

# SHADOW REPORT

FROM MONITORING WORK  
AND EFFECTS OF  
THE SECTOR WORKING  
GROUP ON HEALTH

*January – December 2021*







THROUGH  
DIALOGUE **TO**  
**EU**

# SHADOW REPORT

FROM MONITORING  
WORK AND EFFECTS OF  
THE SECTOR WORKING  
GROUP ON HEALTH

*January – December 2021*

 This project is funded  
by the European Union



**REACH-OR**  
research in action

 **Center for Civil Communications**  
Центар за граѓански комуникации

**ЕВРОТИНК**  **EUROTHINK**  
ЦЕНТАР ЗА ЕВРОПСКИ СТРАТЕГИИ CENTER FOR EUROPEAN STRATEGIES  
евротинк

## SHADOW REPORT FROM MONITORING WORK AND EFFECTS OF THE SECTOR WORKING GROUP ON HEALTH IN THE PERIOD JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021

### ORIGINAL TITLE:

ИЗВЕШТАЈ ВО СЕНКА ОД СЛЕДЕЊЕТО НА РАБОТАТА И ЕФЕКТИТЕ НА СЕКТОРСКАТА РАБОТНА ГРУПА ЗА ЗДРАВСТВО ЈАНУАРИ – ДЕКЕМВРИ 2021

### Publisher:

Foundation Open Society – Macedonia

### For the publisher:

Fani Karanfilova Panovska, executive director

### Authors:

Goran Lazarov

Aleksandar Kolekeski, Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance IPA III (2021-2027)

Irina Jolevska, Gender Mainstreaming in Sector Working Groups

### Editors:

Danche Danilovska – Bajdevska

Nada Naumovska

Sandra Anastasovska Kuzmanovski

### Graphic design:

КОМА

### Translation from Macedonian language:

Katerina Dimishkovska

Skopje, 2022

---

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација

Национална и универзитетска библиотека „Св. Климент Охридски“, Скопје

35.075.2:341.171(4-672EУ:497.7)"2021"(047)

LAZAROV, Goran

Shadow report from monitoring work and effects of the sector working group on health [Електронски извор] : January – December 2021 / [authors Goran Lazarov, Aleksandar Kolekeski, Irina Jolevska. - Skopje : Foundation open society – Macedonia, 2022

Начин на пристапување (URL):

<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdijalogkoneu.mk%2Fen%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fsites%2F3%2F2022%2F06%2FZDRAVSTVO-2021.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7C9fe119cecae645e318b408da4e0add72%7C6dd6692964ee4888a65ab847baf12c47%7C0%7C0%7C637908106273383139%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=xpwPo97kV8UFv6ASvuS%2BUVwiobTXA0GYBe8i4oGx2S0%3D&reserved=0>

- Превод на делото: Извештај во сенка од следењето на работата и ефектите на секторската работна група за здравство : јануари - декември 2021. - Текст во PDF формат, содржи 44 стр., табели. - Опис на изворот на ден 20.05.2022. - Фусноти кон текстот. - Библиографија: стр. 44

ISBN 978-608-218-394-7

1. Kolekeski, Aleksandar [автор] 2. Jolevska, Irina [автор]

а) Процес на пристапување во ЕУ -- Секторски работни групи -- Македонија -- 2021 -- Извештаи

COBISS.MK-ID 57421829

---

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, Eurothink: Center for European Strategies, Reactor – Research in action and Center for Civil Communication and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

# TABLE OF CONTENT



FOREWORD	5
GENERAL INFORMATION	9
METHODOLOGY APPROACH	11
<b>PART 1: SECTOR POLICIES</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART 2: SWG FUNCTIONALITY</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1 Rules of Procedure	19
2.2 Annual plan	20
<b>PART 3: CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART 4: CSO CAPACITY</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>PART 5: EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK</b>	<b>29</b>
5.1 Plenary sessions	29
5.2 Operational meetings	30
<b>PART 6: INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE IPA III (2021-2027)</b>	<b>33</b>
6.1 IPA III programming (2021-2027) in the health sector	34
<b>PART 7: GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SECTOR WORKING GROUPS</b>	<b>39</b>
7.1 Gender mainstreaming in SWG Health	41
FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY	44



# FOREWORD

## SUMMARY ON PERFORMANCE OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS IN 2021

Shadow Reports from Monitoring Work and Effects of Sector Working Groups in 2019, 2020 and 2021 were developed under the hypothesis that SWGs are important bodies responsible for sector policy creation and monitoring in the Republic of North Macedonia and serve as forum for coordination of donor support for policy implementation.

The sector-wide approach was indicated as comprehensive approach for IPA II, used to assess and determine the state's qualification level in terms of utilization of IPA assistance for full sector support, and was followed by formation of sector working groups over the period 2015-2020. With the start of IPA III programming for the period 2021-2027, institutions continued the sector-wide approach and operation of sector working groups.

While, in formal terms, sector working groups have potential to be policy makers in relevant sectors, SWG monitoring findings in 2021 indicate to regression in terms of their functionality, civil society participation and effects from their work. Modest improvement is noted in respect to transparency in operation, having in mind that institutions responded to more than 85% of information requests made under the instrument for free access to public information, accounting for an improvement by more than 4% compared to 2020. Openness is also noted in terms of increased communication, especially because in 2021 representatives from all 12 SWGs accepted invitations for interview with the project team that monitors their work and performance.

