FOCUS-EU

HEALTH

January 2020

Overview of EU and global policy developments

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WHO IS OLD?

A deeper understanding of ageing has been achieved with a definition of 'old age' that departs from the standard chronological approach applied until now. According to the ATHLOS project defining 'who is old' should take into account both health and life expectancy as the two concepts are not the same. People could be characterised as "old" based on their remaining life expectancy of 15 years or less instead of the traditional chronological basis. Policy design may become fairer if we no longer use the same chronological age (e.g. 60 or 65 years old) for a whole population. Projections should instead be calculated using many characteristics in each specific population - for example opting out from using the chronological age to set up retirement ages would allow more equitable pension ages on the basis of life expectancy. The project has also highlighted that one's capacity to live long and healthy is the result of political and social factors. Sustaining good health and wellbeing in older age depends on how effective policies are in increasing the overall level of education and addressing health inequalities. Appropriate policies (including interventions at an early age) can reverse the embodiment of socioeconomic disadvantage.

ATHLOS is a research and innovation action consisting of 14 partners from 11 European countries. It focusses on identifying the trajectories and determinants of healthy and active ageing, from early stages of development onwards including critical points in time. The goal is to propose timely clinical and public health interventions to optimize healthy ageing. The EU-funded project has created a single metric of health based on a harmonized dataset with over 411,000 individuals.

Sources: http://athlosproject.eu
http://athlosproject.eu/definition-of-old-age
http://athlosproject.eu/wp.pdf

European Commission

New European disability equality strategy

The European Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, indicated that there will be another European disability strategy during *Towards Inclusion 2020*, an event organised by the European Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to Community-based care. Commissioner Dalli announced that a Task Force for Equality has been set up and independent living is a pre-condition, for equal treatment aiming to strengthen the link between Sustainable Development Goals and country reports and policy recommendations in the European Semester. The present strategy is currently under evaluation.

Full speech: *www.ec.europa.eu/towards-inclusion-2020*

Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe

The European Commission has published *Orientations towards the first Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe*, a document which summarises the Strategic Planning co-design process for the first four years of the implementation of the programme. The document provides the basis for preparing the Strategic Plan (SP) itself and for drafting the first work programmes. The SP is still to be agreed upon by Member States before the start of the Horizon Europe. The publication of the first work programmes is expected in October.
The research and innovation interventions under Cluster 1 Health will be oriented towards the following six health-related challenges (targeted impacts):

a. Staying healthy in a rapidly changing society;

b. Living and working in a health-promoting environment;
c. Tackling diseases and reducing disease burden;
d. Ensuring access to sustainable and high-quality health care;
e. Unlocking the full potential of new tools, technologies and digital solutions for a healthy society;
f. Maintaining a sustainable and globally competitive health-related industry.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/orientations-strategic-plan.pdf

Electronic cross-border health services

The following two electronic cross-border health services are currently progressively introduced in all EU countries:

- ePrescription (and eDispensation) allowing EU citizens to obtain their medication in pharmacies in their country of travel.
- digital Patient Summary which is part of one's electronic Health Record. It provides key health information (allergies, current medication, previous illness, etc.) in the language of the doctor to address linguistic barriers when the patient comes from another EU country.

The exchange of ePrescriptions and Patient Summaries is open to all the Member States thanks to the new eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure (eHDSI). The full Health Record should become available across the EU in the future.
Currently, the following exchanges are operational:

- Finland: ePrescriptions of outgoing travellers
- Estonia: ePrescriptions of incoming travellers
- Luxembourg: Patient Summaries of incoming travellers
- Czech Republic: Patient Summaries of outgoing travellers
- Croatia: ePrescriptions and Patient Summaries for incoming travellers
- Malta: Patient summaries of outgoing travellers
- Portugal: Patient Summaries of incoming travellers
  - National Health Service
  - Shared Service of the National Health Service

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/crossborder_healthservices_en

Updated list: National Contact Points for Cross-Border Healthcare

https://ec.europa.eu/cross_border_care_ncps.pdf

ERC: Changes for Horizon Europe

The European Research Council (ERC) has announced a number of changes as the organisation is preparing for the transition to Horizon Europe. In more detail:
a. face-to-face interviews for Advanced Grants similarly to those for the Starting Grants and Consolidator Grants.
b. all the monobeneficiary grants will be launched in 2021 and 2022, but with shifted opening and closing dates: no call will be launched earlier than January 2021 and the call schedule will gradually move back to its original timing by mid-2022.
c. new peer review panels will be added to the ERC's evaluation structure which currently has nine panels in Life Science (LS), six in social sciences and humanities (SSH) and ten in the field of physical sciences and engineering (PE). The new panels are in PE covering material sciences and in SSH panel covering human mobility, environment and space for research on demography, population health, sustainability science, territorial planning and spatial analysis. The ERC is also redefining the *contours* and enriching the descriptors of the existing LS panel.
The ERC has already published the panel structure and it plans to have in place for calls from 2021 onwards.

Call schedule: ERC web page.

Source: https://erc.europa.eu/transition-ERC-to-Horizon-Europe

European Parliament

Disability Intergroup 2019-2024

The European Parliament's Disability Intergroup was officially re-established for the 9th legislative term (2019-2024). The Intergroup counts, currently, 67 members and 40 supporters.

The Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament is an informal grouping of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from all nationalities and most political groups who are interested in promoting the disability policy in their work at the European Parliament as well as at the national level. The Disability Intergroup is one of the oldest Intergroups of the European Parliament: it was established in 1980.

