

CoR INTERREGIONAL GROUP ON HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Thursday, 9 February 2023, 8h00-9h00

Constitutive meeting

Minutes

8.00 Welcome, introduction by the Chair, Birgitta Sacrédeus

The Chair, **Birgitta Sacrédeus**, welcomed all the participants and explained that the purpose of the constitutive meeting was to discuss topics for the upcoming meetings.

Start of the round-table discussion on possible topics for 2023 meetings

From the exchange of ideas between the participants, potential topics of interest came out:

1. European Health Data Space

The Interregional Group's members agreed on pinpointing the European Health Data Space as a top priority for 2023, following the adoption of the CoR's Opinion on "Regulation on the European Health Data Space" during the European Committee of the Regions' plenary session held the day before (8 February). Given the broadness of the discussion around the proposal, the specific angle will be defined in the preparation of the meeting, but the exchange will be built upon the major questions and issues that might raise from the regional perspective on the implementation of the EHDS and the resources linked to it.

Given the importance and recent developments, the members agreed to focus the first public meeting of the year, scheduled for 16 March, on the discussion on the EHDS.

From a more general perspective, the Interregional Group's members underlined the importance of having a focus on health data also as a cross-cutting topic, which can meet the current topics at stake within the NAT Commission. In this respect, the members' mentioned resilience and vulnerabilities of regional systems to crisis and emergencies as potential topics of interest that might be linked to the health data dimension, as well as the use of data for the care provision and future health challenges.

Mr José Alberto López Moreno from the Region of Valencia (Brussels office) brought the example of the city of Valencia, which developed a system to track COVID-19 evolution by analysing wastewater

by areas. There is also a similar experience from Leuven (BE), as reported by **Mr Jean-luc Vanraes** from the Municipal Council of Uccle. This focus can be one potential nuance according to their opinion.

2. Pharmaceutical legislation

The Pharmaceutical Strategy also emerged as a topic of interest. In particular, an interesting focus might be the procurement of pharmaceuticals in the international framework learning from the experience of vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, which represents a virtuous example of joint procurement, and the reproducibility of this strategy even in times of non-crisis. According to the members, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) could be a potential interlocutor to be involved in this discussion, as well as the European Commission's views on this. It was indeed stressed the diversity in procurement procedures across Europe, with some Member States having it decentralised at the regional level, and the potential benefits of a common coordinated approach and framework at the EU level to improve access to the market and meet health needs.

The IG members agreed to dedicate the second meeting of the year to this topic. This meeting might take place tentatively in the first week of July.

3. Digital and green skills and sustainability of health systems

Following the discussion on the European health Data Space, the topic of digital and green skills of the health ecosystem can have a special spotlight as it represents an interesting angle related to digital and green transition and would fit perfectly in the European Year of Skills, that the EU is going to celebrate in the second half of 2023. Although the themes of the European Week of Regions and Cities have not yet been made official, the IG members agreed to take into consideration this topic as a potential focus for the EWRC session, with the possibility of linking it to the debate on green transition and sustainability, or more broadly to health prevention. This latter theme can be also considered as a potential focus for the last meeting of 2023.

Mr. Michele Calabro', EUREGHA Director, informed those presents that the European Week of Regions and Cities will take place from 9 to 12 October 2023, and the kick-off event is scheduled for 13 February. During the launch event, the four main topics of the Week will be presented and the EUREGHA Secretariat will keep the IG members posted about them.

Other hints from the round table:

4. Integration of care.

5. Centralisation of EU response for health/humanitarian emergencies

Another topic that emerged from the debate was the lack of centralisation and coordination at the EU level in response to emergencies in terms of health-related aid, with a particular reference to the emergency caused by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria at the beginning of February.

Discussion on the organisation of meetings and attendance

The Interregional Group members discussed with the EUREGHA Secretariat how to engage and better promote the activities of the Interregional Group within the European Committee of the Regions in order to increase the attendance of CoR members. With this aim, those presents agreed to extend the invitation to the IG meetings to the reference contacts of NAT Commission members, as well as whole CoR members belonging to regions that have a strong link or existing connections with the network.

To increase the participation of members and external stakeholders, as well as to facilitate the participation of the speakers and optimize the smooth running of the event, the IG members proposed to request the CoR's Unit responsible for meeting service about the possible movement of the timeslot to the early afternoon during the lunch break (13:30-14:30), instead of the usual scheduled time (8:00-9:00 a.m.), keeping the meeting on the second day of the plenary. The first day of the plenary was excluded because of the presence of national delegations.

Another point raised by the IG members to increase attendance was the possibility of having, at least, one online event.

The EUREGHA Secretariat will contact the CoR's Unit responsible for meeting service to find a viable solution.

Always on attendance, it was stressed the need for some support from the NAT Commission staff for the CoR members' mailing list, as well as from the CoR members in echoing the invitations. It may be asked the President of NAT to present and promote the Interregional Group during meetings and plenaries, and the invitations and news may also be shared with the persons responsible for the communication of CoR political groups.

Mr Vanraes also suggested contacting the coordinator of the national delegations to announce the existence and activities of the Interregional Group to the new members of the CoR as well, making sure that everyone who may be interested in IG activities is informed about them.

Finally, another suggestion for having a better outreach was to check the person who is in charge of health (between politicians) and to target them to make a starting skim.

9.00 End of the meeting