Based on the analysis of meetings held by SWGs, total of 251 responses made by institutions under the instrument for free access to public information, 12 interviews with

IPA coordinators and discussions with 26 civil society organizations that participate in sector groups, flagship monitoring findings on performance of SWGs in 2021 concern the following:



- In 2021, SWGs held a total of 11 plenary sessions and 8 operational meetings, representing a decrease compared to 2020 findings, when they held a total of 19 plenary sessions and 21 operational meetings.
- None from 12 SWGs has complied with the minimum number of plenary sessions on annual level stipulated in their respective rules of procedure or draft rules of procedure, while 4 sector groups<sup>1</sup> did not hold any plenary session during 2021.
- In the case of 5 from 12 sector groups, civil society organizations have not participated in SWG work during 2021. In the case of 4 SWGs, civil society participation was absent due to the fact that the relevant sector group has not held any meeting, while one sector group has not invited civil society organizations to participate in its work.<sup>2</sup>
- SWGs that have held plenary session and invited civil society organizations to attend these meeting did not fully update data on civil society representatives resulting in invitations being sent to erroneous or non-existing e-mail addresses, which additionally narrows the space for civil society participation.
- Although IPA III Regulation anticipates that civil society organizations should be given space for meaningful participation in IPA programming and sector policy development, in the practice there is no actual space for substantial engagement of civil society organizations during plenary sessions and involvement of civil society representatives in operational meetings organized by SWGs.
- While donor coordination is anticipated as part of activities performed by sector working groups, the monitoring tools did not observe agenda items for SWG meetings held in 2021 that focus on donor coordination matters.

1 SWG Justice, SWG Public Administration Reform, SWF Roma Integration and SWG Home Affairs

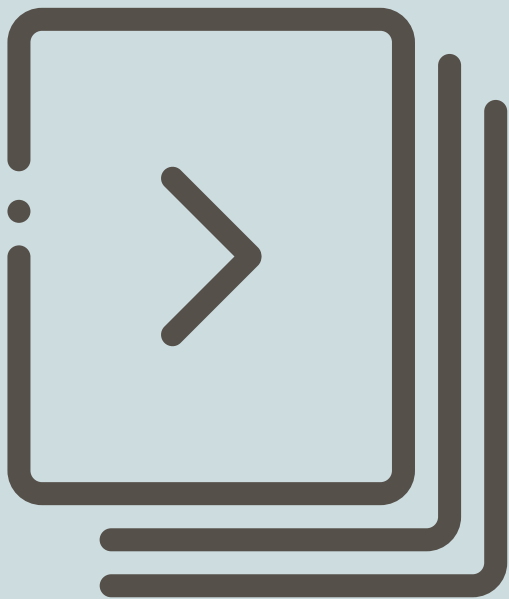
2 SWG Competitiveness and Innovation



Based on the established state-of-play, encouraging steps have been made in 2021 towards enhanced structural dialogue. In particular, the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) initiated the process for amending the rules of procedures for SWGs in order to improve their overall performance and regulate civil society and donor participation. During interviews with representatives from competent institutions it was underlined that they are open to changing the rules of procedure with a view to regulate participation and role of civil society organizations in greater details. Expectations are that predictability of SWG dynamics and functionality will be improved in 2022, by creating the indicative calendar for meetings of all SWGs and by publishing information on phases for future IPA programming, as well as relevant documents for sector policies. Based on responses obtained from civil society organizations, evident is the request for their participation at the level of technical meetings that would allow them to be involved in all stages of policy development and adoption.

## HOW TO MOVE FORWARD?

SEA must urgently open consultations around the new rules of procedures for SWGs, which should include provisions that improve meaningful participation of civil society organizations, primary by ensuring availability and access to materials and information of operational nature, as well as by organizing inception training for new representatives to ensure thorough understanding of sector policy processes and IPA programming. These trainings should also target civil society representatives from Sector Monitoring Committees. The new rules of procedure should regulate in details the procedure for selection and work of civil society representatives, including the method for consultations with the broader civil society. Adherent actions are needed to implement plans aimed at improving participation, work predictability and transparency of SWGs.



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## SECTOR WORKING GROUP ON HEALTH

**FORMED:** 2020

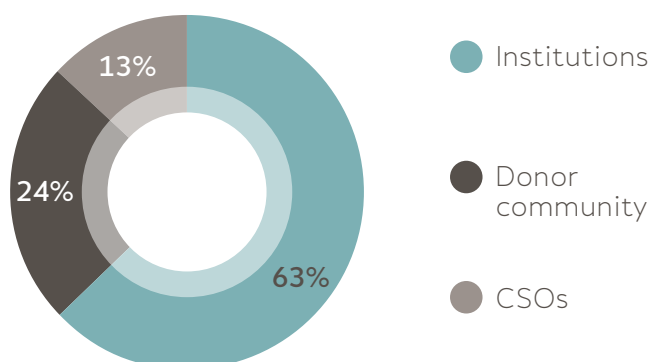
**NUMBER OF SWG MEMBERS:** 62, institutions x 39 members, civil society organizations x 8 members and donor community x 15 members

**NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD IN 2021:** one plenary session, 03.06.2021

**SWG CHAIR:** Minister of Health

**SWG CO-CHAIR:** Deputy Minister of Health

**CHART 1.**  
*Distribution of various representatives in SWG Health*





# METHODOLOGY APPROACH

For the purpose of this report, the project team combined several research methods for data collection, processing and analysis. Research work was comprised of desk analysis and field/online research.

