

**EG Chairs and ITAs
Twenty first Meeting
Moscow, Russia
25 August 2016**

Title	Minutes from the 21 th EG Chairs & ITAs meeting
Submitted by	Secretariat
Summary / Note	This document outlines the main discussion points and decisions made during the 21 th EG Chairs and ITAs meeting.
List of Annexes	Annex 1 – List of participants Annex 2 – List of documents submitted to the meeting

1. Welcome and opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened and chaired by Mr. Jürgen Ojalo, the NDPHS Chair Country Representative, Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia.

Ms. Yulija Mikhailova and Mr. Eduard Salakhov welcomed the participants to Russia and wished the participants a fruitful meeting.

The participants introduced themselves.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Meeting **adopted** the Provisional agenda (submitted as document EG Chairs and ITAs 21/2/2).

3. Progress in the implementation of the NDPHS Action Plan and further steps

The Secretariat introduced the NDPHS Action Plan, its objectives, horizontal results and time frame (up to 2017), actions, targets, indicators, as well as the role of the Secretariat in its implementation.

Further, the Secretariat described the horizontal results expected to be achieved by the Partnership, to which everyone is expected to contribute, as well as activities and actions with the focus on individual objectives, the Secretariat plans to achieve with the main input of the Expert Groups.

Further, the Secretariat presented examples of its achievements during the past months with regard to the horizontal results (mostly linked to a EU co-financed project implemented by the Secretariat):

- The NDPHS contribution to 6th EUSBSR Annual Forum: Innovations and Cross-Border Infrastructures for a Better Health Care (16 June 2015) – an activity contributing to the horizontal results 1 and 5;
- Conference promoting policy-to-project-to-policy concept (28 April 2016) – an activity contributing to the horizontal results 2 and 5;

- Event promoting health on regional cooperation agenda - “Health is wealth and wealth is health” (30 August 2015), as well as a message forwarded to the BSPC Annual Conference and included in the BSPC Conference Final Resolution – activities contributing to the horizontal result 1;
- Study and articles on health economy – an activity contributing to the horizontal result 1.

In addition, the regular cooperation with other stakeholders was mentioned (including the Secretariat’s support in the development of project proposals subsequently submitted for funding from ENI, the EUSBSR Seed Money Facility, and the Interreg Programme Priority 1, as well as issuing of official Letters of Support) - all contributing to the horizontal results 2 and 5. Finally, the Secretariat mentioned its leadership in implementing two NDPHS projects – an activity contributing to the horizontal result 2, as well as the NDPHS e-Newsletter and e-News – activities contributing to horizontal results 2 and 3.

The Secretariat also recalled a report from the Policy Area “Health” Coordinator to the European Commission which was developed under its leadership – an activity contributing to the horizontal result 5, as well as a comprehensive updating of the NDPHS website (done with inputs from EGs) – an activity contributing to the horizontal result 4.

With regard to the PA Health Support 2 project P016, the Secretariat highlighted that the following activities would be carried out: a NDPHS event being a contribution to the 7th EUSBSR Annual Forum (horizontal results 1 and 5), a training on project development and implementation (horizontal results 2 and 5), a study and a paper on health economy (horizontal result 1) as well as the stakeholder consultation meetings (horizontal results 2, 3 and 5). It also noted that a proper introduction to the project’s scope and purpose would be made later during the meeting, in item 4.1.

The Secretariat also mentioned the development and implementation of projects as well as its support to different stakeholders (e.g. NDPHS proposal for the ENI funding, NCD application, an on-going PYLL study, EUSBSR Seed Money). With regard to the PA Health the participants were informed, that PA Health is the second most successful EUSBSR PA in raising funds (seed money) from the INTERREG Programme and mentioned, that it contributed to this result by providing assistance to project promoters in the preparatory process of their project applications.

With reference to the NDPHS Action Plan and the NDPHS Work Plan for 2016, the Secretariat and the Expert Groups’ leaderships were invited to make presentations on the progress in the implementation of the NDPHS Action Plan. Presentations comprised both the horizontal activities as well as the activities to achieve the objectives in the period of 2015 - 2017 in order to facilitate discussions among groups on topics and activities of mutual interest.

The Chair invited the Expert Groups to contribute to the presentation of the implementation of the Action Plan.

