1.H. Oral presentations: Health inequalities in time of crisis

The transfer of the bottom-up approach to tackle health inequalities to seven EU countries

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Issue
Health inequalities (HI) could be defined as preventable and unjust differences in health outcomes among different SE groups which exist in all countries and between them. The gap in mortality of cardiovascular diseases between new and old member states was identified by EC as indicator of HI. Public health (PH) capacity on regional level was recognised as insufficient. Slovenian PH institute developed bottom-up approach to tackle HI at regional level by means of health promotion.

Problem
Transfer of this approach to seven EU regions and PH capacity building including preparation and implementation of regional strategic plans were main goals of the ACTION-FOR-HEALTH project, co-financed by the EU Health programme during the period 2012–2014. The methods were: situation analysis in seven chosen EU regions using available data, creating partnerships and involving local stakeholders, identification of regional PH priorities, performing workshop and summer school, producing on-line distance learning (DL) and printed learning tools, preparing and implementing strategic plans, which were culturally adjusted and tailored to regional priorities and needs. The main question was whether the generic bottom-up approach can be transferred to diverse cultural and socio-economic environments.
Results
The results were increased PH capacity using participative approach of involved institutions, prepared regional, culturally adjusted strategic plans to tackle HI in each of seven regions and implemented objectives targeting vulnerable groups. DL and printed learning tools contribute to sustainability of results.

Lessons
Increased PH capacity, commitment and participation of regional stakeholders, adjustment to regional environment, shared ownership and strategic planning are basic components of the bottom-up approach and can be applied in diverse EU environments.

Key messages
• National policies aimed at HI should be accompanied by continuous and strategic bottom-up approaches on local and regional level, using health promotion as an overall approach and a tool.
• The prerequisites to address HI at regional level are: PH capacity, partnerships and strategic plan, adjusted to available resources, culture and needs.