The desk research component included in-depth analysis of documents, laws and strategies that are of significance for this sector working group (*for more information see [BIBLIOGRAPHY](#)*). Moreover, the project team submitted **22 freedom of information requests** to the Ministry of Health as the institution competent for this sector group, but did not receive any response.

As regards field/online component, the project team **interviewed**<sup>3</sup> the coordinator from the ranks of civil servants from the Ministry of Health, and organized a **focus group**<sup>4</sup> with civil society representatives that participate in SWG Health. The focus group was attended by three from total of eight representatives from civil society organizations.

According to the monitoring methodology, performance of sector working groups is assessed in respect to five segments:

- SWG functionality;
- civil society participation in SWG;
- CSO capacity for contribution and participation in SWG;
- effects from SWG work;
- IPA..

3 Interview with the coordinator from the Ministry of Health was conducted on 12.01.2022.

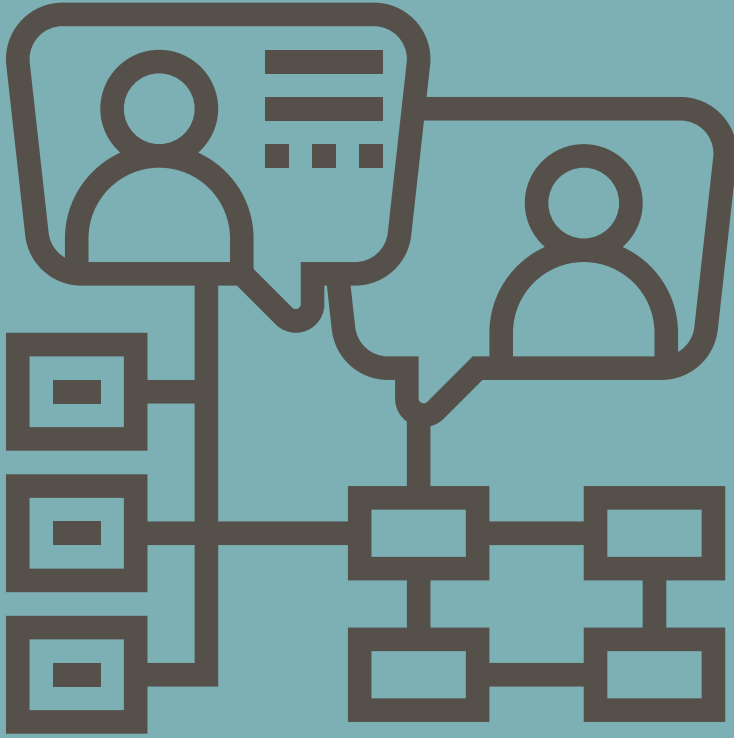
4 Focus group with civil society representatives that participate in SWG Health was held on 18.01.2022



Based on the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, performance of SWGs in all these five segments is measured against 31 standards and 21 indicators. Scores calculated for these standards (1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest) are used to assess progress in work of all 12 sector working groups at annual level.

Nevertheless, having in mind that five of twelve SWGs did not hold plenary sessions in 2021 and given that most standards and indicators are directly related to SWG meetings, unlike last years, this monitoring report does not include scores for individual segments of SWG performance. This method is applied to all SWGs, including those that have held plenary sessions in 2021, in order to maintain same approach to assessment for all 12 sector working groups.







# PART 1

## SECTOR POLICIES

### European Commission's 2021 Progress Report for North Macedonia

Reforms in the health sector are covered under Chapter 28: Consumer and Health Protection in the European Commission's 2021 Progress Report for North Macedonia. In particular, the report noted that North Macedonia remains **moderately prepared** in the area of consumer and health protection and that **no progress** was made in the reporting period, leaving the country with the same status observed in 2019 and 2020 reports. Furthermore, the European Commission underlines that in the coming period, the country should in particular:

- intensify efforts on tobacco control;
- publish reports on registers for cancer and individual rare diseases and ensure adequate funding and specialized knowledge for early detection and treatment, based on data from these registers.



### **Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021–2030**

In 2021, the Ministry of Health published the [Health Strategy 2021–2030](#) with a several months delay due to the great workload falling on this ministry during the COVID-19 health crisis. The strategy was developed by international experts<sup>5</sup> with financial support from the European Union and, as indicated by representatives from the Ministry of Health, the document had taken into consideration numerous international and domestic analyses.

Publication of this strategy was accompanied with an action plan on strategy implementation which, in addition to the timeframe for implementation of activities, offers an opportunity for involvement of international institutions and donors in strategy implementation.

Draft version of this strategy document was presented at the only plenary session held by SWG Health in 2021. For more information see [MEETING HELD BY SWG HEALTH](#).