The HIV, TB&AI EG ITA introduced the progress of the NDPHS Work Plan 2016 implementation, including the group’s actions contributing to the implementation of the horizontal results. The key activity during the current year is an assessment of the implementation of the NDPHS Statement on “Impact of the HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis on people of the Northern Dimension Countries – status quo and the way forward.” adopted in

2003. The survey was distributed between the countries (quantitative data analysis). The results will be introduced in the middle of September in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Further, the HIV, TB&AI EG ITA expressed his interest in increasing the visibility of the EG and declared his interest in a future contribution to the NDPHS e-Newsletter. He also presented the EG's achievements in the project proposal for the ENI funding, as well as expressed his wish to expand the Expert Group's activities on development of a project proposal in a broader spectrum using external funding.

In addition, he also presented HIV, TB&AI EG ITA and PH EG contribution (in the form of the organisation, facilitation and content) to the Vilnius Communicable Disease Summit, which lasted for one week and took place at the end of June and early July.

Finally, a big international conference on HIV and immune suppression disorders was announced, which will take place in St. Petersburg in mid-October 2016. The Expert Groups will have a dedicated time slot in one session, that will be dealing with HIV issues and associated infections in the Northern Dimension Area. HIV, TB&AI EG ITA plans to choose HIV and migration as a special topic. HIV, TB&AI EG ITA declared the Expert Group's determination to initiate even more activities until the end of the year and addressed a question to the Secretariat regarding the reporting of the progress activities of 2016.

The Secretariat clarified, that the 2016 activities will be reported in the spring of 2017.

The Chair of the HIV, TB&AI EG informed about a meeting of Finnish actors engaged in the NDPHS that was held in June, assessed it as extremely useful and recommended holding this type of meetings also to the other participants. Finally, he informed about a message from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was very positive about the Secretariat's activities.

The Chair thanked the Expert Group members for their presentation and encouraged other Expert Groups to also contribute to the NDPHS e-Newsletter.

AMR EG Chair informed about a project called Modern GLASS (Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System) focusing on the implementation of the global antimicrobial surveillances, which contributes to the recommendations of the WHO in this area. Separate slides describing the details were offered to the interested participants.

AMR EG Chair named few other projects currently implemented (among them the NoDARS project) and stated, that there are still many gaps to address in the area of the antimicrobial resistance, a.o. the lack of data and stressed the importance of addressed actions for the communities (lacking knowledge about infections). According to the WHO strategic objectives, the actions in the field of the antimicrobial resistance should be strengthened by the surveillance and research. He explained, that the Modern GLASS project builds on the existing national surveillance systems and makes them comparable. AMR EG Chair encouraged the countries to share the data in the GLASS system and stressed, that the Modern GLASS will contribute to the collaboration in the region and securing data sharing and nominating e.g. national quality coordinators, as well as securing the necessary logistics adequate for the project purpose. The participants were also invited to participate and encouraged to explore the available Swedish Institute funding for that purpose.

Chair PHC EG expressed his gratitude to the Secretariat as well as to the Russian Ministry of Health for funding the meeting, then the ppt slides were presented.¹

¹ Available at: http://www.ndphs.org/?mtgs,eg_chairs_&_itas_21_moscow.

PH EG Chair informed about the first meeting of the PH EG, which focused on the EG's work plan and mentioned the next PH EG meeting planned for September 2016. The PH EG contributed to the Vilnius Communicable Disease Week and presented the role of the NDPHS in Health and Prison Project as well as requested closer linkage to the NDPHS with regard to a broader dissemination of information about the project and ideas on the prison health in the Partner Countries.

OSH EG ITA informed that the group's next meeting is planned for the middle of September, after a thematic conference on occupational health in Tampere, Finland. During the thematic conference the results of 2 projects will be presented, OSH EG ITA was involved in.

The meeting was invited to participate in the conference. OSH EG ITA is currently distributing the project results, as one of the dissemination activities a meeting with EUROSTAT was mentioned. It was also mentioned that EUROSTAT adopted the OSH EG ITA method.

Further, the OSH EG ITA side event at the ILO World Congress was announced, as a good occasion to present the results of the EG's activities. The meeting was also informed, that EG seeks to get funding for their new project (the idea of which is similar to the idea of the occupational accidents' project) and attempts to collaborate with networks dealing with the occupational health.

ASA EG was not represented at the meeting.

The Chair thanked for the tasks performed and congratulated the group on organising the side-event, further he encouraged the participants to work closely with other international organisations as this helps improve the Partnership's visibility.

Further, with reference to the ppt presentation², NCD EG Chair described the ToR adopted by the CSR on 24 July 2016 and the NCD EG Work Plan for 2016, a. o. the PYLL project. The results of the PYLL project will be presented on 28 October during the PAC side-event in Sopot, Poland. All meeting participants are invited to attend the event.

