

**MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**  
Athens, 25 September 2012, 9.00 – 18.00

**Summary Report**

The Steering Committee meeting of the EPAAC Joint Action was co-chaired by Mr. Martin Seychell, Deputy Director General for Consumers and Health of DG SANCO, and Ms. Mojca Gobec, Director of the Public Health Directorate at the Slovenian Ministry of Health. The second half of the meeting (from the plenary session of the strategic discussion onward) was chaired by Mr. Stefan Schreck, Head of Health Information Unit, DG SANCO, and Mr. Tit Albreht, Leader of Work Package 10, National Cancer Plans.

The first agenda point was reporting from the Coordinator, including evaluation of the Open Forum in Rome. EPAAC Coordinator, Sandra Radoš Krnel, gave an overview of the latest activities from all Work Packages (WPs). Open Forum Leader, Tina Lipušček, stated that the evaluation shows that participants were very satisfied with the conference overall. It was stressed that the Open Forum is an excellent opportunity to provide a forum for debate and an appropriate place to discuss different viewpoints and underlines the importance of collaboration on specific topics. Both co-chairs used the opportunity to remind partners that the success of the Partnership is fully in their hands and depends on their proactive contribution. Partners should also fully use the opportunity for collaborating together.

Under the next agenda point a presentation was given by the Research Work Package 8 (Coordination of Cancer Research) Leader, Julio Celis, on the latest activities from the Work Package, including the outcome of the Coordination of Cancer Research Meeting in Berlin in March 2012 and the Research Forum in Brussels in July 2012 (presentation available at [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sanco/heidi/images/o/oe/EPAAC\\_SC\\_Athens\\_Julio\\_Celis.pdf](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sanco/heidi/images/o/oe/EPAAC_SC_Athens_Julio_Celis.pdf).) The Steering Committee agreed that duplication of existing cancer research cooperation activities should be avoided and that care should be taken in order to avoid overlap between the potential public/private pilot project and the already existing Innovative Medicines Initiative. The Commission expects that Work Package 8 will not only propose pilot projects, but also how those will be implemented. In this respect, opportunities under EPAAC should be fully used and the implementation of pilot projects should not depend on additional EU funding. The Commission expressed some concerns over the second pilot project on the outcome research platform which does not seem sufficiently clear; at the same time, it seems overambitious and premature in the moment when the sustainable cancer information system does not yet exist.

WP 10 Leader, Tit Albreht, reported on the previous day's meeting of the Working Group on National Cancer Plans. The Steering Committee agreed that the final version of the Report on National Cancer Control Programmes which was circulated to Steering Committee members prior to the meeting will now be published on the EPAAC website, [www.epaac.eu](http://www.epaac.eu) as one of the deliverables (report available at [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sanco/heidi/images/7/7b/Final\\_Report\\_on\\_National\\_Cancer\\_Control\\_Programmes.pdf](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sanco/heidi/images/7/7b/Final_Report_on_National_Cancer_Control_Programmes.pdf)). During the previous day, WP 10 also discussed the proposal for a book. Such a book would benefit from the richness of additional

information coming from the survey on National Cancer Plans and an additional literature review, however due to time constraints, WP 10 finally agreed to focus on the remaining deliverables, namely guide(line)s on National Cancer Control Plans and indicators for their monitoring. It was suggested that final deliverables should be published in a separate booklet, to be prepared in time for the final Open Forum in November 2013 and that articles should be published in journals and easily accessible online journals should be approached in order to increase visibility of the deliverables.

Leader of WP 3, Ada Hočevar Grom, gave a presentation on the results of the first Interim Evaluation Report (presentation available at [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sanco/heidi/images/f/f6/EPAAC\\_SC\\_Athens\\_Ada\\_Hocevar\\_Grom.pdf](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sanco/heidi/images/f/f6/EPAAC_SC_Athens_Ada_Hocevar_Grom.pdf)). The report was based on questionnaires sent to Associated Partners and WP Leaders and the Interim Report sent to the EAHC. Overall, the first year of the Partnership can be considered successful. Among areas for improvement, it was stressed that individual Work Packages could benefit from more synergy amongst each other and that Member States could be more substantially involved in the Joint Action.

The Steering Committee split into two groups to conduct a strategic discussion on the potential follow-up to EPAAC, focusing this time on the partnership approach, its added value and potential ways for its continuation. In the plenary session, it was concluded that all participants recognised the benefit of a partnership approach. The first discussion group consisted of Member State representatives. It suggested that there should be a long-term sustainable framework for cooperation in the cancer prevention and control area. The (formal and informal) exchange of information and best practices in EPAAC was seen as extremely useful in sparking debate and facilitating action at national level. In addition EPAAC enables contacts with different stakeholders and important experts and produces inspiring ideas. Guides and other such documents were also seen as being particularly useful at national level. There were some suggestions for improvement within EPAAC, e.g. stakeholders, including NGOs that participate at EU level should better channel information to their partners/members on national levels and thus contribute to implementation of activities at national level. There should also be more space to discuss priorities and the virtual partnership could be improved. The second discussion group consisted of WP Leaders and representatives of the European Observatory, IARC, EDMA, EUREGHA, ECPC, an individual expert, JRC, DG RTD and EAHC. It emphasised that a multi-level strategy with clearly defined short-, mid- and long-term goals should be created and a proactive approach should be employed. It was agreed that the role of industry should be better defined and that mutual information exchange across all levels should be encouraged.

Information was given on cooperation between SANCO and IARC. This cooperation should result in the revised European Code Against Cancer, as well as the second implementation report of the Council Recommendation on cancer screening. Both deliverables are expected to be presented during the last Open Forum. Participants were informed about the proposal of the Commission under the Health Programme work plan 2013 for the future Joint Action in cancer and related preliminary discussions that took place with Member States. Elke Anklam, Director of the Institute for Health and Consumer Protection of the Joint Research Centre –gave an update on their cancer activities. The European Cancer Screening Guidelines and the

establishment of the first EU voluntary accreditation scheme for breast cancer services were also briefly discussed. It was decided that the next Steering Committee in Malta would devote a specific agenda point to the area of cancer screening, including screening guidelines and the updates on the development of the breast cancer services accreditation scheme.

In the continuation of the meeting, the rationale behind the EPAAC publication to be prepared by the end of the Joint Action was presented by Professor Moreno, Professor of Public Health and Medicine at the University of Valencia, who is also proposed to be the volume's chief editor. The idea behind the book is to present the innovation of each of the Work Packages and the added value of collaboration at European level. The book is scheduled to be published alongside the final Open Forum in November 2013. Chapters will be discussed individually between the authors and the editorial team in the near future. The editorial team will consist of Professor Moreno, Josep Figueras from the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, which will also finance most of the costs involved for the production of the book, and members of the EPAAC Project Management Team (Tit Albrecht and Sandra Radoš Krnel). It was clearly stated that the book should focus on innovations brought forward by EPAAC and should not be wholly descriptive in nature. A strong consensus was established for the inclusion and highlights of Member State involvement through each of the chapters. The additional book deliverable will have to be included in an amendment request from the coordinators to the EAHC.

Finally, under AOB, the Irish representative presented an update regarding the future Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU, which will focus on health, wellbeing and innovation. Written information from the current Cyprus presidency was sent in advance by e-mail to all Steering Committee members. Steering Committee members were warmly invited to a symposium in Belgium on the evaluation of Belgian Cancer Plan 2008-2010 and the follow-up meeting on Cancer Research in Paris on October 18 – 19.

The next Steering Committee meeting is provisionally scheduled to take place in Malta in May 2013.