After the strategy's presentation within SWG Health, the document was shared with relevant ministries and other institutions for the purpose of collecting feedback aimed at improving its quality. According to information from the Ministry of Health, a significant number of comments have arrived, some of which were later integrated in the strategy, while others could not be approved. The strategy's final version includes 17 milestones that should be reached by 2030. Both strategy and its action plan are published on the Ministry of Health's website.<sup>6</sup>

Except for the health strategy, in 2021, the Ministry of Health worked on other thematic documents related to the health crisis, such as: Action Plan on Provision of Essential Health Services under COVID-19 Conditions and Revision to the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. These two documents are not available on the Ministry of Health's website.

In addition to the new strategy, 2021 activities of the Ministry of Health included continued efforts for implementation of other valid strategies, such as:

- | [National Strategy for Control of Antimicrobial Resistance with Action Plan 2019-2023](#);<sup>7</sup>

5 Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2030 was developed by the consulting company Conseil Santé.

6 Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021–2030, available at: <https://bit.ly/3GBfkLP>

7 National Strategy on Control of Antimicrobe Resistance and Action Plan 2019-2023, available at: <https://bit.ly/3uy5OGO>

- [National Strategy on Prevention of Oral Diseases with Children Aged 0 to 14 Years \(2018-2028\);<sup>8</sup>](#)
- [National Strategy for Promotion of Mental Health 2018–2025.<sup>9</sup>](#)

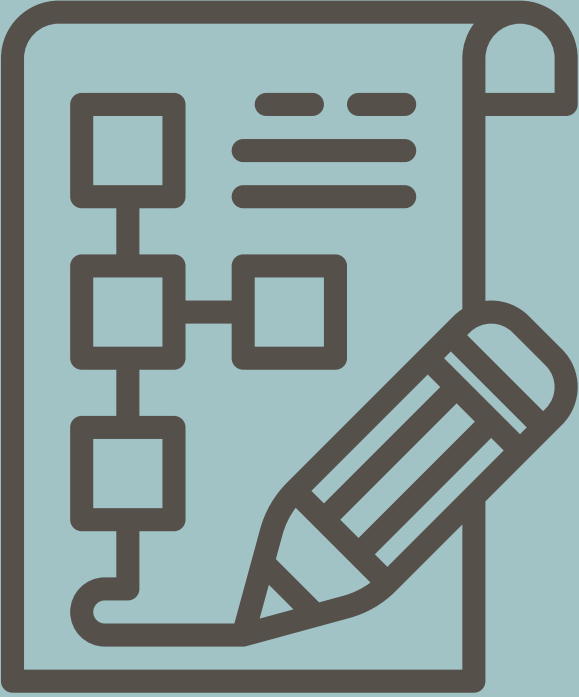
Based on measures taken in the light of the COVID-9 health crisis, 2021 legislative activities included amendments to the Law on Healthcare and Law on Health Insurance.

At the same time, activities have started for drafting several laws: Law on Medicines, which is already in parliamentary procedure, as well as Law on Medical Aids and Law on Drugs, which are still in development stage.



8 National Strategy for Prevention of Oral Diseases with Children Aged 0 to 14 Years (2018 - 2028), available at: <https://bit.ly/3gtqsjn>

9 National Strategy for Promotion of Mental Health September 2018 – 2025, available at: <https://bit.ly/3uwDOn6>



# PART 2

## SWG FUNCTIONALITY

### 2.1 RULES OF PROCEDURE

The decision on formation of SWG Health<sup>10</sup> and the rules of procedure<sup>11</sup> are two key documents that govern operation of this sector working group. In 2021, no changes were made to the rules of procedures and they remain in effect as adopted in 2020. SWG Health is chaired by the Minister of Health of RNM, with the Deputy Minister serving as co-chair.

In 2021, no changes were made to the number of SWG members, i.e. there were total of 62 members with the following breakdown of representatives: 39 from institutions, 15 from the donor community and 8 from civil society organizations. It is important to note that according to the rules of procedures, representatives from the donor community and the civil society have the status of members-observers within this sector group.

To great extent and with few exceptions, provisions from the rules of procedure were enforced by SWG Health. In particular, the rules of procedure stipulate organization of at least two meetings annually (lowest number compared to other SWGs), but only one plenary session was held in 2021. Representatives

<sup>10</sup> Decision on formation of SWG Health, available at: <https://bit.ly/3v4yEv2>

<sup>11</sup> Rules of Procedure for SWG Health, available at: <https://bit.ly/3gmoUHe>



from the line ministry confirmed that initial plans implied organization of two meetings for presentation of IPA III Action document and for the Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2030 separately. However, in order to comply with deadlines for development of IPA III action document, both documents were presented at the only plenary session held in 2021. Having in mind that these are exceptionally voluminous and important documents, such practice could result in additionally narrowed space for structural dialogue during the process for development of important health policies.

Invitations for the only meeting held by this sector group in 2021 were sent in timely manner. Attached to the invitation, SWG members received all necessary documents, i.e. agenda and materials anticipated for discussion, and sufficient time was allotted for discussions and presentation of opinions by civil society representatives.

