



ENRF Briefing Note

The EU Health Programme and how it links to nursing research

The [EU Health Programme](#) is a funding instrument that supports cooperation among the EU Member States and fosters and develop EU health activities. The third programme took place between 2014 and 2020 and had a budget of €449.4 million spread throughout 23 priority areas. It serves four concrete objectives:



1. Promote health, prevent disease and foster healthy lifestyles through 'health in all policies';
2. Protect EU citizens from serious cross-border health threats;
3. Contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable health systems;
4. Facilitate access to high quality, safe healthcare for EU citizens.

The next edition of the EU Health Programme will cover the timeframe 2021-2027 and will probably have similar objectives and hopefully a larger budget. It includes two funding mechanisms: [grants](#) and [tenders](#). Applications can be submitted via the [Chafea website](#).

At the [EU Health Programme High Level Conference](#), the current EU Commissioner for Health, [Vytenis Andriukaitis](#), continued strengthening the importance of the "health in all policies" approach, the importance of primary care, and the need of reforming our healthcare systems towards more sustainable eco-systems.



Anne Bucher, the DG Sante Director-General stressed that the EU health programme is meant to invest in people, with a clear focus on the European Pillar of Social Rights and continuing using the ESF+ as a cohesion policy instrument to continue fostering investment in health. **She addressed the importance of moving away from hospitals investment towards more tangible elements such as prevention programmes and patient empowerment, integrated care services, primary care, develop homecare and community care, and new patient pathways, and training of health workforce and digitalisation of healthcare.** These are topics of utmost importance for the nursing profession, and hence nursing researchers should take the lead and do research on those, ensuring that nurses are in the frontline of the EU healthcare systems reform.



Andriana Sukovan, Deputy Director-General, DG EMPL, said we need to foster long-term care and integrated care. She talked extensively about the ESF+ fund. Healthcare coverage should become a universal right. Irene Norstedt, DG RTD, focussed on climate change are becoming a major area in EU research, as well as competitiveness and growth, with the programme being structured in three pillars: Pillar 1: excellent science, Pillar 2: global challenges and european industrial competitiveness (including digital), and Pillar 3: innovative Europe. She argued that health is across

all pillars. She also spoke about a new characteristic of Horizon Europe: the five mission areas. One of them is “cancer”. The drafting of the first Horizon Europe Work Programme 2021-2022 on the basis of the Strategic Plan will take place in 2020. In 2021, the programme Horizon Europe will start until 2027.

Khalil Rouhanan, Deputy Director-General of DG CNECT, said they are working on the digital transformation of healthcare, for example, they are looking at the cross-border interoperability of healthcare systems. There are several funding opportunities for eHealth 2021-2017: 1) Horizon Europe, 2) Digital Europe Programme and Connecting Europe Facility, 3) European Social Fund + and European Globalisation Adjustment Fund 4) European Regional Development Fund, and 5) the InvestEU Programme.



Geraldine Mahieu, Head of Unit SG stressed the importance of healthcare for the new incoming EU commission. They are supporting reforms in many areas, including the reform of healthcare.



Martin Seychelle, Deputy Director-General of DG Sante, stressed that in coordination with the EU Member States, the European Commission has put in place a portal of best practices. Europe should be the best region from the world in learning from each other. For that, the EU Health Programme is a very valuable tool. We should enhance cross-sectoral work. We should also support Member States in doing the right investments. E-health and the digital revolution of health has a great potential to increase the efficiency of the EU healthcare ecosystems. However, the EU Health Programme should not be seen in isolation – its results should be joined up with other non-health funding instruments. The role of the European Commission

is to help to make things happen, to assist Member States in bringing value to their healthcare systems. For the upcoming years we definitely need to increase this mutual learning. There is no health-related problem that is unique to one Member State only. From now on, the key word has to be “implementation”.

For that, nursing researchers should team-up and create cross-sectoral consortiums that apply to EU research funds falling within the EU Health Programme. It is key that the nursing research community benefits from the upcoming EU research funds.

ENRF Briefing Note - 01 10 2019

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