



**European Health Systems Foresight
Group - Second Meeting
Copenhagen, Denmark
07 February 2018**

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Issue date: 08 January 2018

Scope and purpose

Background

The 2008 “Tallinn Charter: Health Systems for Health and Wealth” has become a reference point for strengthening health systems throughout Europe¹. Its seven commitments have provided a shared and solid basis for improving health systems, and its assertion of a common European value base around the provision of health remains fundamental to their future. In June 2018, a High-Level technical meeting will be organised by WHO/Europe – with the support of the European Observatory on health Systems and Policies – and the Government of Estonia to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Charter. It will provide an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of the Charter and to situate health systems strengthening within wider developments such as the global push towards Universal Health Coverage² and the Sustainable Development Goals³. The meeting will also provide an important opportunity to look forwards, both at specific challenges facing health systems in Europe, and how to plan for the future.

Beyond technological advances, shifting disease profiles, changes in models of care and health workforce composition, and concerns over future financial sustainability, the first meeting of the European Health Systems Foresight Group identified other changes and challenges which have the potential to fundamentally change how healthcare is provided in future, and how people will relate to their health systems. These include wider societal shifts, the impact of climate change, changing political directions, the role of artificial intelligence, and as yet unknown challenges such as stemming from new types of health emergency / pandemic, the impact of anti-microbial resistance, broken economic models, and how people may come to regard responsibility for their own health. Through Health 2020, the overarching health policy and framework for Europe⁴, WHO/Europe remains committed to working with and for its Member States in ensuring that their health systems are people-centred and fit for purpose in future. But clarity on what impacts such changes and challenges will have, and answers to address them, are not readily forthcoming.

Given the nature of some of these issues, therefore, a key question going forwards is whether we can safeguard – and if so to what extent – the shared values of solidarity, universalism and equity which we associate with European health systems, and which are at the centre of the Tallinn Charter? How can decision- and policy-makers ensure that their health systems work to provide the best possible care for everyone; and be sure to not leave anyone behind, in keeping with the SDG commitments? Additional insights are needed and more targeted health systems work and preparedness is crucial.

Overall aim

The overall aim of the Health Systems Foresight Group is to develop perspectives on the long-term future of health systems in Europe. This work will be an important input into the June 2018

¹ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/88613/E91438.pdf

² <https://www.uhc2030.org/>

³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

⁴ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/199532/Health2020-Long.pdf

Tallinn Charter anniversary meeting. But, as noted earlier, accurate predictions on the future of health systems are difficult to make given the environment described, and they are potentially even more difficult to prepare for; small scale real-world experiments are not a viable strategy for example. The European Health Systems Foresight Group will draw on the principles of the 'Foresight' approach⁵, adapting them for this specific purpose:

- Action-focused: the aim of this process is to guide action by Member States and WHO;
- Exploring alternative futures: the process will explore different issues, trends and challenges, and consider different scenarios;
- Participatory: the process will be driven by key stakeholders and experts, reflecting the range of health systems in different parts of Europe and their different contexts;
- Multidisciplinary: the process will involve a wide range of stakeholders and expertise.

The group is mandated to work through three stages which will go beyond the Tallinn meeting: **diagnosis** (understanding where we are), **prognosis** (exploring future and different scenarios), and potential **prescription** (recommending ways forward). The first meeting of the group covered the first stage. This second meeting will now look at the second stage.

Objectives

The second meeting of European Health Systems Foresight group is planned for 07 January in Copenhagen. The objectives of this one-day meeting are:

- to recall the main elements of the initial brainstorming held during the first meeting – on the issues and challenges facing health systems in Europe – and to see whether additional elements need to be considered;
- based on the deliberations at the first meeting, two reports on the (a) uptake / adoption of innovations (hard and soft) by health systems, and (b) current and future health and healthcare trends (spending, life expectancy etc) have been commissioned, and the group will be apprised of progress on both and asked to provide feedback;
- to consider what outcome the group should produce for the June 2018 Tallinn Charter meeting, including what sources of input are needed and how the group can most effectively work together over the coming months; and
- following as a recommendation from the first meeting, the group will be invited to reflect on the possibility of developing a platform on the future of health systems in Europe to support Member States after the 2018 Tallinn Charter meeting.

Participation in this meeting is by invitation, and on a personal basis. The working language of the group will be English.

Additional material

- Whitty CJM (2017). Triumphs and challenges in a world shaped by medicine. Harveian Oration Wednesday 18 October 2017, Royal College of Physicians. RCP; London.
- Crisp LN et al (2014). *The Future for Health*. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Lisbon, Portugal. available at: <https://gulbenkian.pt/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Full-Report-The-Future-for-Health.pdf>
- WEF (2013). World Economic Forum 2013. Sustainable Health Systems Visions, Strategies, Critical Uncertainties and Scenarios. available at: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/sustainable-health-systems-visions-strategies-critical-uncertainties-and-scenarios/>
- Wild C, Torgersen H (2000). Foresight in medicine: Lessons from three European Delphi studies. *European Journal of Public Health* 10(2): 114–119.
- Smith R (1997). On future challenges for European health systems: The future of healthcare systems. *British Medical Journal* 314(7093): 1495.

On Foresight processes:

- The FOR-LEARN project: http://forlearn.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guide/3_scoping/index.htm;
- The Handbook of Knowledge Society Foresight: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/2003/handbook-of-knowledge-society-foresight>

⁵ European Commission Joint Research Centre. FOR-LEARN. Brussels: European Commission, 2007