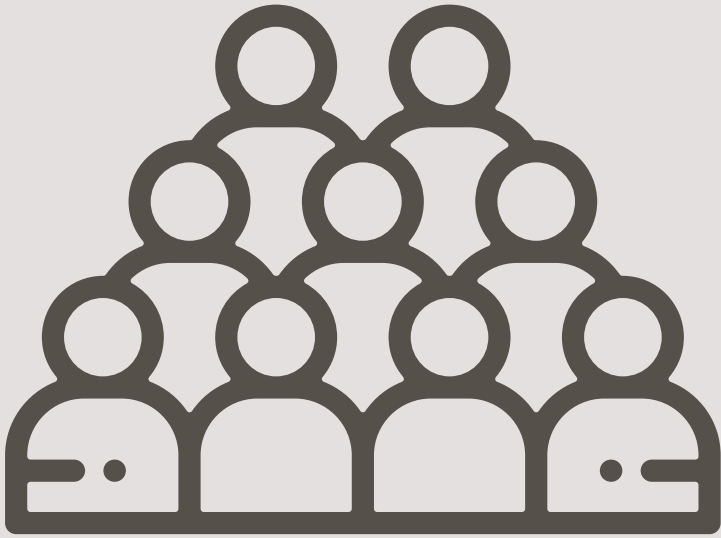
Transparency is another important segment in terms of SWG functionality. As was the case in 2020, in 2021 the Ministry of Health did not publish any information related to this sector working group (rules of procedure, meeting announcements, minutes from meetings held, etc.).

In December 2021, the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) initiated a meeting with representatives from all institutions that chair sector working groups to present and discuss the new draft rules of procedure for all 12 SWGs. For more information on planned amendments to the rules of procedure and the process for their adoption see [FOREWORD](#).

## 2.2 ANNUAL PLAN

SWG Health did not develop an annual work plan for 2021. Representatives from the Ministry of Health confirm that SWG meetings are planned on the basis of needs and the rules of procedure which anticipate organization of at least two meetings per year.







# PART 3

## CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

The list of civil society organizations that participate in SWG Health is given in the annex to SWG rules of procedure. No changes were made to the number of civil society representatives in this sector group or in terms of their status, meaning that the list still includes the same eight organizations with the status of observers.

List of CSOs with status of observers in SWG Health includes the following:

- Foundation Open Society – Macedonia;
- HERA - Health Education and Research Association;
- Association for Support to People Living with HIV – STRONGER TOGETHER;
- Association for Rare Diseases “Life with Challenges”;
- Center for Regional Research and Cooperation “Studiorum”;



- Association for Fight against Cancer - BORKA;
- HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje;
- Association ESE.<sup>12</sup>

Civil society representatives were timely invited to attend the only plenary session held by SWG Health that took place in 2021.

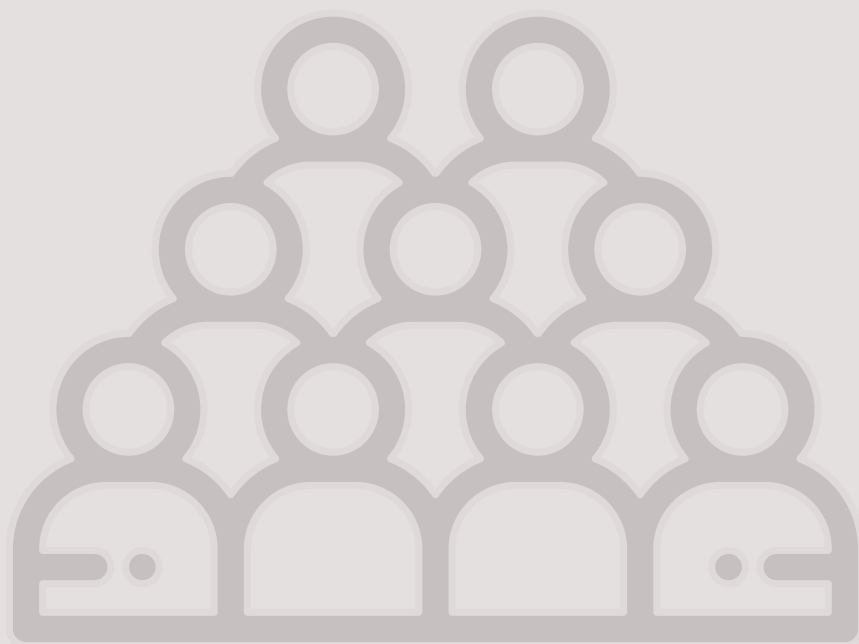
Several days after SWG plenary session, on **09.06.2021**, the project “EU Dialogue” organized consultations with civil society organizations that participate in SWG Health and representatives from the Ministry of Health. The purpose of these consultations was to provide another presentation of IPA III Action Document “EU for Better Health and Social Protection, and Gender Equality” for civil society organizations.