The Chair thanked the group for a very operational work plan.

HIV,TB&AI EG ITA proposed, that all Expert Groups, which presented their input with slides, share them.

PHC EG Chair noted, that the Russian Ministry of Health assessed the results of the Expert Groups' activities as not impressive in real practice.

Invited to comment on the latter matter, the Secretariat raised a question about the role of experts and how they can get an appropriate support from their own countries. The Secretariat shared the concern that members of Expert Groups sometimes do not get strong enough support from their own countries' ministries and stressed the necessity of a solid political and practical support to the experts, comprising also providing financial support for concrete projects. Finally, it expressed its worries on the situation described by the PHC EG Chair concerning an insufficient support for the experts in some of the Partner Countries.

² Available at: http://www.ndphs.org/?mtgs,eg_chairs_&_itas_21_moscow.

With reference to the PHC EG Chair's statement, the Russian Ministry of Health clarified that the ministries and experts work at two different levels and pointed at the need of an active teamwork between those two levels.

The Chair referred to the statement of HIV, TB&AI EG Chair concerning the organisation of the country representatives of the Expert Groups' meetings in Finland, commanded them as a good practice that, which could also be implemented also in other countries to help address the situation mentioned by the PHC EG Chair.

HIV, TB&AI EG ITA raised a question, if the experts, who are appointed by the countries to the Expert Groups, need to report about their work results to the ministries.

The Chair responded, that, in Estonia, after experts attend an international meeting they need to write a report about it, however there is no unified procedure as it depends on the institution sending them.

Latvia observed, that the process is very much depending on the rules imposed by ministries. In Latvia, for example, the experts are invited to the ministry to report about their work twice a year before or after CSR or PAC.

The Secretariat stressed that the leaderships of the Expert Groups need to take the responsibility for striving to make experts' work meaningful. It named an example of OSH EG leadership, which delegates the responsibility for running some of the group activities to the group members and their institutions, and has also achieved very good progress in getting funding (EUSBSR seed money and ENI funding).

The Russian Ministry of Health highlighted that it is important that the Expert Groups would convert their meeting inputs into ppt presentations so that they can be published on the NDPHS website. To that end, each of the Expert Groups would make a ppt presentation and have it posted on the meeting's webpage (including those, who did make a ppt during the meeting and those, who did not participate in the meeting). It was agreed, that the ppt presentations will be submitted to the Secretariat, so that they can be uploaded to the NDPHS website³

The Meeting **agreed** to the suggestion by the Russian Ministry of Health.

4. "PA Health Support 2" project including the NDPHS event during the EUSBSR Annual Forum

4.1. Information about the scope of the "PA Health Support 2" project

With reference to document EG Chairs and ITAs 21/4.1/Info 1, the Secretariat informed about the purpose and scope of the new project "Support to coordination and implementation of activities within the Health Priority Area of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Action Plan" (in short "PA Health Support 2"), which is scheduled for 24 months. The project started in July 2016 and was granted 200 000 EUR from the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region

³ Available at: http://www.ndphs.org/?mtgs.eg_chairs & itas_21_moscow

Programme. Further, it presented actions that are foreseen within the project, including possible linkages to the Expert Groups (e.g., support that can be provided by the Secretariat, and possible engagement of the groups in project activities).

The Secretariat informed that a new project assistant, Ms Katarzyna Tyczko, has been employed as of 15 August 2016. As part of the project activities, the Secretariat plans to organize a training comprising project application drafting skills and invited the Expert Groups to take part in it.

Further, the Secretariat described other activities forming part of the “PA Health Support 2”: the already-contracted desk study and a report on economic dimensions of health and social care to be prepared by Dr. Björn Ekman, which will be used as an input to the NDPHS event during 7th Annual Strategy Forum to be held in Stockholm. In the second half of September, a draft report will be disseminated among the Expert Groups’ leaderships for comments by their groups. It was agreed that Dr. Björn Ekman can approach the Expert Groups’ members with questions or requests concerning the study and the report. As to the speakers selected for the above-named NDPHS event, these will be Dr. Björn Ekman and Prof. Roland Trill.

The Secretariat informed about funding is available from the “PA Health Support 2” project also for a training that will focus on the successful project proposal development. The training will be organized for the Expert Groups’ members as well as to external stakeholders. Finally, project funds can also be used for costs of participation in meetings - both Expert Group members and external experts who cooperate with them can benefit from it. The scope of the training would be decided according to the Expert Groups’ and other stakeholders’ needs to make it more meaningful.