Source: http://edf-feph.org/intergroup

Blind People and New Labelling Rules

Inclusivity has been added to the political debate on the nutritional labelling system (Nutri-score). MEP Laura Ferrara from the Five Star Movement has proposed the use of Braille language and modern technologies capable of implementing an audio-narrating label for food products so that people who are blind or have low vision can exercise their right as everyone else when it comes to choose what they consume.

The European Commission is expected to publish a proposal for an EU-wide labelling system as part of the EU's new food policy, the Farm-to-Fork Strategy (F2F). The new strategy aims to provide consumers with better information on nutritional and environmental aspects of the food products they buy.

Source: https://disabilityinsider.com/accessibility/labelling-rules/

First draft resolution on disability strategy post-2020

Members of the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee proposed a draft resolution on the new disability strategy post-2020 focussing among others on:

- Involving persons with disabilities and their organisations when drafting the strategy;
- Aligning the strategy with UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities;
- defining clear objectives, a clear timeline and adequate resources (both financial and human resources) together with a clear responsible for implementing strategy in every service of the European Commission;
- Ensuring that EU funds are not used for projects that do not ensure the rights of persons with disabilities (for example, residential institutions or inaccessible infrastructure);
- Reducing differences among Member States in how persons with disabilities are treated.

Source: https://www.europarl./COMMITTEES/EMPL/RE/.pdf

Across the World

FDA: Faster Reviews for Biosimilar Supplements

A RAPS article by Zachary Brennan on the draft guidance on the review of biosimilar or interchangeable application supplements.

Source: https://www.raps.org/fda-biosimilar-suppleme

Other

Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-2030

The World Health Organisation has called for a concerted global action on Healthy Ageing to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live. The zero draft document describes the plan for a *Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030*, which consists of concerted, catalytic, sustained collaboration focussing on older people. It is the second action plan of the WHO *Global Strategy on Ageing and Health*, building on the United Nations Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and aligned to the United Nations Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Source: https://www.who.int/decade-of-healthy-ageing

DARWIN and priorities of the EU regulatory network

The Joint Big Data Task Force of EMA and the Heads of the Medicines Agencies have identified ten priority actions for the European Medicines regulatory network. The most ambitious of them is the establishment of DARWIN (Data Analysis and Real World Interrogation Network), an EU platform to inform regulatory decision-making through the analysis of healthcare data from across the EU. DARWIN would create a European network of databases of verified quality and content with the highest levels of data security.
Other recommendations focus on the need for a secure and ethical governance framework; on building up computing and analytical capacity; and enhancing guidance and resources for data quality and data discoverability (choice of key metadata). The Joint Task Force also proposes to establish a learning initiative to enhance the capacity of regulators to track and review outcomes of applications for the authorisation of medicines that use big data as part of the evidence on benefits and risks.

Priority Recommendations:www.ema/recommendations.pdf

Full report: hma-ema-joint-big-data-taskforce.pdf

ERN-EYE: Educating healthcare professionals

The European Reference Network for Rare Eye Diseases (ERN-EYE) launched a video to improve patient experience in the hospital by guiding healthcare professionals on how to welcome visually impaired patients in the hospital.

Source: https://www.ern-eye.eu/educational-video

Calls

Call for proposals on new infrastructures (ESFRI)

Deadline: 5 May 2020

ESFRI Guide: https://ESFRI-Roadmap2021-Public-Guide.pdf

Health Research Infrastructures: http://esfri

Open Call SC1-HCO-19-2020: Reliable and Accessible Information on Cell and Gene-Based Therapies

Deadline: 7 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service: https://ec.europa.eu/funding/sc1-hco-19-2020

Open Call SC1-HCO-20-2020: Coordination of Clinical Research Activities of the European Reference Networks
Deadline: 7 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service:
https://ec.europa.eu/funding/sc1-hco-20-2020

IMI 20th Call
Deadline: 21 April 2020

Rules and how to apply: IMI website.
IMI webinars to inform about the open topics: here.

Source: https://www.euresearch.ch/IMI

Open Call DT-ICT-12-2020:
AI for the smart hospital of the future
Deadline: 22 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service:
https://ec.europa.eu/fundingdt-ict-12-2020

Open Call SC1-HCC-10-2020:
Towards a Health Research and Innovation Cloud: Capitalising on Data Sharing Initiatives in Health Research
Deadline: 7 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service:
https://ec.europa.eu/sc1-hcc-10-2020

Open Call SC1-BHC-06-2020:
Digital Diagnostics - Developing Tools for Supporting Clinical Decisions by Integrating Various Diagnostic Data
Deadline: 7 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service:
https://ec.europa.eu//funding-tenders//sc1-bhc-06-2020

Open Call SC1-BHC-20A-2020:
Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) for Integrated Care Solutions
Deadline: 7 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service:
https://ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders/sc1-bhc-20a-2020

Open Call SC1-DTH-12-2020:
Use of Real-World Data to Advance Research on the Management of Complex Chronic Conditions
Deadline: 7 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/sc1-dth-12-2020

Open Call SC1-HCO-19-2020:
Reliable and accessible information on cell and gene-based therapies
Deadline: 7 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service:
https://ec.europa.eu/funding/sc1-hco-19-2020

Open Call SC1-DTH-06-2020:
Accelerating the uptake of computer simulations for testing medicines and medical devices
Deadline: 22 April 2020

For topic conditions, documents and submission service:
https://ec.europa.eu/funding/sc1-dth-06-2020

Consultations & Events

Webinar on Calls 2020 of EU Health Programme

4 March 2020
Join to hear about the Calls 2020 and the Annual Work Plan of the EU Health Programme.

Registration info: https://ec.europa.eu/annual_work_plan.pdf

The EU EYE continues to be a partner of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA) with a commitment to the B3 Action Group on Integrated care accessible at: https://ec.europa.eu/eip/b3/

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