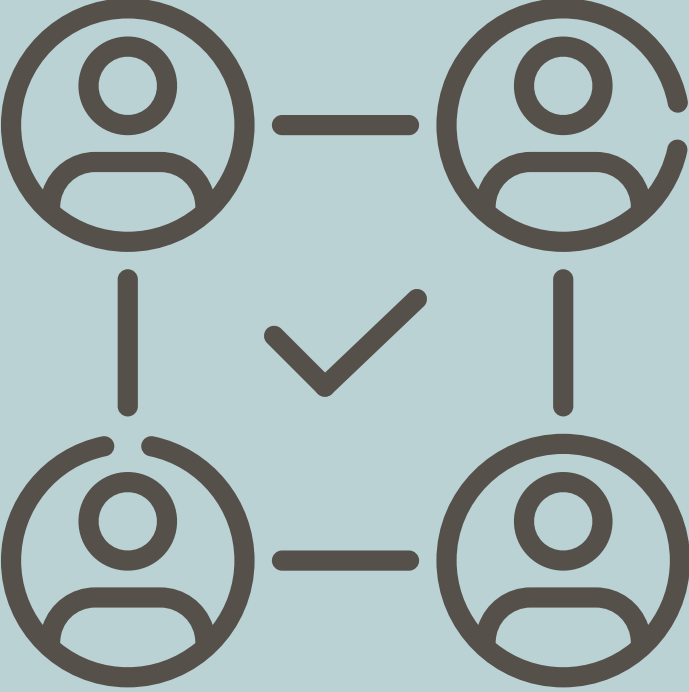
After the event, joint agreement was reached to allow additional seven days for civil society organizations to submit their comments about the action document. Four CSOs have presented the Ministry of Health with their comments on IPA III action document, but after their review these were not taken into account.

Representatives from more active civil society organizations perceive this approach as demotivating and indicated that, unless changes are made to the method of operation for SWG Health, they do not see their role in this sector group.

On the other hand, representatives from the Ministry of Health indicated that objectives defined in the action document cover a small portion of health policies and therefore comments made by civil society organizations could not be taken into account, especially because they are addressing particular group of citizens and diseases.

<sup>12</sup> Websites of CSOs that participate in SWG Health: Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, HERA – Health Education and Research Association, HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje, Association ESE, Center for Regional Research and Cooperation “Studiorum”, Association for Support to People Living with HIV – STRONGER TOGETHER, Association for Rare Diseases “Life with Challenges”, Association for Fight against Cancer - BORKA.





# PART 4

## CSO CAPACITY

Civil society representatives have not changed their position in terms of this sector group's performance from the last round of interviews, meaning that they perceive its role as more formal instead of serving as true forum for various stakeholders to discuss crucial policies in the health sector.

At the same time, it was reiterated that civil society organizations are often called to comment already finalized documents in the last stage of development, which means that meaningful changes cannot be made to such documents.

Hence, the setup of SWG Health, which formally includes civil society organizations, could be erroneously interpreted that the civil society has been involved and consulted in development of documents, but that process is not properly implemented in the practice.

In their opinion, civil society organizations should be involved at operational level, in all stages for development of relevant documents by institutions, in order to be able to exert actual impact on policy creation.



# PART 5

## EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK

### 5.1. PLENARY SESSIONS

In 2021, SWG Health organized one plenary session, held on 03.06.2021. The meeting organized by the Ministry of Health and the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) was held as online event on the WEBEX platform in order to comply with health protection recommendations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The **first part** of this meeting included presentation of the Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021–2030 by international experts that worked on its development, with individual overview on strategy principles, the process, key health issues, strategy objectives, action plan and funding opportunities. The **second part** concerned presentation of IPA III Action Document “EU for Better Health and Social Protection and Gender Equality” by representatives from the Ministry of Health. This presentation also included proposed indicators to monitor performance and success of anticipated activities.

The meeting was attended by representatives from institutions, donor community and civil society organizations.

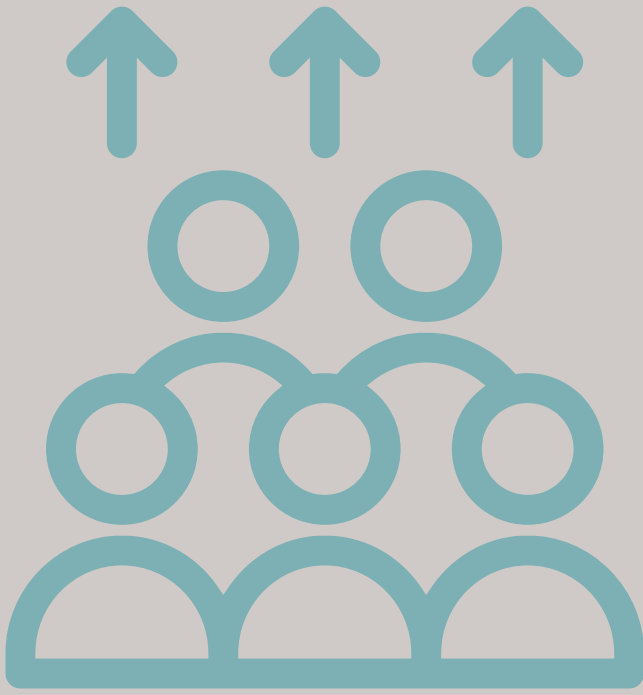
## 5.2 OPERATIONAL MEETINGS



Representatives from the Ministry of Health stressed that this sector group is still relatively new and has not formulated its concept for operational meetings. Hence, development of IPA III action document implied organization of various consultation meetings with representatives from the Secretariat for European Affairs and the team of experts that worked on drafting the document. Be that as it may, these meetings were considered informal and therefore other SWG members were not invited to attend, including civil society representatives.







# PART 6

## INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE IPA III (2021-2027)

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) concerns the programming period 2021 - 2027. The European Commission introduced this instrument together with the new EU multiannual financial framework. IPA III was introduced with adoption of the Regulation on Establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and the Regulation on Implementing Rules and Principles for IPA III<sup>13</sup> by the European Union, and is coherent with other funds, programmes and instruments of the Union, primarily the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument.