The Chair invited to take the latter into consideration as it is a good opportunity for the Expert Groups to participate in the training.

The PHC EG Chair asked who would be eligible for training - participants or presenters.

The Secretariat replied that 23 people will be eligible for training as well as the Secretariat’s staff.

The Chair also invited the participants to be active in the preparatory process of the report being prepared by Dr. Björn Ekman, as well as to use the opportunity offered thanks to the financial resources for trips.

4.2. Preparation for the NDPHS event at the EUSBSR Annual Forum

With reference to document EG Chairs and ITAs 21/4.2/Info 1, the Secretariat introduced the scope of the upcoming workshop/seminar which will be organized as part of “PA Health Support 2” project during the 7th Strategy Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and encouraged the Expert Groups as well as actors they cooperate with to take part in the Forum, including the NDPHS workshop/seminar. It invited the Expert Groups to actively contribute to the event by delegating their experts to take part in discussions and make short statements during the workshop/seminar. Further, the Secretariat invited the Expert Groups to participate and disseminate information about the NDPHS event, as well as mentioned an additional remuneration, which had been foreseen for two speakers and the reimbursement for travel and accommodation cost for 3 up to 4 persons, who could actively participate in the

discussions during the event and present a short statement to the audience. The deadline for preliminary information about the persons, who are potentially interested to take part in the NDPHS event, was agreed for the beginning of September 2016. Finally, the programme of the NDPHS event was presented to the Expert Groups.

Since there is still a possibility to add new topics to the NDPHS seminar event during the 7th Annual Strategy Forum, the Secretariat encouraged the interested participants to approach Dr. Björn Ekman and Prof. Roland Trill, the speakers appointed for the event, with the respective proposals concerning the desired scope of the seminar.

Further, the Secretariat requested the Expert Groups' input to Dr. Björn Ekman's study by the **5 of September**. The deadline for comments/inputs concerning the NDPHS event at the 7th Annual Strategy Forum was agreed to the **23 September 2016**.

HIV,TB&AI EG ITA emphasized that it is really important to provide more information about the Reachforchange organisation included in Forum's programme, introducing themselves as a part of PA Health.

Secretariat promised to forward the response from the mentioned NGO, also asked Sweden to investigate this issue.

5. ENI financial support for NDPHS projects

The Secretariat informed about the state of affairs regarding the ENI funding offered to the NDPHS and groups' efforts to obtain it. There were 3 proposals for ENI funding, and the OSH EG's proposal has been selected. It subsequently invited the OSH EG to introduce their experience on the development of their project proposal.

The OSH EG ITA observed that the project idea was elaborated by the Expert Groups' members during the meeting, the entire process of project proposal development involved many OSH EG ITA members. The collective approach was identified as a success factor of the project.

The Chair asked if OSH EG had planned to involve any other Expert groups the project as well.

OSH EG ITA said that they had not.

The Secretariat spelled out several comments about ENI funding which the NDPHS may possibly receive from the European Commission in a future. Different aspects of the ENI funding were presented, such as less managerial obligations, but also less influence on individual project actions (they have to be a part of a given framework). In addition, the Secretariat informed that it had already forwarded the message to the EC with a request to describe more precisely the project selection criteria for the purpose of exploring future funding opportunities. He expects additional information in October 2016.

6. Preparations for the upcoming PAC

The NDPHS Chair Country and the Secretariat informed about the progress in the preparations for the upcoming PAC, which is going to be held on 28 October 2016 (from 9.00 until 16.30) in Sopot, Poland⁴ on the Senior Representatives level and about the main topic proposed to be discussed, which is the implementation of the NDPHS Strategy 2020 and the Action Plan. One of the documents to be submitted to the PAC is a draft NDPHS Work Plan for 2017, which is supposed to include the Expert Groups' work plans as annexes.

The Expert Groups members were invited to prepare their presentations and include into them their concerns and requests for the country representatives in terms of the political or financial support for their work plans. Further, the process of drafting the NDPHS Work Plan preparation for 2017 was discussed. The Secretariat stressed the importance of a good participatory process within each EG when preparing their own work plans. The Expert Groups were informed, that the Secretariat will include the key messages from each EG's input into to main part of the Work Plan, and requested to draft the proposals respectively.

