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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: Health systems performance assessment (HSPA)
- *Terms of reference for an expert group*

At its meeting 15 July 2014, the Working Party on Public Health at Senior Level discussed draft terms of reference for an expert group on the health system performance assessment.

Taking into account comments made by delegations at the meeting and subsequently in writing, the terms of reference for an expert group set out in the Annex were agreed by delegations.

**Terms of reference for an expert group
on health systems performance assessment**

Rationale

In the Council Conclusion on the reflection process on modern, responsive and sustainable health systems, adopted on 10.12.2013¹, Member States and the Commission were invited to improve the coordination on health systems performance assessment (HSPA) at EU level by streamlining the debate on the theoretical HSPA framework, identifying useful methodologies and tools to support policy makers in taking decisions, and defining criteria for selecting priority areas for HSPA at EU level and improving the availability and quality of relevant data and information.

At the Senior Level Working Party on 18.2.2014, the working group on measuring and monitoring the effectiveness of health investments recommended to follow up on its work to improve policy-usefulness, coordination and exchange of best practices at EU level in the field of HSPA.

The working group called for involvement of all Member States in this exercise. In this regard, the working group has considered the option of an expert group, set up by the Commission, to which all Member States would be invited. Sweden, as coordinator of the working group, expressed its availability to chair the work of such a group, together with the European Commission.

The purpose of this e voluntary exercise is to help national policy makers use HSPA to identify if and where improvements are needed in their system. The outcome of this voluntary process is not to rank health systems, but it is to identify together tools and methodologies for Member States, which might be implemented in order to further improve their health systems performance. Moreover, this process aims at searching for ways to improve comparability of information through an agreed working framework.

¹ OJ C 376, 21.12.2013, p.3

The application of such tools and methodologies is likely to focus on specific conditions (e.g. cancer, diabetes, etc.) and requires solid epidemiologic ground .

The Council in its conclusions on the economic crisis and healthcare, adopted on 20 June .2014², confirmed its interest and invited Member States and the Commission to continue to strengthen the effectiveness of health systems through identifying tools and methodologies for HSPA, the exchange of best practice and better use of existing data such as Eurostat and OECD statistics.

The expert group on health systems performance assessment is set up to respond to these invitations.

Mission

The Expert Group on health systems performance assessment aims to reach the following concrete objectives:

- Provide participating Member States with a forum for exchange of experience on the use of HSPA at national level.
- Support national policy-makers by identifying tools and methodologies for developing HSPA.
- Define criteria and procedures for selecting priority areas for HSPA at national level, as well as for selecting priority areas that could be assessed EU-wide in order to illustrate and better understand variations in the performance of national health systems
- Intensify EU cooperation with international organisations, in particular the OECD and the WHO.

Membership

Each Member State is invited to voluntarily appoint its representative to the Expert Group. EEA countries (Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein) as well as OECD and WHO will also be invited to participate in the work of the group.

² OJ C 2017, 10.7.2014, p. 2

The Commission will send invitations to EU Member States, EEA countries, OECD and WHO as soon as the Expert Group is set up – likely at the beginning of September 2014. They will then have two months to express their intention to join the Expert Group.

The European Commission will also be a member.

Operation

The Expert Group is co-chaired by DG SANCO and Sweden.

The Expert Group will adopt its rules of procedures on the basis of the Commission's proposal, at the simple majority of its members.

In carrying out its work, the Expert Group will liaise with other actors which deal with health systems performance within the European Commission, in order to avoid duplication and take advantage of synergies. The Expert Group should take into consideration the activities carried out by Economic Policy Committee on the sustainability of health systems, the Social Protection Committee with regard to the Joint Assessment Framework on health , and the findings of EU-funded research projects on HSPA.

Secretariat

DG SANCO shall provide secretarial services for the Expert Group.

Tasks

1. As a precondition to all other activities, the Expert Group will update the mapping of actors and experiences of international HSPA, which was carried out by the subgroup presided by Sweden in 2012. The information acquired with this exercise will be used to fine-tune and better shape all following activities.

2. In order to achieve the first objective (provide participating Member States with a forum for exchange of experience on the use of HSPA at national level) the expert group will:
 - Organise open exchanges of experience on the development and use of HSPA-tools in the Member States.
3. In order to achieve the second objective (support national policy-makers by identifying tools and methodologies for developing HSPA) the Expert Group will:
 - Based on existing work developed by other organisations, including the OECD and the WHO, define a coherent conceptual framework, identifying the main dimensions/domains of the health system (e.g. effectiveness, equity, etc.);
 - Provide relevant background analysis to support policy making.
4. In order to achieve the third objective (define criteria and procedures for selecting priority areas for HSPA at national level, as well as for selecting priority areas that could be assessed EU-wide in order to illustrate and better understand variations in the performance of national health systems) the Expert Group will:
 - Define criteria for selecting priority areas, on the basis of the work carried out by the subgroup coordinated by Sweden;
 - Based on the identified criteria, test the procedure to select priority areas either at national level or at the level of this Expert Group; organise open exchange of good practice on priority areas, aiming at identifying common factors of success that are replicable in other systems;
 - Explore possible reporting formats and pilot a thematic HSPA exercise on a specific priority area selected by the Group;

5. In order to achieve the fourth objective (Intensify EU cooperation with international organisations, in particular the OECD and the WHO) the Expert Group will:
- Attend or send contribution to relevant meetings hold by the OECD and WHO on health systems performance assessment;
 - Develop a common understanding of the frameworks for HSPA to be used by international organisations and Member States;
 - As part of the report to the WPPHPSL, inform on the progress made regarding collaboration between organizations in HSPA, existing gaps, opportunities for joint work and synergies.

Reporting

The Expert Group will report yearly to the Council Working Party at Senior Level.

	2014				2015				2016				2017			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Mapping of existing actors and experiences of international HSPA																
Organise open exchange of experience																
Definition of a coherent conceptual framework, identifying the main dimensions/domains of the health system																
Provide relevant background analysis to support policy making																
Define criteria for selecting priority areas, on the basis of the work done by the Swedish subgroup and the expert panel																
Test procedure to select priority areas																
Organise open exchange of good practice																
Explore possible reporting formats and pilot thematic HSPA exercise on a specific priority area																
Attend or send contribution to relevant meetings held by the OECD and WHO on health systems performance assessment																
Develop a common understanding of the framework for HSPA																