According to its structure, IPA III is organized around five thematic priorities, i.e. windows:

1. Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy;
2. Good Governance, Acquis Alignment, Good Neighbourly Relations and Strategic Communication;
3. Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity;

<sup>13</sup> Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) COM/2018/465 final

4. Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth;
5. Territorial and Cross-Border Cooperation



For more information on IPA III programming (2021-2027) see the report [IPA: Cross-Cutting Issue](#).

## 6.1 IPA III PROGRAMMING (2021-2027) IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

IPA III funds anticipated for the health sector are part of WINDOW 4: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth, thematic priority 1: Education, Employment, Social Protection and Inclusion Policies, and Health. IPA III action document “EU for Better Health and Social Protection, and Gender Equality” that was discussed within SWG Health in 2021 has passed the maturity stage before the European Commission and its implementation started. The planned budget amounts to 11,120,000 EUR, of which 11,000,000 EUR are contribution from IPA III. Action fiches are still not developed for the action “EU for Health”, which is planned for 2023 and 2024, meaning that at the moment this action is addressed with strategic indicators in the earliest stage and they can be changed in the future.

**TABLE 1:***IPA III programming (2021-2027) in the health sector***WINDOW 4:  
COMPETITIVENESS AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH****Thematic priority 1:** Education, Employment, Social and Inclusion Policies, and Health**Implementation period: 2022 година**

Action	Estimated total budget (million EUR)	Requested contribution from IPA (million EUR)	Implementation plan/arrangement
<a href="#"><u>EU for Better Health and Social Protection, and Gender Equality</u></a>	11.12	11.0	The action will be implemented under direct management through procurements, including service, goods and works contracts. <b>The action document</b> and accompanying materials were submitted to the European Commission's service in November 2021.

**Implementation period: 2023 and 2024**

<a href="#"><u>EU for Health</u></a>	9.5	8.0	Direct management
--------------------------------------	-----	-----	-------------------

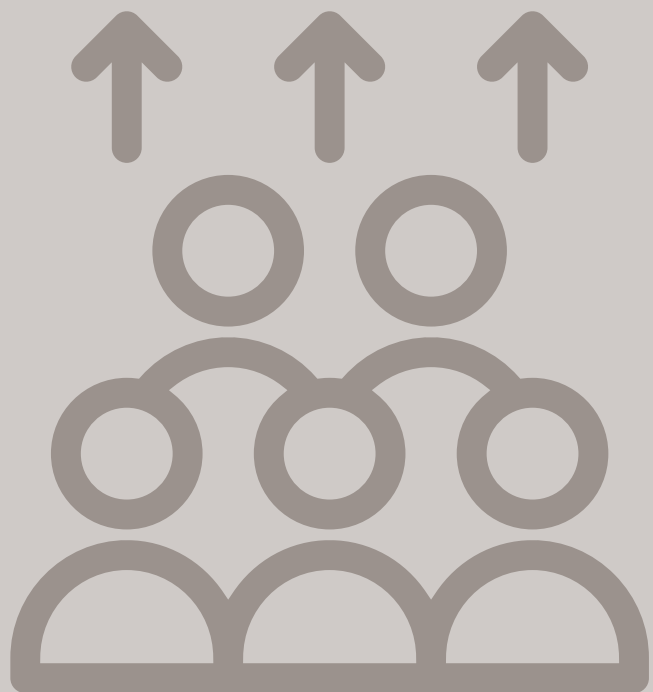
**TABLE 2**

*2022 Action Document “EU for Better Health and Social Protection, and Gender Equality”*

2022 ACTION DOCUMENT “EU FOR BETTER HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, AND GENDER EQUALITY”		
Expected outcome	EU contribution (EUR)	Indicative third party contribution
1. Improved system and practices for occupational safety and health	2,500,000	0
2. Enhanced effectiveness of the system for prevention and protection of gender-based and domestic violence	1,000,000	120,000
3. Improved quality of social services	1,500,000	0
4. Improved state response to major health threats in the country	6,000,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,000,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>

A novelty under IPA III is the fact that all projects will be managed centrally, i.e. the EU Delegation to the Republic of North Macedonia will be the contracting authority.

Openness of data on the implementation status of activities under IPA III is of exceptional importance for regular monitoring and greater involvement of stakeholders. Hence, in 2021, the Ministry of Health and all other institutions involved in implementation of activities under IPA III have appointed person responsible for updating PAF Indicators on the specially designed website for that purpose. However, although implementation of IPA III activities has already started, the website is still not active.







# PART 7

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

Gender mainstreaming is a process for systematic consideration of implications on women and men from a planned action, including legislation, policy or program, in any area and at all levels.<sup>14</sup> In that, the ultimate goal is to achieved gender equality. Within the national legislation of the Republic of North Macedonia, gender mainstreaming is defined under the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men<sup>15</sup> and represents an obligation for all state bodies and institutions. Failure to incorporate the gender perspective implies adoption of gender-neutral or gender-blind policies that are unable to address existing inequalities and could contribute to deepened gender gaps.

---

14 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Glossary and Thesaurus, A-Z Index, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1185?lang=mk>

15 Article 4, paragraph (1), item 10) of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” no. 6/12, 30/13, 166/14, 150/15 and “Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia” no. 53/21.



