

European experiences with “health” in Impact Assessments

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1. EUPHA and HIA


European Public Health Association (EUPHA)

= scientific umbrella organization for Public Health:

- Including 42 national associations
- About 12,000 public health experts
- European Journal of Public Health
- EUPHActs = series of summaries on important health issues

EUPHA on HIA

- EUPHA identified IAs as a strategic approach to protect and promote human health
- Section on HIA, established 2011
- EUPHActs : HIA



EUPHActs 2011: 2
Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

The World Health Organization (WHO) is an active supporter of HIA development. In 1982, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution introducing a framework for HIA development (WHA-35.17).

The European office of WHO places HIA high in public health priority areas and provides tools and advice to Member States on health impact assessment (HIA) through building capacity,

Health Impact Assessment for Health in All Policies

Health in All Policies is based on Article 168 of the Lisbon treaty on the functioning of the European Union which states that "a high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all community policies and activities".

HIA is an essential element of the Health in All Policies approach and a tool that aims to inform decision makers mostly outside the "traditional" health sector on future consequences of current decisions. As such, HIA aims to be prospective or

EUPHActs on HIA

- Reference given to WHO, EC, „Health in all Policies“, Health inequities, Integrated IA
- “How can HIA help a Ministry of Health?”
- “How can a Ministry of Health help development of HIA in a country?”
- “EUPHA calls upon the EC to take appropriate measures to strengthen the inclusion of health ... in all policy initiatives ... and to ... encourage and help Member States to establish legal and institutional frameworks for applying HIA”

2. On HIA status in Europe

Elements of status quo:

- **Attitudes** towards “health in IAs”
- **Practice** of “health in IAs”

Caveat :

large variability between countries, and over time
high uncertainty concerning status quo, partially
due to multitude of national languages

2.1 Attitudes towards “health in IAs”

- Overall, the health potential of IAs = increasingly acknowledged. During their EU presidencies, several countries (incl. Finland, Portugal, Poland) promoted the inclusion of health in IAs
- Reservations concerning: fragmentation, health dominance/subordination of issues, ownership, information overload, costs, feasibility, data availability, added value, “red tape”, “IA fatigue”

2.2 Practice of “health in IAs”

- For European HIA examples: Gateway, www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?QN=P HIA
- International HIA conferences, e.g. Geneva 2013
- HIA projects, e.g. “Effectiveness” (Wismar et al.)
- Recent books: Birley 2011 (extra-european focus), Kemm 2013, O’Mullane 2013
- “Explicit” coverage of health still rather limited
- EUPHA: “is concerned that the progress regarding implementation of Health In All Policies in the European Union is slow ...”

3. HIA integrative developments

Evolving partially in response to reservations

Main strands:

- 1) Linking health with **other values**, espec. equity / justice, sustainability, economic development
- 2) Linking HIA with **other assessments**
- 3) **Integration of methods**, incl. qualitative and quantitative methods

Other values and other assessments

3.1 Linking health with other values

- Equity; cf. „Health Equity Impact Assessment“
- Sustainability; cf. Sustainability Assessment
- Economic development

3.2 Linking HIA with other assessments

Other forms of IAs: EIA, SEA, Soc IA, Sust A

- Special form: Integrated Assessments (cf. EC)

Other types of health assessment, e.g.

- Health reporting, HNA, HTA

3.3 Integration of methods in HIA

Qualitative and quantitative methods:
antagonism or complementarity?

EC funded projects on HI quantification:

- Track record of tool development, incl. DYNAMO, HEIMTSA, INTARESE, RAPID
- Calling for evaluation (efficacy, effectiveness)
- Integration across tools (toolbox)
- Integration qualitative / quantitative

4. Perspectives

- EUPHA: “encourages the further application of HIA as the main tool to ensure progress in the Health In All Policies in Europe”
- Exploiting the full potential = no trivial task
- Broad range of health determinants: requires systematic cooperation IA <-> health experts
- Global exchange on practical experiences and conceptual developments to be continued