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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Council

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Subject: **Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council**  
meeting on 17 June 2016  
The State of Health in the EU  
– *Information from the Commission*  
(Any Other Business item)

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Delegations will find attached an information note from the Commission on the above mentioned subject.

## **The State of Health in the EU**

In 2016-17, the Commission intends to deliver the "State of Health in the EU" package: a series of analytical products, established in partnership with the OECD and with the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, to support Member States in their efforts towards better knowledge and stronger evidence-based policy making.

### **Building up country-specific and cross-country knowledge to support Member States**

As documented in a 2013 Commission Staff Working Document<sup>1</sup> health contributes to inclusive growth, social cohesion and to the nurturing of a healthy economic environment that is conducive to investment. In turn, the health sector offers great potential to promote growth, create new jobs, ensure fairness and trigger productivity gains through innovative technologies and treatments. These positive links between population health and economic progress and welfare are as strong as they are often overlooked: better health of citizens leads to higher productivity and lower levels of early retirement and absenteeism at work; and a healthier population with longer life expectancy is more prone to invest, including in human capital.

EU Member States need to strengthen the evidence-base, so as to rationalise public expenditure and ensure the effectiveness, accessibility and resilience of their health systems. Moreover, Member States may benefit from exchange of best practices. The Commission has been supporting them in this effort: in particular, the 2014 Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems<sup>2</sup> highlighted tools that can be used to help Member States in evidence-based policy making. Co-operation between the Commission and the OECD, as well as with the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies has demonstrated high value, particularly as concerns the publication *Health at a Glance: Europe*, the analysis of the economics of prevention and of health systems, or the development of patient safety indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2013)83 Final of 20 February 2013

<sup>2</sup> COM(2014)215 Final of 4 April 2014

However, health systems across the EU are under unprecedented pressure to evolve, modernise and adapt to an ever-changing environment, be it because of new technological developments, changing epidemiology, or patient engagement.

In this context, more should be done to support Member States' efforts. In particular, the Commission considers that the time is ripe to strengthen its own country-knowledge and to develop synergies with the OECD and the Observatory so as to provide better analytical outputs for the benefit of the Member States, the EU and other stakeholders. The "State of Health in the EU" package is the concrete result of this renewed effort.

### **The State of Health in the EU: Bringing expertise together to strengthen the evidence-base**

The State of Health in the EU will comprise four deliverables on country-specific and cross-country knowledge in the field of health. These will show cross-fertilisation, yet clear added value for each of them separately.

1. The first deliverable is a revised Health at a Glance: Europe Report by the OECD, to be published in November 2016, prepared by the OECD in cooperation with the Commission; the structure of the Report will be aligned to the three objectives of the 2014 Communication on effectiveness, accessibility and resilience of health care.
2. The second product, foreseen for November 2017, will be a set of twenty-eight individual country health profiles developed by the OECD and the Observatory in cooperation with the Commission. These expert-driven, analytical documents will provide complementary data and indicators, and emphasise the particular characteristics and challenges of each Member State.
3. The third deliverable is a Commission analysis, accompanying the twenty-eight country health profiles, also in November 2017. This analytical paper will put at the service of Member States a succinct overview of the information provided in the first two products, linking them to the broader EU agenda, emphasising cross-cutting policy implications.

4. The fourth product, starting November 2017, is the opportunity for exchange of best practice that Member States can request to discuss concrete aspects of their respective country situation. These exchanges, with the Commission, the OECD and the Observatory, will be done on the basis of the State of Health in the EU findings, and will help Member States to use the gathered evidence if they wish to do so.

### **Exploiting synergies and avoiding administrative burden**

With the State of Health in the EU, the Commission will bring together internationally recognised expertise and will provide Member States with the evidence relevant to their specific context, without judging on their comparative performance.

The State of Health in the EU exercise will be conducted in full transparency with Member States, and will not impose an additional administrative requirement or reporting obligation on them: the Commission, the OECD and the Observatory will use already existing health information and evidence, to provide a factual and objective analysis. The State of Health products will benefit from prior work undertaken with Member States (e.g. in the Commission's Expert Group on Health Information and the Social Protection Committee), and will draw on existing EU level indicator sets such as the European Core Health Indicators (ECHI) and data collected regularly by Eurostat, OECD and WHO. It will also exploit the synergies between the Commission and the OECD.