

A new Joint Action on Health Inequalities should acknowledge the key role of local and regional authorities

On 17-18 November, the Expert Group on Social Determinants and Health Inequalities meet in Luxembourg to discuss, among other things, an upcoming Joint Action on Health Inequalities. To this occasion, European Regional and Local Health Authorities (EUREGHA) has shared a position paper with the Expert Group, emphasising the need for a new Joint Action to acknowledge the key role of local and regional authorities in creating and implementing policies to tackle health inequalities.

EUREGHA's overall expectations on a new Joint Action on Health Inequalities is for it to effectively address the social inequalities of health, based on a whole-of-government approach, while including all levels of governance (from local to national and international).

A new Joint Action on Health Inequalities should look into how health authorities in the Member States can comply with the 'dual role' of the health system; as both a deliverer and a steward of health services, and as a steward of health and equity in other relevant policy areas. The actions should focus on how to create a win-win situation for, and between, health and other policy areas.

The final output of a new Joint Action should be to provide policy makers with evidence-based tools to develop plans and strategies to tackle health inequalities. It should aim to guarantee the involvement and cooperation of the local and regional level, and the interaction between different levels of governance, as these are pre-requisites for success.

KEY MESSAGES

A new Joint Action on Health Inequalities should:

- Recognise the key role of local and regional authorities in creating and implementing policies to tackle health inequalities
- Take a whole-of-government approach to health equity, including the mandatory inclusion of all levels of governance
- Safeguard the dual role of the health system, as both a deliverer and a steward of health services, and as a steward of health and equity in other relevant sectors.