

HIA in Austria – A Voluntary Instrument for Health in All Policies

Gabriele Gruber, Austrian Public Health Institute

Workshop: Mapping legal requirements for HIA institutionalization across Europe

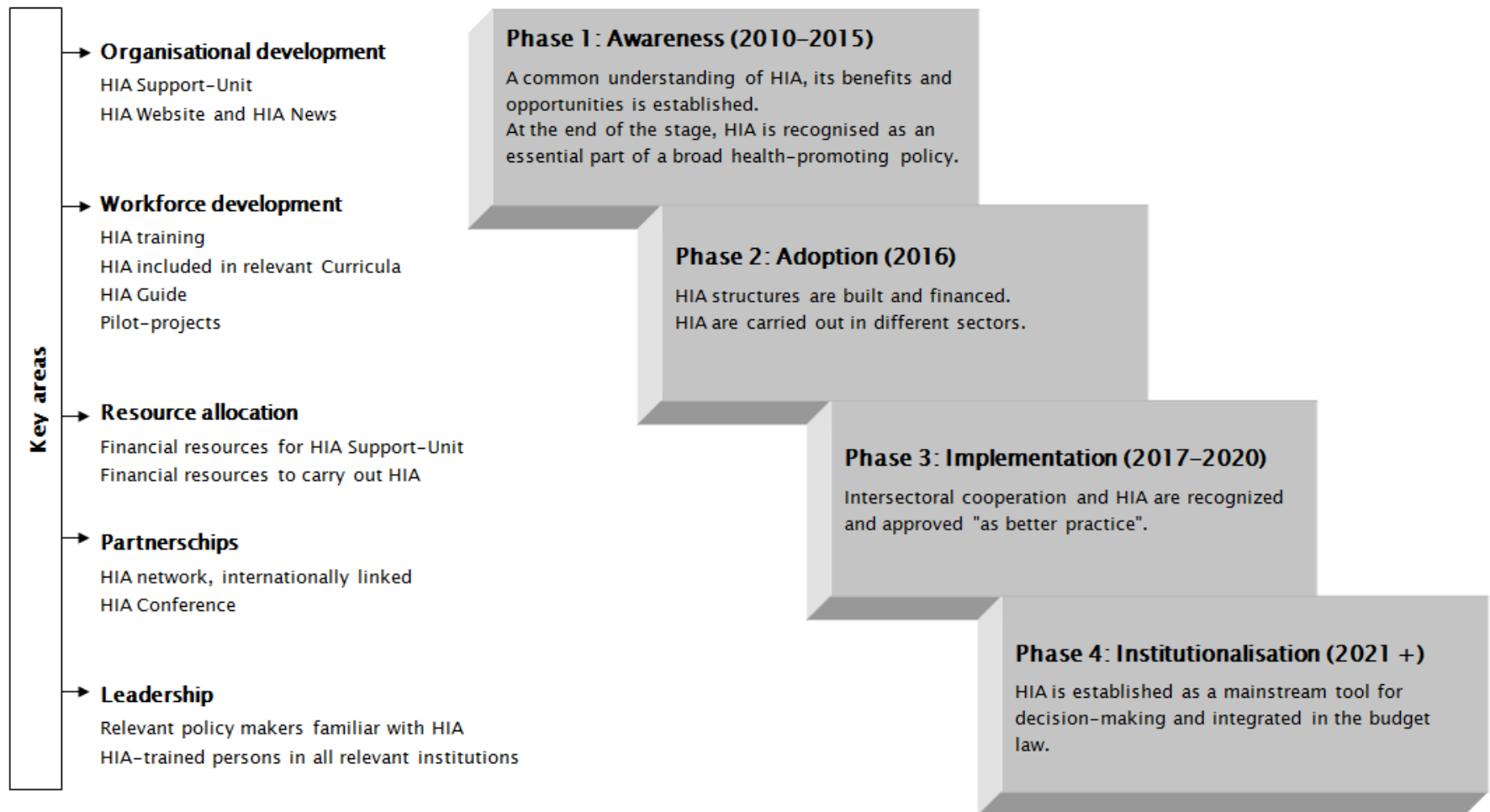
European Public Health (EPH) Conference 2017, 1. – 4. November 2017
Stockholm, Sweden

