



INHERIT

Health | Equity | Environment

Improving our health and environments through lifestyle change

Brussels – Monday, 29 February 2016

INHERIT – a new 18-partner, 4-year Horizon 2020 research project – kicks off today to examine the health and environmental implications of our living, moving and consuming patterns.

The new EU-funded H2020 project – Intersectoral Health and Environment Research for Innovation (INHERIT) – brings together experts from the health, environment and other sectors, including technology, to investigate how to ensure environmental sustainability and improve health equity and well-being. The goal: to see how we can modify our lifestyles to simultaneously protect the environment and our health.

Our current lifestyles, characterized by ‘take-make-consume-dispose’ models of economic growth, are damaging the environment and our health. The proportion of adults in EU Member States that are considered to be overweight or obese range between 37.0 % (Italy) and 56.7 % (UK) for women and between 51.0 % (France) and 69.3 % (Malta) for men.¹ A report released in the UK last week sets out that around 40,000 of deaths in the country per year are attributable to exposure to outdoor air pollution, which has also been related to cancer, asthma, stroke and heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and changes linked to dementia.²

Experts will identify effective inter-sectoral policies, interventions and innovations that encourage individuals and communities across Europe to lead healthier and more environmentally sustainable lifestyles. The research will focus on the areas of living (housing, the built environment), moving (active travel) and consuming (food, nutrition, eating habits). It will identify promising practices, test and evaluate pilot activities, roll-out models of good practice, evaluate them on (cost) effectiveness and support decision makers in efforts to strengthen well-being and environmental sustainability.

¹See Eurostat information on ‘Overweight and Obesity, BMI Statistics:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Overweight_and_obesity_-_BMI_statistics

²See Report from the Royal College of Physicians ‘Every breath we take: the lifelong impact of air pollution’:
<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution>

Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Director of the Health Equity Institute at UCL commented that:

We need to end the complacent and compartmentalized approaches to health and environmental issues and ensure more strategic alignment between the health and environmental agenda. I am pleased that this research will contribute to this, and focus in particular on solutions for people with low socio-economic status, who are worst hit by the effects of environmental degradation, face the highest burden of disease, but who have limited scope for individual choice.

Professor George Morris from the University of Exeter also stated that:

One of the most pressing needs of 21st century is to build public health, well-being and greater equity on ecological principles. This research will enable us to better understand the complex links among the environmental, demographic, lifestyle etc. factors that affect our health. It will allow us to assess interventions that sustain our environments and promote health and well-being and, ultimately, to create more effective policies.

Caroline Costongs, Managing Director of EuroHealthNet, is leading the INHERIT project and said:

This research is unique as it will also investigate how inter-sectoral and business initiatives can lead to more equitable, healthy and environmentally sustainable lives. The project is timely and we hope research outcomes will inform policy-makers on ways to take forward the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreements. We are delighted to work with 17 excellent partners from across Europe and to contribute to a policy change that is so desperately needed.

ABOUT INHERIT:

INHERIT is about defining effective inter-sectoral policies that promote better health and greater well-being across social gradients by looking at key environmental stressors and related inequalities in the areas of living, moving and consuming. INHERIT aims to identify and promote linkages that support greater inter-sectoral cooperation in order to address health, climate and environmental issues in a comprehensive and positive scenario-oriented manner for a more sustainable future.

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INHERIT was launched in January 2016 and will run until December 2019.

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Additional Notes:

The following Institutions are involved in INHERIT:

Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)
University College London (UCL), Health Equity Institute
Institute of Preventative Medicine Environmental and Occupational Health (PROLEPSIS)
University of Exeter Medical School, European Centre for Environment and Human Health (UNEXE)
Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology
Management, Center for Health Promotion Research
Riga City Council, Housing, Environment and Welfare Department (RIGA)
Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP)
Swedish Public Health Agency (FoHM)
National Institute of Public Health Macedonia (IJZRM)
Basque Research Centre for Climate Change (BC3)
Lisbon University Institute (ISCTE-IUL)
Charles University in Prague (CUNI), Environment
University of Alcala (UAH)
Revolve Media (REVOLVE)
Philips Electronics Netherlands (PHILIPS)
Flemish Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (VIGeZ)
Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA)