

Health Targets for Austria: a Health in All Policies case study

Health targets have been widely used in many countries and are recommended by WHO. In Austria, it was decided in 2010 that health targets at federal level should be developed in order to complement existing health targets at regional level. The first year was dedicated to study international as well as Austrian experiences with the elaboration of health targets and to define the guiding principles and the process for further work.

Based on the recognition that the health of the population is determined by living conditions and lifestyles which are influenced by many sectors and not by the health care sector alone, it was decided that the Health in All Policies should be the core principle for the health targets and that broad participation of relevant sectors of policy as well as civil society is key in the process of elaboration. Therefore, a committee with representatives of almost 40 institutions – representing public authorities at federal, regional and local level (covering different political sectors), social insurance, social partner, experts on the health care system, health care professionals, institutions of the health and social care system, representatives of patients, children and adolescents, elderly people and socio-economic disadvantaged people – was set up as in order to develop the health targets. Interested citizens were able to participate in the process by using an internet platform which allowed providing an input at the start and feedback on the drafted health targets at the end of the process. Two big conferences – a kick off conference in May 2011 and a conference for presentation of the draft of the 10 health targets in May 2012 – were organized in order to involve a wider group of the expert public.

The 10 health targets developed in this process were officially approved by the Bundesgesundheitskommission (federal health commission) end of June 2012 and the Austrian Council of Ministers in August 2012. The health targets are just a first step in a longer-term process to come up with and implement an Austrian strategy “Health for all” based on a Health in All Policies view. This first and important step was successful but there is still a lot of work and challenges in front.

<http://www.gesundheitsziele-oesterreich.at/> (in German)