Starting Point for Implementation of HIA in Austria

- » HIA is/was a **voluntary instrument** in Austria
- » A few HIAs have been conducted in Austria before 2010
– also a few Master thesis's dealt with HIA
- » Systematically implementation of HIA in Austria started in 2009/2010
→ **Concept for the implementation of HIA in Austria**
- » **Federal Ministry of Health** commissioned Austrian Public Health Institute to elaborate this Concept and to support the described activities

Concept for the Implementation of HIA in Austria

(Horvath et al. 2010)



Activities phase 1: 2010–2015

- » Establishing the **national HIA support unit** at the Austrian Public Health Institute
- » Establishing of a national HIA–website:
<http://gfa.goeg.at/>
- » Establishing of a national **HIA–network**
- » Establishing of an (intersectional) **HIA steering committee**
- » **HIA–guidelines** for practice
- » **Conduction of HIAs** in Austria
- » **HIA–trainings**
- » **Presentation of HIA** at national events
- » **Austrian HIA conferences**
- » ...



Basis for HIA in Austrian Policies/Strategies

- » Health Targets for Austria
 - » Strategy for the health of children and youth
 - » Strategy for the promotion of health (part of the Austrian Health Reform)
 - » National strategy on public health
 - » Health targets of Upper-Austria
 - » Strategy for the promotion of health in Styria
- HIA mentioned concerning the achievement of targets, BUT no legal obligation to carry out HIAs



Resume of phase 1

- » A lot of **important activities** for promoting HIA in Austria have been done between 2010 and 2015
- » **Knowledge** about HIA got improved through events, presentations and courses
- » **Expertise on HIA** in Austria is built up in the Austrian HIA network and the HIA-Support-Unit
- » HIA is part of the **curricula** of specific higher education programmes

BUT...

- » **Decision makers** (on federal and provincial level) **hardly know** HIA
- » **Lack of Interest** or **demand for commissioning** HIAs

Modification of Implementation plan

- » **Activities for awareness raising** have to continue
→ focus for the next year(s): **Federal Ministries**
- » Creating a **connection** to **health care reform** (in Austria Federal Ministry of Health, Federal States & social insurance)
→ task: Elaboration of criteria for Application of HIA
- » Further **HIA trainings** and inclusion of HIA in **higher education curricula** (not only in health-related study programmes)
- » **Conduction** of further **HIAs** in Austria
- » Long-term goal: obligation for an **assessment if an HIA** would be **useful for certain policies**
→ if HIA is not useful: (compulsory) statement why not
→ not obligation to do an HIA compulsory for certain policies

Obstacles when implementing HIA in Austria

- » Comprehensive **understanding of health** and use of **health determinants** are challenges when implementing HIA in practice
- » **Silo-thinking** of policy sectors is still challenging
→ sensitising decision makers that HIA has benefits for all policy sectors (not only health sector)
- » Delimitation towards **existing instruments** is necessary (e.g. HTA, EIA, SEA)
- » When establishing HIA, the creation of awareness is a central measure and has to focus also on the **health care sector itself**

Conclusions

- » Implementing of HIA (in Austria) **still needs time**
- » Austrian-specific **HIA trainings, courses and events** should continue to raise awareness for the instrument and improve the expertise on HIA
- » Inclusion of HIA in **higher education programmes** (not only in health-related study programmes) could promote HIA/HiAP in Austria
- » HIA is a **voluntary instrument** in Austria and will be in the future
 - **Long-term goal**: obligation for an **assessment if an HIA** would be **useful for certain policies**
- » Challenges for the next years will be to build further capacities in the fields **leadership** and **resources**

Contact

😊 THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION! 😊

Gabriele Gruber, BA MA
Stubenring 6

1010 Vienna, Austria

T: +43 1 515 61-349

F: +43 1 513 84 72

E: gabriele.gruber@goeg.at

www.goeg.at

<http://gfa.goeg.at>

