

# European Health Information Initiative



**World Health  
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR  
**Europe**

# European policy-makers need answers.



- Are our policies effective?
- Are our policies good value for money?
- Are we reaching our targets?
- What is the best option for us?
- What are other countries doing?
- How much will it cost?
- What should we do first?

# European Health Information Initiative

The European Health Information Initiative (EHII) is a multimember WHO network that is committed to answering these questions and improving the health of the people of the European Region by enhancing the information on which policy is based.

The vision of EHII is an integrated, harmonized health information system for the entire European Region with evidence for policy-makers. This can be achieved by fostering international cooperation in order to exchange expertise, build capacity and harmonize data collection.

## Health information

“Health information” refers to all information, data and evidence that determines health and facilitates policy-making. The activities necessary to obtain health information and bring this information into the health policy-making process can be described as “public health monitoring and reporting”. The term “health information systems” includes all activities and resources related to public health monitoring and reporting. It also includes some less tangible elements necessary for operating a health information system, such as governance mechanisms and legal frameworks, interinstitutional relationships and values.



To address inequalities in health in Europe, our first step must be to address the inequalities in health information. All too commonly where health is poorest, health information tends to be poorest. Health information is absent or incomplete just where we need it most. Health information is crucial in all countries, rich or poor.

– Sir Michael Marmot

A wealth of information, data and evidence is scattered across the European Region but it needs to be collated, completed and made accessible. There are data gaps in all countries and particularly for population groups where health tends to be poorer. As a consequence, health policy is not optimally informed. A sustained, collaborative effort is required to address this. This cannot be done by ad hoc projects. EHII was established to overcome these problems.

### Why Europe needs EHII

Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab  
WHO Regional Director for Europe

“I am extremely pleased that Member States, the European Commission, the OECD and other stakeholders have joined forces with the WHO Regional Office for Europe to improve health information in the European Region, and that a clear way forward for the European Health Information Initiative has been defined. I invite more Member States and other stakeholders to join the EHII as active members.”

*European Journal of Public Health, 2015*

# Adding it all up

## Underlying values

- Maintaining compatibility with existing monitoring frameworks, including global ones
- Applying the life-course perspective
- Aiming to reduce inequalities
- Enhancing interagency collaboration
- Enhancing intersectoral collaboration

## EHI key areas

- 1 Development of information for health and well-being with a focus on indicators
- 2 Improved access to and dissemination of health information
- 3 Capacity building
- 4 Strengthening of health information networks
- 5 Support for health information strategy development
- 6 Communications and advocacy



## Guiding principles

- A focus on the development of practical tools
- A focus on the use of innovative approaches and the stimulation of research and development work

With international support and cooperation EHII's objectives can be reached. Examples of achievements and outputs by the Initiative so far include the following.

- A dedicated expert group is guiding development work on well-being measurement and the cultural contexts of health and well-being for WHO's Health 2020 strategy.
- The WHO health information and evidence portal, a one-stop-shop for easy access to European health information and policy relevant evidence, has been developed (<http://portal.euro.who.int>).
- The WHO Autumn School on Health Information and Evidence for Policy, a flagship training course in health information, is now held annually.
- New health information networks have been set up, such as the Evidence-informed Policy Network Europe (EVIPNet) and the Central Asian Republics Information Networks (CARINFONET).
- A support tool has been created for Member States to assess health information systems, and develop and strengthen health information strategies.

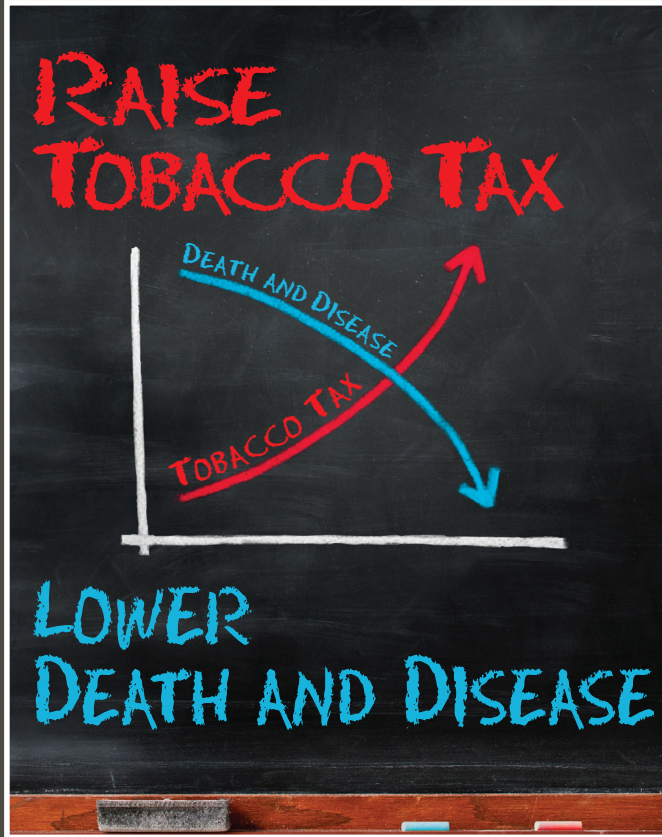
**data  
indicators  
synthesis  
dissemination  
methods  
monitoring  
reporting  
policy  
network  
expertise**





## EHI aims to:

- harmonize health information and improve its comparability;
- improve the quality of health information;
- make health information more available, accessible and easier to use;
- support the development of methods and tools;
- support and facilitate the exchange of good practice;
- support the synthesis, dissemination and use of high quality evidence for health policies;
- build and sustain expert networks; and
- contribute to capacity building for public health.



The benefits from improvements resulting from effective health policy will be felt by those who deal with health and well-being, health care, health determinants or health inequalities and ultimately by the people of Europe.

## What can EHI achieve?

- A stronger, more accessible and sustainable evidence base for health policy making.
- A reduced administrative burden for Member States through increasing harmonization of international data collection.
- Fewer discrepancies between and more clarity about indicator values in different databases.
- A more efficient use of resources as a result of reduced duplication and better use of existing information and knowledge.



For an informal discussion about the many ways in which your institution or organization can become involved in this Initiative and benefit from better health information, contact

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