Third programme for the Union's action in the field of health (2014-2020)

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This European Commission report to the European Parliament and the Council concerns the implementation of the 3rd EU action programme in the field of health in 2014.

Objective of the report: the report provides an assessment of the implementation of the Union's action programme in the field of health in order to meet the requirements of Article 13 of the Regulation which lays down the requirement for the report. Its main purpose is to provide information on how the programme’s budget was used in 2014.

It is accompanied by a Commission staff working document which provides several examples of the main actions financed under the 2014 work programme in ancillary areas such as evaluation and dissemination.

As a reminder, the 3rd programme had a total budget of EUR 449.4 million and had 4 specific objectives to:

1. promote health, prevent disease and work towards the creation of conditions conducive to healthy lifestyles, taking into account the principle of integrating health issues into all policies;

2. protect EU citizens from serious cross-border threats to health;

3. contribute to innovative, effective and sustainable health systems;

4. improving access to better and safer healthcare for EU citizens.

Key findings: 2014 was the first year of the third programme, and its implementation was delayed. Thus, most grant agreements and several service contracts were signed only in the first quarter of 2015.

There has been progress in the execution of the programme, such as **on-line submissions through the Participants Portal**, on-line evaluation and the electronic signing of grant agreements. The Regulation also introduces simplified administrative procedures and direct grant agreements for joint actions, as well as partnership framework agreements, so that operating grant holders can carry out longer-term planning.

The **new procedure for joint actions** is also more transparent, since the consortium must first be constituted by designations by the Member States and the countries participating in the third programme. This means, however, that EU umbrella non-governmental organisations in particular, face the challenge of being nominated, whereas during the second programme they were nominated by the Commission.

The number of participants in joint actions remains relatively high, as was the case during the 2nd programme: **12 to 39 participants per joint action in 2014**, with an average of 25 participants.

This is a challenge for the **overall management and coordination of joint actions**. The outcome of the calls for proposals for projects shows that 2 calls ended with no project awarded. In one case, no applications were received, perhaps because the theme had been narrowly defined and the proposed co-financing was relatively low. In the second case, several proposals were received, but **all were excluded** during the evaluation process due to insufficient quality.

Outlook: In line with the recommendations of the *ex-post* evaluation, **improvements should be made in the coming years**, including:

- improved electronic tracking and reporting system,
- improved and better targeted dissemination and
- sustained work to involve organisations and institutions from countries that have so far been under-represented among beneficiaries.