networks and Joint Actions on an ad hoc basis. WHO Europe and the OECD are also important health information stakeholders.

Though collaboration has improved between the three organizations over the past few years, their health information activities are still overlapping, and hence coordination can still be improved.

Information and evidence for health policy- and decision-making in Europe is vital. [ ] This requires joint work to provide a common basis of information and evidence to ensure both the efficiency of our work and also its effectiveness  
([European Commission and WHO Regional Office for Europe: Joint Declaration](#))

## INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS ARE WORKING TOGETHER, BUT IMPROVEMENT STILL NEEDED

"As long ago as 2010, the European Commission and WHO Regional Office for Europe, since joined by OECD, agreed a roadmap towards a single European Health Information System. Despite several individual initiatives, concrete action has so far been lacking. Article 168 (2) of the EU Treaty states that '... The Commission may, in close contact with Member States, take any useful initiative to promote [...] the preparation of the necessary elements for periodic monitoring and evaluation.' Yet the Commission does not seem to have taken the opportunity available to it. This is despite the clearly stated intention of all its Member States, enshrined in their support for WHO EURO's Health 2020 policy, which requires monitoring of agreed health targets, a task that should be incorporated in a single monitoring system. Yet, these words have not been matched by action."  
*(Source: Rosenkötter N, Brand H, McKee M, Riley N, Verma A, Verschuuren M. The realisation of a European health information system--time to get the politicians involved. Eur J Public Health. 2014 Apr;24(2):184-5. doi: 10.1093/eurpub/cku012. Epub 2014 Feb 24. PubMed PMID: 24568753)*



## REMAINS COMMITTED

**EUPHA supports the development of an overarching European Health Information Strategy. This is necessary in order to guarantee high quality, sustainable health information systems, both at national and at European level.**

### **EUPHA calls for an overarching European Health Information Strategy**

In December 2012, EUPHA expressed her concerns related to the lack of sustainability of health information activities at the EU level in a letter to EU Health Commissioner Borg. In this letter, the need for an overarching European health information strategy was also addressed.

### **EUPHA calls for broad international cooperation**

For an overarching European strategy to be successful, the European Commission, WHO Europe and OECD need to work together. Moreover, the involvement of national authorities is of utmost importance, as is the involvement of international NGOs and organizations, such as EUPHA.

### **EUPHA offers support and expertise**

During the EPH in 2013, EUPHA organized a Round Table on the single European Health Information System with panelists from the European Commission, WHO Regional Office for Europe and OECD. EUPHA offers its support and expertise for the further development of this System.

### **EUPHA calls for a sustainable repository on health information**

Currently there are large health information inequalities in Europe, leading to inequalities in health. To overcome these, exchange of knowledge and experiences is necessary. A sustainable repository for tools, evidence, project outcomes etcetera would be an essential element of such an exchange.