

# Public health: Community action programme 2003-2008

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The purpose of this Communication is to report on the implementation of the Public Health Programme for 2007.

The report recalls that 2007 was a year of major policy achievements for the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General, as it was marked by the adoption of the [Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health](#) (2008-13) and of the White Paper “Together for Health, a Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013” and the [White Paper](#) “Together for Health, a Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013” which brings together in a coherent and comprehensive framework a range of EU policies that impact on health.

**Budget aspects:** to recall, the programme’s overall budget for 2003-2008 was EUR 354 million. The budget for 2007 was estimated to be **EUR 41 870 000**.

A single call for proposals, covering all work plan activities for 2007 was published in February 2007 and closed in May of the same year. The indicative amount for the call for proposals was EUR 33 888 000. A total of 222 applications were submitted. As a result of the evaluation process, a list of **63 projects** (23 for Health Information, 11 for Health Threats and 29 for Health Determinants) and a reserve list of 11 projects (8 for Health Information and 3 for Health Determinants) were drawn up, respectively totalling EUR 37 575 948 and EUR 4 523 107.

The **main activities for 2007** were:

## Health Information

- work began on a report concerning a Council Recommendation on cancer screening;
- work began on a Commission Communication concerning European action in the field of rare diseases and a Conference on rare diseases was held in Lisbon under the Portuguese Presidency.

## Health Threats

- in 2007, the most important disease incidents recorded by the EU’s Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) concerned: Chikungunya fever in Italy, haemorrhagic fever caused by the Ebola Virus in Uganda, an HIV vaccine adverse event in Vietnam, the multidrug resistant tuberculosis incident affect of a US citizen travelling from the US to the EU, a Salmonella Tennessee event and a legionellosis event involving EU tourists in Thailand;
- the EWTS informatics tool was transferred to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC);
- the Health and Consumer Protection DG actively participated in as assessment of seven EU Member States’ “preparedness plan”. They were Malta, Finland, Cyprus, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Estonia and Romania. The Commission noted that all of these Member States had made significant progress in improving their preparedness plans;
- a fourth joint EC-ECDEC-WHO Workshop on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness was held in Luxembourg, which provided a good opportunity for experts to discuss efforts in the fight against a potential outbreak;

- a call for tender was launched in order to establish a framework contract for scripting, planning, conducting and evaluating exercises related to public health matters.

### **Health determinants**

- efforts to work with the Member States to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS was continued through tools such as the HIV/AIDS think-tank and Civil Society Forum;
- in 2007 the Commission began implementing the EU's strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm;
- in May 2007 the Commission adopted a White Paper on a Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related issues and with a view to implement the Strategy the Commission established a High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity;
- regarding tobacco, the Commission continued work on the 2005-2008 programme: "HELP: For a Life without Tobacco", an EU anti-smoking campaign targeting mostly adolescents and young adults. Over a 30 month period more than 46 000 TV spots, using 96 national TV channels and the Internet, achieved more than 3.2 billion contacts within the target group of young people. In parallel, the EU "HELP" website triggered more than 4.2 million hits and over 5 000 press articles;
- the Commission did follow-up work based on the results of the Green Paper on "Promoting the mental health of the population: towards a strategy on mental health for the EU";
- the Commission also adopted a report on the implementation of a Council Recommendation on the prevention and reduction of health-related harm associated with drug dependence.

### **Risk assessment:**

- in 2007 three separate Scientific Risk Committees met. They concerned: Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks; Environmental Risk; and Consumer Products. The three Committees prepared studies on: hair dyes; Nanomaterials in cosmetic products; dangerous substances; indoor air pollutants; dental amalgams and their alternatives and the effects of smokeless tobacco products;
- the Commission started work on a report concerning the implementation of a Council recommendation on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields; and
- a first Annual Nanotechnology Safety for Success was held concerning nanotechnologies in consumer products including food, cosmetics and medical applications.