

EPHA 6th ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015 SIDE EVENT

Thursday, 3 September 2015

14:30-17:30

Polak Room, Residence Palace, Brussels
Exhibition & European Policy Conference

Towards a European Union for Health?

The other Europe: What can YOU do?

"The case of connecting Roma people - living in secluded communities - to basic healthcare"

Background information

The 2015 EPHA conference will explore how the concept of 'Health in All Policies' has evolved into a broader approach to better governance for health. The conference will seek to draw lessons from previous health policy-making and identify challenges and opportunities for health in the coming decade. This conference will provide the perfect platform to discuss the issue of Roma integration, including past successes and obstacles, as well as future strategies.



Photo's source: © Catalin Georgescu in the Romanian village Hetea/Hete]

Health in all Policies has a vital importance in the case of Roma Integration.

Housing, Education, Access to Healthcare, Employment and Discrimination are core element influencing overall Roma population health. The Roma, Europe's largest ethnic minority group with its approximately twelve million members is one of the most

disadvantaged communities living in Europe, and in most cases they live in

segregated areas or settlements without proper access to healthcare services as well as without proper health coverage in general. The Roma population is at the bottom of the socio-economic spectrum, with the social determinants of health being largely responsible

for health inequities¹. In most cases Roma lack sufficient access to public services, including access to healthcare.

The European Commission has issued a report on the health status of the Roma population in Europe.² The report concludes that Roma in Europe suffer a greater exposure to wider risks of ill health, have poorer access to preventive healthcare services and suffer poorer health outcomes than the general population. The report also highlights that as a result of cutbacks linked to the economic crisis, Roma health status and access to health services is deteriorating further in several areas. This latest report reinforces the worries of the public health community about the Roma health situation, and that urgent policy actions are needed to tackle the Roma public health emergency.

In the first session, the discussion will focus on the situation in Slovakia as a case-study to demonstrate the challenges Roma people living in secluded communities face, when accessing basic healthcare services. It will also offer solutions on how local authorities, stakeholders, and the Roma themselves – with the active involvement of Roma health mediators – could work together to contribute to the Roma inclusion.

Slovakia, along with Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, with as much as 8 per cent of the population has one of the largest relative Roma populations, out of the total population of 5 400 000. Two-third of the Roma population live in Eastern and South Central Slovakia, which from 50% live in settlements lacking sufficient hygienic and infrastructural amenities.³ The Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC) recently held a conference⁴ on *Improvement of Health in Disadvantaged Communities* in Poprad, Slovakia to introduce the Slovakian results of the Together for Better Health (T4BH) project.

Recognising that each stakeholder (Member States, European Commission, (pro) Roma civil society) has its own responsibility to promote meaningful Roma integration, **this session will provide an inclusive platform for panellists and participants to have an in-depth discussion** about the crucial aspects of Roma integration and how aspects of public health could be included into **the non-health specific elements** of national strategies for Roma integration (housing, employment, education, anti-discrimination), following the health in all policies (HiAP) approach aiming at better governance for health. The debate would also aim to discover **what role Roma Health Mediators can play to facilitate that process.**

Figures show the disadvantaged health situation of Roma in Europe. For example, a continuous improvement is needed in the area of reproductive health in order **to help generate a decrease in infant mortality** by monitoring the access to qualitative and guaranteed antenatal, perinatal and postnatal health services for Roma women as well as for socially vulnerable women. As there are structural problems in many countries which prevent access to healthcare, session 2 will focus on **effective use of European funds**

¹ Marmot M, Allen J, Bell R, Bloomer E, Goldblatt P (2012). WHO European review of social determinants of health and the health divide. *Lancet*, Vol. 380, No. 9846, pp. 1011 – 1029. Doi: org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)61228-8.

² European Commission (2014). *Roma Health Report – Health Status of the Roma Population*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/2014_roma_health_report_en.pdf

³ Healthy communities Slovakia. Available at: http://acec.sk/sites/default/files/download/udalosti/healthy_communitiesplatform_m_kubor_koky.pdf

⁴ Improvement of Health in Disadvantaged Communities Conference, available at: <http://acec.sk/en/udalosti/conference-improvement-health-disadvantaged-communities-0>



To register please follow this **[REGISTRATION LINK](#)**

(Deadline for registration: Monday, 31 August 2015, 12:00)

The event is **[free of charge](#)**

for solving these problems by presenting some examples of good practice from Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Where and when:

Date: 14h30-17h30, Thursday, 3 September 2015

Place: Brussels

Venue: Polak Room, Residence Palace, Brussels

Objectives of the event:

The objective of the event is to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders on:

- **The real living conditions and health status of Roma people** living in secluded communities in Central & Eastern Europe
- **The critical role of Roma Health Mediators** in connecting secluded Roma communities to basic Health care systems,
- **The needs and suggestions from Roma-health NGO's**, local and national authorities to improve the health situation of Roma people living in secluded communities,
- **To present good practices how to use European funds** to improve the health status and access to healthcare for Roma at national, regional and local level
- **And to start to work on solutions** that provide easy-to-access support from the European institutions to improve the situation.

Who should attend?

The side event will be of particular interest and importance for the representatives of civil society organizations, representatives of EU institutions or member states, researchers and other stakeholders dealing directly and indirectly with Roma integration and/or Roma health-related policies.

Organised by:

The side event is organized by the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) in collaboration with the "Together for Better Health" Program by the GalxoSmithKline (GSK).

ABOUT EPHA



EPHA is a change agent – Europe's leading NGO advocating for better health. We are a dynamic member-led organisation, made up of public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals, and disease groups working together to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe. <http://www.eph.org>

ABOUT T4BH



Together for Better Health established in 2011 with (GSK) is a consortium of four non-government organizations working to improve access to healthcare for socially excluded Roma communities in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia. Three-year program seeks to address some of the gaps in

these basic services. <http://www.togetherforbetterhealth.eu>



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