

## OPEN DAYS 2014

**Code of the Workshop:** 07B03

**Title of the Workshop:** The importance of using the European Structural and Investments Funds to drive sustainable healthcare systems

**Date and time:**

7 October 2014

09:00-10:45

**Organiser/leader:** COCIR / AER / HOPE

**Chair/moderator:** Willem Rozenberg, COCIR Financial Sustainability Focus Group Chair, Belgium

**Speakers:**

1. [Michael Ralph](#), Adviser to the Deputy Director-General, DG REGIO, European Commission, Belgium
2. [Sylvain Giraud](#), Head of Unit D1 "Strategy and International", DG SANCO, European Commission, Belgium
3. [George Zervos](#), Head of Special Service Health & Social Solidarity, Greek Ministry of Health, Greece
4. [Antoni Zwiefka](#), Senior Specialist, Lower Silesia Region, Poland
5. [Karsten Uno Petersen](#), Vice-President of the Regional Council of Syddanmark & President of AER Committee "Social Policy and Public Health", Denmark
6. [Susana Fernandez Nocelo](#), Coordinator of European Projects, Galician Health Authority, Spain

**Outline:**

Good health is recognised as an important asset for regional development and competitiveness. Yet health inequalities are increasing across Europe's regions, as shown by the WHO.

COCIR, the European Association representing the medical imaging and healthcare IT industry and its partners, the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE) offer a debate demonstrating the critical role European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) can play in achieving sustainable healthcare models, with better access for and inclusion of patients.

Under the new EU Structural and Investment Funds rules, these can still support Member States and their regions in transforming and modernising their healthcare systems. The debate will discuss how investment in health infrastructure and eHealth, in innovative care delivery models and in qualitative training of health professionals represent an effective use of EU Structural and Investment Funds.

**Debate/Panel discussion:**

1. [Michael Ralph](#), Adviser to the Deputy Director-General, DG REGIO, European Commission, Belgium  
Many changes were implemented under the new ESIF programming period: country position papers were published by the EC, more emphasis is put on results and on strategic frameworks rather than on ad hoc investments. Member

States are asked to invest both in infrastructure and soft measures with a view to ensure sustainability, efficiency and cost effectiveness of healthcare systems. The EC has also put in place Smart Specialisation Strategies to concentrate regional efforts on key areas of research.

2. [Sylvain Giraud](#), Head of Unit D1 "Strategy and International", DG SANCO, European Commission, Belgium  
The role of DG SANCO is first to raise awareness on the eligibility of health investments under the ESIF 2014-2020. The EC has published a guidance document setting priority areas of investment in health which is cross linked with the ESIF thematic objectives. It shows how ESIF can contribute to health and in return how health investments can contribute to ESIF's overall objectives. The EC guide identifies 4 key areas of investment:
  - Capacity building
  - Demographic change (Active and Healthy Ageing)
  - Health inequalities / access to health
  - Reform of health systems
3. [George Zervos](#), Head of Special Service Health & Social Solidarity, Greek Ministry of Health, Greece  
Greece adopted a policy paper on health in May 2013 which principles are reflected in the Greek Partnership Agreement. Greece faces a lack of finance while in need of a health reform to address structural issues. The objectives of the health investments under the new ESIF programming period are to ensure healthcare sustainability, reduce health inequalities and upgrade human capital. Greece is also promoting a digital modernisation of the healthcare system through IT technology and health e-services.
4. [Antoni Zwiefka](#), Senior Specialist, Lower Silesia Region, Poland  
During the period 2007-2013, Lower Silesia Region benefited from low financing for the health sector from the Structural Funds. However, the Region was still able to develop better health infrastructure and high speed access to Internet. In 2014, Lower Silesia Region joined the European project Carewell which will enable the delivery of integrated healthcare to frail elderly patients with complex needs. Under the ESIF 2014-2020, Lower Silesia Region has planned projects to integrate healthcare with telecare and to create platforms which will support patients.
5. [Karsten Uno Petersen](#), Vice-President of the Regional Council of Syddanmark & President of AER Committee "Social Policy and Public Health", Denmark  
Syddanmark has designed a Smart Specialisation Strategy around 3 areas including Health and Social Innovation. The objectives of the Region in the field of health are to optimise and streamline hospitals, create growth and jobs and provide a quality and better experienced system. Syddanmark Region has been working with the entire value chain, in close cooperation between the public and the private sector, which has led to the creation of the Health Innovation Centre. An evaluation of the impact of the Structural Funds 2007-2013 shows a creation of 800 jobs in the Region.
6. [Susana Fernandez Nocelo](#), Coordinator of European Projects, Galician Health Authority, Spain  
The Health Innovation Platform is the main tool of the Galician public health system and is co-funded at 80% by the Structural Funds 2007-2013. The Health Innovation Platform is geared towards improving quality, efficiency and

sustainability of the Galician healthcare system. It is open to collaborative projects with all stakeholders including universities, companies, patients, etc. New innovation health projects are in the pipeline under the ERDF programme Hospital 2050 - Innova Saúde.

**Conclusions:**

The moderator concluded that investing in health has been recognised by the EC as a key driver for keeping healthcare systems sustainable, for keeping people active and healthy, and for reducing existing health inequalities, all of this against a background of demographic change and the rise of chronic disease. The various panellists present today came here to discuss about the challenges they face in their healthcare systems and to share their experience with using the ESIF efficiently. In this regard, COCIR has published a practice Guide in June 2014 which explains to the potential beneficiaries the main features of the ESIF 2014-2020 and how it is possible to co-finance a health project.

**More information, links:**

[http://cocir.org/site/uploads/media/14007.COC.ESIF\\_Guide\\_ENG\\_web\\_2.pdf](http://cocir.org/site/uploads/media/14007.COC.ESIF_Guide_ENG_web_2.pdf)

**One representative quote from the workshop with author:**

“Sharing best practices and successful projects between European Regions is key to leverage the efficient use of ESIF for health”

Antoni Zwiefka, Senior Specialist, Lower Silesia Region, Poland