HIV,TB&AI EG ITA asked about the format of the Expert Groups' work plans and the deadline for their submission, the Secretariat promised to send out an e-mail comprising the Expert Groups' work plan template as well as the instruction how to fill it out.⁵ The Expert Groups were requested to submit the work plans until **6 October 2016**.

Federal Research Institute for Health Organization and Informatics of Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation asked for good practices or ideas on the collaboration schemes of the ministries with the Expert Groups from other countries, as well as proposed to prepare a formalized procedure to that end in order to define the relation between the responsible ministries and institutions versus the NDPHS Expert Groups. The procedure could refer to the financial aspects of the mutual cooperation, as well as define the use of the Expert Groups' outcomes. She suggested to start discussing the topic during the upcoming PAC event in Sopot.

The Chair welcomed the proposal as a good idea and suggested to make use of the good practice of the HIV,TB&AI EG ITA and the Finnish expertise concerning this issue.

The Secretariat replied that some countries have their procedures already in place, but added that initiating a good discussion on those issues would be very valuable.

7. Preparations for the upcoming PAC side-event

During the CSR meeting held in April 2016, the NCD EG presented a proposal to arrange a seminar presenting the outcomes of the ongoing PYLL study (project "International Comparison Differences in Premature deaths and their Causes in NDPHS Partner Countries measured by PYLL indicator") as a PAC side-event. The CSR welcomed that there is a proposal for a side-event and agreed with the Chair's proposal that the Chair and co-Chair Countries supported by the Secretariat would try to help address the issue of funding for the

⁴ Practical information will be posted soon at: http://www.ndphs.org/?mtgs.pac_12_sopot.

⁵ E-mail sent on the 26 August 2016, further information available at: http://www.ndphs.org/?ndphs_docs (in section "Templates").

side-event. Following it, the NCD EG and the NDPHS Secretariat discussed bilaterally and with other actors concerned the substantive, organizational and financial aspects of the side-event.

The NCD Expert Group was invited by the Chair to inform about the latest state of affairs regarding the above as well as the planned steps to ensure a successful event.

The Secretariat informed the Expert Groups about the PAC side-event date (27 October 2016) and the location of the event venue (Sopot, Poland) as well as the focus and the scope of the event (presentation of the PYLL study as the final result of the project implemented by 7 countries with the financial support of the EU). The scope of the event will comprise the benchmarking as well as exchange of experience between the countries on premature mortality from preventable causes, discussion on regional and national health promotion policies, supporting evidence based policy making in implementing health in all policies, as well as strengthening the links between policy makers and researchers for better health in the region. The representatives of all EGs' and other interested experts and stakeholders are invited to participate in the event.

PHC EG ITA welcomed the participants to the PAC side-event in Poland and informed, that the participation in the meeting is free of charge. The expected number of participants is 50 people, as well as informed about the PAC-side event web-page to be opened for registration in the following week.⁶

HIV, TB&AI EG ITA proposed the reflections from the PAC side-event to be included into the PAC's agenda.

The Secretariat responded, that it has already been foreseen – there is one item foreseen for this purpose in the provisional PAC agenda.

8. Next EG Chairs and ITAs meeting

The Meeting did not decide on the date and place of the next meeting.

The Secretariat offered hosting the next EG Chairs and ITAs meeting and promised to come back with the concrete proposals.

The Meeting **agreed** with this proposal.

9. Any other business

The Secretariat reminded the Expert Groups about their responsibility to update their own group's sections on the NDPHS website, if and when necessary.

Further, it informed the participants of the EG Chairs and ITAs meeting about the upcoming NDPHS e-Newsletter issue and invited them to discuss the focus of the next issue and encouraged to contribute to it with articles describing the Expert Groups' activities. The

⁶ Available from: http://www.ndphs.org/?mtgs,pyll_side-event

participants were requested to propose ideas for the main focus of the e-Newsletter. The deadline for the Expert Groups' contributions was agreed to the first days of November at the latest.

10. Adoption of the meeting minutes

The Secretariat proposed that it would send out draft meeting minutes to the participants on **9 September 2016** and that comments on the draft would be due, at the latest on **16 September 2016**. The revised minutes would then be distributed on **23 September 2016** to be adopted *per capsulam* provided that no further comments are submitted within one week.

The Meeting **agreed** to the Secretariat's proposal.

11. Closing of the meeting

The Chair thanked the Host for hospitality and the perfectly organised meeting, as well as all the participants for attending the meeting, for their contributions as well as the fruitful and interesting discussions.

The Meeting terminated at 14:00 hours on 25 August 2016.