The role of the EU in health policy and in health system development

Ortwin Schulte

Head of Unit Health in PermRep
Germany to EU, Brussels

EU competences for Health
(without food law)

Art. 168 TFEU	EU-competence
Quality and safety of pharmaceuticals and medical devices	**fully harmonised**
Pricing and reimbursement of pharmaceuticals and medical devices	**member states, transparency by EU**
Quality and safety of organs and blood	**EU minimum standards**
Resource prioritisation of organs and blood	**member states**
Organisation and health system development	**member states, EU dialogue**
public health (prevention, communicable diseases, Drogen	**member states, EU dialogue**

guiding principles of Health at EU level

legislation

- small area of harmonisation: **pharmaceuticals** and **medical devices**
- small area of minimum standards: **blood** and **organs**
- additional EU role in **public health**….
- …excluding **financial and organisational issues** of health systems

budget

- small budget for **action program on health**: 55 Mill. €/year
- fairly high budget on **EU health research** through Horizon 2020
- potential EU financing for health infrastructure by **structural funds**

Influence of other EU policies on health

- Internal market

- Regional and Agricultural Policy

- Research

- European Semester/Open Method of Coordination

- EU/ECB/IMF-support for certain EURO states

Political framework of EU presidencies

- **focus** of EU 28, COM and EP on **Presidency**
- **6 months for a presentation of the country** (achievements and challenges)
- **special attention** on ministers and staff as **chairs**
- possibility to set new topics and to **start an EU process**
- possibility to set a regional **accent in external EU relations**
- possibility to set new topics with EU support and to **start a process on national level**

examples for processes and accents

- **EU process**
  Dutch presidency on pharmaceutical questions

- **EU external relations process**
  Spanish Presidency: Barcelona process/Euromed
  Finnish Presidency: Northern Dimension

- **national process enhanced by EU**
  German Presidency: Together against HIV/AIDS
  Estonian Presidency: Alcohol policy

finding a top theme: criteria (overview)

- personal commitment of the minister? (1)

- embedded in existing EU processes? (2)

- integrated in the government program? (3)

- compatible with the Trio presidency program? (4)

criteria 1
personal commitment of the minister?

internal EU topic

- collecting of **core topics in national health policy**
- scanning of **EU relevance** of the topic, derived from that definition of aims (legislation or dialogue?)

external EU topic

- definition of **target areas** in external relations
- **bilateral contact** with target states on ministers level
- possibly **invitation to Informal Ministers Council**

criteria 2
embedded in existing EU processes?

- **trade-off** between **continuing** other topics and **starting** new processes

- topics in **non-harmonised fields** are necessarily focussing on **dialogue** and produce **less tangible results**

- **abstract topics** can cause **dry debates**

- topics in **full consensus with EU Commission diminuish** the **visibility** of the Presidency

- **European Parliament** needs to be integrated in the plannings and the program

criteria 3
integrated in the government program? (1)

- simple **messages across ministerial boundaries** increase the overall **message** of the Presidency,…

- …but a fully integrated approach **reduces** the **visibility** of the **Ministry.**

example German Presidency 2007:
Interministerial Task Force being occupied with **organisational questions**; content decisions often handled inside the ministries

example Estonian Presidency 2017:
digital innovation as **cross-cutting issue for all participating ministries**

criteria 4
compatible with the Trio Presidency program?

- **Trio Presidency** as a new instrument to **enhance** mid-term planning and **coordination**

- **dense contacts** on political and technical level

- challenge: handling of **different interests** of Trio partners

2017-2018	**Estonia**	**Bulgaria**	**Austria**
2019-2020	**Romania**	**Finland**	**Croatia**
2020-2021	**Germany**	**Portugal**	**Slovenia**

recent subjects for political discussions in EU health care

- Health Technology Assessment (HTA)
- cross-border Healthcare /ERN
- health professions in the services package
- standardisation in health (CEN)
- shortages in pharmaceuticals
- European Pillar on Social Rights
- health indicators, esp. self-reported health