

COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL PARTNERSHIPS – CALL 2020

THEMATIC FIELD 9: Health promotion and prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

JRC RESEARCH AREA DESCRIPTION

The European Union has committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 including the health-related SDG 3. To support these efforts, in particular reducing the health and economic burden from non-communicable diseases, the JRC provides knowledge for policy, scientific tools for monitoring and evaluation progress towards policy targets, as well as health-related impact assessments of policies (*ex post*) or policy options (*ex ante*), respectively.

Work in the JRC on health promotion and disease prevention focusses much on health determinants, in particular on nutrition but also on physical activity and alcohol use. The JRC provides tools for monitoring and evaluating the nutritional quality of the food offer, providing scientific evidence for food legislation, such as on nutrition labelling or composition of baby foods. More integrated assessments including environmental, economic as well as health impacts of dietary patterns and policies affecting food systems in collaboration with the sustainable resources directorate of the JRC are already underway and will continue to grow in importance with the upcoming European Green Deal. The CDP is expected to contribute to these endeavours.

As examples of other past and current work, the JRC has assessed the cost-effectiveness of policy options to reduce the health burden from trans fats in foods and diets to inform decision-making leading ultimately to introducing an EU-wide legislative limit for trans fats in foods. To support policies aimed at reducing burden from childhood obesity, the JRC has assessed school food policies in Europe, identified effective practices to increase fruit, vegetable and water intakes in schoolchildren, and provided guidance on health-minded public procurement. It has also published a recent toolkit for developing or updating marketing codes of conduct for food and alcoholic beverages.

MAIN POLICY FIELDS

Public health-related policy in the EU at both national and Union level is framed by the SDGs, and in particular SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing). To support countries in reaching the health targets, the Commission has established a Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases composed of high-level representatives of EU Member States' health ministries. Among others, this group fosters exchanges of relevant experience, policies and practices between the Member States. One key goal is to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based best practices by EU countries, in order to ensure that the most up-to-date findings and knowledge are being put into practice. The Commission presents to the Steering Group tested policies and approaches selected according to national and EU priorities and based on agreed-upon criteria; the JRC manages this evaluation process.

As health is affected largely also by non-health policies, the JRC's health-related activities also support other policy areas, such as aspects of agricultural policies or food and nutrition-related legislation. The EU school food scheme is an example of the former, regulations on food information to consumers, nutrition and health claims or foods for special purposes examples of the latter.

The new Commission (2019-2024) has laid out in 6 political priorities. They all will have implications for health and in particular the European Green Deal (and new farm to for strategy for sustainable food), Promoting our European way of life and a Europe fit for the digital Age. In addition, Europe's new 'Beating Cancer Plan' will have a focus on prevention, too.

LINKS / URL WEBSITES

Policy:

- https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/sustainable-development-goals_en
- https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024_en
- https://ec.europa.eu/health/non_communicable_diseases/steeringgroup_promotionprevention_en
- https://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/overview_en
- https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition_en

JRC:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/health-knowledge-gateway>
- <https://ecis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/limiting-industrial-trans-fatty-acids-food-protect-consumers-eu>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/helping-eu-schools-become-springboard-healthy-diet-and-lifestyle-habits>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/science-update/towards-reduction-added-sugars-food-0>

LINKS / REFERENCES TO PUBLICATIONS

- <http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/20329> (Marketing toolkit)
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/642047> (Monitoring approach for sugars in foods)
- <https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.116.136911> (Economic evaluation of trans fat policy options)
- <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0213512> (nutritional quality of select foods in EU)
- https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/processed_cereal_baby_food_online.pdf (dietary guidelines and foods offered to infants and young children)
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.2788/82233> (school food policy mapping)
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.2788/33817> (toolkit to promote fruit and vegetable intake in schools)
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.2788/95048> (toolkit to promote water intake in schools)
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/269508> (public procurement of food for health)
- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2019.100342> (healthy low nitrogen footprint diets)