Gender equality is among core values of the European Union.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, EU membership is conditioned with respect and promotion of fundamental European values.<sup>17</sup> The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance in the period 2021-2027 (IPA III) stipulates that implementation of IPA III should be led by the principles of gender equality and enhanced rights of women and girls,<sup>18</sup> in line with and aimed at attaining the minimum standards established under the EU's new Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III) titled "An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action".<sup>19</sup> GAP III is organized into five pillars and the third pillar anticipates activities in six key areas of engagement.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, GAP III reflects goals and objectives defined under the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, IPA III defines gender equality as specific objective, but also thematic priority eligible for support.<sup>22</sup> In that, it is stressed that gender equality is a cross-cutting issue that should be adequately reflected and integrated in the overall implementation process.<sup>23</sup> Goals of IPA III assistance under the thematic priority on gender equality fully correspond to six areas of engagement from GAP III, which provides an additional indicator for the need for these two documents to be linked. On that account, work within sector groups - that represent forums for interdepartmental cooperation and are competent for creating and implementing national policies and programming, monitoring and evaluating foreign aid - should be guided by and aligned with GAP III. Finally, due consideration should be made of the EU's commitment

16 Article 2 of the consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union, available at: <https://bit.ly/3s4gjyR>

17 Ibid. Article 49, paragraph (1)

18 Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III), available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1529&qid=1643627286827&from=en>

19 EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join\\_2020\\_17\\_en\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join_2020_17_en_final.pdf)

20 Ibid. GAP III anticipates activities grouped into six thematic areas: ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence; promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights; strengthening economic and social rights and empowerment of girls and women; advancing equal participation and leadership; implementing the women, peace and security agenda; addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation.

21 A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

22 Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III), available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1529&qid=1643627286827&from=en>

23 Ibid.

that, by 2025, at least 85% of all new external actions should include gender equality as important or general goal.<sup>24</sup>

An important element of the sector approach to gender mainstreaming is building and enhancing technical competences of all stakeholders involved in implementation of sector policies.<sup>25</sup> Hence, equal importance is assigned to capacity building on gender mainstreaming among policy makers, but also among people involved in policy implementation.

For more information, see [Shadow Report on Gender Mainstreaming in Sector Working Groups](#).

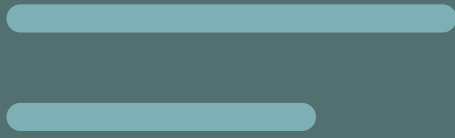
## 7.1 GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SWG HEALTH

As the lead institution for SWG Health, the Ministry of Health (MoH) did not respond to information requests submitted under the instrument for free access to public information. Nevertheless it should be noted that, at the meeting held on 03.06.2021, MoH's IPA coordinator presented activities in the area of health from the last version of IPA III 2022 action programme "EU for Better Health and Social Protection, and Gender Equality". This action document falls within joint competences of two sector working groups: SWG Health and SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy. It includes gender equality as primary objective, and effects from proposed projects will be measured against gender desegregated indicators.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join\\_2020\\_17\\_en\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join_2020_17_en_final.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> EIGE, Glossary and Thesaurus, A-Z Index, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1359?lang=mk>

<sup>26</sup> Information obtained under response to information request for free access to public information provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy no. 14-491/3-2022 from 31.01.2022.



## FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**1.** In 2021, SWG Health held one plenary session for presentation of the Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2030 and IPA III Action Document. This work dynamics is insufficient for development of strategy and planning documents and for monitoring results achieved under existing strategies and plans. Hence, planned changes to the rules of procedure must guarantee a more comprehensive approach to policies discussed at SWG meetings, which will contribute to better quality of documents produced and monitored by all stakeholders.

**2.** SWG rules of procedure need to be amended in order to define the model for selection of civil society representatives and their role and mandate in this sector group. In particular, representatives from civil society organizations perceive the current role of SWG Health as more formal instead of being an actual forum for various stakeholders to discuss crucial policies in the health sector. Meaningful development of the sector working group necessitates established practice for structural and organized dialogue with civil society organizations, with due consideration of the principles of pluralism and transparency.

**3.** Insufficient transparency on the part of SWG Health remained in 2021 as well. The Ministry of Health's website does not host any information on operation of this sector group. Therefore, all documents (rules of procedure, minutes from meetings held, materials discussed at meetings, etc.) should be published on the ministry's website and specific activities need to be taken to familiarize the general and expert public with reform policies in the health sector.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY



- ◆ European Commission's 2021 Progress Report for North Macedonia
- ◆ National Programme for Adoption of the EU Acquis (NPAA) 2021-2025
- ◆ Transcript from interview with representative from state institutions that participate in SWG Health
- ◆ Transcript from focus group with civil society representatives that participate in SWG Health
- ◆ Rules of Procedure for SWG Health
- ◆ Minutes from the plenary session held by SWG Health
- ◆ Insight in electronic communication with SWG members
- ◆ Strategic response for WINDOW 4: COMPETITIVENESS AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH
- ◆ 2022 Action Fiche "EU for Health"
- ◆ IPA III action document "EU for Better Health and Social Protection, and Gender Equality"
- ◆ Act on job systematization at the Ministry of Health



