



State of Health in the EU: shift to prevention and primary care is the most important trend across countries

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Today the European Commission published the reports that depict the profile of health systems in 30 countries. Country Health Profiles are being issued with the Companion Report that shows some of the biggest trends in the transformation of the healthcare systems and draws key conclusions from the Profiles.

Vytienis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *“Various surveys and debates across Europe prove us that health ranks among the top priorities of European citizens. I am particularly glad that health promotion and disease prevention are finally getting the attention they need. I am therefore very proud to have initiated the State of Health in the EU cycle and delivered two cycles together with the OECD and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies for 28 EU Member States, plus Norway and Iceland. I can clearly see that this robust country-specific and cross-EU knowledge feeds into both national policymaking and EU level cooperation. I hope my successor will continue this exercise and that more Member States will follow up the voluntary- basis discussions on its findings and share best practices.”*

Key findings

The Country Health Profiles provide an in-depth analysis of health systems, looking at the health of the population and important risk factors, as well as the effectiveness, accessibility and resilience of health systems in each EU Member State. They clearly reflect shared objectives across the Member States, and reveal potential areas where the Commission can encourage mutual learning and exchange of good practices.

The Companion Report brings out some of the biggest trends in the transformation of our health systems:

- Vaccine hesitancy is a major public health threat all across Europe, which can be tackled by improving health literacy, countering disinformation and actively involving health workers.
- The digital transformation of health promotion and disease prevention can result in winners and losers. People who would most benefit from mobile health and other such digital tools may be the least likely to have easy access to it.
- Gaps in health care accessibility are still very much a reality in the EU. Both the clinical needs and socioeconomic characteristics of patients need to be accounted for when measuring access to health care and its many barriers.
- Skill mix innovations among the health workforce show great potential for increasing the resilience of health systems. Promising examples of task shifting among health workers are found across the EU, particularly when it comes to enhancing the role of nurses and pharmacists.
- The product life cycle of medicines reveals ample scope for Member State cooperation in ensuring safe, effective and affordable therapies, including everything from rational spending to responsible prescribing.

Background

In 2016, the European Commission launched the *State of Health in the EU* cycle of knowledge brokering, to assist EU Member States in improving the health of their citizens and the performance of their health systems. The reports fill a knowledge gap of a context-sensitive, comprehensive analysis and insights that has been identified as a major obstacle for health policymakers. The reports have been widely used by national authorities.

For More Information

The 30 Country Health Profiles, the Companion Report and more background information can be found [here](#).

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