

## Handout

**33rd Annual IAIA Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 13-16 May 2013**  
**Session 6.2: The science and art of international HIA practice (Health II)**

**European experiences with “health” in Impact Assessments**

The European Public Health Association (EUPHA), a scientific umbrella organization for public health including 42 national associations and bringing together about 12,000 public health experts [1], has identified Impact Assessments as a strategic approach to protect and promote human health. Accordingly within EUPHA a section on Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was formed in 2011. The EUPHActs series of summaries on important health issues includes an issue on HIA [2].

Within Europe, not surprisingly both the attitudes towards, and the practice of, dealing with health in Impact Assessments vary largely between countries and over time. During their European Union presidencies, countries like Finland, Portugal, and Poland attempted to promote the issue. In spite of reservations, the health potential of impact assessments seems increasingly acknowledged in European countries. As for practice, “explicit” coverage of health is widely seen as needing improvement. HIA gateways [3] and conferences [4] provide access to real-life examples. The multitude of national languages contributes to the difficulties in more precisely ascertaining the status quo.

For a global audience, several developments might be of interest:

- Linking HIA to Integrated assessments as practiced by the European Commission since 2003 [5]; and to various other forms of Impact Assessments, as investigated jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO) and IAIA – cf. Session 6.1 at this conference,
- Linking HIA to other types of health assessment, e.g. health reporting [6] and Health Technology Assessment [7], both of which are strongly developed in many European countries,
- Complementarity of qualitative and quantitative methods in Impact Assessments; the European Commission funded several projects focused on health impact quantification, e.g. DYNAMO HIA, INTARESE, HEIMTSA, and RAPID, calling for evaluation and integration [8].

With Public Health in Europe being strongly oriented towards “Health in all policies” and an attitude of foresight, the inclusion of health in IAs is much in line with current positions. To exploit the full potential, however, is not a trivial task. To deal adequately with the full range of physical and social health determinants requires systematic cooperation of IA specialists with health specialists. The global exchange on practical experiences and conceptual developments needs to be continued.

---

[1] [www.eupha.org](http://www.eupha.org), [2] [www.eupha.org/site/publications.php?publications\\_page=3](http://www.eupha.org/site/publications.php?publications_page=3),  
 [3] [www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?QN=P\\_HIA](http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?QN=P_HIA); [4] [www.hia2012.ca/en/home.aspx](http://www.hia2012.ca/en/home.aspx),  
 [5] [http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/index_en.htm), [6] [www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/data-and-evidence/european-health-report-2012](http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/data-and-evidence/european-health-report-2012), [7] [www.eunetha.eu/](http://www.eunetha.eu/), [8] <http://jech.bmj.com/content/66/12/1088.abstract>

**Authors:** Rainer Fehr, Universität Bielefeld, Bielefeld (DE), EUPHA's HIA section vice president, [rainer.fehr@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:rainer.fehr@uni-bielefeld.de); Gabriel Gulis, University of Southern Denmark (USD), Esbjerg (DK), EUPHA's HIA section president; Marco Martuzzi, WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH), Bonn (DE), EUPHA's HIA section steering committee member; Walter Ricciardi, Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome (I), EUPHA president; Dineke Zeegers Paget, EUPHA executive director